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NORTHWIND DREAMING

Kiwetin Pawâtamowin

Tthísi Níłtsi Náts'ete



FORT CHIPEWYAN 1788 - 1988



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FORT CHIPEWYAN 1788 - 1988

Patricia A. McCormack

**Catalogue of an exhibition held at the
Provincial Museum of Alberta**

23 September 1988 - 26 March 1989

The Friends of the Provincial Museum of Alberta Society

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Cover: Artifact 71. Cree man's hat. Collected in 1892 by Frank Russell. (*University of Iowa Museum of Natural History*)

FOREWORD

Although the story of our people began long before the coming of European traders, their arrival set our history on a new path. In the bands which traded at Fort Chipewyan, Cree and Chipewyan Indians began to marry one another, and their daughters married European men. Today in Fort Chipewyan, we have separate Indian bands and a Métis Local - but we are proud to say that we are working together, supporting one another, and yet respecting our individual traditions and values.

We take pride in our community and its heritage. We welcome the Fort Chipewyan Bicentennial Ex-

hibit as a step in teaching our children about their rich past and in showcasing Fort Chipewyan to other Canadians. We know that we must understand our past in order to help us shape our future. By taking the best from the different cultures which have contributed over the years to Fort Chipewyan, we will build a thriving community for our children and their descendants.

Rita Marten
Chief, Fort Chipewyan Cree Band

PREFACE

In 1968, I went to Fort Chipewyan as a summer student. Little did I know that twenty years later I would be putting the final touches on a major exhibit and catalogue commemorating the 200th anniversary of Fort Chipewyan and celebrating the lives of its people. In that first visit, I met people who have opened their homes and lives to me over the years, and who are still close friends today. From 1975 through 1978, I lived in Fort Chipewyan for long periods while I conducted formal research for my Ph.D. dissertation. From 1985 through 1988, I spent many weeks in the community preparing for this exhibit and developing the northern collections at the Provincial Museum of Alberta. I visited with people in their kitchens, talking about the "old days" as well as life today. I spent time on the trapline and generally took part in the daily life of the community. As well, I visited museums, archives, and private collections in North America and Britain, searching for artifacts and photographs from Fort Chipewyan. Particularly memorable was a trip to the Orkney Islands, the home of many fur trade em-

ployees whose descendants still live in Fort Chipewyan today.

The development of the exhibit itself began in earnest two years ago, with feasibility reports and preliminary designs. During that time, I talked with Fort Chipewyan residents about exhibit concepts and appropriate artifacts for exhibit components. Their advice and recommendations have shaped the form of the exhibit and catalogue. This exhibit would not have been possible without their liberal assistance and support. In turn, this exhibit is my gift to the people of Fort Chipewyan. In this historical and contemporary portrait of their community, I hope they find some answers to their own questions about their historical roots, and that other visitors to the exhibit find it a useful guide to this little known corner of Alberta.

Patricia A. McCormack
Curator, Ethnology
Provincial Museum of Alberta

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At one time or another, virtually all staff at the Provincial Museum have been involved with the Fort Chipewyan Bicentennial Exhibit and related programming. Special thanks must go to the dedicated Ethnology staff, especially Ruth McConnell-Curatorial Assistant, Gina Sydenham, Carolyn Green-Olson, Cathy Figol, and Kerri Ward; and to Exhibit Services staff, especially Vic Clapp, who designed and built the exhibit with the assistance of Paul Beier, Bill Gordon, Ludo Bogaert, Bill Malysz, Ken Petrashuk, and others. Doreen Rockcliff looked after conservation needs. Bruce McGillivray and Ross Hastings assisted in the production of the catalogue and maps were drafted by Steve Fisher. Catalogue photographs were prepared by the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Operations staff Ted Smith, Vicki Fannon, Karen Jensen, Jim Worton, and Diana Lake developed exhibit-related programming.

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THE FOUNDING OF FORT CHIPEWYAN

Fort Chipewyan celebrates its 200th anniversary in 1988. It is the oldest, permanently occupied community in Alberta, and one of the oldest in western Canada. About 1,500 people live there today, many of them the direct descendants of the Indians and Europeans who jointly constituted a new social formation with the coming of the fur trade two centuries earlier. They are Chipewyan and Cree Indians, French and Scots Métis, and a scattering of non-Natives. The building of the post and local development of the fur trade in the heart of the Athabasca country went hand-in-hand with the generation of the new social community which historically comprised Fort Chipewyan.

The Athabasca region

Fort Chipewyan lies at the west end of Lake Athabasca, in the northeast corner of Alberta (Fig. 1). The region is bisected by two great physiographic provinces: the Great Plains to the south and west and the Canadian Shield with its rugged, rocky outcrops along the north shore of the lake. Lake Athabasca is one of Canada's major shield lakes. The region surrounding Fort Chipewyan includes the rich Peace-Athabasca delta, with its concentration of fur and food resources and neighboring grasslands and forests where animal productivity was increased by controlled Indian burning.

