Women are Discriminated Against within Politics in Indigenous Communities Because of their Gender

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to prove that women are discriminated against within politics in Indigenous Communities because of their gender. It will demonstrate how the Cree people historically were once an egalitarian society. Even though women were not often seen in leadership roles, such as chiefs, leaders of hunting or war parties, they still had important roles to play in their societies.

This study set out to prove how colonial legislation had a big influence on changing the way-of-knowing and thinking for many Native groups including, but not limited to the Cree people of Canada. It will demonstrate how the Cree people would no longer be an egalitarian society, but now be forced to live in a patriarchal society created by the Canadian government.

This thesis will prove that Cree women had important roles in their societies using the following theories/methodologies:

- Storytelling – Oral history and Interviews
- Indigenous Feminism
- Literature Review

These methodologies and theories were chosen, as they best reflected the philosophies of the Cree people in the Treaty 8 area.

In this study, three individual members of Horse Lake First Nation were interviewed to demonstrate how many Aboriginal men have taken on and accepted the western views of the colonizer. Many carry out those views by disempowering the women in their communities. Some of them have the idea that women should not be in positions of power and they belong in the household looking after domestic duties. Missionaries and Residential Schools aided in teaching male dominance to the Native people in Canada. They were given the mandate by the federal government to train female students to become submissive to male authority. Past Literature written about Aboriginal women reveals and confirms the discrimination they experienced. Even at the Supreme Court of Canada level, Aboriginal women were deemed savages.

In conclusion, this study shows how discrimination women continue to face on their reserves resulted from colonial legislation, government restrictions and mandates. It shows how women, even today, continue to be discriminated against. Yes, the laws have changed to eliminate gender discrimination, but now they face it within their own communities, by their own people. Women continue to be devalued and struggle to be treated as equals. Women have never been elected as chief and continue to be disrespected in positions of management.

PREFACE

After running for Chief in my reserve, I discovered that our community had not entirely recovered from the patriarchal society that was created for us by colonization, missionaries, and government laws. This realization made me question whether or not our people, the Cree people, were always of this mindset. Were the Cree People historically a patriarchal society and if not, what changed their way of thinking? This is when I decided to write my thesis surrounding the discrimination women face on their reserves when dealing with politics.

Growing up with the women in my life, such as my mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, I had difficulty believing that our women were always submissive. My mother in her youth was a woman who chose not to give up her independence. She would be involved in many relationships throughout her life; however, rejected marrying any of the men that asked her for her hand in marriage. My mother usually left men that became too controlling, but one man managed to keep her under his control for a time long enough to have two daughters with him. This man was controlling and abusive but fortunately after a few years she left him. This is when I decided, I would never allow any man to control or hit me.

Next, my grandmother always demonstrated great authority in her home and never had any difficulty standing up for herself or her children, regardless of the situation. In fact, she never hesitated to tell her common-law husband what to do.

Finally, my great-grandmother was also a strong independent woman who proved she needed no one to get things done. Even whilst in her seventies, she displayed great leadership and strength. She was always telling everyone around her what to do. I admired her for her strength and resilience in continuing to practice the Cree culture, even when the Priests in the

area were trying to teach her otherwise. In the summer months, my great-grandmother spent a majority of her time outdoors making dry meat or tanning hides. She did this until she fell ill and ended up in the hospital well into her eighties.

I discovered while researching my thesis that the Cree people were once an egalitarian society, but would conform to the Canadian/British ideals. Our community, even though laws have changed to eliminate gender discrimination, continues to support the idea of male dominance. This proved true while I was running for chief in our band elections. Comments were often made about women having no business running for chief, as men made better leaders. They would also say that women were not strong enough to be leaders in our community.

I hope that this study will help anyone who reads it understand how difficult it was to write about the history of my people and why we ended up where we are today. I also hope it will educate others that women were not always submissive to the man and they did have a place in their communities that was just as important as the men.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was conducted while I was teaching Cree at the Grande Prairie Regional College, operating my store on reserve, working as the Director of Community Based Services for Horse Lake First Nation and working as a Coordinator of the Grande Prairie Friendship Centre. I also spent the ladder part of writing my thesis in Edmonton where my teenage boy attended the Inner City High School, so he could play Triple A and Double A Midget Hockey.

I would like to thank many people for putting up with me while writing my thesis. First, I must thank my supervisor, Professor, Dr. James Dempsey for helping me organize and make sense of my thesis. There were very few Mondays that went by in my final year, that he and I did not sit to go over my thesis at his home or at his office at the University of Alberta where he was a full-time instructor. I would also like to acknowledge my band for their financial support over the years that it took me to complete my thesis.

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I especially want to thank my partner, Kathryn Savard for her support, patience and confidence she gave me when I sometimes felt like giving up. The time she took out of her busy schedule to make sure my orders were done and store business was looked after will always be appreciated. Also, my sons and step kids for all the support they gave me whenever I needed

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Take note that throughout this paper the term "Indian" will be used, as the *Indian Act* defines First Nation's people as "Indians. However, many people in the community of Horse Lake are offended by the term "Indian" because they understand that Indians are from India. They want recognition for being the first peoples of Canada; however, some Indigenous elders would prefer to be called "Indian," as this is the term used to identify Indigenous people in the *Indian Act*. Any information in this document pertaining to the writer's family was collected from the writer's mother, Delia Horseman. Many telephone interviews as well as home interviews were conducted with Delia to gather this information. This writer was also able to conduct personal interviews with three previous members of council.[1] Throughout this thesis you will be hearing about my community, who consist of people residing in Horse Lake, most of which are related in one way or another. You will also learn about my community and what self-governance means to them. Chief and council often relate to the public, the importance of band governance and what it means to the people, yet many governance models that have been introduced to band members have given chief and council the overall power to make decisions on behalf of the band. Chief and council generally favour immediate family members, while excluding others who are not directly tied to the council's family.

In this introduction, I will be locating myself as an Indigenous, two-spirited, traditional Cree woman. I am a *ohkawîmaw, ohkomimâw, ohkawiyisimâw, ohsîmisimâw, ohmisisimâw, ekwa ninehiyawân*.[2] I was born in a small town named Beaverlodge located near my reserve, Horse Lake First Nation, northwest of Grande Prairie, Alberta. I have lived on my reserve my entire life with the exception of the time I resided in Edmonton to pursue my Masters of Native Studies at the University of Alberta. In my community, I learned very quickly how my gender,

[1] See Appendix III.
[2] Cree translations: see Appendix VI.

race and sexuality would influence how I was seen in my community when participating in politics. Women are discriminated against within politics in Indigenous communities because of their gender. While running for chief of my reserve, I experienced firsthand discrimination from many people in my community because of my gender, race and sexuality. It was after listening to people in my community on why "I shouldn't run because women don't make good chiefs," that I decided to write about my experiences. It was important that people outside my community, as well as within my community, knew the truth of what many women face on reserves throughout the country while running in elections. Throughout Canada since 1951, male chiefs have been the majority elected on reserves. Even though more women are being elected as chiefs in the country, male chiefs still outnumber women chiefs 6 to 1. In 2012, there were 111 women chiefs out of 633 First Nations communities in Canada.[3]

Indigenous women throughout Canada have faced double discrimination because of their race and gender, I on the other hand, have experienced it three-fold because I am Indigenous, female and two-spirited. While running for chief, many people in my community believed women would not make good leaders because they were not strong enough to deal with politics, others believed that two-spirited people did not belong in politics because they would influence the young people to be gay.[4] Even though, "women are the majority of the population throughout the world [they] never compromise more than a handful of its political leaders."[5] "As women, the female chiefs must deal with sexism within the First Nations and mainstream communities alike. Some members of the First Nations community do not believe that women should hold the

[3] Miriam McNab, Indigenous Women's Issues, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/native-womens-issues, [accessed 12 October 2016].
[44] Personal experiences I and other two-spirited people have heard people say in my community.
[5] Cora Voyageur, *Fire Keepers of the Twenty-First Century: First Nations Women Chiefs,* (Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), p. 7.

position of chief. Some believe that women are incapable of making hard decisions and base their deliberations on emotion rather than logic."[6]

As a young girl in the 1960s and 1970s, I spent most of my time on the reserve. My first encounter with a non-Indigenous person was the Indian Agent that assisted my mother with welfare (social assistance). I remember we rarely traveled anywhere outside of the reserve, except to attend a day Catholic school in Beaverlodge. This is where I first experienced discrimination of the worst kind, the kind that forbade me to speak my own language, the kind that forbade me to practice my own culture, and the kind that told me my culture and language was worthless. The nuns at the school would not allow me to speak *nehiyawewin* (Cree), and if I was caught speaking my language, I was sent to the office to receive a strap from the principal. I was only six years old and could barely understand English, so I often spoke *nehiyawewin* because I did not know all the words in English. Luckily though, *nisikos* (my uncle's wife) worked at the school, as a teacher's assistant and would help me with the English words when I had trouble. I remember this one time, I was having trouble telling the nun in English that I had a sliver, so I told *nisikos* instead. She pulled me aside and asked me to whisper it so the nun would not hear me. I said to her, "Mrs. Horseman, I *kipisini*," because I did not know how to say I have a sliver in English. She began to laugh and said to me, "Be careful not to let the nuns hear you." I often wonder what my experiences at the school would have been like if *nisikos* was not there to help me with English.

My next experience with discrimination was when I attended a Catholic school in Grande Prairie. I was ten years old and was having trouble adjusting to a school which had only a few brown faces enrolled. I remember seeing less than a handful during my time there. I disliked going outside during recesses because it was then that some of the "White" kids would often tell

[6] Ibid, p. 13.

me I did not belong there and should go back to my reserve. Sometimes, they would call me names like, “wagon burner,” “savage Indian,” “Squaw,” and other derogatory terms. On one occasion that I remember, a couple of kids waited around the corner of the school for me, so that they could throw rocks at me and told me to go back to the reserve where I belonged. When I got home that day, I told *nikawiy* (my mother) about the incident and she decided to send me back to the reserve to live. I stayed with *nokom* (my grandmother) and a few of her adult children along with their wives and their own children, she had living with her. Her house only had two bedrooms, and three or four of her children already had spouses and one or two children each of their own and two of her youngest boys were still young and going to school. *Nistesimâw* (My eldest brother) sometimes stayed at *nokom*’s as well. *Nokom*, every morning, would prepare eight or nine lunches for all the kids going to school. I remember, many mornings *Nokom* would be mending one of our items of clothing, so that we had something to wear. Whether she was putting on a button, zipper, or just sewing a patch on an old pair of worn out pants, she always made sure we had something to wear that was clean.

My next experience with discrimination was when I was in grade seven attending a local junior high school. I asked my teacher if she could help me with my math, she came back to me with a response I will never forget, “It’s okay dear. You people never make it past grade nine anyways.” I think that was the last time I ever asked another teacher in grade school for help. While there, I ended up dropping in and out of school for the next four years, three of which I was in grade eight. I finally dropped out of school entirely in grade nine. I never did complete the grade. I only lasted until March of that school year. I had no reason to believe that I would ever amount to anything academically, so I did not even try. Despite what the teacher said to me, I decided I was not going to let that stop me, I taught myself to be the best at whatever job I was doing.

Ethnographies help us to understand people better by learning about their cultures. Many societies differ because of how they do certain things. In the following, you will learn about the history of the Cree people of Horse Lake. The information regarding land claims and settlements were gathered from our band manager.[7] You will be able to get a sense of how women have been excluded from important decisions when dealing with politics because of their gender.

Throughout this thesis, you will read about the discrimination women face on reserves when dealing with politics. Chapter one will demonstrate a generalization of the Cree culture prior to the *Indian Act* and how the *Indian Act* helped in setting the stage for women even today, on their struggle to achieve success within politics. Chapter two will take a look at the methodological and theoretical framework by introducing the importance of story telling for the purpose of teaching lessons to the Indigenous people in Canada; how Indigenous Feminism has played an important role in assisting Indigenous women in regaining a voice in their communities; and it will validate through the interviews conducted with three people in Horse Lake, how many men on reserves in Canada have incorporated the ideas of the colonizers. Chapter three will demonstrate how colonization, Missionaries, Literature about Aboriginal Women and Residential Schools have contributed to the discrimination Indigenous women throughout Canada have endured. Chapter four will exhibit how the structure of band governance, in Horse Lake, has contributed to the discrimination of women in politics and how they continue to be disconnected from important decision-making processes.

[7] Jack Patterson was hired by the Horse Lake First Nation to research land claims for the illegal land surrender of the Beaver Indian Reserve #152 that occurred in 1929. He was the band manager for a number of years between 1981 and 2001.

Chapter One

Prior to colonization, women in Cree communities were respected and honoured for the roles they played in their communities.[8] The Cree people lived a harmonious life prior to the enactment of the "*Indian Act*." Men and women both had roles that were important to the survival of the community. Men were generally the hunters and women were the ones who "butchered and transported the meat and hides to camp" and "both meat and hides were the property of the women who could dispose of them as they pleased."[9] The Cree people lived in a dwelling called a tipi. The Cree Tipi was constructed with 13 poles and was entirely covered with hides. "Twelve to twenty buffalo hides were used for a cover. An old woman skilled in cutting covers measured the hides and cut them to the proper shape.[10] "The care of horses was entirely the work of men. A woman could own horses and dispose of them as she liked, but her husband or father looked after them.[11]

Not taking away from the Cree people, the following article will show that other Aboriginal groups have demonstrated the important roles women played in their communities prior to colonization. An article by Jeanette Armstrong illustrates,

> the role of Aboriginal women in the health of family systems from one generation to the next was one of immense power. […] In traditional Aboriginal society, it was wom[e]n who shaped the thinking of all its members in a loving, nurturing atmosphere within the base family unit. In such societies, the earliest instruments of governance and law to ensure social order came from quality mothering of children.[12]

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[8] Beverley Jacobs, "Response to Canada's Apology to Residential School Survivors", ed. Patricia A. Monture & Patricia D. McGuire, First Voices an Aboriginal Women's Reader, Inanna Publications and Education: Toronto, Ontario, 2009, p.11.
[9] David G. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study,* (Saskatchewan: Canadian Pains Research Center, 1979), p.58.
[10] Ibid, p.88.
[11] Ibid), p.64.
[12] Christine Miller & Patricia Chuchryk, *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength*, (The University of Manitoba Press: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1996), essay by Jeannette Armstrong, *Invocation: The Real Power of Aboriginal Women*, p. ix.

The article further demonstrates, "the use of non-gendered figures, such as animals, provided a focus for instructions based on human worth. Our "languages" contained no words for *he* or *she* because of the high elevation of human dignity and personal recognition in our culture."[13] In Cree, this holds true. When speaking in the second person narrative, he/she is translated into *ohya*, which is not gender specific. One could be referring to either he/she or him/her. "Traditionally, it was the woman who controlled and shaped that societal order to the state of harmony, which in this time of extreme disorder seems nearly impossible."[14] Also, an article taken from "Canada in the Making" expresses how, "before First Contact with the Europeans, […] in many Aboriginal societies, women had an important role in their society."[15] Mandelbaum illustrates how women had important roles in their society pre-*Indian Act*. Women were the owners of the teepee.[16] They were also the ones who took ownership of the meat and hide after the hunters brought back the game they killed.[17] These are only some examples that support the idea that women were important in their communities prior to colonization and the *Indian Act*.

Before explaining about the affects the passing of the *Indian Act (1876)* and the creation of the reserve system had on Indigenous people in Canada, the following will hopefully demonstrate how many of them, including the Cree people, functioned socially within their groups prior to colonization. Before one can understand the true impact, colonization had on Indigenous people, one has to learn about the ways of life for Indigenous people prior to this contact. In this article from the *Historica Canada* website it identifies how many Cree groups lived in their societies;

[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p. x.
[15] Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal Through to the Continent of North America, (*New York: New Amsterdam Book Company, 1902),(S.I.: s.n 1801) at 150, p. 2.
[16] David Mandelbaum, Ibid, p. 89.
[17] Ibid, p.58.

> The Cree lived in small bands or hunting groups for most of the year, and gathered into larger groups in the summer for socializing, exchanges and ceremonies. Religious life was based on relations with animal and other spirits which revealed themselves in dreams. People tried to show respect for each other by an ideal ethic of non-interference, in which each individual was responsible for his or her actions and the consequences of those actions. Food was always the first priority, and would be shared in times of hardship or in times of plenty when people gathered to celebrate by feasting. Although the ideal was communal and egalitarian, some individuals were regarded as more powerful, both in the practical activities of hunting and in the spiritual activities that influenced other persons. Leaders in group hunts, raids and trading were granted authority in directing such tasks, but otherwise the ideal was to lead by means of exemplary action and discreet suggestion.[18]

Prior to European contact, the Cree people were nomadic. They hunted and gathered off the land and followed the wild-life whenever they would relocate. They hunted buffalo, moose, elk, caribou, deer and small game to survive. The Cree people were gatherers of berries and other plants that "Mother Earth" had to offer. They, according to the following insert by *Native Net*, were independent and relied on the land to look after all of their needs to survive.

> The Cree Indians were excellent hunters and gatherers. They lived primarily near the Great Lakes, which was abundant in wild rice, one of the Cree Indians staple foods and an adequate substitute for corn, which could not be grown in the lakes area very easily. And just as rice was a substitute for corn, it was equally a substitute for labor. The Cree Indians planted and guarded the crop, harvested it, hulled it, dried it and smoked it. It was quite a strenuous undertaking for the Cree women, as they did most of the work. As for their main protein source, it was definitely fish, along with moose and deer meat.[19]

Colonization; however, would force many Indigenous people to conform to the western culture and Christian belief system. Luckily some Indigenous people were resilient against adopting the colonizer's culture entirely. They found ways to survive a new world introduced to them. Some of these people still practice the Cree culture today. They continue to dry meat, tan hides, take-part in sweat ceremonies, round dances, daily smudging, pipe ceremonies, and

[18] Historica Canada: *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/cree, [accessed August 20, 2013].

[19] Native Net is a website dedicated to sharing Native American and Indigenous Peoples in History, http://www.native-net.org/, (retrieved 16 July 2013), p.1.

traditional feasts. For many years, Indigenous people were banned from taking part in any giveaways because of the *Indian Act*:

> Every Indian or other person who engages in, or assists in celebrating or encourages either directly or indirectly another to celebrate, any Indian festival, dance or other ceremony of which the giving away or paying or giving back of money, goods or articles of any sort forms a part, or is a feature, whether such gift of money, goods or articles takes place before, at or after the celebration of the same, and every Indian or other person who engages or assists in any celebration or dance of which the wounding or mutilation of the dead or living body of any human being or animal forms a part or is a feature, is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months and not less than two months;[20]

It was not until 1951 that the ban was removed from the *Indian Act.*

I will now demonstrate the epistemology of Indigenous women prior to the colonial legislation being implemented in Canada.

Many First Nations people "across Canada share a common experience of colonial encounter that has left them economically marginalized, politically weakened, and culturally stigmatized.[21] Some of the major effects in these First Nation communities have been the endemic presence of social, mental, and physical illness in communities who were once self and environmentally sustaining.[22] According to Arthur J. Ray, in reference to Europeans taking credit for exploring lands in Canada, it is truly a myth.[23] He goes on to say that the newcomers created this mythology to justify their seizing of territory and to glorify their personal deeds in the bargain. In truth, Aboriginal men and women guided these European explorers across the continent. The Indigenous people [had] also set up trading provisioning networks that European traders subsequently took over and made their own expanding empires during the mercantilism era.[24] Many accounts of history fail to document that Indigenous people clearly held the upper hand at the very least an equal one, for many years over vast areas.[25] They greeted Europeans

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[20] Sharon H. Venne, Sharon H, an insert in the 1880 Indian Act, S.C. 1884 Amendment, c.43, s.113 ss.6, *Indian Act and Amendments 1868 – 1975: An Indexed Collection.* University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre: Saskatchewan, Canada, 1981, p.158.

[21] Brenda McLeod, 2009, "First Nations Women and Sustainability on the Canadian Prairies", as cited in *First Voices, an Aboriginal Women's Reader,* eds. Patricia A. Monture & Patricia D. McGuire, Inanna Publications and Education Inc. : Toronto, Ontario, p. 154.

[22] Idem.

[23] Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began,* Key Porter Books: Toronto, Ontario, 2005, p. 45.

[24] Idem.

[25] Idem.

with a confidence and excitement at the prospect of exploring new and upcoming opportunities, before they were "pushed into ever-shrinking niches of their former homeland".[26]

With European contact, came social structures foreign to First Nations' people. Their "traditional belief systems came under assault and Indigenous people […] were confronted with increasing cultural and social fragmentation.[27] Gender relations would be disrupted and alien social structures would be imposed on the Indigenous people in Canada.[28]

Colonial Legislation

The creation of the "*Indian Act*" would disrupt the Indigenous peoples' way-of-living. It was done with the mindset of Canadian/British ideals. The "Act" emphasizes on the male, while excluding the female. These were not the ways many First Nations people in Canada were accustomed to before these government laws were put in place for Indigenous people. This chapter will demonstrate how these government laws played a huge role in diminishing certain roles Indigenous women had in their communities, such as excluding women from participating in band politics. This section will hopefully help the reader understand why Cree women, even today, still encounter gender discrimination, which will be demonstrated in the following: For over a century, bands like Horse Lake First Nation, have lived under rules that have been set by the colonizer. With the creation of legislation focusing on the assimilation of Canada's Indian population, the government had to define who their acts affected; therefore, the status Indian was born. A status Indian was legally defined and recognized as an "Indian" by the government and at the same time was not legally a Canadian citizen but a ward of the government. This legislation would further affect Indian women even more as their rights became non-existent

[26] Idem.
[27] Cynthia C. Wesley-Esquimaux, *Restoring the Balance: First Nations Women, Community and Culture,* "Trauma to Resilience: Notes on Decolonization, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), p. 13. See also, Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), etal.*
[28] Idem.

under these acts. For example, the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869 stated that when an Indian male was enfranchised, his wife and minor children were enfranchised with him, without a choice. The *Indian Act* of 1876,[29] states that women belonged to their husbands; the *Indian Act* Amendment of 1880, further restricted their liberties;[30] the Indian Advancement Act of 1884,[31] gave males only the right to elect and get elected for council; the *Indian Act* Amendment of 1886, did not recognize women as individuals,[32] the *Indian Act* Amendment of 1906,[33] took all rights away from Indian women who married non-Indians.

It is important to note that while laws were being implemented in Canada, two important issues were also taking place;

1) Indians were not considered citizens, they were and would remain wards of the state until 1960 when they would finally be franchised to vote in federal elections without being enfranchised. Even though men were permitted to run and vote in reserve elections, women would not be given that right until 1951.

2) The government would create the Chief and Council system in hopes of training the Indians, males only, on how to deal with the election system. It was never intended to teach them about governance models. They did not intend to give any power to elected councils, they only wanted to train the Indian males about the election system in hopes of one day enfranchising them.

The creation of colonial legislation, especially Indian laws, would forever change the way of knowing for many Indigenous people throughout the Country. "Early colonial legislation did

[29] Sharon H. Venne, *Indian Act and Amendments 1868 – 1975: An Indexed Collection,* (Saskatchewan: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1981), chapter 18, section 3, p.24.
[30] Ibid, chapter 28, section 12, p.5.
[31] Ibid, chapter 28, section 5, p.58.
[32] Ibid, p.110.
[33] Ibid, chapter 81, section 14, p.179.

not presume to define membership in the Indigenous peoples, it was assumed that Indigenous persons could easily be told apart from the white settlers," so the term "Indian would not be put into legislation until 1850.[34] The government felt it was necessary to define who an Indian was because Indian Reserves were being created.[35] Canada, in trying to keep the Indians on reserves began signing treaties in the North West Territories (NWT) in the late 1800s and early 1900s.[36] With the treaties, came the *Indian Act* of 1876, which would change the way Indigenous people practiced their culture as they once did. The formation of reserves was one of the most fundamental events that occurred amongst Aboriginal groups. Their way-of-living would be interfered with. They would no longer be able to freely hunt wildlife and were no longer able to move from one location to the other in search of wild life to feed their families and communities. The Department of Indian Affairs would further restrict their movement by implementing the Pass system by 1889. Indians were now forced to confine themselves to their reserves.