The Athabasca region contains a wealth of fur bearers, including beaver, marten, mink, otter, weasel, fox, lynx, wolf, and bear. Large game include moose, bison, and caribou. Small game such as hare and upland game birds are present year-round, while dense flocks of migratory waterfowl - geese, swans, and ducks - pass through the region each spring and fall, with many staying to breed in the delta. The numerous lakes and rivers support diverse fish species, including whitefish, lake trout, northern pike (jackfish), goldeye, and walleye (pickerel). In the harsh climate of the Canadian

subarctic, the Athabasca region is unparalleled in the natural resources which it offers now and did provide historically. This richness drew Indians and traders alike into these remote lands in the early days of the fur trade.

The settlement

The roots of Fort Chipewyan as a fur trade entrepôt lie in the westward expansion of the fur trade by men of the Hudson's Bay Company, at York Factory and Fort Prince of Wales, and by various entrepreneurs based in Montreal (Fig. 2). By the mid-1770s, Hudson's Bay Company employees and competing Montreal "pedlars" on the Saskatchewan River were looking for new markets. They sought to intercept the Indians from the distant, unexplored Athabasca country who were travelling to Hudson's Bay with their furs. It was inevitable that the trade would shortly be brought to the Indians in their own lands. Alexander Mackenzie described how the Montreal traders pioneered the Athabasca trade:

...in the spring of the year 1778, some of the traders on the Saskatchewan River, finding they had a quantity of goods to spare, agreed to put them into a joint stock, and gave the charge and management of them to Mr. Peter Pond, who, in four canoes, was directed to enter the English River, so called by Mr. (Joseph) Frobisher, to follow his track, and proceed still further; if possible, to Athabasca, a country hitherto unknown but from Indian report. In this enterprise he at length succeeded, and pitched his tent on the banks of the Elk River, by him erroneously called the Athabasca River, about forty miles from the Lake of the Hills (Lake Athabasca), into which it empties itself.

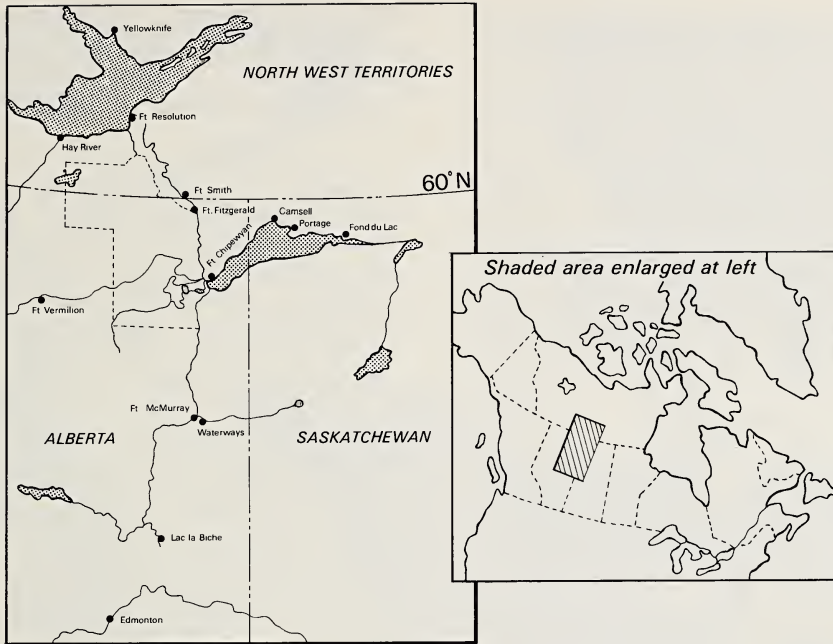


Figure 1. The Fort Chipewyan region.

Here he passed the winter of 1778-9; saw a vast concourse of the Knisteneaux [Cree] and Chepewyan tribes, who used to carry their furs annually to Churchill.... Mr. Pond's reception and success was ... beyond his expectation; and he procured twice as many furs as his canoes would carry. They also supplied him with as much provision as he required during his residence among them, and sufficient for his homeward voyage [Mackenzie 1970:73].

Eyewitness accounts from the Cumberland House journals, kept by Hudson's Bay Company staff, support Mackenzie's account. On May 26, 1778, they record that:

...at Noon Peter Pond one of the Canadian traders arrived here with five large Canoes from above [farther up the Saskatchewan River] loaded with Goods; He is going to penetrate into the Athapuskow, country as far as he can possibly go and there to stay this next winter..[Rich 1951:235].

He stopped again at Cumberland House on his return trip, on July 2, 1779:

At noon arrived Mr. Peter Pond with three canoes from the Northward very much distressed for want of food having had success on his Journey down his Canoes being broke upon the falls He required some little Supplies from me which I did give him with the greatest Civility for their kindness shown to Us Such as 3 lb. of Tobacco, Two pounds of Powder and two Berks of bear meat, He was so far that He traded with the Northward Indians that Mr. Samuel Hearne was along with Mit'tee'na'pew and his gang, He has been two Summers upon this Voiage made 140 Packs each 90 lbs. but was obliged to leave the most part of them behind, mostly parchment and Coat beaver He informed me of one carrying Place to be about 12 miles over...[Rich 1952:5-6].

An entry in a York Factory journal states that Pond "...had Traded the Cloaths of his back the Indians are so distressed and eager for European

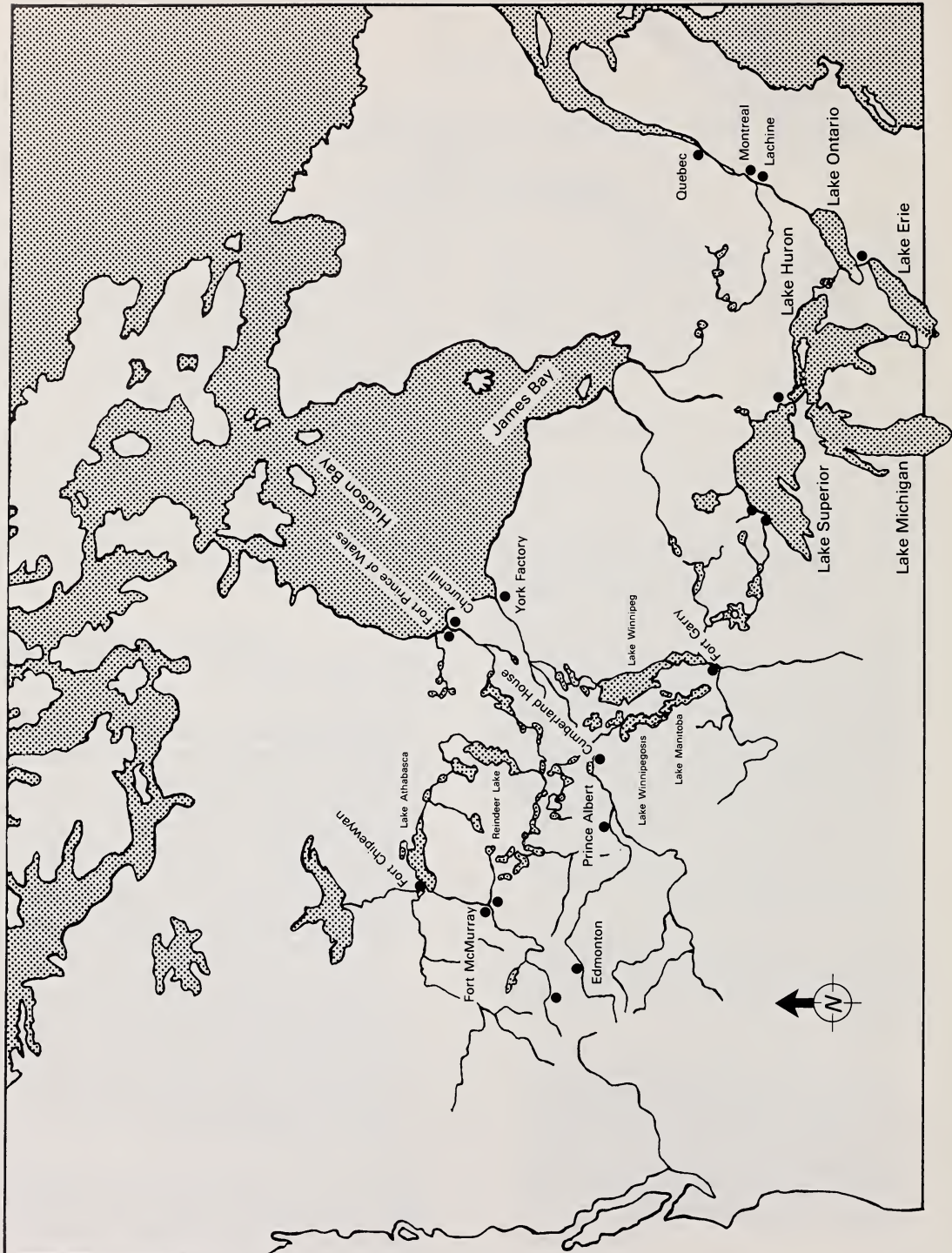


Figure 2. The Canadian fur trade.

goods..." [Rich 1952:6]. This singularly successful trade whetted the traders' appetites for more, although it would be nearly a quarter of a century before the Hudson's Bay Company would organize a trading venture.

Pond operated a trading post on the Athabasca River, about thirty miles from modern Fort Chipewyan, for a decade for the newly formed North West Company (Fig. 3, Plate I). He sent men to establish outposts on Great Slave Lake, the Peace River, and Lake Athabasca. Other "pedlars" followed Pond from Montreal to compete with him for furs, and in the rivalry which followed, Pond was implicated in the deaths of two of them. In 1788, these competitors amalgamated under the name of the North West Company. Despite the shadow that surrounds him, Pond was the person responsible for bringing together the worlds of the European and the Indian in the Athabasca country, opening up a vast region for incorporation into an expanding system of world trade. Accordingly, he is a pivotal figure in Fort Chipewyan history.