Indian Act

The focus will now move to how the creation of the *Indian Act* of 1876 would begin to define gender differences among Indigenous people in Canada. Gender inequality was not always evident in laws dealing with Indigenous people in Canada prior to this act. The *Indian Act of 1876* would now define who an "Indian" was; "First. Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; Secondly. Any child of such person; Thirdly, any woman who is or was lawfully married to such person."[37] The term "any male" is emphasized here, as an

[34] Sebastien Grammond, *Identity Captured by Law: Membership in Canada's Indigenous Peoples and Linguistic Minorities,* McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, Quebec, 2009, p.71.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada,Treaty 6 was signed on August 23 & 28, 1876, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028710/1100100028783#chp1, [accessed 1 March 2014], p.1.
[37] Sharon H. Venne, *Indian Act and Amendments 1868 – 1975: An Indexed Collection,* (University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre: Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1981), chapter 18, section 3, p.24.

order of distinction. Further, this allowed women to inherit one-third of her husband's holdings upon his death.[38]

According to *Canada in the Making,* the *Act* also identified other conditions for being an *Indian* under the eyes of the law.

> Any woman that married an Aboriginal man could be considered an Indian and could be allowed to live and even be buried on a reserve. These women also received other cultural and social benefits by gaining Indian status. However, any Aboriginal woman who married a white, European male was now considered to be a bona fide member of Canadian society. She lost her Indian status and every right that came with it.[39]

In other words, a woman who married a non-Indigenous was no longer a member of the band and no longer had any privileges as a "status Indian". "The *Act* recognized the rights of men, but not women."[40] It further emphasizes "male lineage, defining an Indian as any 'male person' of Indian blood and 'any woman lawfully married to such a person. As a result, the rights of women as 'Indians,' under the *Indian Act,* were defined by their fathers and their marriages."[41] An article retrieved from an on-line source reveals that

> the *Indian Act* of 1876 effectively made women second-class citizens with Aboriginal society, and was particularly instrumental in helping erode their self-confidence and status as a group. […] If a woman with Indian status through birth married a non-Aboriginal person, she was enfranchised into mainstream Canadian society and automatically lost the right to: be called an Indian; live on an Indian reserve; be buried on an Indian reserve with the rest of their family.[42]

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[38] Ibid, chapter 18, section 9, p.27.
[39] 1876 - 1877: *The Indian Act, 1876 and Numbered Treaties Six and Seven*, http://jfulton.wikispaces.com/file/view/2_10+Indian+Act+and+treaties+6+and+7.doc [retrieved 24 March 2013], p. 1.
[40] Peggy J. Blair, *Rights of Aboriginal Women On- And Off-Reserve,* The Scow Institute (October, 2005), http://www.scowinstitute.ca/library/documents/RightsofWomenFacts.pdf, p.3, as cited from *An Act Respecting Civilization and Enfranchisement of Certain Indians (1859) 22 Vic. c-29 s. 11, http://gsdl.ubcic.bc.ca/collect/firstna1/tmp/1859.html,* [retrieved 15 March 2013], p.3.
[41] Ibid.
[42] *Aboriginal Women's Issues*: Canada in the Making, http://www.canadiana.ca/citm/specifique/abwomen_e.html [retrieved 15 March 2013], p. 2.

The origin of this legislation was passed in regards to the declassification of Indian women a couple of decades before the *Indian Act* was even passed. In an article, by Peggy Blair, she notes,

> […] as early as 1857 when legislation had been passed which contained enfranchisement provisions to 'civilize' Indians. The wife, widow, and lineal descendants of those Indians who voluntarily enfranchised [gave up their Indian status] were deemed themselves to be enfranchised and were no longer considered members of their former tribes, unless the widow or female lineal descendant married a non-enfranchised [status] Indian, in which case status was restored.[43]

Blair also validates that laws were put in place even before 1876 in reference to the status of women who should marry outside of their tribes. She demonstrates how women a provision was added to the *Indian Act* in 1869, where Indian women lost their status privileges when they married non-Indians. In this Act, her children also lost their status privileges.[44] In 1880, the *Indian Act* was amended, clearly showing a change in gender placement: status privileges were taken away from Indian women upon marriage to non-Indigenous people[45]. This clause, is just one of many that demonstrate the injustices enacted against Aboriginal women. This section clearly stated that "any Indian woman marrying any other than an Indian or a non-treaty Indian shall cease to be an Indian in any respect within the meaning of this Act."[46]

To summarize, a non-Indigenous woman would gain status by marrying a status Indigenous man, while a status Indigenous woman would lose her status upon marrying a non-Indigenous man. This is clearly discrimination towards Aboriginal women because of their gender. Indigenous men were not necessarily affected to the same degree. Although they were not considered Canadian citizens, under the *Indian Act*, they were given certain privileges in line with other Canadian citizens. They were given the voting ability to vote and run for chief and

[43] Peggy J. Blair, ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Sharon H. Venne, Ibid, chapter 28, section 12, p.58.
[46] Ibid, as chapter 28, section 12 reads, p.58.

council. This was in line with the government's overall plan to instill the elective system in Indigenous communities.

The *Indian Advancement Act* of 1884, "First election of members of the Council of a Reserve: the male Indians of the full age of twenty-one years, resident on the reserve (hereinafter termed electors) shall meet for the purpose of electing the members of the council of the reserve; […].[47] Women are not even mentioned as electors for the purpose of band elections.

In 1886, another amendment was made to the *Indian Act*;

> Any Indian woman who marries an Indian of any other band, or a non-treaty Indian, shall cease to be a member of the band to which she formerly belonged, and shall become a member of the band or irregular band of which her husband is a member; but if she marries a non-treaty Indian, while becoming a member of the irregular band of which her husband is a member, she shall be entitled to share equally with the members of the band of which she was formerly a member, […].[48]

This section of the *Act* further demonstrates how women did not have any rights as individuals. They automatically took on the status of their husbands with no regard to their personal Indigeneity[49]. This clearly is a product that these women were set up to become more dependent on others, in this case, their husband, which further oppressed them. The 1906 amendment to the *Indian Act*, also demonstrated that Indigenous women lost their entire rights as an *Indian* woman upon marriage if they married a non-treaty Indian. This section reads, "any person other than an Indian, or a non-treaty Indian, shall cease to be an Indian in every respect within the meaning of this Act."[50]

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[47] Ibid, as chapter 28, section 5, reads, p.103.
[48] Ibid, as chapter 43, section 12 which reads, p.110.
[49] Online Dictionary, Usage: In a similar way, "indigeneity" is derived from "indigenous" which means born or produced naturally in a land or region; native or belonging naturally to (the soil, region, etc.)," from indu, an old Latin root meaning "within" (like the Greek ..., endon) and gignere meaning "to beget." http://www.definition-of.com/indigeneity, (Retrieved 10 August 2017).
[50] Ibid, Chapter 81, section 14, p.179.

Roles of Women in Aboriginal Communities

Next, women in history have been excluded to illustrate a non-existent role in their communities. As the following quote from Fine-day will demonstrate:

> No matter how brave a man is and no matter how many horses he brings back (from raids), if he has nothing, he can't be a chief. It happened many times that a man would be brave and bring back many horses. But he would trade the horses for clothes and would be too lazy to get hides for a tipi cover and so he could never be a chief. When a young man showed (by his deeds) that he would be a chief someday the old men would go to see him and say, "Now young man, you are climbing higher and higher and are on the way to become a chief. It is for your own good (that we speak). It is not an easy thing to be chief. Look at this chief now. He has to have pity on the poor. When he sees a man in difficulty he must try to help him in whatever way he can. If a person asks for something in his tipi, he must give it to him willingly and without any bad feeling. We are telling you this now because you will meet these things and you must have a strong heart."[51]

The exclusion of women in this insert implies that women did not have the same rights as men. This should not be a surprise, as the rest of Canada was following the British/English ideas of a system that defined men as the dominant gender. "In the nineteenth-century Western world, at the time that our constitution was framed, European women in Canada occupied a secondary position in society."[52] Women who were British subjects, 21 years of age and older would not be given the right to vote in Canadian Federal Elections until May 24th, 1918.[53] Again, this supports the idea that women, were discriminated against because of their gender. Kathleen Jamieson in her book, describes how the *Indian Act* of 1876 redefined the term "Indian" to mean that a woman, regardless of her Indian heritage, lost status privileges upon marrying a non-Indian.

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[51] Fine Day, "Incidents of the Rebellion, as Related by Fine Day (Canadian North-West Historical Society, Publications, vol. 1, number 1, Battleford, Saskatchewan, 1926), as cited by David G. Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study,* (the Canadian Plains Research Center: Regina, Saskatchewan, 1979), p.106.

[52] Lorna R. Marsden, *Canadian Women & the Struggle for Equality,* (Oxford University Press: Don Mills, Ontario, 2012), p.vii.

[53] Idem, p.69.

Jamieson depicts how "the male line and the importance of legitimacy,"[54] is emphasized. The 1920 *Indian Act* amendment wanted to ensure that when an "Indian" woman married a non-Indigenous, she lost all connection to her band. The rationale for this was the following:

> When an Indian woman marries outside the band whether a non-treaty Indian or a white man it is in the interests of the Department, and in her interests as well, to sever her connection wholly with the reserve and the Indian mode of life, and the purpose of this section was to enable us to commute her financial interest. The words 'with the consent of the band' have in many cases been effectual in preventing this severance as some bands are selfishly interested in preventing the expenditure of their funds. The refusal to consent is only actuated by stupidity because the funds are not really in any way impaired. The amendment makes in the same direction as the proposed Enfranchisement Clauses, that is it takes away the power from unprogressive bands of preventing their members from advancing to full citizenship.[55]

As stated earlier, Indigenous women, who married non-Indigenous people, were not even permitted to be buried on their reserves. This was initiated in an attempt to assimilate all "Indians" into Canadian society. "When this 1920 legislation was being discussed in Commons Committee, D.C. Scott explained it thus: 'Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department. That is the whole object of the Bill.'[56]

Amendments would later be introduced to continue with the discrimination of women pertaining to their marriages to non-Indigenous people. "Indian women were by far the largest group of Indians to lose their status as a result of these provisions. Most were 'de-registered' as a result of Section 12 of the *Indian Act*, introduced in 1951[…].[57]

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[54] Kathleen Jamieson, *Indian Women and the Law in Canada: Citizens Minus,* (Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1978), p.43.
[55] *An Act to amend the Indian Act, s.c.* 1919-20, c. 50, 2 "14", p.51.
[56] Ibid, p.50.
[57] Freda Ahenakew & H.C. Wolfart *Kohkominawak Otacimowiniwawa: Our Grandmothers' Lives as Told in Their Own Words,* (Winnepeg, Manitoba: Hignell Printing Limited, 1998), p. 51.

> Section 12(1) (b) provided that a woman who married a non-Indian was not entitled to be registered. In contrast, section 11(1)(f) stated that the wife or widow of any registered Indian man was entitled to status. Pursuant to section 109(1), if a male status Indian was enfranchised, his wife and children would also be enfranchised. Section 12(1)(a)(iv), known as the "double mother" clause, provided that a person whose parents married on or after 4 September 1951 and whose mother and paternal grandmother had not been recognized as Indians before their marriages, could be registered at birth, but would lose status and band membership on his or her 21st birthday.[58]

Again, the status of man generally dictated the status of his Aboriginal wife and their children. So, the discrimination was not only against women, but also their children. It was not enough for the government to put laws in place to disempower women, but to go further by including their children in this disempowerment.

Indigenous Women and Case Law

Many women in Canada throughout the history of the *Indian Act*, have fought to gain rights afforded to them. "

> Due to section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act, which denied Indian status to women who married non-status men, Corbiere Lavell lost her legal status as an Indian. Outraged, Jeannette Corbiere Lavell filed a legal suit against the federal government on the basis that it was in violation of the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights because it discriminated against women on the basis of sex.[59]

Lavelle's loss in this case, resulted in the formation of the National Committee on Indian Rights for Women (NCIRIW) and Indigenous Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) in 1974. The (NWAC) wrote a Research Paper regarding Aboriginal Women's Rights and made the following claim: "The founding of NWAC was closely tied to Indigenous women's struggle to overcome the discrimination inherent in s.12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act*, which deprived a woman of Indian

[58] Megan Furi and Jill Wherrett, *Indian Status and Band Membership Issues, Library of Parliament, BP-410E, (Ottawa: 1996, revised 2003) http://www.parl.gc.ca/informantion/library/PRBpubs/bpr10-e.htm#4tx (accessed 24 March 2013).*

[59] Amanda Robinson, "Jeanette Corbiere Lavelle," *Historica Canada*, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jeannette-vivian-lavell/,

status upon marriage to a non-Indian, but permitted a status man to bestow on his non-Indian wife status under the *Indian Act."*[60]

Sandra Lovelace, who had married a non-Indigenous, was another of these women brave enough to take on the government when she was denied access to her band after divorcing her husband.

> Sandra Lovelace Nicholas, a Maliseet woman from New Brunswick's Tobique Nation, lost her Native status when she married a white man, and even once divorced, she and her children didn't recover her status.
>
> At the time, the Tobique band council refused to allocate her a subsidized house. The law made no similar provision for Native men who married non-aboriginals. Women who lost status were effectively barred from having their children educated on the reserve and taking part in band decisions. In 1977, Ms. Lovelace Nicholas took her case to the United Nations human-rights committee, charging that the discriminatory measures in Canada's Indian Act violated an international covenant on civil and political rights – a case she won in 1981. The law was not reversed until 1985; it took her nearly ten years to recover her status.[61]

As a result of Lavelle and Lovelace (Nicholas)'s strong determination to be heard at the United Nations, the grounds for a lawsuit under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was presented. This of course led to the creation of the *Bill C-31 Act, an Amendment* to the *Indian Act:*

> On June 28, 1985, Bill C-31, *An Act to Amend the Indian Act*, received Royal Assent. Bill C-31's purpose was to eliminate sexual discrimination within the *Indian Act* and make it congruent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Bill C-31 was a response to the decision of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in the case of Sandra Lovelace (Nicholas). The UN recognized that Canada was discriminating against First Nations women as a result of the marriage provisions within the *Indian Act*. While the Canadian legal system had not ruled similarly in the case of Mary Two-Axe Early and Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, First Nation women saw justice prevail at the International level. Though some may have seen the enactment of Bill C-31 as a gain, it was offset by

[60] *Aboriginal Women's Rights are Human Rights,* (Native Women's Association of Canada), http://action.web.ca/home/narcc/attach/AboriginalWomensRightsAreHumanRights.pdf, [retrieved 15 March 2013], p.3.

[61] *Sandra Lovelace Nicholas Fought for Aboriginal Women's Rights,* The Globe and Mail (Published 12 November 2012), http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/25/sandra-lovelace-nicholas-fought-for-aboriginal-womens-rights/article1796736/ [accessed 25 March 2013).

> other provisions which continued the discrimination against Aboriginal women and their children.
>
> The 1985 amendments to the *Indian Act* (Bill C-31) introduced three key changes:
>
> The reinstatement of Registered Indian Status primarily affected women who had lost their eligibility for registration through provisions of earlier versions of the *Indian Act*.
>
> The amendments also provided, for the first time, registration of many children;
>
> The introduction of new rules governing entitlement to Indian registration for all children born after April 16, 1985 (Section 6); and
>
> The ability for First Nations to develop and apply their own rules governing membership (Section 10(1)). [62]

As a result of the Bill C-31 Act, many of the women who had lost their status were reinstated and their children obtained status only to face further discrimination from their own people. After 1985, an Indian woman could be reinstated as a status Indian. Unfortunately, this did not mean she would automatically gain band membership. A number of First Nations reserves were not willing and certainly not ready to accommodate the huge increase in the membership population resulting from the Bill C-31 Act. Some of the politicians within these First Nations lobbied to the government to consider the increase in membership and repercussions associated with this change. Our band was one of these First Nations who were not ready to willingly accept these newly reinstated women, so they adopted their own membership code. They wanted to put rules into place to make it difficult for these applicants to become band members. Again, Indian women would encounter discrimination, but from their own people this time.

> But how to create a registration policy treating men and women equally was controversial. Most Aboriginal women sought full restoration of Indian status and band membership for themselves and their descendants. However, most First Nations organizations opposed reinstatement, arguing that First Nations should control their

62 *Aboriginal Women and Bill C-31,* An Issue Paper Prepared for the National Aboriginal Women's Summit (June 20-22, 2007) Corner Brook, NL http://www.laa.gov.nl.ca/laa/naws/pdf/nwac-billc-31.pdf, [accessed 25 March 2013], p. 1.

> membership and who could reside on reserve. After lengthy and sometimes hot debate, Bill C-31 (as it is still widely known) was passed in June 1985, with effect from April 17 of that year, as required by the Charter.[63]

The First Nation's politicians voiced their concerns about being able to choose who would be reinstated into their bands. Because of the many concerns brought forward by these bands, the government amended the *Indian Act* to allow for bands to control their own membership by allowing them to establish their own membership rules s.10 of the 1988 *Indian Act*.[64]

> As of 28 June 1987, bands that chose to leave control of membership with the department were subject to the provision that a person who has Indian status also has a right to band membership. Membership lists for these bands are maintained by the department. These bands may still go on to take control of their own membership registration, but the rights of those individuals already registered and added to the band list are protected.[65]

This definitely showed hostility towards bands that had control over their own memberships, as many of the people who were reinstated were denied memberships to their respective bands. Because of the backlash surrounding these events, many First Nations politicians met with the government to gain more land, so that they could accommodate the increase in membership. According to a study done by Stewart Clatworthy, the fears of First Nations people within Canada are supported in the following projection for population growth. According to data compiled from the RSIS file, roughly 114,700 individuals had been registered under the provisions of Bill C-31 to December 31, 1999.[66] […]

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[63] *An Act Respecting Civilization and Enfranchisement of Certain Indians* (1859 22 Vic. c-29 s.11), http://rsmin.ca/CHW/index.php?title=Act_Respecting_Civilization_and_Enfranchisement_of_Certain_Indians, [accessed 25 March 2013].

[64] Shin Imai, *The 1997 Annotated Indian Act,* in Gros-Louis v. Nation Huronne-Endat (1988) 1 C.N.L.R. 46, 24 F.T.R. 245 (T.D.) Case Law, (Canada, Thomson Canada Limited, 1996), p.37.

[65] As cited in the Parliament of Canada website, retrieved from http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/bp410-e.htm#2bandtx, [accessed 15 August 2013], p. Table of Contents Sec. B(2).

[66] Stewart Clatworthy *Re-assessing the Population Impacts of Bill C-31,* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2001), as cited from the actual number of registrations reported on the 1999 S4 report is 123,964. This number, however, includes 9,220 individuals registered under Section 6(1)a. Most of these individuals were entitled to registration under the previous Act and are not considered to be part of the Bill C-31 population, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/R2-363-2004E.pdf, [accessed 25 March 2013), p. 12.

> Apparent in the trend is a general slowdown in the number of new Bill C-31 registrations over the time period. New registrations over the course of the last three years (1997-1999) have averaged about 2,350 annually, less than one-half the number reported annually at the outset of the decade. As in the case of new applicants, the number of new registrations under Bill C-31 is also expected to continue to decline in the future.[67]

Again, the question arises, "Do First Nation's women have to be discriminated against because of their gender?" Because of the fight First Nations have with the government, many First Nation women are feeling the detrimental effects of it.

Another case attesting to the discrimination of the *Indian Act* was filed by Sharon McIvor in 2009:

> Sharon McIvor and her son Jacob challenged the sex based registration scheme in the 1985 *Indian Act* arguing that Aboriginal women and their descendants continue to be discriminated against in the determination of who can obtain and transmit Indian status. The BC Supreme Court agreed with Sharon and Jacob and granted a broad remedy, essentially entitling anyone who traced their Aboriginal lineage through a woman to Indian status.[68]

In the McIvor case, the Supreme Court made the following ruling: "In McIvor the BC Court of Appeal ruled that two sections of the *Indian Act* that pertained to the registration of Indians contravened Charter provisions. Parliament was granted a 12-month timeframe to amend Section (6) 1 a. and c. of the *Indian Act* to meet the non-discriminatory clauses of the Charter."[69]

In 2011 the *Indian Act* amendment was put in place to address above ruling. The *Act* stipulates that all three conditions must be met.

> All three of the following conditions to apply to be registered pursuant to the 2011 *Indian Act* amendments, *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act* must be met:

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[67] Ibid.

[68] *Indian Act Amendments for April* 2010, Woodward & Company LLP Newsletter (January 2010), http://www.woodwardandcompany.com/media/pdfs/January_2010.pdf, [access 25 March 2013.

[69] *Chief Lonechild wants Canada to Deal with the Amendments,* Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, (22 January 2010), http://www.fsin.com/index.php/media-releases/294-chief-lonechild-wants-canada-to-deal-with-indian-act-amendments.html, [accessed 25 March 2013].

> The applicant's grandmother lost her entitlement to registration as a Status Indian as a result of marrying a non-Indian;
>
> One of the applicant's parents is/was entitled to be registered pursuant to subsection 6(2) of the *Indian Act;* AND
>
> The applicant, or one of his/her siblings of the same entitled to be registered parent, was born on or after September 4, 1951.[70]

Even though the above amendment attempted to eliminate gender discrimination, it created additional problems within First Nations communities. This change did work in favour of those women who lost their treaty rights and status privileges because of marrying non-Indigenous people; however, it does not apply to women who did not get reinstated as status "Indians." For example, I did not marry a non-Status person before 1985, so I did not lose my treaty rights or status privileges; therefore, the above Bill C-3 does not pertain to me. I have four boys from a non-Indigenous man, which means my sons are considered "Section 6(2) Indians," under the *Indian Act.* A "Section 6(2) Indian" must marry or have a child with a "Section 6(1) or 6(2) Indian" to pass on "Indian" status to their children; hence, my grandson from a non-Indigenous woman cannot or will he ever be able to gain "Indian" status under the current *Indian Act* in its entirety.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the *Indian Act* had a huge influence on the discrimination women would only become too familiar with a century later. The next chapter will illustrate how Cree people in Canada through their storytelling and Indigenous methodologies were once a very strong people.

[70] *2011 Indian Act Amendments – Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act Application for Registration and Secure Certificate of Indian Status,* Canada (2011), http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/frms_mci_83114fl_1309968487635_eng.pdf

Chapter Two

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

For this chapter, I chose to use the following methodology and theoretical frameworks for my thesis: Literature review, storytelling, Indigenous feminism, interviews and participation observation. I decided to use the mixed methods approach because I wanted to be able to describe the Cree people and their epistemology using methods most familiar to me and my people. I wanted to take literature written about my people to demonstrate the struggle Aboriginal women have had in literature in the past. Storytelling was used to explain how Cree people used them to teach important lessons and morals to their young people. Indigenous feminism was used to describe how the Aboriginal women have been fighting to regain their voices within their own societies. The following interviewees were chosen to exhibit the differences council members have faced depending on their gender. Finally, participation observation was included to express how personal experiences within my community have played an important role in describing the discrimination women have tackled within politics because of their gender and sexuality. Linda Tuhiwai Smith takes us through Indigenous Research Methodologies to demonstrate the importance of using methods, such as storytelling, participant observation and interviews to the Indigenous people. You will be able to hear my voice in this thesis, as I too am a storyteller. I will walk you through my experiences as a young girl facing racism, discrimination, and sexism. My contribution to this thesis will hopefully help others learn about the triple marginalization many women, like myself, face on reserves even today. It will hopefully set the stage for the many obstacles Indigenous, two-spirited women have had to overcome in their communities while participating in band politics.