The location of Pond's post proved unsatisfactory. It was too far from good fishing locations, which could threaten the post with food shortages. It was too far from the Chipewyan Indians, whose lands lay northeast of Lake Athabasca, and not enough furs were being trapped in the immediate vicinity. Finally, it was subject to flooding. A new permanent post was needed. Alexander Mackenzie, who wintered with Pond in 1787-88, was instrumental in its establishment. His cousin Roderic McKenzie recalled that in July, 1788, Alexander was at Lac La Pluie making arrangements for the Athabasca outfit for the following season. He wanted Roderic to accompany him into the interior. When Roderic resisted:

He then informed me, in confidence, that he had determined on undertaking a voyage of discovery the ensuing Spring by the water communications reporting to lead from Slave Lake to the Northern Ocean, adding, that if I could not return and take charge of his department in his absence, he must abandon his intentions. Considering his

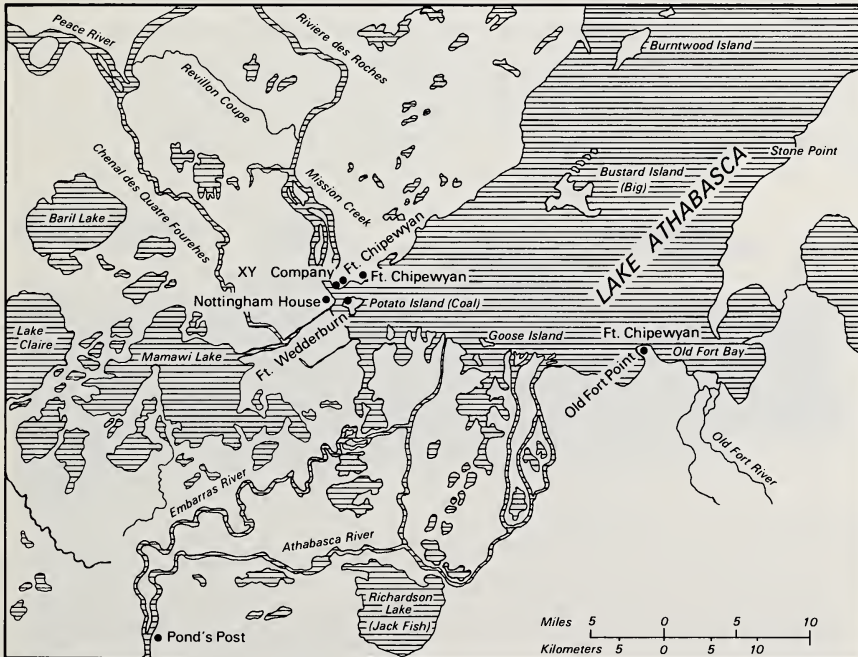


Figure 3. Lake Athabasca: location of trading posts.

regret at my refusal, and the great importance of the object he had in view, I, without hesitation, yielded to his wishes, immediately set to work and accompanied him into Athabasca [McKenzie 1889:27].

Roderick McKenzie (1889:27-28) described the events which followed:

On our arrival at Mr. Pond's old establishment the outfits for the several posts of the Department, were made up and despatched. I was appointed for Athabaska Lake, which was in the neighbourhood, say about one or two day's distance. Mr. MacKenzie himself remained to pass the winter with two or three men at the Old Post, the other men accompanied me to the Lake, where we were to make a new establishment and depend on our own industry in fishing for a living.

On my arrival at our destination, I looked out for a suitable spot for a new establishment to replace the old one of Mr. Pond.

After making every possibly enquiry and taking every measure of precaution, I pitched on a conspicuous projection that advances about a league into the Lake, the base of which appeared in the shape of a person sitting with her arms extended, the palms forming as if it were a point.

On this point we settled a built a fort which we called Fort Chipewean. It is altogether a beautiful, healthy situation, in the center of many excellent and never failing fisheries, provided they are duly attended to at the proper season.

Alexander Mackenzie intended Fort Chipewyan to be "...the principal Post for the Department" (1970:436). Philip Turnor (1934:398) described the post in June, 1791:

I think this is the compleatest Inland House I have seen in the Country this is the Grand Magazine of the Athapiscow Country and I am informed they have a sufficient quantity of Trading Goods in this Country for at least two years to come [emphasis in original].



Plate 2. Fort Chipewyan, 1901. (Provincial Archives of Alberta, E. Brown Collection, B.2967)

Pond's old establishment was maintained for a few more years to serve the Cree Indians, but eventually it was abandoned in favor of various posts further south on the Athabasca River. Today no trace remains of Pond's post, which presumably has been eroded away by the river.

Fort Chipewyan was moved about 1798 to the north shore of Lake Athabasca, about two km west of its present location. Although this location was once again removed from the Old Fort fisheries, it was strategically placed to take advantage of the earlier breakup of ice at the west end of the lake near the river draining the lake, to receive furs from posts up the Peace and down the Slave and Mackenzie Rivers in the spring, and to ship goods to those posts in the fall. It was also closer to the Chipewyan Indians, the major group trading at the post.