As a young adult, I believed that people from my reserve did not participate in politics. I never associated band elections and social issues as politics, I just thought it was a part of our-

being. It was not until I was working for the band a number of years and was asked by a government employee about the politics on reserve that I realized, I was right smack in the middle of it. This is the one day, aside from Percapita Distribution Day, that most, if not all band members would attend the band office to vote. It was only in the past few elections that we did not get 100 percent of the eligible voters voting on band election day. It may be due to a number of people that were added to the band list do not live near the reserve. Band politics affects everyone on the reserve. If a member does not have a family member on council, they are often deprived of certain benefits, such as home renovations or jobs. This, of course, is why everyone deems voting as being important to their welfare.

Literature Review:

"Making Space for Indigenous Feminism," Joyce Green, Ed.

After reading literature on Indigenous feminism, I discovered I most connected with the author, Verna St. Denis who writes about the group of Aboriginal women who express the idea that Indigenous feminism is not like the western view of feminism. Many Aboriginal women who write about Indigenous feminism have expressed that they are different in their views. Freedman, writes that many Aboriginal woman scholars reject the idea that they are fighting for the same rights as other feminist activists. These Aboriginal women state that their ideals are different because they are not fighting for rights to be like men; however, are attempting to restore their rights as Aboriginal women who once had a voice in their own communities. Freedman writes that "early western feminists" for their rights to receive education and property, as well as attaining citizenship. These feminists believed it was their authority and right to these issues, as mothers.[71] St. Denis goes on to explain how Indigenous feminism is not about fighting

[71] Verna St. Denis, " Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity," Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), "p.35.

for equal rights, but about acknowledgement of a history that did not have unequal gender relations. She further demonstrates how it is argued that "Aboriginal women occupy or occupied positions of authority, autonomy and high status in their communities.[72] As "Tobe explains, 'We didn't need to fight for our place in our societies because it surrounded us constantly.'"[73] Denis has also been able to cite Jaimes with Halsey that Indigenous women have been the backbone of their communities within the North American Continent. They further illustrate how women were the center of the family structures, not the husbands.[74] Beads, in her article states that there is a "huge power imbalance between men and women regardless of their race.[75] She states that women sexism is the biggest oppression and barrier right now for Aboriginal women in achieving equality. She also clarifies that this equality does not mean the desire to be equal to men.[76] Aboriginal feminism to Beads, is the recognition of an equality that exists between men and women and recognizing that it is compounded by race, gender and class in the workforce. Further, that in taking these social issues and figuring out what has to be done to make changes that will remove some of the barriers these women face today.[77]

Emma LaRocque writes that Aboriginal women are victims of colonization and patriarchy, they are activists and agents in their lives, they are the oppressed, yet they are fighters and survivors, they are "among the most stereotyped, dehumanized, and objectified of women,

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[72] Verna St. Denis, " Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity," Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), "p.37.

[73] As cited by Verna St. Denis, " Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity," Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), "p.37, can cited by L. Tobe, "There Is No Word for Feminism in My Language," *Wicazo sa Review: A Journal of Native American Studies Fall.*

[74] Verna St. Denis, " Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity," Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), "p.37, also cited by A.M. Jaimes with T. Halsey, "American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary North American." In A. McClintock, A Mufti and E. Shohat (eds.), *Dangerous Liasons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

[75] Tina Beads with Rauna Kuakkaned, "Aboriginal Feminism Action on Violence Against Women," In Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), "p.225.

[76] Ibid, p.229.

[77] Ibid, p.232.

yet as the strong gracious and determined women.[78] She goes on to say that Aboriginal women are restricted when compared to men. They continue to face oppression when it comes to politics and cultural life in their own communities.[79] They were expected to conform to the white Canadians in how they dressed. Most Aboriginal communities did not wear clothing to distinguish between genders prior to colonization.[80] She goes on to say that colonial forces have disrupted Aboriginal though and institutions. As Aboriginal people, "we need to rebuild and restore ourselves and our cultures.[81] "We must be both decolonizers and feminists."[82] It is important for us to rebuild our culture contemporarily based on human rights that includes all people within our communities. It is also important to ensure these rights respect our culture and traditions, at the same time making sure that these practises respect human rights for all people, including women and children.[83]

Indigenous women are among the most deeply marginalized groups in the world."[84] As Stewart-Harawira puts it, "in post-everything feminism, woman and feminist exist as endlessly abstract potentialities that encompasses the oppressed as well as the oppressor, so that there is no longer a space for the oppressed."[85] She goes on to explain that pre-European contact, Maori women had their roles in society which included She goes on to explain that pre-European contact, Maori women powerful leadership roles.[86]

[78] Emma LaRocque, "Metis Feminist: Ethical Reflections on Feminism, Human Rights and Decolonization," In Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), "p.53.
[79] Ibid, p.55.
[80] Ibid, p.64.
[81] Ibid, p.65.
[82] Ibid, p.68.
[83] Ibid, p.69.
[84] Makere Stewart-Harawira in "Practising Indigenous Feminism: Resistance to Imperialism," In Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), "p.125.
[85] Ibid, p.127.
[86] Ibid, p.124.

After reading different literature about feminism and Indigenous feminism, the writer found the essays in "Making Space for Indigenous Feminism," most useful in helping her understand where a lot of Indigenous women fit into this new world. It takes you into the views of Indigenous women opposed to the western world view of feminism. It allows the reader to take into consideration that many Indigenous people once had a place in their community that was a place of respect. St Denis, Toby, and Freedman, write about how Indigenous women are fighting to regain their place in society; while Beads, Stewart-Harawira, Barman, and Anderson write about Indigenous women being victims of colonization in one way or another. Even though they address different points, they have commonalities which tend to see Indigenous women as being among the most marginalized people in the world. All theses writers have an important contribution to give to Indigenous women everywhere. They have assisted in sharing the lives of Indigenous women during their time of suffering as victims of colonization and oppression. Anderson writes about, literature written about Indigenous women was generally written by men. It would have been nice to see if this literature written by men would have changed if it was written by women.

Storytelling

When selecting what research methodologies, I would be using, I decided to use my family and their oral history, as well as interviewing people from my community to relate the importance of storytelling to my community. Throughout this thesis you will be reading stories related by myself, my mother, aunt's, and great grandmother, as we are all storytellers. Storytelling has always been an important part of the Cree culture. Some Cree people have and still continue to use stories to relate the history of their people. Other Indigenous groups in North America also use storytelling as a method of relating the history of their people for generations past. As Angela Cavender Wilson relates, even in the Dakota Nation, the stories handed down

from generation to generation were considered a part of their educational process.[87] Cavender Wilson goes on to quote, Charles Eastman, a Wahpetonwan Dakota in his autobiography, as he "describes the differentiation between myths and true stories, necessitating an understanding of history as being encompassed in oral tradition."[88] Robina Anne Thomas also talks about storytelling as playing an essential role in the nurturing of her people.[89] Their stories are important to many of them, as they tell the history of their people before colonization. It has been told that every story has a moral and a lesson to be learned. As Julie Cruikshank relates about the meaning behind storytelling to the elders of the Yukon, "they illustrated how narratives that have been passed on orally for generations continue to provide a foundation for evaluating contemporary choices and for clarifying decisions made as young women, as mature adults, and during later life."[90] These elders "continue to tell stories that make meaningful connections and provide order and continuity in a rapidly changing world."[91] These stories continue to be important to the elders of the Yukon, Territories, as it passes down the knowledge of Yukon First Nations ancestry.[92] These stories according to "Mrs. Sidney, show[s] how a single story" can take on a different meaning to different people.[93] Michel de Certeau describes how narratives main "function as one of authorizing, founding, and setting in place ways of experiencing the world.[94] As Cruikshank describes, in the narrative of Kaax'achgook's journey, "no single

[87] Angela Cavender Wilson, *Grandmother to Granddaughter: Generations of Oral History in a Dakota Family*,American Indian Quarterly/Winter 1996/Vol. 20(1), University of Nebraska Press: Nebraska, (1996). http://www.jstor.org/stable/1184937. [accessed 4 January 2014]. p.1.
[88] Ibid, as citing Charles Eastman, *Oral Historiography,* (London: Longman, Inc., 1982), p. 2.
[89] Robina Anne Thomas, *"Honouring the Oral Traditions of My Ancestors Through Storytelling,"* in "*Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, & Anti-oppressive Approaches*, edited by Brown & Strega, (Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars' Press/Women's Press, 2005), p. 237.
[90] Julie Cruikshank, *The Social Life of Stories, Narrative and Knowledge in the Yukon Territory,* (Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press, 1998), p.xii.
[91] Ibid, p.xiii.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid, p.xv.
[94] Ibid, as cited by Clark and Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin,* 11, 14, p. 1.

interpretation can explain the meanings told by different people in different times.[95] Cruickshank also goes on to describe how the same story, told by a skillful storyteller, like Mrs. Sidney, conveys a range of meanings.[96]

Many Indigenous people continue to pass on the knowledge of their ancestors by way of storytelling. Even among the Cree, many relate the stories of their ancestors. However, when the Indian laws were officially introduced in the1876 *Indian Act*, this would change the way Indigenous people governed themselves politically from that day on. Although Many Indigenous people historically lived in egalitarian societies, such as the Cree people of Horse Lake, they would no longer be a part of that egalitarian system, but would now be forced to be part of a patriarchal system introduced to them by the "White man."

When choosing what methods and theories, I would be using in my thesis, it came almost instantly to me that I wanted to include storytelling as a methodology. Cree people have, for centuries, used storytelling as a way of passing down the history of their people. "When our stories die, so will we."[97] This quote from Cavender Wilson is a reality for many Cree people. Similar to Cavender Wilson's belief, people in Horse Lake believe it is an important part of their lifelong learning process. "Traditionally, storytelling played an essential role in nurturing and educating First Nations children."[98] Robina Anne Thomas in, "Honouring the Oral Traditions of My Ancestors through Storytelling" also believes that these stories are vital to the survival of First Nations people.[99] Most First Nations people came from oral societies.[100] They passed on the history of their people with these stories. Many Cree people believed for many years that if

[95] Ibid, p.27.
[96] Ibid, p. 28.
[97] Ibid, Cavender Wilson, p.3.
[98] Robina Anne Thomas, *"Honouring the Oral Traditions of My Ancestors Through Storytelling,"* in "*Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, & Anti-oppressive Approaches*, edited by Brown & Strega, (Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars' Press/Women's Press, 2005), p. 237.
[99] Ibid, p.238.
[100] Ibid, p.242.

stories were written down about their ancestors, these stories would lose their meaning and the spirit of the story along with them.

I want to now take you into my childhood and what I remember most about nicapan (great grandmother). She was a strong Cree woman and storytelling was a way-of-knowing for her that she would pass on to *ohcawasimisa, osisimak ekwa ohcapanisak* (her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren).

"*Poko nikan ohci okohtakani kamansin*... (You have to cut from the throat first…)" Many Cree elders have always believed that stories were a huge part of their culture. As a child, I remember many hunting trips with *nicapan* (my great grandmother) telling stories as the children gathered around her on the ground surrounded by a forest full of poplar, pine and spruce trees. Around the camp, I remember seeing a huge white canvas tent and some lean-twos, where many of us children slept. She was such a wonderful storyteller. I remember her most, sitting around a campfire wearing her glasses while all of us kids just sat listening to her stories and laughing and giggling with her. Her hair was white with bits of grey and she still had all of her teeth. She liked to wear dresses with pretty patterns, like flowers. I remember her smell… *Nicapan* always smelled like smoke, the kind of smell that campers have after sitting in front of a campfire of burning poplars or spruce. The same smell as a moose hide after it has been tanned over a smothered fire. She was well into her seventies when she was still making kakewak (dry meat). *Nicapan* would get all of the girls and boys, to help around her *akon* (dry meat rack), especially when a wild animal was killed. I admired *nicapan*, as she seemed to always keep her area around the *akon* nice and neat, with the exception of her hide stretcher. There you would see moose hair spread out all over the ground where many moose hides before had been scraped free of hair, meat or fat. If you walked down her path a bit, you could smell a bad odor, the same smell as maggots after meat has rotted, but that is not what the smell was, it was from the smell of the

hide being soaked in a tub filled with water and moose brains. On the other hand, if you walked into her trailer or her house, you would find a huge mess. The pots, pans, plates, cups and cutlery would often be scattered throughout the stove and counter tops and the sinks would both be filled with the same. I always wondered why her home was so messy, but she was able to keep the outside looking so neat. I later realized, she was probably not taught how to clean a house, as that is more of a non-Indigenous custom. Because we did not live in houses or trailers, we did not know how to look after them. Not to mention, in the summer time, she barely spent anytime indoors. She often slept in the lean-to she always had near her *akon*. *Nicapan* was such a strong woman. I remember watching her lift up and carry a hind-quarter of a moose like it was a sack of flour. I remember thinking, I want to be that tough. I even watched her shoot and kill a moose, skin, gut it out, and cut it into sections to prepare it for loading on the back of a horse carrier.

"*Poko ka manâcihtâyin moya ka manisosowiyan*… (You have to be careful not to cut yourself…)" *Nicapan* use to take me to her akon and teach me how to make *kakewak* and tan hides. I never often heard her speak English, unless she was in town with the white people. If you were around her as a Cree person, you better understand and speak *nehiyawewin* (Cree language) or she would make fun of you. She never hesitated to correct me or laugh at me if I mispronounced something in *nehiyawewin*. She would say "*kepatci moniya-skwesis* (crazy white girl)." I valued the time I spent with nicapan those many years ago even though she was very strict. She was even scary at times. This very small traditional woman resisted the ways of the "white" people and still managed to pass on her Cree traditional knowledge to *ohsimak* (her grandchildren). I use to think *nicapan* was a very large woman, but when I think back, she was very small compared to her youngest son, *nipapasis* (my great uncle). I guess when you are a little girl, all people look big. She was only about five feet four inches tall. When I think of *nicapan*, I think of the stories she would to tell us. It seemed every story had a moral. As Mrs.

Sidney tells us in Julie Cruikshank's interview, about how stories can take on different meanings for different people at different times.[101] She often spoke of the importance of women and men respecting one another. She would tell us about these men that beat their wives would suffer a fate much worse than what he gave to his wife, just like the story of the man who use to beat his wife and the fate he succumbed: [102]

"*Kaya ohkats kapapihaw awiyak moya ka insteymat*… (Never laugh at a stranger…)". Nicapan would often sit on an old kitchen chair that my uncle always brought for her whenever we would go on our hunting trips, in front of the fire beading or sewing moccasins while waiting for the hunters to return. I was never allowed to go on the hunting trips because I was too little. They only wanted helpers that could actually carry the meat. I tried lifting a chunk of meat once that *nicapan* or *nipapasis* had cut out of the moose, but I dropped it because it was to heavy and awkward to hold. I was better at gathering wood from the bushes and helping tidy up around camp. One could always find scraps of old dry wood lying on the ground. The ones that were the color of gray were the driest ones, but you had to be careful not to upset the many bee hives that were hidden in a lot of the fallen trees. There, by the glistening fire, *Nicapan* would sit telling her stories. She would often warn us to watch out for strangers and to never make fun of them. The *Weytiko* (a person who eats a lot) stories from the Woodland Cree tells the story *nicapan* use to tell us.[103]

Indigenous Feminism

If one was to ask me five years ago if I was a feminist, I would have said, "Absolutely not!" because of the negative connotation the word signified in our society. Even though I would

[101] Julia Cruikshank and her interview with elder, Angela Sidney, p.28, ibid.
[102] See appendix I, Native Languages of the Americas: Wesakechak Stories and other Cree Legends *Flying Wonder,* http://www.calverley.ca/Part06-Legends/6-005.html, [accessed 28 July 2013].
[103] See Appendix II, as told by Marie Merasty, *the World of Wetiko: Tales from the Woodland Cree,* edited by Candace Savage, (The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College: Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1974), p. 20 & 21.

hear stories about how feminists were fighting for better wages and equality in the work place, these reasons would often be forgotten when comments were made that women were too angry and bitter against men. This is not who I wanted to be. My focus was not about being angry at men for my place in society; however, it was more about having a place in my society that was not defined by my gender. After attending university, I began reading about Indigenous feminism and discovered it was more along the lines of my way of thinking and my own way of being. After studying Indigenous Feminism, it helped me make sense of the gender relations in Horse Lake. It also made me realize the complexity of women's roles on our reserve. "We are vastly underrepresented in the legislation, executive, and judicial branches of federal state and local government."[104] Christianization would also assist in keeping women from practicing their culture. Missionaries would be responsible for prohibiting the existence of women's societies, attempting to destroy matri-organization, and degrading women by giving them the title of sinful creatures.[105]

Feminism has been around for a long time; however, Indigenous Feminism has only been around for a short time; therefore, literature on the topic is limited. In Canada, women have been fighting for equality since the late 1800's. The women's fight for equality took a huge leap in 1917, during World War I, when women who were British subjects, over the age of 21, were finally given the right to vote in a Dominion election.[106] It took another leap in 1929 when the

[104] Sue E Headlee and Margery Elfin, *The Cost of Being Female,* (Praeger: Westport, Connecticut, 2014), [accessed from eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost on 2 April 2014], pXIV.
[105] Lilianne Ernestine Krosenbrink-Gelissen, *Sexual Equality as an Aboriginal Right,* (Saarbrucken, Germany: Verlag breitenbach Publishers, 1991),p. 47
[106] Veronica Strong-Boag, *Women's Suffrage in Canada: Women's suffrage (or franchise) is the right of women to vote in political elections; campaigns for this right generally included demand for the right to run for public office,* (The Canadian Encyclopedia), published 06/20/16, last edited 08/25/16, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/suffrage/, [accessed 11 December 2016].

Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council made a decision in the Person's Case to declare women as "persons," and were given the right to vote and run in federal elections in Canada.[107]

"Feminism is the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes,"[108] while Indigenous feminism is the "theory and practice of feminism that seeks sovereignty for Indigenous people. ... It is a type of feminist theory that developed out of a need to define the complexities that arise for Indigenous women as a result of the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender."[109] As Joyce Green explains, "Indigenous women who fight for or complain about band politics, distribution of resources or violence against women and children, are sometimes" titled with the term "feminists."[110] She goes on to explain how Aboriginal women "cannot be culturally authentic, or traditional, or acceptable, if they are feminist."[111] The feminism, Aboriginal women face is the one that includes women in the Aboriginal liberation, not the one that hopes to conform women who have been excluded from their community because of colonial legislation and socio-historical forces. It has not only taken "a theoretical engagement with history and politics," it also takes "a practical engagement with contemporary social, economic, cultural and political issues."[112]

I come from a family of strong women. *Nicapan* was a strong, healthy, well-spoken woman who everyone listened to and respected. *Nokom* and *nikawiy* were the same. I would watch these women mingling with people in the towns we visited and would usually be in awe at

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[107] Lorna R. Marsden, *Canadian Women & the Struggle for Equality,* (Oxford University Press: Don Mills, Ontario, 2012), p.56.
[108] Online dictionary, https://www.google.ca/search?newwindow=1&site=&source=hp&q=feminism+definition&oq=feminism+&gs_l=hp.1.0.0l5j0i10k1j0j0i10k1l2j0.2374.4572.0.6627.9.9.0.0.0.0.170.1140.0j9.9.0....0...1.1.64.hp..0.9.1134...0i131k1.g5RLLoyM7lk, [accessed 22 February 2017].
[109] Online dictionary, https://www.google.ca/search?newwindow=1&q=indigenous+feminism+definition&oq=Indifeminism+definition&gs_l=serp.1.0.0i7i30k1l2j0i8i7i30k1.320416.321232.0.323588.4.4.0.0.0.0.250.677.0j3j1.4.0....0...1.1.64.serp..0.4.667...0i13k1.VE7Bv8MW_dU, [accessed 22 February 2017].
[110] Joyce Green, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism," *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Ferwood Publishing: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007), p.24.
[111] Ibid, p.25.
[112] Idem.

the respect they received everywhere we went. Many people would stop and talk to them and it seemed like everyone knew them. This is where I discovered nicapan spoke English. I always thought she could only speak *nehiyawewin* because that is how she communicated with us. This was also where I discovered nicapan was good with numbers. Whenever we would go into a grocery or department store, she only had a few dollars and would add everything up in her head before she got to the counter, so she would not be short of money. I remember she was usually very close and did not ever go over what she had.

In Horse Lake, women were not always respected. As Norma Horseman,[113] puts it, when referring to women getting elected into council, "Not getting voted in because of your sexuality when you run for council."

As we delve into Indigenous feminism, we discover that upon European contact, women's voices were seldom heard. Barman demonstrates how outsiders who wrote about encounters were generally written by men.[114] "Not only did men comprise the virtual entirety of arrivals, the assumptions they brought with them meant that they considered themselves the keepers of the written word. As a very broad generalization, male newcomers depicted Indigenous men in terms of their physicality and Indigenous women in terms of their sexuality.[115]

After reading the above, it should not be a surprise that Indigenous women are among the most marginalized people in the world. They have not only had to survive racism from the Europeans, but have had to survive sexism from their own people. One cannot completely blame the men in Aboriginal communities, without exploring where this mentality came from. Colonization, missionaries, and residential schools played a big part in reforming the way-of-

[113] Interviewee, Norma Horseman of Horse Lake First Nation.
[114] Jean Barman in "Indigenous Women and Feminism: On the Cusp of contact," UBC Press, 2010, p.60.
[115] Ibid.

thinking for many men in Aboriginal communities. As Voyageur puts it, "As Indian women, female chiefs must deal with racism and discrimination. Research has shown that the average Canadian knows little about Indian people or their concerns."[116] Further, "Mainstream attitudes towards Aboriginals, which range from indifference to outright hostility, often stem from lack of contact with Aboriginal people."[117]

[116] Cora Voyageur, p. 13.
[117] Idem.

Chapter Three

The previous chapter discussed the importance of storytelling for the Cree people, as well, it looked at the increasing role Indigenous feminism has played in the lives of many Indigenous women. It also talked about the stories of some Cree women who have shared their experiences with gender discrimination. This chapter explores the impacts of colonization, missionaries, residential schools and the history of some Aboriginal women.

The lifestyles of Indigenous people would change as a result of being placed on reserves. Indigenous people would learn to become dependent on the government for their living necessities because of their confinement to Indian Reserves. A number of community members in Horse Lake believe this is why their people continue to be dependent on the band. Many band members remain on reserve and continue to be unemployed. They expect the band to hire them and look after them. The welfare office is one of the busiest places in the community of Horse Lake on welfare day. When young boys and girls turn 18, many parents push them through the welfare office doors. Many of them have become so dependent on government and band aide that they do not even know how to look for jobs outside of their reserve. They would no longer be a harmonious community.

Horse Lake Reserve is located northwest of Grande Prairie and it consists of a little over 6,000 acres. Many of the people there, because of the shortage of wild-life and plant vegetation, no longer live a traditional life. They rarely go hunting, if they go at all, and depend a great deal on the local grocery stores for their daily necessities. *Nokom* supported this idea as cited in her interview in the book, "Those Who Know: Profiles of Alberta's Aboriginal Elders." She says,

> When somebody killed a moose, everybody heard about it and everybody got their share. I thought it would go on forever. But in the '70s, people started taking their vehicles into

> the bush to hunt. They'd kill a moose and come right back home. And gradually… nothing. Some don't even step into the bush now.[118]

She was describing what her community is like now. Being confined to reserves, was the beginning of a drastic change for many Indigenous people in the Plains and Woodland areas. The people in Horse Lake are among the few communities that rarely hunt for sustenance anymore, and those that do, usually hunt so that they can make *Kakewak* (dry meat). These hunters make a large supply of *kakewak* to sell. Many of the people that sell *kakewak*, regrettably buy alcohol or drugs with the money they earn from the selling of it. People in the area have had the unfortunate experience of finding racks of moose ribs, still full of meat on them, and other parts of the animal that *kakewak* makers have no use for, thrown away in the bush. Many of the people in the area are saddened by this abuse of the animal, as in the Cree culture, it is believed that every part of the animal should be respected and used in honour of the animal that gave its life. The elders have always taught the young that the animal spirits have given them a gift and should be treated as such; however, Indian legislation within Canada would forever impact the culture and traditional practices of many Cree people.