The North West Company faced new challenges from competitors at Fort Chipewyan. The first opponent was the New North West Company, or the XY Company, operating under Alexander Mackenzie's leadership from 1798 until 1804, when it was absorbed by the North West Company. Meanwhile, in 1802 Peter Fidler built Nottingham House for the Hudson's Bay Company on English Island, across the channel from Fort Chipewyan (Fig. 3). He managed to hold on to his post until 1806, when he was driven out by the aggressive and powerful Canadians of the North West Company. The Hudson's Bay Company returned in 1815 under John Clarke, who established Fort Wedderburn on Coal (now Potato) Island. This post persisted until the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company amalgamated in 1821, under the Hudson's Bay Company name. All local trade moved to Fort Chipewyan. For a century after its founding, Fort Chipewyan was the paramount trading center of the northwest. It was the link between the eastern posts and trade to the west and north.

The people

Chipewyans and Crees

The social roots of Fort Chipewyan predate the fur trade and the arrival of Europeans by thousands of years, to the establishment of Dene (Athapaskan) peoples to the north and west of Lake Athabasca and of Algonkian peoples to the south. David Thompson (1962:72-73) outlined these dif-

ferences in his *Narrative* when he talked of "...two distinct races of Indians...":

...North of the latitude of fifty six degrees, the country is occupied by a people who call themselves "Dinnie," by the Hudson Bay Traders "Northern Indians" and by the southern neighbours "Cheepawyan".... Southward of the above latitude the country is in the possession of the Nahathaway Indians their native name (Note. These people by the French Canadians, who are all without the least education, in their jargon call them "Krees"....

In fact, neither group was probably aboriginal to the western end of Lake Athabasca, which seems to have been inhabited by the Beaver Indians, an Athapaskan people. While Beaver Indians visited Pond's post and Fort Chipewyan, they had evidently been driven out of part of the region by Crees. One version of this story was recorded by W. F. Wentzel in a letter to Roderick McKenzie from his post at the "Forks" on the Mackenzie River. He describes the Indians of his region as Beaver Indians, who

...pretend to be a branch of the tribe of the Beaver Indians of Peace River, from whom they had been formerly separated and then driven this way by their inveterate enemies the Crees who, previous to the introduction of European arms into this quarter, were continually waging war against them [Wentzel 1889:85].

In local tradition, Peace Point, a location on the north shore of the Peace River in what is now Wood Buffalo National Park, was the site where Beaver and Cree Indians negotiated a peaceful end to their disputes. Beaver Indians appear in post records occasionally in the first quarter of the 19th century, but after that period they seem to have settled farther west up the Peace River, in the Fort Vermilion region.

Chipewyans and Crees became the two dominant Indian groups trading at Fort Chipewyan. Alexander Mackenzie (1970:125) overstated the case slightly in 1801 when he claimed:

Who the original people were that were driven from it, when conquered by the Knisteneaux [Crees] is not now known, as not a single vestige remains of them. The latter,



Plate 3. Fort Chipewyan woman with child. (*National Archives of Canada, C-24480*)

and the Chipewyans, are the only people that have been known here; and it is evident that the last-mentioned consider themselves as strangers, and seldom remain longer than three or four years, without visiting their relations and friends in the barren grounds, which they term their native country.

George Simpson, who operated Fort Wedderburn in 1820-21, elaborated in his report on the difficulties the traders had in securing the Chipewyan Indians as reliable trappers and provisioners:

The Chipewyans do not consider this part of the Country to be their legitimate Soil; they come in large Bands from their own barren lands situated to the North of this Lake, extending to the Eastern extremity of Gt. Slave Lake and embracing a large Track of Country towards Churchill. The Compys. Traders at the latter Establishment, made them acquainted with the use and value of European Commodities and being naturally of a vagrant desposition and those articles becoming necessary to their Comforts, they shook off their indolent habits, became expert Beaver hunters, and now penetrate in search of that valuable animal into the Cree and Beaver Indian hunting grounds, making a circuit easterly by Carribeau Lake; to the South by Isle a la Crosse; and westerly to the Banks of Peace River.... The greater proportion of them however remain on their own barren Lands, where they procure sustenance with little exertion as the Country abounds with Rein Deer [Simpson 1938:355-6].

Although Crees still occupied the region, Simpson (1938:362-3) noted that their numbers had been decimated by "...the Small Pox, Measles and other contagious diseases...." Moreover, some Crees had left the region for Lesser Slave Lake (*ibid.*:363).

Historically, Chipewyans and Crees were hostile to one another and distinct culturally and socially. Until the mid-20th century, Crees were in the minority. By the mid-1800s, Cree men had begun to marry Chipewyan women, creating alliances between their bands. Such alliances not only facilitated access into one another's hunting and trapping territories, they established a basis for the development of Chipewyan and Cree cultures which were more similar than they were distinct.

The early journals offer accounts of the various Indians who came to trade. The traders designated some as trading captains, such as English Chief, a Chipewyan Indian who had travelled with Matonabbee and Samuel Hearne in the early 1770s, and later journeyed with Alexander Mackenzie. Other names which show up in the accounts can be related to people who appear in the church records of later years. The continuity of people over time is strongly in evidence in Fort Chipewyan.

Other Indians visited Fort Chipewyan on an occasional basis, especially Iroquois and Ojibwa. Those who remained in the region married locally and were assimilated to Chipewyan or Cree culture.

Europeans

All early Europeans were aligned with trading companies. The North West Company was operated in Montreal and at the inland posts by Scots and Englishmen. They took over the trade from the French following the fall of Québec and its transfer to Great Britain in 1763. The "Canadians" they hired as their labor force were French-Canadian voyageurs, many of whom were the descendants of Indian mothers. The early journals mention Piché, Laviolette, Boucher, Tourangeau, and other men whose surnames are common in Fort Chipewyan today.

The management of the Hudson's Bay Company was primarily English, but its labor force in the 19th century was mainly Highland Scots and Orcadian. Peter Fidler's entire crew at Nottingham House in 1802-06 consisted of Orkney men. Names which have persisted into the 20th century in Fort Chipewyan include Flett, Wylie, Fraser, Loutit, and McKay.

Robert Campbell (n.d.:102) described both the men and their acculturation to the country:

The Company engaged clerks and labourers mostly in North and West of Scotland, and Lower Canada, for a term of service of five years at, till recently, very low wages. These greenhorns, after getting to their winter's quarters, found everything strange, food, ...scenery and whole surroundings very different from what they were accustomed to or expected, and many a one wished he was back with his mother again; but by the time

his term of service by their contract expired, they, for the most part, would be reconciled to their surroundings and would re-engaged at an advance of wage; thus the apprenticed clerks got to know thoroughly all the ins and outs of the business and the ways of the country and got an interest in promoting the fur trade and so a most efficient staff of recruits were always ready to take the place of retiring officers and keep the business in first class running trim.

The Canadians and the Orcadians were culturally distinct. For example, the Canadian men were often seen as superior voyageurs, while the Orcadians were considered better fishermen. Stereotypes of each abound in the fur trade literature. These solitary men took Indian wives when they lived in Fort Chipewyan and at other posts. Sometimes their wives were from the local Indian bands, while other wives accompanied their husbands far from their place of birth and their own people. The women served as interpreters and as a labor force, processing foods, sewing clothing, and manufacturing various goods used by the traders. These marriages and the children which resulted are the earliest beginnings of a northern Métis population, with kinship ties to Indians and Métis at other posts throughout the northwest.

No clear line separated the Métis of Fort Chipewyan from their Indian relatives, nor was the process of "Métisation" a uniform one. Agnes Deans Cameron (1910:76) observed that "When a Frenchman marries an Indian woman he reverts to her scale of civilization; when a Scot takes a native to wife he draws her up to his." French fathers tended to have been close to their Indian affines. They and their children were sometimes even absorbed culturally into the mother's band. For example, François Piché entered the area with Peter Pond in 1778 (Duckworth n.d.:185). He married a Chipewyan woman. Today in Fort Chipewyan, "Piché" is considered a Chipewyan surname, and all those with that name were listed as members of the Chipewyan Band established by Treaty 8 in 1899. Ironically, Alexandre Lavolette, the first Chipewyan chief, was remembered by one Fort Chipewyan resident as blond and bearded, and barely able to speak Chipewyan (Parker 1979), although this latter claim is hard to believe. Some Scots and English fathers tried to acculturate their families to a British norm. While sometimes they described themselves as "White," they are more properly de-

scribed as a distinctive Scots-Métis people. However, Indian families with Scots names are present. These examples show the fluid ethnic and even cultural boundaries which characterized the Fort Chipewyan social units.

Europeans brought their class distinctions to Fort Chipewyan. French-Métis tended to continue as fur trade laborers and as trappers, while Scots-Métis were more likely to move into managerial positions. One successful Scots-Métis, John James Loutit, was the factor at Fort Chipewyan from 1920 to 1935.

Other Europeans in Fort Chipewyan were the Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries, who arrived during the mid-19th century. After Canada purchased the Hudson's Bay Company territories in 1870, an increasing number of government employees were stationed in Fort Chipewyan, to ensure compliance to laws and regulations and to administer government programs. Many free-traders tried to establish their operations in Fort Chipewyan. The most successful of these was Colin Fraser, the son of Sir George Simpson's piper, also Colin Fraser, from Scotland. Increasing numbers of travellers passed through the area, including John Franklin in 1820, Frank Russell in 1892, and Robert Lowie in 1908. Most travellers made observations about the post and its inhabitants; some, such as Russell and Lowie, purchased moccasins and other local items which have been preserved in museum collections.

The years following World War I saw the arrival of two new groups of people: French-Métis families from Lac La Biche (450 km south of Fort Chipewyan) and "White" trappers, mostly struggling homesteaders. They moved north in response to a depressed prairie economy, lack of employment opportunities, and high fur prices. While a few White trappers stayed in Fort Chipewyan and married local women, most were transients who trapped intensively during the winters and returned south in the summers. By the beginning of World War II, virtually all White trappers had left the region. The Lac La Biche Métis, however, made their homes in the region, and their children are integrated into the community today.