It is not implied that it was always a perfect world among the Cree people, but they each had their roles in their communities. Women had the responsibilities of child rearing, food preparation, berry and root gathering, and clothes making; while, men had the responsibility of hunting and protecting the community. No roles specific to genders were more important than the other. Each served a purpose. These roles were based on their physical ability, age, and gender, but not exclusive to. For example, children were the ones who guarded the horses, and gathered the wood and water, elders were sought out for the knowledge they knew, women could

[118] Dianne Meili, *Those Who Know: Profiles of Alberta's Aboriginal Elders,* (NeWest Press: Edmonton, Alberta, 2012), an interview with Christine Horseman, elder from Horse Lake First Nation, p. 356, 357.

gain status in their communities based on their artistic prowess, men, because of their physical strength, tended to be the ones to hunt; however, everyone participated in the kill.

The Colonized Becomes the Colonizer (In their way-of thinking)

Many Indigenous people have bought into the views of the colonizer without even knowing it. This is a reality, and is accepted as the "norm" in many bands, and Horse Lake First Nation was not an exception. They have bought into the views that men are the rulers and leaders and women are the followers and caregivers. They are usually void of important decision making processes and are expected to follow the rules set out by the men. Men dominate the political and economic fields, while women dominate the social and community fields. They have bought into a system foreign to them, as a way of survival. Many Indigenous people have adopted the patriarchal system of the "white man." As Emma LaRocque illustrates in her quote, "Aboriginal men have internalized white male devaluation of women".[119] Many of the Cree people in Horse Lake will say that they have given into the "white man's" way-of-thinking and thus have turned their backs on the traditional and cultural ways of their nation. Some; however, believe they gave into the "white man" to survive. According to Sarah Carter in *The Importance of Being Monogamous,* settlers coming into Southern Alberta in the 1880s would strongly bring with them the idea of monogamy and preferably intra-racial monogamy. "Cristian Religion and English Common law" would also be imprinting on the model of marriage, the expectation that the wife would be a dependent of her husband, who was considered the head of the family and sole economic provider.[120] Legal historian, Constance Backhouse, would deem this idea of marriage

[119] E. LaRocque, *Violence in Aboriginal Communities, (*Ottawa, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence Prevention Division, Health Programs and Services Branch, Health Canada,1994), cited in Joyce Green, ed. *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism,* (Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), p. 47.
[120] Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous,* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Houghton Boston Printers, 2008), p.22.

as "very rigid, overbearing [and] patriarchal".[121] English Common law meant that women were subservient to their husbands and had no rights or freedom of independence.[122] Upon colonization, English law in Canada would inherit dower rights, which entitled widows to one-third of their husband's property upon his death. This would however change in 1886, as Western Canada abolished married women's dower rights.[123] After the dower law was abolished, the husband could now sell his entire property without the consent of his wife. This also meant that he could leave his wife with nothing upon his death.[124] These English Common laws would set the stage for laws governing Indians, such as they did in the *Indian Act.*

> In his 1877 book entitled *Ancient Society*, Lewis Henry Morgan, a New York lawyer who had personally visited several Aboriginal nations of North America, concluded that there were three broad stages of human development: savagery, barbarism, and civilization. Domestic life in the first two stages was characterized by promiscuity, no sexual prohibitions, loose or polygamous marriages, and communal property systems. Civilization, however, was characterized by strictly monogamous families, and private ownership of property. As historian John D. Pulsipher has written, "[Morgan] placed the monogamous family at the heart of the success story." [125]

Morgan's views would help shape American Policy in the late 1800s. These views would also play an important role when creating Indian policy in Canada.[126]

Next, we would have major detrimental effects from the colonial experience, which would include the loss of land and access to many of our resources that helped our people to lead a sustainable livelihood. It is most unfortunate that once colonization began the Cree people and their epistemology would change drastically. The following census reflected the increase of

[121] Sarah Carter, Ibid as cited from "Britishness, 'Foreignness,' Women, and Land in Western Canada, 1890s to 1920s," in "Britishness and Whiteness: Locating Marginal White Identities in the Empire," special issue, *Humanities Research* 13, no. 1 (2006): 43–60, p.24.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Sarah Carter, Ibid, p. cited A.E. Caldwell to R.A. Hoey, 12 December 1939, file 44, box 5, H.W. McGill Papers, ga.
[126] Ibid.

Europeans in the western provinces, which outnumbered the Indigenous population resulting from the federal government allocating land to settlers in these areas;

> According to the 1870-1871 census of Canada, the population of the nation was composed mainly of people of British origin (2.1 million) and French origin (1 million). In addition to the German-speaking immigrants (203,000) and to the Aboriginals (136,000 in 1851), there were small groups of people who had arrived from several other countries.[127]

This really took a leap after Canada began entering into treaties with the First Nations people in 1871.[128] This would be the beginning of 11 treaties that would be signed between 1871 and 1921 to facilitate settlement in the western provinces and in hopes of assimilating Aboriginal peoples into Euro-Canadian society.[129] The effect these land allocations would have on Aboriginal people would be the beginning of oppressing a people who were once mobile. Because "Indians" would now be confined to reserves, their traditional ways-of-living off the land would have to change. They would be forced to conform to a new way-of-life that was foreign to them. Farming was introduced in the treaties and the reserves were now expected to farm their land for the intent of becoming economically independent. If successful, the Indian male would be enfranchised (assimilated) into Canadian society or they would have to get jobs off the reserves, or accept government aide for rations and supplies.

Missionaries

The missionaries also had a big impact on people of Aboriginal ancestry, especially First Nations women. Jo-Anne Fiske writes about the gender inequality of the Catholic missionaries who ran the residential schools. This of course was a result of the government's mandate to educate Indigenous students in the 1920s.

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[127] Ève Préfontaine, The Settlement of Canada: An Overview, http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/scripts/explore.php?elementid=15__true&tableid=11&contentlong, [accessed 16 August 2013], p.1.
[128] Historica Canada, "Treaties 1 & 2."
[129] Ibid.

> The aim of the federal government and the missionaries was to train female students to become farm wives, members of nuclear household's resident in reserve communities. Their education included primarily 'domestic sciences," reading, arithmetic, and religious instruction. Since the missionaries clearly intended that the girls become 'Catholic' wives and mothers, submissive to male authority, all school activities were subordinated to religious instruction and ritual.[130]

Keeping in mind, the grade level that the Indigenous girls would be expected to achieve in these domestic sciences, was only up to grade five.

I remember my mother telling us that she was always warned by *nicapanpan* not to be seen by the *simâkanisak* (policemen), or they would be taken away. This fear was most-likely a result of the possibility of Indigenous children being taken from their families and homes to be placed in Residential Schools, as they were in other Indigenous communities in the south.

> The ensuing nightmare of the effect of residential schooling on our communities has been what those 'Indian problem' statistics are all about. The placement of our children in residential schools has been the single most devastating factor in the breakdown of our society. […]
>
> Throughout the dehumanizing years that followed those residential-school years, the struggle of Aboriginal woman has simply been to survive, under the onslaught of a people steeped in a tradition of hostile cultural supremacy.[131]

"The last residential school operated by the Canadian government, Gordon Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan, was closed in 1996. It is estimated that the number of residential schools reached its peak in the early 1930s with 80 schools and more than 17,000 enrolled students."[132] Because the missionaries were having trouble converting the Indigenous people, they learned to adapt the Indigenous people's traditional practises into their religious practices.

Missionaries were given the responsibility of educating children from reserves in the

[130] Christine Miller & Patricia Chuchryk, *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength,* (The University of Manitoba Press: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1996), essay by Jo-Anne Fiske, "Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education in Carrier Society," p.167.
[131] Ibid, essay by Jeannette Armstrong, *Invocation: The Real Power of Aboriginal Women*, p. x.
[132] As found in Wikipedia Website, [accessed 1 May 2017], www.http//en.m.wikipedia.org.

early 1900s. In the 30s Catholic Priests and Nuns attended the Horse Lake reserve to work on converting people on the reserve. They were successful for the most part. Many of the people in Horse Lake were baptised, and they followed the Catholic religious practices faithfully. Today a number of elders still follow the Catholic rituals. They pray to God every night using the prayer beads, attend Christmas Mass every year, encourage baptism, encourage Catholic weddings, expect the Catholic Church representative to administer funeral services, and finally, they attend Lac St. Anne pilgrimage, a Catholic celebration, every year.

Residential School

During this era, the Department of Indian Affairs had a lot of power. As you will see in this insert by Kathleen Jamieson, "The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (or his agent) was given very wide powers."[133] In the 1960's nicapan would always tell us to be careful of the Indian Agents, as they would take us away from the reserve. The fear the department instilled in our people would continue into the 1970's when I was about 12 years old. Even the *simâkanisak* were feared. The fear was so engrained in our people that some of our young people still hide when police cars are seen driving around the reserve. Some people have been taught by their parents and grandparents that the Indian agents and the police officers are our enemies. In my community, in the 1930's, it was the Indian agents accompanied by the RCMP that removed some of our children from our reserve to place them in residential schools. *Nokom* just happened to be one of them. It took *nimosompan*, according to *nimamasis* (my aunty)[134] about three years to find her and bring her home with him. After he returned her to her family, they relocated to Kelly Lake, British Columbia to seek sanctuary away from the Indian agents.

[133] Kathleen Jamieson, ibid, p. 29.
[134] As told to me by one of my aunts.

One of the most detrimental legacies of the Indian Act was the evolution of the Day Schools into Residential Schools. Indian Affairs with support of the Indian Act gave various missionaries the mandate to educate Status Indians throughout western Canada. At the missionary operated Residential Schools, Indigenous people were subjected to various forms of racism and discrimination; however, women would receive the brunt of it. Their roles in their communities would change, as a result of these schools. Men would become the dominant gender on reserves and women's voices would become less influential in their communities. They would be expected to become submissive to the men in their communities.

Nokom is a typical example of what Indigenous people were being subjected to. Nokom's experience is a compilation of my interactions with her as well as the stories I have heard over the years from my four aunts. Nokom would only expect the girls in the house to clean house and look after the children. She would make sure that my aunts cleaned up after their brothers and to cook for them when she was not around. The girls in her home would even have to get water and chop the wood, while the boys just sat around watching television. One of my aunties once said to nokom, "Mom, it is like you love the boys more than us!" Nokom, according to my aunty, replied, "Because I do!" Nokom spoiled my uncle, her baby so much that she would buy a carton of milk, cereal and other treats that were only for him. We were not allowed to touch anything that was in my uncle's cupboard, as nokom called it.

Many of our community, even today, believe that women are subject to their husbands. Many Indigenous people have been exposed to many forms of discrimination, but one wonders what their history would have been like if not for colonization? *Nohkom* and *nicapan* were a contradiction to this belief system, as they were both very strong powerful women in my community. I remember *nohkom* always told her husband what to do. In my younger days, I definitely saw *nohkom* as the dominant one in her relationship with her common-law husband.

However, according to my aunts and mother, she was not always the dominant one. Her partner was very abusive while their children were still young. It was not until, one of their son's (my uncle) became a teenager and threatened to hit his father if he ever laid a hand on his mother again, that the abuse stopped. Unfortunately, the cycle of abuse would continue into the next generation. My uncle, who protected his mother, became the abuser himself in his own relationship.

Our Community was once in the middle of accepting "common-law," as a way of knowing and being. In the late sixties and into the mid-eighties, I witnessed many domestic violence incidents in my community and during this time I do not remember the police being called to attend when these incidents occurred. In fact, many people, from my community, would not even get involved if they witnessed a man beating his wife. Even though many people did not like it, they stuck to the rule of "non-interference." Even as a small child, I remember seeing men hitting their wives. I often wondered why no one interfered when they witnessed a woman getting beaten up. It was not until I was nineteen that I realized why they did not interfere. "A woman is submissive to her husband,[135] was the idea that was being taught in the Catholic schools. In addition to the generation of children who attended the Sturgeon Lake Residential School, two generations went on to attend a Catholic Day School in Beaverlodge. It was in this institution that western ideas of gender roles were communicated. Not without saying, but the Indian Act also played a huge role in creating this philosophy accepted by many of my people.

I remember once when I was about 18 years old, a few of my family members and I went back to my house for a party, after the tavern had closed. Sometime into the evening, tempers began to flare and the arguments began. One of my uncles began arguing with his wife in one of

[135] Christine Miller & Patricia Chuchryk, *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength,* (The University of Manitoba Press: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1996), essay by Jo-Anne Fiske, "Gender and the Paradox of Residential Education in Carrier Society," p.167.

the bedrooms. It was not long after the argument began that the screams could be heard. One of my aunties and I went into the bedroom to a bloody scene. There was blood all over the foot of the bed. My aunt's face was covered in blood. My other aunty tried talking her brother out of hitting his wife, to no avail. My uncle began hitting his wife again, so my aunty and I tried to stop him. I was thrown onto the bed; while, my aunty was thrown against the dresser. This small struggle was enough of a distraction to allow my aunty to escape from her husband's clutches. However, after recovering himself, he fled out the door in pursuit of his wife. It was not until later that morning that my aunty returned with cuts and blood all over her face. Some of her cuts appeared to be quite deep. I tried talking her into calling the police, but she refused. It was enough that she even allowed us to take her to the hospital. She told us that my uncle had caught up to her, as she was attempting to get through a barbed-wired fence. Upon meeting up with her, my uncle had grabbed her by the hair and started slamming her face into the barbed-wires on the fence. A day after the incident, my aunty was cut-up, bruised and bandaged up from the battery she received from her husband, but was back in her husband's arms.

This behaviour would continue until the latter part of the eighties when one my uncle's wife called the police to charge her husband that had beaten her. Unfortunately, my aunt would drop the charges and the police would not independently lay a charge, especially after her husband promised it would never happen again. Regrettably, she would continue to be battered until she left him after ten years of marriage. However, by my aunt calling the police that first time it gave other women in the community the option to call the police if they were abused by their spouses.

Even though women were starting to call the police in a domestic situation, many would withdraw their charges against their spouses, well into the nineties. The RCMP were getting tired

of investigating domestic violence cases, just to have the female spouse withdraw charges, they began laying the charges against the violator based on evidence of violence inflicted.

As a result of men going to jail due to the violence they inflicted on their spouses, domestic violence was rarely reported. Just because violence in the home was few and far between, did not mean that the community was completely against it. Men could often be heard telling other men, "that if she didn't listen to beat her," while many of the men laughed. On one occasion in particular, at a band meeting, the chief told one of the men, whose wife was speaking out against chief and council, to control his woman. Some of the people found humour in this and began to laugh, while most of the women present were horrified.

Literature about Aboriginal Women

After examining literature written about Aboriginal women between 1860 and 1920, the following information, regarding the discrimination some Indigenous women experienced at that time, was found. The following ruling by Chief Justice Ramsay in Sylvia Van Kirk's book, "*Jones v. Fraser in 1886*, Chief Justice Ramsay ruled that marriage *à la façon du pays* did not constitute a marriage in law. Ramsay's ruling described the Aboriginal wife as a savage of a civilized "white" man. He declared that the court would not accept that 'the cohabitation of a civilized man and a savage woman, even for a long period of time, gives rise to the presumption that they consented to be married in our sense of marriage."[136] Indigenous women would continue to carry this image for generations. According to James Hargrave, chief factor for the Hudson's Bay Company in 1865[137], that Indians were savages. He said "savages… most of them with no better education than what the light of nature teaches lead more innocent lives and better

[136] Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870,* (Saults & Pollard Limited: Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1980), p.241, as cited by Louis Knafla, "Marriage Customs, Law and Litigation in the Northwest, 1800-1914," Paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, London, 1978, 11.
[137] Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, (University of Toronto/Université Laval: Toronto, Ontario, 2000), http://www.biographi.ca/EN/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4478, [accessed 15 March 2013].

fulfil the duties of fathers, sons, brothers and sisters than many who in the civilized world call themselves Christians."[138] This mentality, would unfortunately be accepted and carried through by members of Horse Lake.

The term used by Chief Justice Ramsay is only too familiar to me. When I was going to school in Hythe, Alberta in a mostly non-Indigenous elementary school, I was again called derogatory names by some of the non-Indigenous students. I tried ignoring them, but it was difficult. I was embarrassed for being an "Indian." I eventually got tired of it and started hitting the kids in my school that were calling me names, but that still did not change the fact that I was an "Indian." In addition to discrimination against Indigenous people, Cree girls were further discriminated against because of their gender when it came to team sports. The girls were always the last ones to be picked for teams. I hated school and did not want to be there. It was hard for me each day to have to go to school, so I played sick a lot. My mother was not very strict when it came to us going to school, so she allowed me to stay home whenever I wanted to. I even tried to hide the fact that I was an "Indian," just so I would not get picked on. I refused to wear moccasins, I would not take bannock and moose meat sandwiches to school. If my mom did put them into my lunch bag, I often threw them away or ate them in the washroom. I also would not allow my mom to put anything in my hair that had Cree designs. Because of this, when going to school, I was influenced to move away from my traditional value system. The sad truth of the matter was I could not hide my identity. Even if I could get away with it because of my light skin, my accent always gave me away. Because I spoke the Cree language first, my Cree accent was very strong. In reality though, there was no way that I could hide the fact that I was an "Indian" because of my high cheekbones. My physical appearance would disclose what my racial background was, especially to those that were prejudice against Indigenous people.

[138] Ibid, as cited by P.A.C. Hargrave Corres., vol. 21, Hargrave to his uncle and cousin, 20 Aug. 1827, p.242.

In northern Alberta the Cree people, before European contact, lived off the land and its resources. Assimilating Indigenous people into Canadian society meant the possible loss of a culture, language, tradition and relationship to the land for many of them.[139] This was definitely true for the Cree people in the community of Horse Lake. Setting up of reserves, creation of residential schools and the governments proposed assimilation goals was the beginning of a loss of identity for many Cree people.

Indigenous people have had to face many hardships on their reserves resulting from laws and regulations that have been implemented on them. According to Brody in his book, "Indian reservations in the United States and reserves in Canada cement nineteenth-century ideas of the separateness of Indians."[140] The following article was taken from the Government of Saskatchewan website regarding the restrictions put on status "Indians" in 1885:

> The Pass System was instituted during the Northwest Resistance years. It was to be a temporary measure during the events of 1885 to control and monitor Indian people and keep them from joining the Resistance.
>
> Indian people were restricted to their Reserves. If they wanted to leave, they had to get permission from the Indian Agent. An Indian person who was absent from the Reserve without a Pass was classified as a criminal.
>
> Neither the *Indian Act* nor any other Federal legislation empowered the Department to institute such a system.
>
> The Pass system was still in use in the Treaty 4, 5 and 7 areas as late as the mid 1930's. It was removed from the *Indian Act* in 1951.[141]

The Pass System was never officially part of the *Indian Act*, but according to Carter, the Indian Commissioner, Edgar Dewdney, sent a notice of "proclamation" "that declared at any one time,

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[139] Brenda McLeod, "First Nations Women and Sustainability on the Canadian Prairies", as cited in *First Voices an Aboriginal Women's Reader,* ed. Patricia A. Monture & Patricia D. McGuire, (Inanna Publications and Education Inc.: Toronto, Ontario, 2009), p.154.

[140] Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams: Indians and the British Columbia Frontier,* (Douglas & McIntiyre: Vancouver, British Columbia, 1981), p.61.

[141] Government of Saskatchewan on "First Nations and Metis Relations," http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/community/fn-history/7#.UMApgC5zsJs.mailto [retrieved 5 December 2012).

only three Indians could leave the reserves for the purpose only of purchasing supplies, and only with a pass from the agent."[142] She goes on to say that the "Pass System" was still being implemented well into the 1930's.

This next chapter will illustrate gender inequalities when dealing with politics and social issues. It will describe what Horse Lake First Nation and its political system is like in today's world, and the effects it has had on women. Especially when dealing with band administration, economic development, social issues, land claims settlement, traditional practices, kinship and marriage patterns, and finally, the elective system. It will depict the unfair roles women play in these areas, as well as in the political arena.

[142] Sarah Carter, "Controlling Indian Movement: The Pass System." *NeWest Refiew,* May 1985, 8-9, Carter, "Genesis and Anatomy, " 302-12, See also David R. Miller, etal, "The First Ones: Readings in Indian /Native Studies," (Craven Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, 1992), p. 253.

Chapter Four

This chapter will demonstrate how colonialism has created a patriarchal system that has neglected or ignored the "voice of women" in politics and has focussed more on the attention and needs of men in the community of Horse Lake. Even though women have been elected as councillors of Horse Lake Reserve, the voices of these women are not heard. Men in this community are the ones people look up to and rely on to make important decisions on behalf of the band. In the entire existence of Horse Lake Reserve, no woman has ever been successful in getting elected as chief. In 2009, I was close to being elected as chief by finishing second, falling short by only seven votes. No other woman has ever been that close. I now want to introduce you to my community by giving you a brief history of Horse Lake and its structure.

According to Rose Auger, a Cree elder from Driftpile First Nation, "our people need to wake up, 'wunskaw.'" She goes on to explain that,

> Part of this waking up means replacing women to their rightful place in society. It's been less than one hundred years that men lost touch with reality. There's no power or medicine that has all force unless it's balanced. The woman must be there also, but she has been left out! When we still had our culture, we had the balance. The woman made ceremonies, and she was recognized as being united with the moon, the earth, and all the forces on it. Men have taken over. Most feel threatened by holy women. They must stop and remember the loving power of their grandmothers and mothers.[143]

This insert was in response to the changes Aboriginal communities have faced in the past few centuries resulting from European contact. She goes on to say how her people have become materialistic, which has caused them to ignore the Cree culture and spirituality. It may appear to the reader that Auger is essentializing Indigenous women; however, this is what many Cree people in their communities believe to be true.

[143] Dianne Meili, *Those Who Know: Profiles of Alberta's Aboriginal Elders*,20th Anniversary Edition, (NeWest Press: Edmonton, Alberta, 2012), interview by Rose Auger from the Driftpile First Nation, p. 27.

Next, I was able to look at oral stories of Cree grandmothers in the book "*Kohkominawak Otacimowiniwawa*: Our Grandmothers' Lives as Told in Their Own Words," by Freda Ahenakew and H.C. Wolfart, to show how gender roles were a big part of our traditions. Ahenakew and Wolfart have provided us with a collection of stories of seven Cree women who endured many hardships in the early twentieth century. Janet Feitz gives her depiction of traditional life as a trapper, fisher, and hunter. She relates her story about a bear she encountered living alone in the bush, and how this bear ended up being killed only for the head as a trophy. In her story, Feitz explains how changes in our society led to the destruction of the bear. "They found the carcass of that bear there, and its head was gone. Someone must have shot it and taken the head as a trophy."[144] Irene Calliou also gives us an example of her mother and grandmothers resilience to losing their traditional beliefs. "My grandmother used to dig up medicinal roots; and once she had dug them up, she placed tobacco there [sc. in the hole]. I did not know then why she put tobacco in."[145] She goes on to say how those teachings are still with her today. So even though these grandmothers have been exposed to the European ways and Catholicism, at least they managed to retain a big part of their culture and traditions to teach them to their own children and grandchildren. Cree women in my community have proven to also be resilient and some of them have managed to continue teaching the language and culture to their children and grandchildren. Philip Joachim, a Horse Lake elder, has often stated that it is going to be the women in Aboriginal communities that will bring their people together, as they are the bearers of life. He believes that women in these Aboriginal communities will be the ones to begin the healing process for many of their people.[146]

[144] Freda Ahenakew & H.C. Wolfart, *Kohkominawak Otacimowiniwawa: Our Grandmothers' Lives as Told in Their Own Words,* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Hignell Printing Limited, 1998), p. 51.
[145] Ibid, p.157.
[146] Philip Joachim, elder from Horse Lake First Nation and interviewee.