Fort Chipewyan, once the informal fur trade capital of the northwest, today still serves people who are hunters, trappers, and fishermen. Wage employment is also very important today. Some Indians and Métis from Fort Chipewyan have always

left the region for residence elsewhere, but this trend has intensified in the last decade. Young men and women are leaving the community in large numbers to find employment in larger centers such as Fort McMurray and Edmonton. The residents of Fort Chipewyan are developing new industries to diversify the local economy so that their children will have a future there if they choose to remain.

The people of Fort Chipewyan are the descendants of Chipewyan and Cree Indians who took advantage of the fur trade pioneered in the Athabasca by Peter Pond and his successors. They are the descendants of hardy French voyageurs, some the offspring of French and Indian marriages, and of Orcadians and Scots who signed on for a short term and sometimes stayed the rest of their lives. The historic changes in Fort Chipewyan and its roles have been reflected in changes in the encompassing society of the region. The complex population which resulted is today a unique configuration which assures the persistence of Fort Chipewyan as a modern community, thriving and diverse as it enters the third century of its existence.



a
Fort Chipewyan, fall 1977.

c



b
Raymond Ladouceur visiting his nets, 1985.



Joe Bourke hunting for moose, 1986.

a



Louise Campbell cutting moose meat for drying, 1987.

b



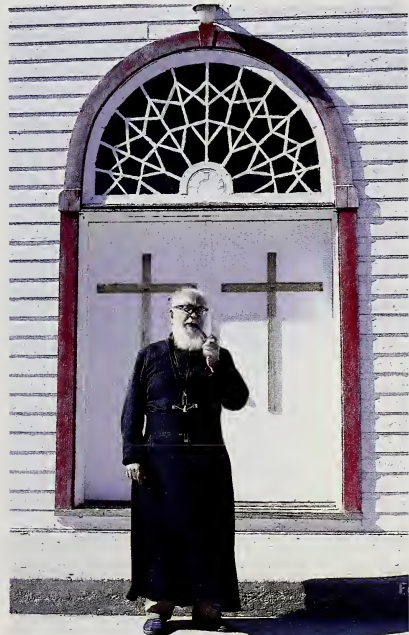
Madeline Tuccaro sewing moccasins, 1986.

c



John Mercredi playing fiddle, 1987.

d



Father Danto at the Roman Catholic church, 1986.

Plate 5. People of Fort Chipewyan.



Plate 6, Artifact 6. Colin Fraser's bagpipes. (*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H80.99.1*)



Plate 7, Artifact 31. Dog blanket (*University of Alberta Collections, O.C. Edwards Collection, ADX965.24.77*)