A brief history of the Horse Lake First Nation (HLFN):

In order to understand where I come from, the history of my people needs to be told. The land is one of the most important resources the government was legally obligated to hold in trust for Treaty Indians of Canada. As per the Treaty No. 8 Agreement, each family belonging to the band was to be allocated one square mile for every family of five and 160 acres of land to every other Indian belonging to each of the bands within its boundaries[147]. When Treaty 8 was signed, the government was required to take a headcount of Indians belonging to various bands for the designation of reserves .[148] The Indians of Beaver Indian Band (BIB) were entitled to receive 11,840 acres of land for their reserve as they had 74 Indians associated with the band on May 13, 1900 upon signing the Treaty Adhesion.[149] Appendix VI will show the number of acres the Beaver Indian Reserve 152 had upon surrender and Appendix VII and VIII will show the number of acres Horse Lake Indian Reserve 152B and Clear Hills Indian Reserve were allocated to compensate for surrendered land. As you will see, the acres of land given was just about half of the original reserve size.

Under the *Indian Act* the Bands of Canada do not actually hold title to their land on their reserves, it is in actuality, held "in-trust" for them by Her Majesty the Queen of Britain.[150] The Beaver Indian Reserve (BIR) was located in the Dunvegan area near Fairview, Alberta after the signing of Treaty 8. The band consisted of both Beaver and Cree Indians. The Cree people were a dominant, aggressive group who settled in many different areas throughout Canada. It was

[147] *Treaty No. 8 Report of Commissioner for Treaty No. 8, Department of Indian Affairs, P.C. No 2749*, http://www.otc.ca/siteimages/Treaty8.pdf, [Retrieved 28 November 2013], p. 13, [Retrieved 28 November 2013], p. 13.
[148] Idem.
[149] Ibid, p.29.
[150] Sharon Helen Venne, *Indian Acts and Amendments 1868 – 1975: An Indexed Collection,* Ch.6, S.6, p.1.

discovered that they may have originated in the Manitoba area,[151] but settled in this area long before the treaties were signed. The BIR was surveyed between 1905-1906. It was confirmed by Order in Council 917 on May 3, 1907[152]. As a result of Europeans rapidly settling in the Fairview area, the Horse Lake Indian Band agreed to surrender over 14,000 acres of land located on the BIR[153] in 1927. At this time six sections of land were set aside for HLIR[154] near Clear Hills, but was not confirmed as reserve until July, 1959. This land would later be a part of a huge Land Claims Settlement.[155] For compensation of the lands surrendered, Indian Affairs set aside two different areas of land for the BIR which were located in Clear Hills and Horse Lake. As there were already some band members, from the BIB settled in Horse Lake near Hythe, they requested land there to be added to the BIB. The same went for the Clear Hills Indian Reserve (CHIR)[156], near Hines Creek, Alberta. Horse Lake Indian Reserve 152b (HLIR)[157] was confirmed by Order in Council 936 in 1920 and added to the BIR. It was the second part of the BIR 152. The third parcel of land to be added to the BIR was CHIR, referred to as CHIR 152C[158]; however, it was not confirmed by Order in Council until July, 1959.[159]

Around 1930, the Chief of the BIB, Alfred Chatelain was working in the Grande Prairie

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[151] Ted J. Brasser, 2009, *Indigenous People: Plains: The Plains cultural area is a vast territory that extends from southern Manitoba and the Mississippi River westward to the Rocky Mountains, and from the North Saskatchewan River south into Texas,* Revised by Zach Parrott, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-plains/, [Accessed 25 September 2015].

[152] Fasken Martineau, 2013, "Site C Clean Energy Project," Vol. 5, Appendix A11, Pt.1, https://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/documents_staticpost/63919/85328/Vol5_Appendix-Horse_Lake.pdf, [Accessed 3 February, 2015], p.2.

[153] See Map of Beaver Indian Reserve in Appendix VII.

[154] See Map of Horse Lake Indian Reserve in Appendix VIII.

[155] Fasken Martineau, 2013, "Site C Clean Energy Project," Vol. 5, Appendix A11, Pt.1, https://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/documents_staticpost/63919/85328/Vol5_Appendix-Horse_Lake.pdf, [Accessed 3 February, 2015], p.2, see also, Alberta Multi-Media Society, *Horse Lake Settles Specific Claims After 10 Years,* http://www.ammsa.com/publications/alberta-sweetgrass/horse-lake-settles-specific-claim-after-10-years

[156] See Map of Clear Hills Indian Reserve in Appendix IX.

[157] See Map of Horse Lake Indian Reserve 152B in Appendix VIII.

[158] See Map of Clear Hills Indian Reserve in Appendix IX.

[159] Fasken Martineau, 2013, "Site C Clean Energy Project," Vol. 5, Appendix A11, Pt.1, https://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/documents_staticpost/63919/85328/Vol5_Appendix-Horse_Lake.pdf, [Accessed 3 February, 2015], p.1. See also Appendix IX.

area when he met my great-grandfather, Narcisse Noskey[160]. My great-grandfather was working in the Flying Shot Lake area when the Chief of the BIB asked him if he would like to join up with his band[161]. My great-grandfather and his wife Caroline agreed to join the band, so they became band members of HLIB around 1933[162]. My great-grandfather originated from the Fort Vermillion Band and my great-grandmother from the Alexander Indian Band. Shortly after transferring to HLIB, they moved to Kelly Lake, British Columbia, a Metis settlement[163]. Kelly Lake, today, mostly consists of descendants of people who took scrip instead of being a part of treaty 8 in the late 1800s.

My great-grandparents along with many other families from Horse Lake moved to Kelly Lake to prevent their children from being taken by the government to be placed in residential schools[164]. The children in Kelly Lake attended a Catholic Day School that was held in the Catholic Church located near the center of the community.[165] My great-grand parents remained in Kelly Lake until they returned to Horse Lake around 1949. According to my mother and my aunties, my great-grand parents' and their children's last name was Noskey until a man from Ft. Vermillion said my great-grandfather's name was "*mistatim-winew*" (Horse Person). The Department of Indian Affairs began calling him by the name Horseman instead of Noskey[166]. Even my great-grandmother referred to herself as Caroline Horseman. When I was a teenager, I heard my grandmother tell her children that her birth certificate came back with hers and her parents' last name showing as Noskey too. My mother would have been registered as a Noskey, but because they went to Kelly Lake to live, she was not registered until June 24, 1950 where she

[160] As told to me by my mother, Delia and her sisters when I was a young girl.
[161] As told to me by my mother, Delia and her sisters when I was a young girl.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

was registered as Horseman[167]. My mother was born in Kelly Lake, B.C. on February 28, 1938. Her mother never married; therefore, she was fatherless the majority of her life. She knew of her father, but did not know him on a personal basis[168].

Horse Lake Indian Band changed its name to Horse Lake First Nation (HLFN) in 1995 after a referendum was held to legally change the band name. All band members, over 18 years of age, living on or off reserve, were entitled to vote in a referendum held on band regulations. All referendums held must have a minimum of 51 percent voting in favour of the recommended changes, or the referendum changes are not applied.

The Horse Lake Indian Reserve today:

Due to diseases and some of the Beaver Indians moving away to other reserves in BC, such as Fort St. John and Chetwynd areas, today the people of HLFN mostly consist of descendants of the Cree people. Out of 400 people, there is still a Beaver Indian heritage living on the reserve. There are currently some Beaver/Cree-mix living on the reserve, but the majority are Cree. Prior to the three bands joining Western Cree Tribal Council (WCTC), they were among the nine bands of Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council (LSLIRC) since 1979. The nine bands of LSLIRC were Sawridge , Swan River, Driftpile, Sucker Creek, Grouard, Whitefish, Sturgeon Lake, Duncans, and Horse Lake Indian Bands. HLFN then joined WCTC, along with two other bands. The other two nations that belong to WCTC are the Cree and Beaver from Duncan's First Nation and the Cree of Sturgeon Lake First Nation. WCTC was formed around 1994.

[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.

Band Political Structure of the Horse Lake First Nation and Women:

After signing Treaty 8, the BIB came under the *Indian Act* and was entitled to have three council members based on their population, one chief and two councillors. Until 1951, only men were allowed to participate in band elections across Canada. The band was under these Regulations for Band Elections until the late 1980s, at which time they held a referendum adopting their own election regulations. The band continued to have one chief and two councillors until 2001. At that time, the band held another referendum adding two more councillors to the band council. This change appears to have opened the door for a female councillor who was elected in the subsequent election to no longer have a voice as the men out numbered the women 4 to 1. Her position on council would unfortunately be mostly in community-based service and would often be excluded from important decisions, as the men on council generally stuck together.[169] Even though many women would run for council over the following years, not one would be elected.

The band council has the responsibility of all functions dealing with the band. Overall responsibility lies with them. They have under them a Band Manager who oversees directors of all band programs (see Organizational chart). The band manager position is usually held by men, as some community members refused to speak to women when dealing with band business. According to Joachim, "women are not given a fair chance to show that they could be leaders. They figure that a man could do a better job."[170] I was the only woman ever to be appointed as band manager for the band, but I held that position for only six months because some band members complained to council that they would not speak to a woman.[171] It was often difficult

[169] As stated in the interviews between the writer and Faye Horseman and Norma Horseman.
[170] As stated in the interview between the writer and Philip Joachim on September 11, 2015.
[171] Personal experiences while writer was in the band manager position, 1995.

for chief and council to conduct business when they were constantly approached by these few people when they had a problem. Some duties of the band manager consisted of addressing concerns or requests from band members as they arose. Once concerns or requests were heard, recommendations were given to the council by the band manager for a final decision. The band manager is responsible for keeping track of band expenditures and the preparing of budgets for each term. A number of days are needed to complete the budget process for all band programs. The band manager meets with all the program heads once their budget requests are complete. After the band manager reviews all budgets and makes any necessary changes, he/she submits the final budget to chief and council for final approval. This event takes place annually.[172]

Horse Lake First Nation has set up protocols on how to conduct band business. Some of these protocols include the day to day dealings with band members, so that the Council's time is free to deal with issues directly dealing with industry, government and/or funding agencies. This process, even though it seemed ideal, was not always adhered to. Many community members still bypassed the manager to speak to council directly.[173] This was especially common when I was the band administrator. Many Indigenous communities have become so accustomed to Canadian/ British ideals that it has become a norm in their societies. Horse Lake is one of those communities that have accepted the belief that men are the designated leaders in their community. I was unfortunately faced with this when I was in a position of power. According to the band's operation's advisor, certain men in our community refused to meet with me because I was a woman.[174] As stated in an interview, with Joachim, "They were the weak ones, we were the strong ones."[175] They even told chief and council that a woman should not be in that position

[172] Idem.
[173] My experiences while I was a finance director of Community Based Services between 1985 to 1995.
[174] My experiences while I was in the position of band manager in 1995.
[175] Philip Joachim interview.

because she did not have the ability to make proper decisions when dealing with band business. One of them even said, "Women belong in the home, not in the office conducting band business![176]" This made it very difficult for chief and council, as these men were part of the community they were elected to serve. It was with no surprize that I was transferred over to land administration, as there I would not be dealing with band members, but more of the external community.

Band Elections:

Band elections are a very important part of HLFN. Prior to the *Indian Act* of 1951, only males over the age of 21 were permitted to vote in band elections.[177] Under the *Indian Act*, the following rules applied:

> 77. (1) Eligibility of voters for chief [or councillor]: A member of a band who has attained the age of eighteen years and is ordinarily resident on the reserve is qualified to vote for a person nominated to be chief of the band and when the reserve for voting purposes consists of one section, to vote for persons nominated as councillor.[178]

It was not until the seventies that the first woman was elected for council, even though women were allowed to vote and run for elective positions in Horse Lake for a couple of decades. Band elections continued to be guided by the *Indian Act* until 1991, at which time the band held a referendum to adopt their own election regulations. The election regulation changes included;

Election Regulation Changes 1991	Existing *Indian Act* Election Regulations 1990
1. all voters were required to have lived on the reserve one year prior to voting day;	Sec. 77. (1) A member of a band who has attained the age of eighteen years and is ordinarily resident on the reserve is qualified to vote for a person nominated to be chief of the band and where the reserve for voting

[176] This was told to the writer, by a band member in the community, when the writer was the band administrator.
[177] Katrina Harry, "The Indian Act & Aboriginal Women's Empowerment: What Front Line Workers Need to Know," as citing the Indian Act of 1951, (2009), p.22.
[178] Shin Imai, *The 1997 Annotated Indian Act,* (Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing: Toronto, Ontario, 1996), p. 83.

	purposes consists of one section, to vote for persons nominated as councillors.[179] *(In 2000, Indian Act was amended to allow all members on or off reserve to vote on band elections).*
2. all nominees were required to have lived on the reserve one year prior to nomination day;	Sec. 75. (1) No person other than an elector who resides in an electoral section may be nominated for the office of councillor to represent that section on the council of the band. (2) No person may be a candidate for election as chief or councillor of a band unless his nomination is moved and seconded by persons who are themselves eligible to be nominated.[180]
3. only eligible band members were able to run for the chief or councillor's position; and,	
4. all new members reinstated under the Bill C-31 amendment were required to have been a member for a minimum of one year.	

(Table 1)

The main purpose of these election changes was pertaining to residency. It was felt that decisions that affected only people on reserve, were being made by people living off-reserve.

These were the four major changes that were made to the existing election regulations.[181]

Horse Lake people tend to be family orientated and clearly demonstrate how important family is to them. In the past few decades, at election times, band members tended to split into separate groups depending on their relatives. The general rule of split consisted of four separate groups; one of which were the children and grandchildren of Narcise Pan's sister and the other

[179] Minister of Supply and Services Canada, *Office Consolidation: Indian Act, R.S., 1985, c. 1-5,* (Canadian Government Publishing Centre: Ottawa, Canada, 1989), p. 43.
[180] Minister of Supply and Services Canada, *Office Consolidation: Indian Act, R.S., 1985, c. 1-5,* (Canadian Government Publishing Centre: Ottawa, Canada, 1989), p. 43.
[181] As cited in the Horse Lake First Nation Regulations, 1991.

three groups were divided amongst Narcise and Caroline Pan's children. Some family members may support others outside of their 'norm' depending on friendships or marriages. Horse Lake people are all inter-related in one way or another, but they do not always consider each other family unless something tragic happens, or a special event is held. Funerals or illnesses tend to pull family members together. Weddings and other special events also pull family members together when taking in the festivities. More often than not, women tend to stick with other women, while men tend to stick with other men.

Women in the Horse Lake community are not generally respected by certain men in their community. Some even refuse to listen when a woman speaks or they tend to refrain from participating when women are involved. Today, when some women speak out at band meetings, some men will try to belittle them or make fun of them. Because of this, many of the women there are afraid to speak out or ask questions at meetings. At a funeral I once attended, one of my cousins invited an elder to join the circle while the pipe ceremony was taking place; in spite of this, he told her, "…but you cannot touch the pipe." This confused me that he would invite her up there, but not allow her to participate. It is possible that he did this because he supports the idea that women are too powerful, spiritually, and will kill whatever medicine the man is carrying.[182] My uncle, who is a traditional sweatlodge holder, has expressed the view that the only medicine women are capable of killing is the "bad medicine." However, many men believe that only they can be traditional healers and women have no place in that world. They believe women are the nurturers, caregivers and expect them to ensure these necessities are met.

Horse Lake Band Membership Code & Its Negative Effects on Women:

The Band's Membership Code was adopted in 1987, after Bill C-31 was enacted by the

[182] As told to me by my mother when I was a teenager.

Federal Government. Bill C-31, an amendment to the *Indian Act*, changed the eligibility for Indian Status of all people in Canada. The amendment, according to the government, was primarily meant to remove gender discrimination.[183] Prior to the Bill, any woman who married a status Indian man under the *Indian Act* was entitled to receive Indian status. Also, when Status Indian men had children with non-status women, the children were eligible for Indian status and membership under the band their father was a member of. However, any status Indian women who married non-status men gave up their status rights and privileges. If they had children with non-status men, their children were not entitled to Indian status nor could they become band members.

When Bill C-31 was enacted, the following changes occurred: all children of status Indians, regardless of gender, could now have Indian status under certain provisions providing they had at least one Status Indian parent.[184] "That person is a person both of whose parents are or, if no longer living, were at the time of death entitled to be registered under this section" and "[...], a person is entitled to be registered if that person is a person one of whose parents is or, if no longer living, was at the time of death entitled to be registered under subsection 1."[185] Bill C-31 maintained the control of status eligibility by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. However, the band membership code once created, was to give the band control over its registered membership list.

Horse Lake Indian Band (HLIB)[186] created their Membership Code to have some control over who became members of their band. Because the government was adding a huge number of

[183] Bill C-31 Amendment to the Indian Act.
[184] Sharon Venne, 1997, S.6(1)(f), p.?
[185] Ibid, S.6(2).
[186] Horse Lake Indian Band (HLIB) also known as Horse Lake First Nation (HLFN), Beaver Indian Band (BIB) and Clear Hills Indian Band (CHIB).

people to the membership list, steps and procedures were created to control band membership. All persons applying for band membership, had to have proof of Indian Status before they could be registered band members of HLIB. They were also required to complete a membership application accompanied with signatures of at least 51 percent of eligible band voters on it. All signatories had to fall under the same provisions of eligibility for voting in band elections. The main purpose of the membership code was to reduce the number of reinstated Indian status women to the reserve. At the time, Bill C31 was enacted, the newly reinstated women were not welcomed into the community. They were ostracized and excluded from any benefits received by other members of the reserve. Again, I stress this amendment further discriminating agaisnt these Indian women. Even though the law was changed to eliminate gender discrimination in the *Indian Act*, they faced it now, from their own bands.

The Economic System of the Horse Lake First Nation & Effects on the Band:

The trust relationship between Industry, Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC), and Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (DAAND) has been very good in the last two decades. This may be largely due to the fact that many men, on reserves in Canada, tend to be more focussed on the issues dealing with the public sector and HLFN has only ever had male chiefs since the band has been in existence. HLFN has a fairly good relationship with the Federal Government (DAAND) and is currently under a Tripartite Agreement. The agreement is between the Federal Government, WCTC, and HLFN. The Tripartite Agreement administers federal government funds to the WCTC to administer programs such as operations and maintenance, child welfare, social development, education, policing, medical care, and administration. The money that is allocated to WCTC is taken from Indian Affair's annual budget. In 1995, HLFN along with four other bands entered into a pilot project for the take-over

of land operations. The project was called the Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC) Pilot Project. The government and the five bands joined up with Southern Alberta Institute of Technology to create a Land Administration Course. It was designed to train members of the five bands to take over the land operations that were originally the responsibility of IOGC to administer. They included duties such as writing contracts for surface and subsurface agreements, environmental assessments, well-site inspections, royalty assessments, and all the administrative duties involved with administering land operations. Each band was allocated money for land administration on a per-capita basis. HLFN was permitted 1.5 positions to deliver the program. In addition, the band had a good rapport/relationship with oil and gas companies who wanted to explore the reserve for oil and gas activities. The band was responsible for negotiating agreements with the oil and gas companies. In the first two years of the pilot project IOGC was involved in negotiations only as a mentor. HLFN is one of the more successful bands in negotiating with industry for a high percentage on oil and gas royalties. Most bands only receive approximately 15 percent royalties on production, but HLFN currently receives a minimum of 25 percent on a majority of their production on royalties.

In the 60s, the land in Horse Lake was mainly used for agricultural purposes and some horse grazing. However, HLFN was one of the top ten wealthiest bands in Alberta in the nineties because of the oil and gas resources that were discovered on reserve lands. In 1995 the band had ten successful gas wells producing on their reserve. As a result of the producing gas wells, the band was able to fund programs in addition to federal government funding. Land on reserve is currently being used for grazing cattle, farming land, and exploring oil and gas.

The band pays for housing on reserve for their band members. Before 1983, band members were able to choose where their houses would be built. In the early eighties, the band

began the development of their town site. The town site was developed with services including a water treatment plant, power service, underground phone lines, indoor plumbing, and natural gas heating. Because of the greater costs for providing services to homes outside the town site area, the band prohibited building houses outside the town site parameters. The first seven homes were built on the town site with full-services in 1983. The homes are generally built for band members who are in need of housing. It is based on need or a first-come, first-serve basis. The size of the home is determined by the size of the family unit. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) lends money to the band to build these houses for band members. The band repays CMHC in monthly installments from money received from oil and gas royalties. The homes have ranged from $110,000.00 to $200,000 since 1983. All the homes are built with basements. Since the mid-nineties, Horse Lake has trained their own carpenters to build homes on the reserve. The band budgets well over $500,000.00 each year for housing which includes a minimum of three new houses per year. HLFN makes an effort to beautify the town site on reserve. They hire crews in the summer to landscape newly developed homes and maintain the ditches in the town site area. The crews that are hired are usually students and social assistance clients. If a couple applies for a house together, the house generally goes under the man's name. This could be an influence of the *Indian Act's* rules favouring male jurisdiction over property. This goes on to validate the philosophy of the rest of Canadian society at the time the *Indian Act* was put in place. If by chance the couple separates, the man takes possession of the house. This is not always good because when the couple splits up, the man is usually awarded the house, while the woman and the children have to look elsewhere for accommodations.

Economic Development activities in the past 30 years have been strongly encouraged. In all cases of leases or ventures given to band members, the band members kept all profits and

were responsible for all costs associated with their lease or venture. Dollars given to individuals using economic development funds, are not always repayable to the Management Board. First, in the late 70s the band leased the agricultural land to a group consisting of three band members, to look after the farm operations for the amount of $1.00. These three band members formed a company called Triple H. Farms and they were responsible for farming the land and looking after the operations of it. Second, in the early 80s, the chief started his own company called Cree Construction using economic development dollars. His first purchase was a Caterpillar that was mainly used for developing roads on reserve. Third, on or around 1985, the chief sold all the bands' horses to his father and brother for the amount of $1.00 for economic development purposes. Fourth, in 1985, the band started an Investment Company to look into various investment opportunities. This company was dissolved in 1987, when a new council was elected. Fifth, the band ventured into the logging industry. The logging company is still in operation today and has been responsible for employing about 10 percent of the people on reserve. Sixth, in 1992, the band assisted me in starting up a convenience store and gas bar on reserve by granting money to me. It is still open today, and is currently selling and stocking a variety of groceries along with supplying fuel for band members' convenience.

Other economic development ventures were PJ Landscaping, responsible for landscaping on reserve, and Ricks Grading, responsible for grading all reserve roads. Finally, one of the most significant ventures was employing band members to build new houses on reserve. The building of houses previously was always done by non-Indigenous construction companies who were successful bidders. The band used contracted companies to apprentice a number of band members for carpentry, gas fitting, and plumbing. It was not a surprise to anyone that the members that were trained, in these journeyman positions, were all men, even though a number

of women applied. All contracts for building houses are given to three separate band members who are carpenters on reserve, all of which currently are men. Only about 1 (one) percent of our people work for outside agencies. Some people from our reserve work for WCTC and Encana Oil and Gas.

HLFN is able to disburse per capita distribution to their members on an annual basis because of the royalties they receive from oil and gas royalties. The very first per capita distribution in the amount of $500.00/person was given out to band members in the mid-1980s. Per capita distribution has been given out every year in December since that time. The amount varies each year for per capita distribution. The band thought that giving this money in December would help families have a better Christmas.

Land Claims Settlement:

In regards to land claims, the band manager was hired by the HLIB to research government documents regarding land surrender. He was able to obtain pertinent information from Archives Canada and Treaty 8 in regards to the illegal land surrender that took place at the Beaver Indian Reserve #152 (BIR)[187] in 1929.

Many First Nation's communities on reserves have been involved in Land Claims Settlement`s across Canada. Probably one of the most significant outcomes for the band has been the Specific Land Claims settlement. The band in 2000 settled a Land Claims dispute with the Federal Government where the government awarded 123 million dollars to the HLFN. As it was agreed upon through negotiations between the federal government and Horse Lake First Nation

[187] Library and Archives Canada, Indian Reserves Western Canada: Map of Beaver Indian Reserve 152, 1929, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/indian-reserves/001004-119.02-e.php?&isn_id_nbr=1876&interval=20&page_sequence_nbr=1&&PHPSESSID=c2qkq1u85o0nc1626t6fihnfe5, see Appendix VII.

that an illegal surrender did actually occur in 1928. The band was compensated in funds that were allocated over a three-year period. The band upon receiving this award agreed to a management agreement administering of the funding allocation. Forty million was to be divided equally between four areas: 1. Per capita distribution, 2. Administrative purposes, 3. Economic Development, and 4. Land purchases that would eventually be added to the reserve. As a result of the Land Claims Settlement dollars, the HLFN was able to create a number of job opportunities. A Management Board was created in 1999 to administer the 120 million dollars the Federal government released to the band. With these dollars, the Management Board was able to give $25,000.00 to each of their members each year for a period of three years. The parents or guardians of children younger than 18 years were given half of the minor's money and the other half was put into a trust account on behalf of the child. The Management Board was also responsible for managing those dollars that were held in trust for the minors. Once minors reach 18 years of age, they receive 30 percent of their trust account dollars. When they turn 19 years old, they receive another 30 percent of their money. The remainder is paid to them when they reach 20 years of age.

With this money, the band has been able to build facilities to enhance community development on the reserve. They were able to build a multiplex arena that cost 8.5 million dollars[188] and they were able to purchase a modular unit for a Day Care Centre. They also entered an all male's team in the North Peace Hockey League and named their team Horse Lake Thunder. The team was entered in the league as an economic venture. The entry fee to the league cost the band $50,000.00/annually. The team was very successful. They had not lost a game in their league the entire first year they played. The team also did quite well in the Allan

[188] See reference to illegal land surrender, p.2.

Cup Tournament. They advanced to the national level of the tournament. The team was strongly supported by people surrounding the reserve, but very few people from our reserve supported them. Mostly the Chief and Council, their close families, friends, or employees of the band supported the team. The chief even hired Theo Fleury, Sasha Lakovic, Dody Wood and Gino Odjick to play for the team in 2004/2005. While many dollars were spent on the men`s team, no dollars were available for women`s teams. Women's teams did exist, however the only contribution given to ladies' teams was the league/entry fees and ball uniforms from time to time. It was not a surprise that the team folded after the Chief was defeated after his second term.

Community Life & Development on the Horse Lake First Nation:

Because men are the majority of leaders on these reserves, they tend to focus more attention on the business dealing with industry; while, women tend to focus more attention on community issues. Again, emphasizing that men benefit more than women, men are the majority of business owners on our reserve, as a result of the economic development funding available for band members. Even though I own my own business, my brother and I acquired the dollars to start my store from an external source. Many male leaders take pride in the partnerships they build with off-reserve business entities, while women tend to focus their attentions on community events. Women are generally the only ones who tend to volunteer on these committees for planning events. It could be assumed here, that men may consider these to be women's forms of activities. Over time, this view of gender roles has become accepted as female roles also by women within the community. The band has hosted the Annual Treaty Days since the mid-eighties. Treaty Days are held in June or July every year. They consist of a number of recreational activities, which vary from year to year and have included tug-a-wars, board racing,

slow pitch tournaments, water carrying relays, ball throwing competitions, three-legged races, and many others. After the activities, a steak barbecue usually takes place. During the event, in the past, two Aboriginal Affairs representatives one of which included a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer, in his or her traditional red uniform, and a member of the Lesser Slave Lake Regional Council Tribal Police are present to distribute the $5.00 treaty money to band members each year. Round Dances are on occasion held during certain events, such as Aboriginal Week, Elder's and Youth Conferences and Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week celebrations. These dances would take place to promote and enhance the Cree culture, to welcome guests to events held on the reserve.

Hockey is a very important part of our community today. In the eighties, it was fastball. Since the early eighties the band has had money available for recreational activities, from royalties received for rental and bonus dollars for lands leased to oil and gas companies. The band used recreational dollars to pay for children's hockey equipment and registration. Any child living on reserve was able to receive hockey equipment and registration fees paid for as long as they provided their own skates and hockey sticks. Girl's extracurricular activities were paid for providing they were activities that were unisex. Figure skating, dance, and other female sports are not paid for by the band. The band also looked after purchasing uniforms, catcher equipment, balls, and bats for ball players. Players were expected to provide their own shoes and ball gloves. In the eighties, the band council sponsored a men's and a ladies' ball team. The band spent numerous dollars on travel and uniforms for the men's ball team, while again, very little was spent on women's teams. They used band royalty dollars to send the men's ball team to Southern Alberta, British Columbia, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Reno, Nevada, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Hilo, Hawaii. The women's fastball team were not given the option to travel outside of the

province, such as the men's team was. The focus on recreation after the new council was elected became the children. Ball teams were formed for children of different age groups, and boys and girls of all ages were equipped to play hockey on unisex teams. Hockey was mainly dependent on parental involvement. Parents were responsible for getting their children to and from hockey. Not very many parents remained committed to their children playing hockey, so a lot of children quit playing. Some however, made it to the Junior level of hockey (those with strong parental support). All teams are affiliated with Minor Hockey Alberta.

The community of HLFN has been involved in hosting many fun activities on the reserve. An annual Halloween Fun Fair was held for many years at the Cultural Centre. Games were set up for the children to play for prizes. The community took special pride in the haunted house that they created for the event. A number of volunteers got together to build a haunted house and to dress up in outrageously scary costumes in hopes of scaring their visitors. The haunted house consisted of real people dressed up in costumes seeking out to scare all who entered. Children would walk through the haunted house many times throughout the afternoon laughing and screaming because of the scares they received. All who participated had a great time. The games set up at the Fun Fair were aimed at children less than twelve, but the adults and youth were not excluded from the fun. Games were set up just for them, like black jack, plinko, and merchandise bingos. There was also garage and bake sales during these events. The Fun Fair was always followed by sober dances. The community based services workers would usually also set up a Christmas parties annually. Santa Claus was regularly in attendance to give presents to everyone younger than 18 years after the Christmas Dinner is held. This was consistently followed by sober dances. The Education Program workers were also involved in hosting two events each year, one of which celebrates the end of the school year and the other celebrates the

new school year. Both involve a dance, but celebrating the end of the school year is kicked off by a dinner and awards presentations.

Horse Lake First Nation Attempts to Address the Social Issues:

Some people are completely lost when it comes to traditional or religious practises. The people in Horse Lake are not exempt from this and are sometimes lost as a result of having little or no spiritual guidance in their lives. Many of these people find themselves in addictions related to alcohol, drugs, substances, or gambling.

With the specific land claims Per Capita Distribution money,[189] came many social problems. The majority of people in HLFN unfortunately have become addicted to one thing or another as we moved into the new millennium. This may be largely due to the royalty money that was given every year to band members in Per Capita Distribution.[190] When I was growing up, Bingo was a common activity for people of HLFN to attend as an extra-curricular activity. It was available every night of the week for those who could afford it. HLFN hosted their bingos every Friday and Saturday evenings. The other night's bingos were held off-reserve in surrounding communities. Bingos are not as commonly attended by Horse Lake people any more, as there are no longer bingos hosted on the reserve. Today, people are more apt to play Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs) at licensed establishments off-reserve or take part in other games associated with casinos. Unfortunately, because alcohol is easily accessible in licensed establishments, more and more people are becoming addicted to alcohol.

Some people became addicted to either bingo, VLTs, other forms of gambling, alcohol,

[189] Ibid.
[190] Aboriginal Multi Media Society: Alberta Sweetgrass, 2001, Vol. 8, Iss. 5, *Horse Lake Settles Specific Claim After 10 Years,* http://www.ammsa.com/publications/alberta-sweetgrass/horse-lake-settles-specific-claim-after-10-years, p.2.

or drugs. The addiction to drugs is very widespread throughout the reserve. It has gone as far as drug dealers selling to children who are younger than seven years of age. They started out by selling marijuana joints for $5.00 each. Once the children became dependent on marijuana, the drug dealers frequently lace the marijuana joints with cocaine. Most of the kids do not even realize the marijuana has been laced, but become very dependent on the drug. Snorting or injecting cocaine, smoking crack, and smoking crystal meth through a smoke pipe is becoming more popular among young adults and teenagers. Drug dealers have even used young children and teenagers to sell their product for them, so that they are not caught. More teenagers are becoming addicted to alcohol because of boredom or just because their friends are doing it. With the money, came the addictions, with the addictions, came the violence against women. It is not enough that women have endured systematic violence over the past century, they are now forced to endure violence from their own spouses.

Since the late 1980s, the band has attempted to address the addictions issues on the reserve through a band-funded program. They hired their own addictions counsellor who worked with people who happened to fall into addictions. With the creation of National Indigenous Alcohol and Drug Addictions Program (NNADAP), the band hoped that it would be the beginning of a healing process for their people. Moving into the twenty-first century, women have been the majority of people who have taken the road to recovery. It is very indicative that many men see attending "Alcoholics Anonymous," as a sign of weakness, so they do not attend. The addictions counsellor has worked with many band members in assisting them in getting help for their addictions, such by checking them into a treatment centres. These treatment programs generally run for 28 days. The band also continuously, through the help of NNADAP has set up drug and alcohol awareness events for reserve participants. HLFN has been hosting a week-long

Drug and Alcohol Awareness event for the past 15 years. Even though addiction to drugs, alcohol, and gambling is still a huge problem on reserve today, these programs have been successful in helping some people get better. Some people have gone to treatment as many as six times before choosing the path of recovery. The events that are held throughout the Drug and Alcohol Awareness week are intended to celebrate these people on their accomplishments. There are; however, a few people like myself who choose to live a life of sobriety. Each year the NNADAP program gives plaques to people who have chosen to live a sober life. They hope that honouring these people will give others the incentive to want to become sober.

The band also makes a huge effort to reduce unemployment. In the nineties, the social development program was involved in a Work Opportunity Program (WOP) to help get some of their people off of social assistance. The education department was also involved with annual summer student programs where all students attending high school or post-secondary institutions were hired to work for the summer. These two programs were designed to work in coalition with one another during the summer months. They mainly looked after beautifying the reserve (e.g., cleaning ditches, maintaining and grooming the grave yard, landscaping new homes, and thoroughly cleaning community buildings). These programs were active from the eighties and into the new millennium. WOP and the summer student program were very successful in helping people get-off social assistance when they were in effect.

Other problems that exist on reserve today include vandalism, theft, and violence. Houses on reserve cannot be left unattended for long periods or the juvenile delinquents of the reserve will vandalize them. In the past 20 years more than five million dollars has been spent on renovations for new houses alone. Windows are usually the first things to be smashed in vacant homes. Community buildings, prior to getting a security system, were hard hit with vandalism.

The washrooms in the buildings were often filled with graffiti and the door locks were usually damaged or broken off the stall doors.

Supplies and equipment are often stolen from band buildings or community homes. The most common theft items have been bicycles. Bicycles cannot be left in the yard unlocked or they will most likely be stolen before morning arrives. Yard equipment, tools, skidoos and all-terrain vehicles are also taken. These big items however, are sometimes found and returned with damages that vary.

Violence usually occurs when alcohol or drugs are abused. Men beating their wives used to be quite common and ignored, but this has changed now that women are becoming more educated. In the 1960s when I was growing up, I saw a lot of men beating their spouses. My mother's 7th boyfriend was very abusive. I remember him coming home a lot after drinking in the bar and beating my mother. My mother was home with us a lot during her relationship with this man. When he was out drinking, he did not often come home. This is when we, my two younger sisters (both of the girls were his daughters) and I, were allowed to sleep with my mom. However, too bad for us if he came home. Depending on how much he had to drink he would usually grab the first child he reached and throw her off the bed. Nine times out of ten it was my sister Charlotte, the older of his two daughters. I was usually quick enough to grab my sister Marlene and get her out of the room. This is usually when he would start beating my mom because she allowed us "brats" to sleep with her. I also witnessed a few of my uncles beating their wives to the point that they had to be hospitalized.

Sexual abuse was also common when I was a child. I remember my sister telling our grandmother that our uncle was sexually abusing her. My grandmother told her that she was

sinning for saying that about her uncle. Although sexual abuse was happening and became a common problem on the reserve, it was not talked about. People pretended that it did not exist. It was just recently that victims of sexual abuse started talking about their traumatic experiences while they were children. In 1995 a group of women from the reserve reported the men who had sexually abused them. Eight men were charged with sexual abuse in 1998. All pled guilty to sexual abuse and molestation and were sentenced to serve community hours along with probation for either one, two, or three years. A men's group was also created as one of the conditions the eight men had to meet. They were expected to meet at least once a week. A facilitator was hired to work with the men to discuss their crimes. Elders were also used from time to time to support the group. A women's group was also set up to meet every week to discuss their sexual abuse experiences. The women met on a regular basis until a new band council was elected in 2001 at which time new people were hired to take over the woman's group. The group stopped meeting because the confidentiality was being breeched and these women's experiences were becoming public knowledge without their consent.

There are still cases of sexual abuse occurring on the reserve, and it is still ignored for the most part. Because of what the victim's family goes through when an incident is reported, people are afraid to report. The perpetrator's family can make it very difficult for the victim on the reserve. In some cases, people have been threatened and accused of lying. Some people even go as far as to spread rumours about the victim's promiscuity. Children in some cases have been seen acting out sexually with other children. This is usually a sign that sexual abuse has occurred.

Traditional Practises and Religious Belief Systems of the HLFN Community:

- **Ceremony**

Traditionalism has recently been rediscovered by some people in Horse Lake. The people of HLFN are in the process of restoring and relearning their traditional practices by attending ceremonies, such as sweats. The use of sweet grass is becoming more common every year for people on reserve. People who have gone through some sort of healing process are usually the ones that have found and restored, their traditional cultural practices. Sweats tend to be held more often in the summer. These sweats are more frequent when there is a sense of imbalance in the community. Sweats are held in a dome-shaped hut, covered with moose-hide or blankets, for spiritual healing. The sweats are very sacred to the Cree people. The sweatlodge is made with small trees tied over top of each other in a dome-shaped structure covered with either moose-hide or blankets to prevent any light from entering. The lodge is built around a two-foot-deep pit for the hot rocks to be placed in. The sweat lodge is facilitated by a spiritual guide who often prays in Cree. The spiritual guide enters the lodge with a sacred pipe, a bucket of water, sage, sweetgrass and fungus to throw on the hot rocks. Tea, and traditional foods to be drunk and eaten by those who take part in the ceremony. The spiritual guide starts out with a prayer and smokes his or her pipe and passes the pipe around to all participants in a clockwise fashion. The Cree people believe that to be in harmony events should take place following the sun's direction from sunrise to sundown. People who enter the sweat lodge usually are in need of some kind of healing. When one is asking for spiritual healing, they must offer the spiritual guide tobacco, ribbons, and broad cloth of various colours (each colour represents something different). Colours that are most commonly used are red, white, yellow, and blue or black. The ceremony lasts for four rounds. Once each round is concluded, the participants are permitted to exit the lodge for a

brief recess. If there is any food left over once all four rounds are completed, it is burned in the fire to give back to Mother Earth.

- **Traditional Practises**

The medicine wheel[191] was an important part of the Cree traditional practices. The wheel has been used as a sacred circle of life to guide the Cree people for health and wellness. The medicine wheel is used to guide traditional healers in curing people's ailments or bad luck. The four directions are very strong, as well as the four colours. The four directions are used to give direction to the spiritual healers when conducting rituals or special ceremonies. The four colours are used to indicate what area, the individual seeking help wants the Healer to work on for them. Each colour represents a different time in one's life. [192] The medicine wheel represents how life is different for everyone on where it begins and where it ends. A person can go around the circle more than once in their lifetime. There is no set start or finish.

- **Rounddances**

Round Dances are held on special occasions. Over a ten-year period that began in 1989 the band was involved in an annual Elders and Youth conference which was held each year during the first week of August. To start off the event a round dance and give away would be held to welcome all participants. The band supplied the give away items. Traditional Cree drummers were always hired to perform at the round dance and during other activities throughout the week. Participants came from across Alberta and B.C. The number of participants ranged from 150 to 300 people from ages 12 and up. The celebration included workshops for Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Cultural Awareness, Peer Pressure, Health and Safety, and other

[191] See Medicine Wheel in Appendix X.
[192] Idem.

related topics. Fun activities were Lip-Sync Contest, dance with DJ, and Skit performances.

- **Hunting**

Very few people still follow their traditional hunting practises. Those that do follow their traditional ways do it in the following manner. When a hunter goes out, he does not usually go out alone. With him he takes other hunters, his family, and anyone else who wants to attend. They set up camp in an area near many moose licks, as these are areas the moose frequently rest. Everyone helps set up camp. Tents are constructed, racks are made, fire pits are dug, wood is gathered, and tables are made. Women remain at the camp while the men start their hunt in the early morning hours (before sunrise). Women prepare breakfast for their men, and a lunch is packed away for them to take on their hunt. Women are usually very busy preparing the site in hopes of receiving a successful hunt. An area is cleared for the hanging of the moose and stretcher-like frames are made for stretching the hides[193]. Tools are readied for preparing dry meat and hides.[194] A huge supper is cooked for the hunters' arrival. As soon as the men arrive with the hunt, women begin cutting the meat into slabs for the preparation of drying meat or packing the meat in packs of steaks, roasts, or stew meat. Dry meat is a treat for everyone on the reserve, but very few people still make it. Dry meat takes time and requires patience. Slabs of meat are readied for making dry meat. The dry meat is cut into very thin layers and placed on a rack to dry. The rack is made out of dry wooden poles that are hand picked from the bush. One pole is placed across four poles. Two poles are placed together vertically and are tied together near the top to secure them. More poles are placed near the top of the dry meat rack over a fire pit[195]. Fire wood is gathered to make a fire to smoke meat until it is fully dried. Once the meat is

[193] See Figures 1 & 2 in Appendix XI.
[194] See Figures 3 & 4 in Appendix XI.
[195] See Figure 2 in Appendix XI

laid out across the poles, a fire is kept going to smoke the meat. The process takes two to three days to complete. Most of the regular dry meat makers are doing it today for the sake of selling. There are only a few people on the reserve that make it for the sake of tradition, to give it away to family and friends.

After the dry meat is made, pemmican is made as an extra treat. The preparation of the pemmican begins by placing the dry meat in a sack for pounding. The back end of an axe or hammer is used to pound the dry meat while it is in the sack. It is beaten until the dry meat is ground into small pieces. Once the pemmican is made, moose fat lard is melted and poured over the pemmican and sugar is sprinkled over top for eating. This is especially popular among small children and elders as it is very sweet tasting.

A rack is also set up at the camp for making hides. Four poles are tied together in a square. The hide is tied and stretched out very tightly inside the four poles. The rack is leaned against a pole that has been tied to two trees so that the scraping can be done.[196] The inside layer of the hide is scraped first. A bone, with a thin metal piece placed on the end, is used to scrape the meat and fat off the hide.[197] Once this is done, the rack is turned over to begin scraping the hair off the hide. A bone, sharpened on one end, is used to scrape off the hair.[198] Once the hide is fully scraped, moose brains and lard, made out of fat, are spread over the hide. Then the hide is taken and placed in a huge tub to soak for a couple of days. After the hide is removed from the tub of water, the process of scraping off the lard and moose brains is done. The hide is inserted in between a piece of metal tied to a tree for scraping[199]. Finally, two people spread the hide out and flap it over a fire that has been made out of almost rotten wood. The specially selected wood

[196] See Figure 2 in Appendix XI.
[197] See figure 3 in Appendix XI.
[198] See figure 4 in Appendix XI.
[199] See Figure 5 in Appendix XI.

is chosen for its scent. The entire hide making process takes five or six days to complete. Hides in Horse Lake are not often prepared anymore. Historically, they were not only tanned for making moccasins, the hide was mostly sold for money.

The hunters mainly hunt for moose, elk, or deer. The people in Horse Lake prefer eating fresh moose meat over any other animal. Elk and deer meat are mostly used to make dry meat. Once the hunter kills his prey the animal's neck is slit across the throat for the blood to drain. The animal is then gutted out and insides cleaned. The kidneys, liver, heart, and colon are taken along with the entire moose to the camp for consumption. The animal is then skinned and cut into sections for easier carrying. Before the hunters depart, one of the hunters, usually the eldest, will take a piece of the animal's heart and tie it to a tree as an offering to Mother Earth. The guts are left behind for other animals to eat and every other part of the animal is taken back to camp by the hunters. Horses were once used for hauling the meat back to camp, now however, 4-wheelers are used.

Language and Bilingualism at Horse Lake First Nation:

The people of Horse Lake mainly spoke Cree prior to the 1960s. There were some people who spoke Cree and Dene. The Cree language is a very important part of the HLFN. A few of the community members take pride in their language and continue to teach it to their grandchildren. Unfortunately, most of the people have lost their language and are unable to teach their children the Cree language. Around 1985, the band worked with a Cree instructor out of Red Earth to develop a Cree curriculum to be taught in the elementary and junior high schools that were attended by Horse Lake students. Cree was taught to Horse Lake students and open to other non-Cree students who attended the Hythe School and were interested in learning Cree. It

was designed to teach children Cree, but unfortunately it took a different direction instead. The instructors spent more time teaching students' Indigenous arts and crafts than the language itself. Some believe the program failed to teach the students to speak Cree because the Cree teachers did not have a teaching background. Teachers, fluent in Cree, who had no teaching experience were used to teach the language, but were unable to meet the goal of conveying the language to the students.

The English language is now the first language of the HLFN. Because of Canada being a bilingual country (English and French), this may have been one of the factors that may have influenced the people from Horse Lake to stop speaking their mother-tongue. Another reason Cree is no longer spoken in reserve homes is largely due to the Catholic school system. It prevented Indigenous students from speaking their language while in school. This was mainly because the school officials felt the quickest way for students to learn to speak English was to speak it on a daily basis. Many parents on reserve agreed that it would be easier and better for their children if they spoke English at home as well as school. There were only a few parents who actually continued to speak Cree to their children at home. My mother taught all ten of her children the Cree language, but my mother did not make our youngest siblings speak it, like she did the rest of us. They understand our language, but do not speak it very well. It is very difficult for many of our people to teach our younger children to speak Cree because they are often not around people who speak it. In addition, many people on the reserve have married or are living common-law with "white" people, or people who do not speak the Cree language.

Cultural Immersion and the School System of the Horse Lake First Nation:

HLFN has an Early Childhood School on reserve for four and five-year-old children. The

children living on reserve start school in Hythe, a mostly "white" community, in grade one. They attend the Hythe Regional School until grade nine and attend grades 10 through 12 at Beaverlodge High School (again, a mostly "white" community). Children in our community have a history of dropping out of school in grade seven, once they reach the junior high level. This is where the youths begin to experience a huge cultural shock in the non-Aboriginal world. Teachers tend to have very little patience for troubled Indigenous students and often deal with them by expelling them from school. A lot of the youths from Horse Lake end up in the Integrated Occupation Program (IOP) class by the time they reach grade nine. Many of the students from the school call this class the Indians on parole or idiots on patrol class. As described by the principal of the Hythe Junior High School in the mid 2000's, the program was designed for students with special needs who needed assistance with their studies.[200] These students were in the program because they were not successfully completing the grade they were enrolled in mostly due to the lack of attendance. Certain requirements have to be met for students to remain in the program. Regular attendance and good behaviour have to be maintained by all students who participate in the program.

Horse Lake people do not have a good success rate at the academic level. Prior to 1989, there were only three high school graduates. For the first time since 1973, in 1989 we had one student graduate to receive their High School Diploma. Even though more students are graduating today, the graduates only make up one out of 200 people to date.[201] Educational programs have been influential in promoting education to the young people. Programs have been set up in the past to reward students with perfect attendance in hopes of increasing attendance

[200] Program was set up by members of the Horse Lake Education Department to address the needs of the Horse Lake students who were on the verge of expulsion in 2015.
[201] Horse Lake First Nation's Nominal Roll, (1989).

rates. Other reward systems have been in place for a few years to recognize students who have achieved high academic standards or have improved the most in the school year. Companies surrounding the reserve are only interested in hiring people with high school or equivalency diplomas; thus, giving parents on reserve an incentive to encourage their children to attend school if they want their children to succeed.

Kinship and Marriage Patterns on the Reserve:

People in Horse Lake did not always get married, especially Treaty women with non-Treaty men. This was due to the provision in the *Indian Act* that proclaimed that if an Indian woman married a non-Indian they could no longer retain their Indian status. A few women; however, still got married and lost their treaty rights and status privileges. Most people on the reserve do not believe in cousins dating cousins. Young people; however, do not share this belief. Some still date their cousins despite their parents' wishes. Just about everyone in Horse Lake is related. The only ones that are not related are the ones who are living with band members. It is common for extended family to raise their grandchildren, nieces, cousins, or great-grandchildren. In the early years, it was a regular practice for grandparents to raise their children's first-born child. This was done so that the grandparents could teach their grandchild the traditional ways of the Cree people. Today there is no particular order as to who raises whom. Siblings along with their spouses tend to raise their single parent sibling's children for them when their siblings are unable to do it alone. Everyone in the community helps look after the children. When children are left unattended, they can go next door or down the street to eat. There is always someone home that is willing to lend a helping hand. When the hunters have a successful hunt, they share the meat with close family and friends. These same hunters will also share their hunt with people in the community that are in need of food. Horse Lake people call

relatives closest to them, whether or not they are siblings, brother or sister. Their mother's siblings and first cousins are called aunties and uncles and their parent's aunties and uncles are called nokomak (grandmothers) ekwa (and) nimosomak (grandfathers). All other relations are considered cousins. As long as they are descendants of their ancestors, they are seen as family. Siblings tend to treat their nephews or nieces like they would their own children.

Conclusion

As I mentioned earlier, conducting this study has proven to be very difficult at times. I went into this hoping to prove that women once had a place in Indigenous communities. I was not prepared to discover that the Cree people once lived a harmonious life, living off the land in an egalitarian society long before colonization, missionaries and government laws. I grew up on a reserve and was taught by members in my community that the man had the last word. Women usually followed their husbands and were okay with doing so. I grew up near communities that not only discriminated against women, but Indigenous people in general. Our people had difficulty getting jobs in neighbouring communities because of the colour of their skin or because they had last names that were associated with Indigenous people. Horseman, Napesis, Joachim, Ferguson, Laglace, Savard, Gauthier/Gouchey, Whitford, and Chatelaine, were some of the last names of people in my community and outsiders knew it. When applying for jobs in outside communities, our people usually did not make the short list for an interview unless there were government grants going out to companies promising to hire Indigenous people.

It was not surprising to discover that Indigenous women, according to Stewart-Harawira and other academics, that women were among the most marginalized groups in the world. In our community of Horse Lake, our own people discriminate against our women. They are often raped/molested, physically abused, degraded, devalued, controlled, unheard, and ridiculed. The *Indian Act* over the years would play a huge role in discriminating against women.

Women were once had an equal role within Cree societies. They were once valued and deemed just as important as the men in their communities. The language of the Cree is a strong indicator that women were once important in their societies. There are no gender specific terms in their language. He/she does not exist within the language. When referring to he or she or him/her, the same term is used, which is "ohya." The Cree people were once a group that demonstrated respect for one another by living an ideal ethic of non-interference. Everyone helped in ensuring a life of longevity.

With the *Indian Act* came the Canadian/British ideals. It was not a surprise to me that it emphasized the male while excluding the female, which led to women's roles slowly diminishing in Indigenous communities. Indians, were not considered Canadian citizens until 1960 when they were finally franchised. Even white women, were given the right to vote decades before Indigenous people were. While the government was training the males on reserves the election system, women would not be given this opportunity until 1951. The 1876 *Indian Act* would influence Indian males to discriminate against females in their communities that still occurs today. It would also define gender differences in Indigenous communities for over a century. Legislation declassified Indian women even before the *Indian Act* was passed. For many years Indigenous women would suffer the brunt of the discrimination Indigenous people would face as a result of government laws, like the *Indian Act*.

As Indigenous women were getting tired of the discrimination they were facing through laws like the *Indian Act*, they began fighting the government to be treated equally to their male counterparts. Section 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act* disempowered women. Lavelle's case would be the beginning of a long and difficult fight for Indigenous women in Canada. Even though Lavelle did not win her case, it would help set up women's groups that would help in the fight for

equality. This would lead to Lovelace taking her case to the United Nations and winning at that level.

I have taken you into a world through the eyes of an Indigenous, two-spirited, traditional Cree woman using Indigenous methodologies. Storytelling was always an important part of my community for teaching important lessons and morals. As demonstrated in this thesis, stories have been an important part of the Cree culture. As Eastman, Thomas, and Mrs. Sidney have related, stories were also important in their cultures. Cruikshank's interviews with the elders from the Yukon supports the idea that storytelling was very important to their people as well. Next, we took Indigenous feminism theories and related them to my experiences in my community relating to politics. As scholars, such as Beads with Kuakkaned, LaRocque, Stewart-Harawira and St. Denis have illustrated; Indigenous women are not fighting for the same rights as men, but are trying to restore their rightful place in their own communities. Women were once highly regarded and respected and they did not have to fight for their place in their societies because it was a part of them.

In Chapter three, I took you through the experiences of Indigenous people as the white people were attempting to civilize them. The Canadian/British ideologies would be forced on the Indigenous people in Canada and my community would not be spared in this process. The colonizers would not give up the fight in civilizing our people. In fact, they came at us so strong that many of the people in our community have adopted the values of the colonizer. Which has resulted in the distinct believe that males are dominant and females are submissive. Men continue to take jobs where physical strength is required and women tend to take on jobs that are of a social nature. As stated earlier, our band has never had a female chief and for the last three terms, we have not had one female serve on council. Many people in our community believe this is so because our people think men make better leaders.

As a result of the laws created by the federal government, the contemporary changes that have been made in the *Indian Act* will affect Indigenous people far into the future. For example, my grandson will never gain status under Bill C-3; therefore, he will never become a Horse Lake Band member because the minimum requirement to gain membership is one must have Indian status.

This thesis is important to my community, as it will help them understand that women were once valued in Cree communities and had a voice and roles to play that were important for the entire community. Too many young people today believe themselves to be worthless and continue to put up with abuse and discrimination without standing up for themselves. It is my hope that whoever reads, this from my community, will gain some confidence in believing that fighting for their rightful place in our society is worth it. I hope this thesis will assist researchers in the future to gain the knowledge needed to better understand the Cree people of Horse Lake. Again, I hope that this document will help women reach higher goals when pursuing political aspirations within or outside my community.

The government did not win the battle in civilizing Indigenous people of Canada, but the scars from their influence still remain in many Indigenous communities. Indigenous women all over Canada are still fighting for their rightful place in their communities. We will not give up. We will continue to fight for our rights. We will hold our heads up high and conquer whatever comes our way. We will fight for our people, so that our children and grandchildren will be able to live in peace and harmony with everyone, regardless of their gender. We will win the war against the people who aim to control us and keep us down. Indigenous people are considered to be among the most marginalized people in the world, and Indigenous women, are the most marginalized within Indigenous communities. But we will not have to give up the fight for equal treatment, and as long as we stick together, we will stand tall.

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Appendix I

FLYING WONDER: Wesakechak Stories and other Cree Legends

A certain man and his wife had a beautiful daughter and three sons who were excellent hunters. The girl was so beautiful that she attracted many suitors all of whom, however, her father dismissed because they could not surpass his sons in hunting.

One day while his sons were out hunting a stranger entered the camp and said to the father, "I should like to remain with you and work for your daughter's hand."

"What is your name?"

"Flying Wonder".

"Well, you may stay," said the father; "but you cannot marry her unless you excel my sons in the chase".

Flying Wonder lived with them for several months; hunting with the three youths and killing even more game than they did. Having proved his skill, he asked the eldest son for permission to marry his sister. The youth consulted his parents, and the entire family sat in council over the matter.

"He calls himself Flying Wonder," said one, "but we neither know who he really is nor where he comes from".

"That does not matter," replied another. "He has shown himself an excellent hunter."

They decided to let him marry their sister. Without delay he set up a tent under a large pine tree close by and the girl moved into it.

They were no sooner married, however, than Flying Wonder seemed to change. He treated his wife so cruelly that at last her brothers became indignant and said to their father, "We shall have to get rid of him. The next time he abuses her let us kill him."

The very next evening they heard their sister sobbing and the voice of her husband mocking her. Inflamed with anger, they rushed over and hewed him to pieces. Then they scattered his body in every direction, abandoned the camp, and erected a new one several miles away.

Being now short of food, the three brothers went hunting again and sighted a large herd of caribou. They approached them cautiously and were almost within bow shot

when suddenly a raven flew over their heads and croaked. The caribou then looked up in alarm and fled.

The same thing happened the next day and the day following. At last they understood its meaning. The spirit of their dead brother-in-law had become a raven and was avenging itself on them. They tried several times to shoot the bird, but it always flew beyond the range of their arrows. Soon the family was starving.

The youngest son proposed a device, saying, "Lay out my body as if I were dead, and abandon the camp. The raven will think one of us has already died of starvation, and it will fly down to devour me."

The others agreed. They covered the youth with brushwood that concealed all but his face, abandoned the camp, and set up a new one some distance away.

The raven appeared again, flew over their heads, crying 'kak kak' and sighted the pile of brush. It circled above it, swooped down, settled on the ground a few yards away, and inspected the supposed corpse. The youth made no movement. Still suspicious, the raven hopped around him just beyond his reach. When even then the youth did not move, it drew closer and tried to peck out his eyes. He caught it in his hands, hacked it to pieces, and, kindling a large fire, carefully burned every fragment. He even collected the bones after the fire died down and pounded them into dust. Then, satisfied that he could do no more, he followed his kinsmen’s tracks to their new camp and told them what had happened.

As they sat round their fire that evening, a man entered the camp -- Flying Wonder himself. He said to them, "You cannot kill me, for you do not know where I conceal my heart. But I repent now of my misdeeds and promise that I will conduct myself better hereafter. So let me remarry your sister. If I ill-treat her again, I will tell you where my heart lies and you can kill me."

The family had no choice, for they were starving and could kill no game as long as he was hostile. Flying Wonder kept his word and treated his wife kindly. He joined his brothers-in-law again in their hunting and filled their camp with meat.

One day they sighted a large herd of caribou, and twisting some roots the three brothers constructed a long fence from which they suspended snares of rawhide thongs at regular intervals. Flying Wonder then suggested that they fasten an extra snare to his body and hide him in the bush. They agreed, fixed his snare, and left him in concealment near the fence while they rounded up the herd.

Every snare caught a caribou, but the snare fastened to Flying Wonder caught the biggest animal in the herd. Unable to hold it, he shouted to his companions as it dragged him away, "Have I no relatives to come to my rescue?"

But the three brothers were so busy slaughtering the other trapped caribou that they did not hear him; and when they looked for him afterwards, the thong had already cut him in two.

"Fit me together, and I shall be whole again," cried his head.

But the eldest youth said to his brothers, "No, let him remain as he is. He brought this fate on himself."

They left him there and skinned their caribou, still pondering what they should do. Finally, the eldest youth suggested that they should dig a deep pit and bury the head, leaving the rest of the body where it lay. So, they buried the head and returned with their hides and part of the meat to their camp.

The next day, with fear in their hearts, they carried all the meat to their camp and hung it up to dry. Flying Wonder did not come near them.

Only after all their meat was dry and stored away in a cache did they hear the raven call again, and this time his call came from high up in the sky. The brothers gazed up at the bird contentedly and said to one another, "Let us not trouble ourselves about him anymore. He can no longer harm us."

And they added, "It is never wise for a man to allow his daughter to marry a stranger."

Appendix II

Sickness from Afar by Marie Merasty

My mother became sick after she had angered a man, but she was not entirely the source of the misunderstanding. It had to do with a young woman whom my mother had been looking after. The man had been trying to enter my mother's home, wanting to make advances to the young woman, but my mother had kept him out.

Later, as the man was preparing to leave on a canoe trip he threatened my mother, warning, "You won't be feeling proud of your victory for long."

And so, it was. One day while my mother was cleaning fish, her little finger began to hurt. Eventually, the pain spread the length of her arm until finally her whole body was sore. Her arm was particularly swollen. For two months or more, she was sick and in pain.

Finally, she called upon an old man to tend her ailment, a man by the name of Thomas Ballantyne, whose name before baptism was Thomas Wetsekis. Other people looked on as he unwrapped the bandage. Something like thick thread was sticking out from the area that had been covered. The old man pulled it out and placed it on a white cloth. He drew out thread for a long time, until there was quite a pile. When it was rinsed out, the people present tested it by pulling till it snapped. It was no different from common thread.

"You are not sick from ordinary causes," the old man told my mother. "Someone has caused you to be this way."

In the morning, my mother was still very sickly, so the old man instructed her husband to repeat the procedure if she became worse. And her condition did worsen to a point where she appeared on the verge of death. The husband unwrapped the bandage. Again, the thread could be seen protruding and again it was pulled out.

Eventually, the old man succeeded in curing my mother but she did not recover rapidly. For a whole year, part of her body seemed dead. Her hands were icy cold and she was not aware of what was going on around her.

Appendix III

During this study, I had the privilege of interviewing Philip Joachim (Philip), Norma Horseman (Norma) and Faye Horseman (Faye), who all served on council for a minimum of one term for the Horse Lake First Nation. Philip served on council for six years, Faye served for 15 years, and Norma served for two years. Each of these members were interviewed with the same set of questions, but the results were somewhat different, as one is male, two are females, one of which is a two-spirited woman. You will get a chance to hear their stories of their experiences living in Horse Lake, as well as their experiences as councillors during their time serving on band council. All three members have given their consent, verbally and in writing, to allow their names to be used in this study. I will now take the time to introduce you to these three people.

Philip Joachim was born in High Prairie, and moved to Horse Lake as an infant and was raised their most of his life with the exception of the years he lived in a residential school. Philip attended the Sturgeon Lake Residential School for two years and Joussard Residential School for the remaining eight years where he was able to begin his grade 11 courses. After leaving the residential school to return home, Philip was able to complete his eleventh year at the Beaverlodge High School, he then went on to finish his grade 12 at the Grande Prairie Composite High School. Upon receiving his high school diploma, Philip went on to attend the Grande Prairie College to pursue an Engineering degree; however, because of personal problems, he did not finish. Philip is now a respected elder in the community and is called on many times to help with spiritual ceremonies or blessings. At the time of these interviews he was 68 years old.

Norma Horseman was born in Beaverlodge and was raised by her great grandmother

soon after she was born. She lived in Horse Lake for most of her life except for the years she lived in various communities surrounding Edmonton. Norma grew up on the reserve and had two boys before she disclosed that she was two-spirited. She stayed in the closet until she moved to Edmonton. There were many times she faced discrimination because of her sexual orientation. Norma has been a strong advocate for women's rights and continues to speak up for women who are struggling with domestic violence or abuse. During her time as a councillor for the band, she stood up against the men on council to ensure that women were treated equal. Her strong will and determination to stand up to people on the reserve when it came to her sexual orientation has proven to be a great sacrifice. Because of Norma, women are now open with their sexuality and walk freely on the reserve holding hands without ridicule from the people there. Her fight has not been an easy one. She was assaulted many times by men in the community because of her sexual orientation and continued to stand strong and persevere in those hard times. Her contribution to women's rights and issues will forever be appreciated by many women in the community.

Faye Horseman has lived on the reserve her entire life. She was one of the longest serving female members to sit on council since the seventies. Faye dropped out of school in her junior high years and never continued her education, but learned a lot while serving on council in the nineties. She played a strong role on council advocating for the women and children in the community. Even though Faye was not well educated, she learned a lot about band programs and how to help her people. She was very involved in promoting educational and social programs in the community. Faye spent most of her time working in the community and left the external band business to her male counterparts: This of course validating the idea that men focus more on the public sphere and women focus more on the private sphere.

I was able to gather the following information from the interviewees pertaining to band politics and the discrimination women face on Horse Lake Reserve:

What does discrimination mean to you?

Philip: "Discrimination could mean a lot of different things. It can point to a gender and it can point to people, but mostly the discrimination factor on the reserves, I feel, is against the opposite sex. Also, the most part in the later years it has escalated to a point where women are not given a fair chance to show that they could be leaders. They figure that a man could do a better job. But I feel, going through this experience myself, I have looked at it thoroughly and I agree that women have better knowledge about a lot of things than men have. Our listening capabilities of a man are very limited. We only hear what we want to hear. But a woman listens and takes a lot of it and she is not afraid to ask questions in regards to what it means."

Norma: "Getting called names and getting refused help because of your sexuality."

*Faye: "*Discrimination is against your colour, who you are as an individual, what family you belong to and how strong you are as a woman. You are criticized and discriminated against for being an outspoken woman and saying what you want to people that is the truth and they can't accept it."

Have you ever faced discrimination?

*Philip: "*I have faced a lot of discrimination throughout my years. You know, growing up in a residential school and going to an environment where I was alone as a native? I seen a lot of discrimination, but learned to face it because if I didn't, I would not have survived."

*Norma: "*Yes, of course I did. Oh my God! Name calling, abuse, not getting voted in because of your sexuality when you run for council."

Have you ever faced gender discrimination?

Faye: Yes. "If I was a man back then, I would have been treated the same as them. I was a woman and I was treated differently." "I don't think it is fair how they exclude women totally. They should be there for the women and the families."

Norma: From the beginning 'til now, I have been discriminated against because of my sexuality. Kids throw rocks at my house, probably I assume, it's because of that.

What is your sexuality?

Norma: two-spirited.

Horseman: So because of you being a two-spirited woman, you feel that that is why you get discriminated against?

Norma: Oh absolutely!

Have you ever experienced or participated in gender discrimination?

Philip: Growing up and being taught by leaders, not only in the Native community, but worldwide, I've learned to discriminate against women too. […]. I said it to myself, and said it to a lot of people, they were the weak ones, we were the strong ones. Now today, I say "they are the strong ones. If it wasn't for the woman, where would I get the strength from? What made me grow to who I am today! All those understandings I have and what I went through, I paid the price. Through all the pain I went through, the pain I put myself through, I've learned to deal with it. That's how come I say, if it wasn't for a woman, where would I get that help from? It was the nurturing, the caring, the understanding that I got when I was a very little guy, small, from my mother. What right did I have to discriminate against women? Saying I am the strong one when it was the strong one feeding me what I needed. […] I am very grateful to have this opportunity to express all my feelings of what women are going through. They cry, but we don't listen. We should learn that a woman gave us birth. It is like we are not tankful for it. We judge them to the point where they lose their identity as women that gave birth. It is like we are not thankful for it. We judge them to the point where they lose their identity as women that gave birth. I was one of them. I was good at blaming, not only the ones at home, but everybody. People I trusted. They broke my trust. And I'm not pointing fingers, but I know today where it came from. It came from the leaders that put all these things for people to go through. […]. I can't blame anybody, but I blame myself. I played a big part of it too. I'm not ashamed to say today; that's how come I say, "women were not given the proper chance to show their leadership, to show that they could help the community grow again. By looking at us grow, as infants, I know a lot of women are proud. But how come we cannot look at that as a community? Maybe she knows how to make it grow and nurture it so that it'll be something to be proud of. Saying, "I live there!" instead of all of this that is happening nowadays.

What is your knowledge about the history of women in politics?

Philip: There's very few Native leaders. But you know, I guess we all come to the point where we don't have enough spirituality inside us. Spirituality is something that a lot of communities' lack. Not only men, but women because we don't teach our kids enough of it. I sit here today, I was one of them. I am not blaming anybody, but myself. Today, I look at it and say, "women were not given the proper chance to show their leadership, to show that they could help the community grow again."

Do you think men or women make better leaders?

Philip: "I would say for myself, like I said, if given a chance today, I believe women would build stronger relationships in the community."

Faye: "I would think women make better leaders. Women know how to take care of their families, they know how to be co-dependant and they know how to be caring."

Norma: "Women, definitely women. Men are in there for themselves and to get sex from little girls and women."

Who would you trust more in leadership, men or women?

*Philip: "*Today, I listen to what people have to tell me cause I know when a person is telling me the truth. Part of my life, like I said, I've been hurt, but when you touch a point like that, I know they mean well because at least I know all they're trying to do is help me." (Referring to the women in his life)."

Faye: "Women."

Norma: "Women."

Do you think it is time for a woman to be elected as chief?

Philip: "For me, I strongly believe it's time. It's time to change. Like I say, if we're going to change, why not give a woman an chance?"

Faye: "Yes!"

Norma: "Definitely, yeah, yes, yes, yes!"

In this study, as the three participants in this study all served a minimum of one term on council, these next few questions were specifically related to the experiences each of these members faced while all council;

When you were running in the election, what reception did you receive from the electors?

Norma: "I had a lot of support because of that petition I took around before the election. I wasn't doing it because I was going to run, somebody just asked me to run. Because they wanted to know what happened with their monies, I had a lot of votes. So, I got in."

What was the mindset of your opponents while you were running?

Norma: "I don't even remember who I was running against."

What was the mindset of the women while you were running? Was it different?

Norma: "No. I had more women, I think supporting me than men."

What was the response from the community while you were on council?

Norma: They wanted by help. That's why they voted me in, but the two turned against me and refused to help anyone I asked help for, even grandma Caroline. I went asked for help for her, they just said, 'No!'"

Faye: "The men were always out-casting me because of who I was, a woman. I always had to fight more for what I believed in. I had to stand up more for the community members. I had to

stand up more for their…, for the women workers. The two council members were men. They pretty well had no time for the women, I always had to be the one to be the mediator, you might as well say, and help out the women as much as I could. No matter what had to be done, I had to do it. And I always got out-casted for that, male wise. I didn't get as much as what they got. I had to fight more just to give. I just had it harder…"

*Darlene: "*Do you think, if you would have been a man, you would have been included in all decision making?"

*Faye: "*Yes because the men always stuck together. The two council members that were in there, they always stuck together and they wouldn't ask for any kind of information or input or suggestions. I was always the last one they would ask, if they asked at all. The only reason they would ask me for things was if I had to talk to the community. If they had to go and deal with the outside community or to do things, I was never asked to go. I was never asked to attend outside meetings. "

Did the council include you in all decisions? If not, what were you excluded from?

Faye: "No, they didn't."

Darlene: "What were you excluded from?"

Faye: "A lot of sneaky stuff! Lots of things were going on behind closed doors, which I wouldn't know because, being a woman council member, they had their profile for the men. Even the band manager was a man. The legal advisor was a man. It was all men. They all worked as men and the only time they would need me is when they needed a third signature on BCR's (Band Council Resolutions), or when they needed something on signatures they wanted to get done. Or if there was anything the chief couldn't sign. When it was a conflict of interest, that's where I would come in to sign on their behalf. There was a lot of stuff that was happening that I couldn't really say 'cause I had to maintain the peace and be the mediator for the women in our working environment. I felt like I always had to be the one and I was so stressed out at times. It was like I didn't know which way to go. I tried to be there for all the women and education. I tried to, just wished it would've been different, always had to go out fighting. Every time there was elections, […] you were always just fighting along with the people."

Do you feel you were treated fairly while you were on council by the community and the council?

Faye: "Yeah, there was a difference. I felt I was treated fairly by the community because a lot of the community, you could speak to. For myself, I could speak to women, like my friends. I could speak to all my co-workers. I called them my co-workers 'cause that's what they were. They were my girls, my friends. I would tell them things that would happen behind closed doors with the council, the men council members, and I agree on, what I said, but I didn't care. That's why the men would exclude me because most of the time I would tell what they would say behind closed doors and wouldn't like that. I was always telling the truth and what they wanted to do and how to do it and I didn't feel it was fair. …did a lot of stuff they were trying to do to people.

I would not just sit there. I would tell about things that were happening."

What were some of your biggest obstacles while serving on council?

Faye: Males of the council. They were getting in my way of things I wanted to get done. Because it had to do with the community, they would not like it. I had things to organize, to do things for people, for family members, or all the families to try and come in and work together. They didn't like it. It seemed like they always liked certain families to fight against each other. I don't know why. Like, the men always wanted to start something between families. And it's still like that to this day. They are always throwing in something, so families can't get along together. And I have always wanted the families and friends and people to get along. I would be a lot better for our families and our community and our children and our people, but it's always been a fear of losing their seats and power. They didn't want to lose it to the women. There was so many times when there, many women could have done a lot of good for our community, but the men were too afraid to lose power. And they still are to this day."

Did you ever get threatened or assaulted while you were on council by anyone, even if it was council members, or band members?

Faye: "Oh yeah, I got threatened quite a few times. […] I got hit once at election time when I was walking in to go make my vote. And then we were fighting with the other side of the family because they didn't feel like I should be running because I didn't belong here, but I do. And we fought right inside the building, me and this lady. That was the time I fought. There was just a lot of discrimination with the ex-chief. [He] thought he knew everything that was there for the band. It was about the seventies. […] He didn't treat women fairly himself. He always belittled women and children. It was mostly just for himself, and what he could get. De didn't want to do things for the community. And that's where all the discrimination against women came into play. Because he was a beater, an abuser and he had a lot to do with the way the community turned out. Him, being a man […]."

Do you think that people in our community, when they became chiefs, followed that same ideal?

Faye: "I believe they did. They believed if they followed the same pattern of just being a male, they could have control over the people. He scared the people any way he could and if they spoke out, they would get beat up the next night. If you did anything to go against them, you were gonna get beat up. So, they tried to eliminate the people they could control and hurt, way back then. […]"

*Darlene: "*I think this is kind of what I've seen in the past few years that the women have been pushed out of the loop because they don't have the physical strength to stand up to the men."

Faye: "Yeah."

Darlene: "It seems men in their need for control have overpowered a lot of our women. Do you believe that?

Faye: "Yes. I believe that. When men get in there, they have to have that power over the community. And as for me, being in there as a councillor, I never felt I had the power. I had the power to try to do good, tried to be a good role model for the families and for the community. And as I see, for men, right to this day, no matter if you're chief or council, you see these people growing up here. You see the people in our community growing up as children and these men are fine people, but as soon as they get into council, they change. It's like they're better than you. They think they got that power and if you say anything toward them or say one wrong thing, they will be fired or they will try to hurt you or they can get somebody else to do something towards you. […]"

During my interview with Faye, she expressed that during her time, Horse Lake had a chief that was on the right path. He helped bring the community to a better place, such as housing, a water treatment plant, and introduced sobriety to the community. Over a decade, this continued, but unfortunately, this would change after only a decade of leadership: "He brought sobriety, but it was the power that got to him […]. He was a good chief, but it was the power and the little things that people would say that triggered him and it shouldn't have bothered him. […]" She believed this was the start of him changing because of the control.

Darlene: "Can you remember an example of something that somebody would say that would upset the male members and it didn't really affect you?"

Faye: […] Like the thing I didn't really like or think was right is when they took (a female member) off the membership list just cuz she was an outspoken woman. There was this other lady […], that would say things that really bothered him at the time. Him, being a chief, I didn't feel that was fair with what was happening with them and I tried to be there to help them both, but it wasn't good. It was like, things they would say to each other and swear at each other. They would say […] things that he's doing stuff he shouldn't be doing. […] They were firing women at that time because the women were now, no longer sitting back. They were saying what they anted to say, gut they took it personally."

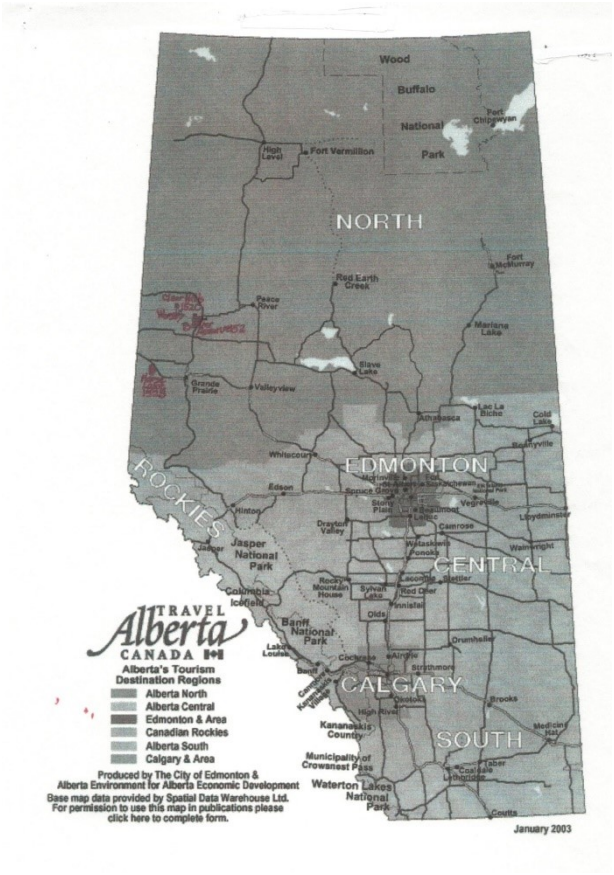
Appendix IV

Cree Terms (Translation)

Ohkawîmâw-mother
Ohkomimâw-grandmother
Ohkawiyisimâw- aunt
Ohsîmisimâw-younger sister
Ohmisisimâw-older sister
Ninehiyawân-I speak Cree
Nehiyawewin-Cree language
Nisikos-Aunt
Kipisini-have a sliver
Nistesimâw-older brother
Nokom-my grandmother
Nokomak-my grandmothers
Kohkominawak-grandmothers
Nikawiy-mother
Ohya-he/she
Kakewak-dry meat
Poko nikan ohci okohtakani kamansin-You have to cut from the throat first
Nehiyawewin-Cree Language
Nicapan-My great-grandmother
Akon-dry meat rack
Nimosompan-grandfather who has died
Nimosomak-my grandfathers
Napesis-boy
Nimamasis-my aunt (Cree mixed with French)
Wunskaw [Wanskâw]-wake up
Otacimowiniwawa-stories told in their own words
Poko ka manâcihtâyin moya ka manisosowiyan-You have to be careful not to cut yourself
Kaya ohkats kapapihaw awiyak moya ka insteymat-Never laugh at a strangers
Kaya ohkats kapapihaw awiyak moya ka insteymat-Never laugh at a stranger
Nipapasis-my uncle
Ohsimak-her grandchildren
Simâkanisak-police
kepatci moniya-skwesis-crazy white girl
Kaya ohkats kapapihaw awiyak moya ka insteymat-Never laugh at a stranger
Weytiko-a person who eats a lot

Appendix V

HORSE LAKE FIRST NATION
& ITS THREE RESERVES



Beaver Indian Reserve #152

11,840 acres (entitlement)

(1900 – Treaty 8 Adhesion)

Surrendered 1928

Clear Hills Indian Reserve #152C

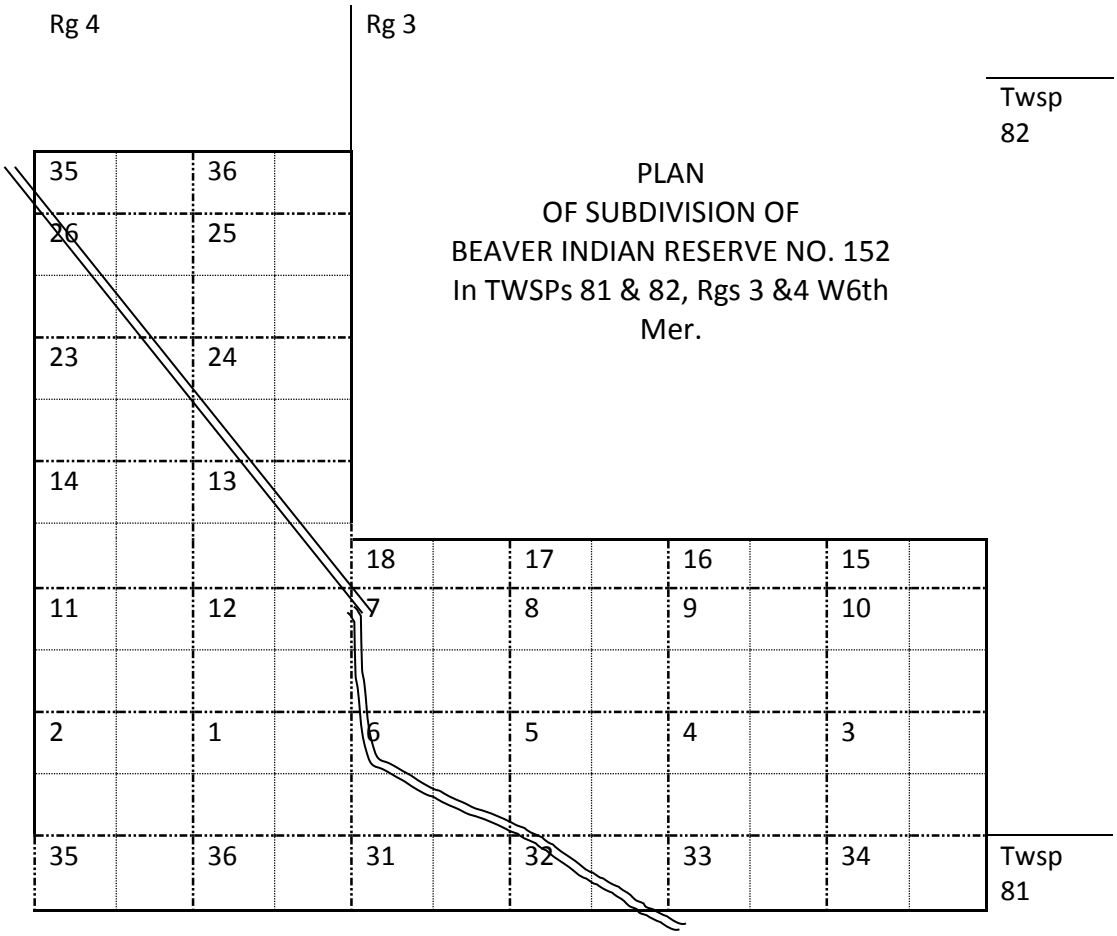
(1921 – Reserve Addition)

Horse Lake Indian Reserve #152B

(1921 - Reserve Addition)

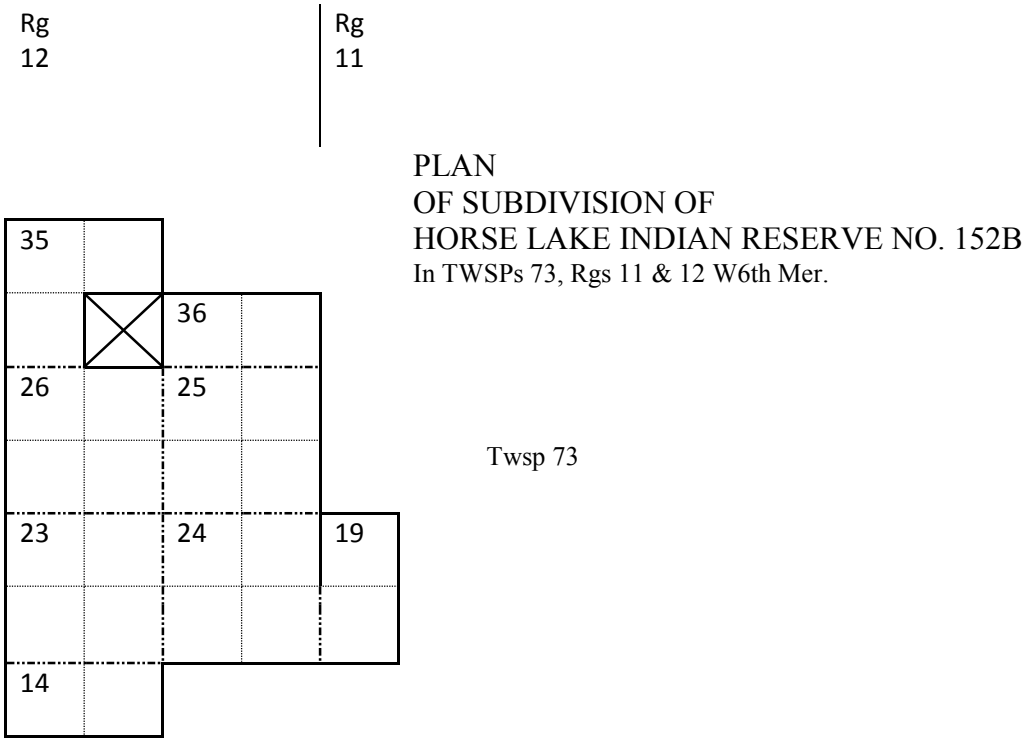
Appendix VI

Picture of BIR (Original Reserve – 11,840 Acres)



Appendix VII

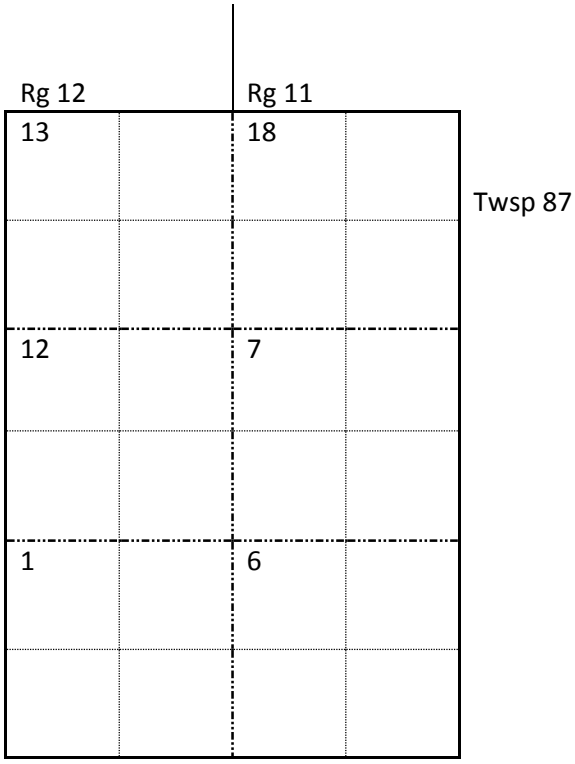
Picture of HLIR (Approx. 3835 Acres)



Appendix VIII

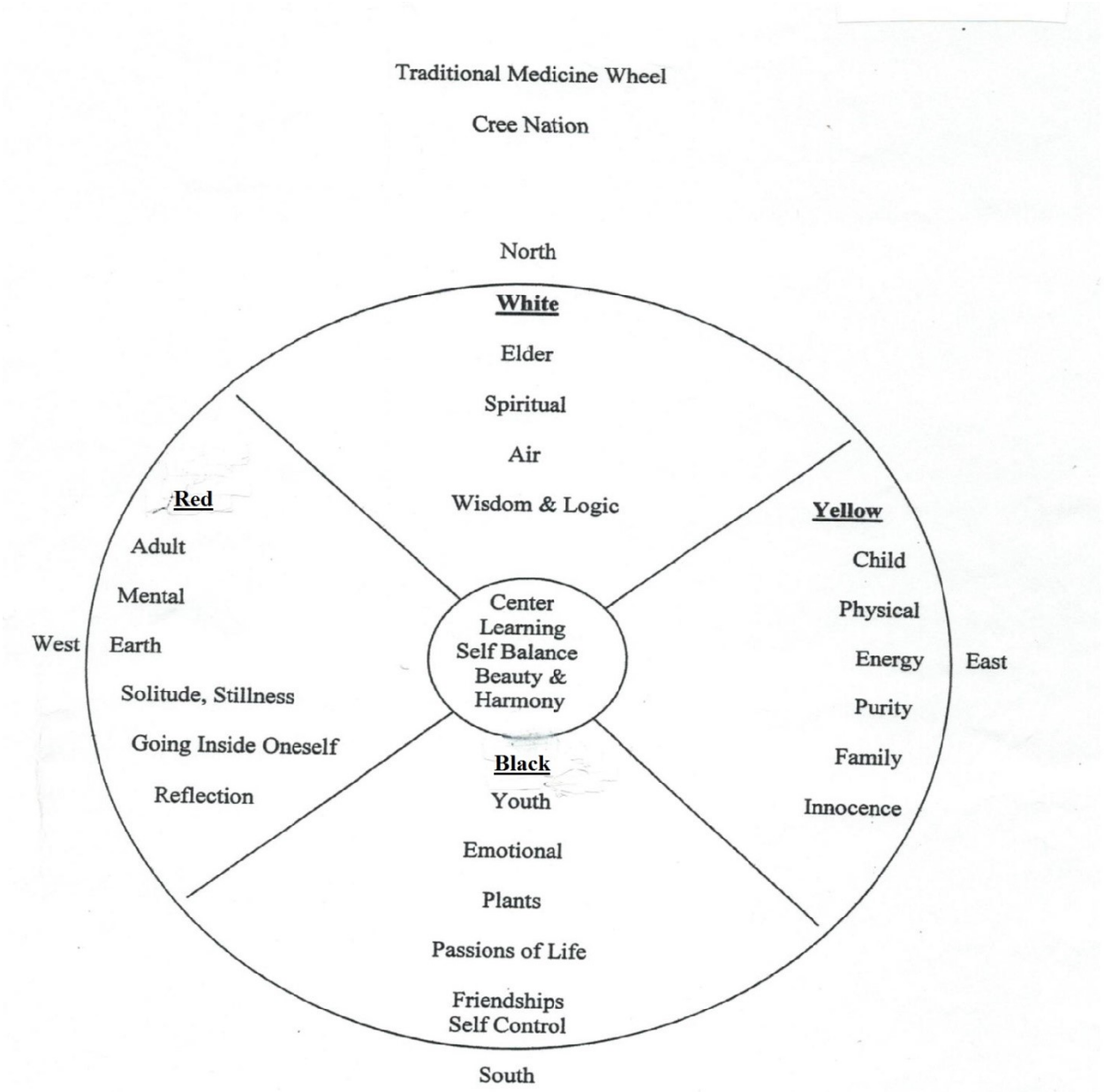
Picture of CHIR (APPROX. 3823 ACRES)

PLAN
OF SUBDIVISION OF
CLEAR HILLS INDIAN RESERVE NO. 152c
In TSPs 87, Rgs 5 & 6 W6th Mer.



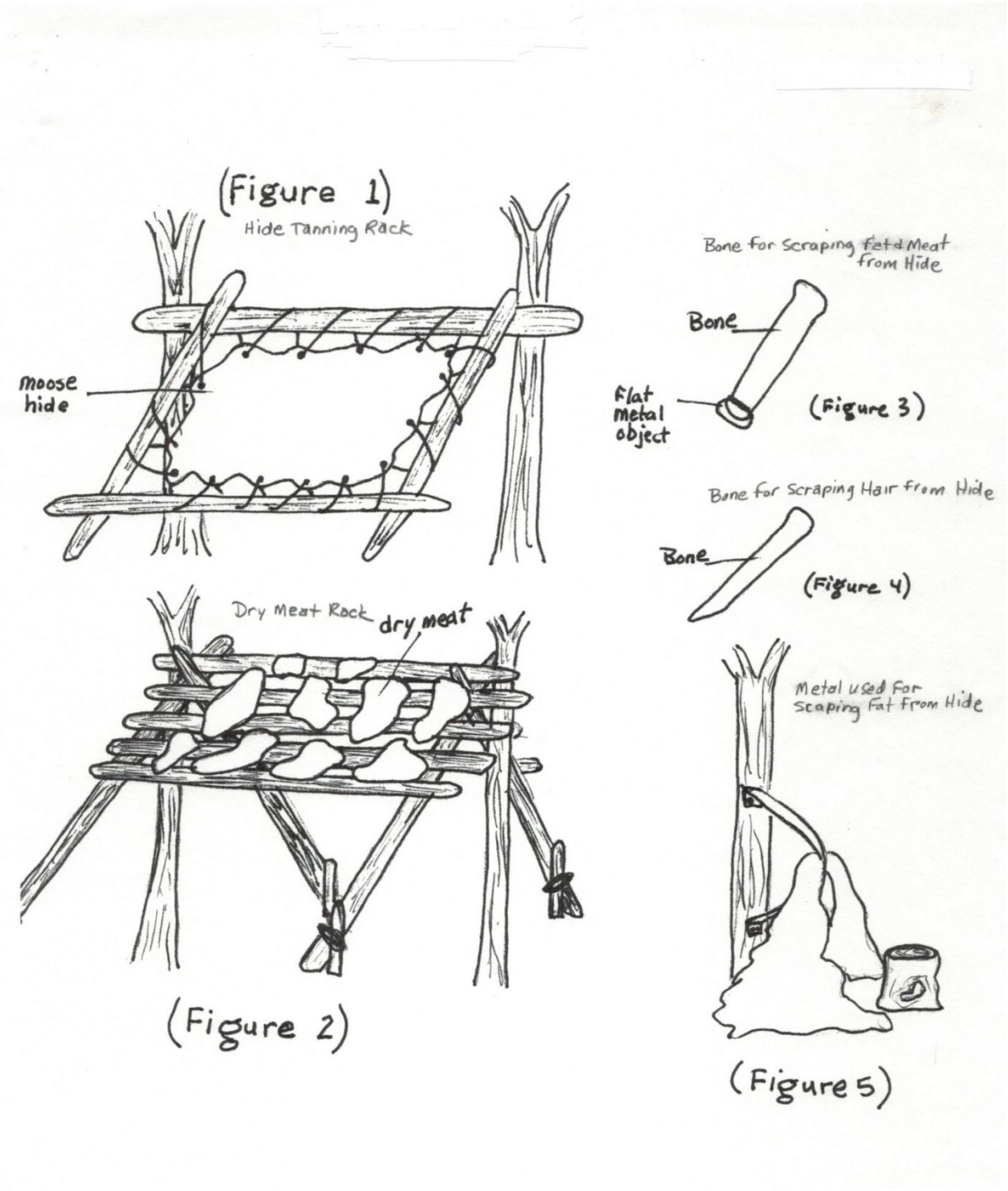
Appendix IX

Picture of Medicine Wheel



Appendix X

Pictures of Stretching Rack and Tools



Drawn by Darlene Horseman