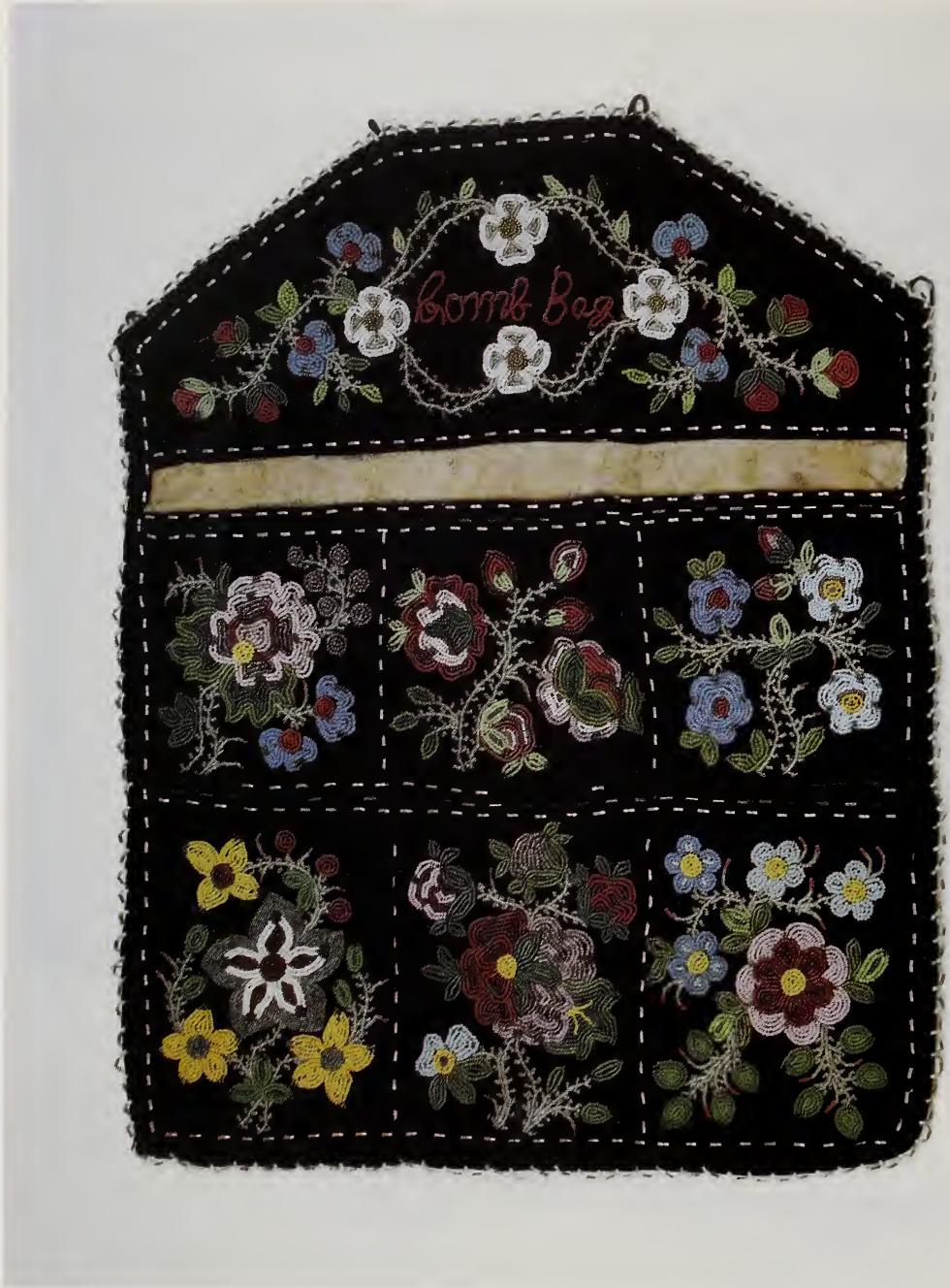


Plate 8, Artifact 59. Comb bag. (Roderick Fraser, Fort Chipewyan)



Plate 9, Artifact 68. Tea cozy. (*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H66.233.128*)



Plate 10, Artifact 77. Portion of quilled belt. (*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H64.12.3*)

a b c d
e f g k
h i j



Plate 11, Artifacts 80a 1908, b 1905, c 1927-30, d post-1950, e 1900, f 1900, g 1905, h 1911, i 1969, j 1988, k 1985.



Plate 12, Artifact 86. Athapaskan woman's dress. (Provincial Museum of Alberta, H73.55.1 A/B/C)

FORT CHIPEWYAN: THE FIRST TWO HUNDRED YEARS

FIRST PEOPLES: BEFORE THE FUR TRADE

Before the fur trade, the Indians - Beaver, Chipewyan, and Cree - were totally self-reliant on the rich resources of the Athabasca region. They fashioned all their tools, clothing, and shelter and provided all their foods from the stones, plants, and animals which surrounded them.

The Indians knew the habits of the animals they hunted, trapped, and fished. Detailed traditions about the animals, the land, and proper human behavior were passed on from one generation to the next in stories. The Indians used controlled burning to maintain grasslands to support bison and the small mammals on which fur-bearing carnivores such as lynx, fox and wolves feed. Moose took advantage of the secondary growth which occurred along the edges of the meadows. In the Peace-Athabasca Delta, spring flooding also maintained early successional habitats, and the lakes and rivers supported beaver, muskrat, mink, and otter. Mature forests provided food and shelter for caribou, marten, and other animals. The complex community of vegetation and animals produced a secure resource base on which residents still rely.

Despite the abundance of game in the Athabasca region, fish have been the most reliable source of food at all seasons for people and their dogs. Indians camped where they could fish as well as hunt. Later, the fur traders located their posts close to

good fishing locations, or "fisheries." Today, the most common fish used locally are whitefish, lake trout, northern pike (jackfish), walleye (pickerel), and goldeye.

Taltheilei tools*

The ancestors of Chipewyan, Beaver, and other northeast Athapaskan (Dene) Indians made distinctive stone tools, called "Taltheilei" by archaeologists. They show that these peoples occupied this broad area for about 2,600 years.

1a Chi-tho

A circular scraper or knife unique to Dene areas

*Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
KkLn 2:65c*

1b Quartzite biface

*Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
JgLp 1:4*

1c Chert end scraper

*Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
IeLk 4:153*

1d Beaver River sandstone projectile point

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
HhOv 18:638*

*The following information is provided about each artifact, where available:

Collection and artifact number

Collector or maker, community of origin, date

Ethno-cultural affiliation

Dimensions

Artifacts illustrated with photographs are indicated by a number next to the name.

1e **Quartzite projectile point**
Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
IIHo 1:3

1f **Quartzite side-notched arrowhead**
Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
HjPd 1:425

Selkirk tools

The ancestors of the Cree Indians also made their own types of stone tools, which archaeologists refer to as "Selkirk." Some Crees made pottery. Cree peoples may have lived in the region south of Lake Athabasca for 500-600 years.

2a **Quartz biface**
Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
SIL 246:19

2b **Rhyolite biface**
Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
SIL 250:1

2c **Chert thumb-nail end scrapers**
Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
SIL 247:39, SIL 247:40

2d **Projectile point**
Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
HgPd 1:695

2e **Chert side-notched arrowhead**
Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature,
SIL 257:M14

2f **Chert side-notched arrowhead**
Archaeological Survey of Alberta, HbOv 7:1

3 **Caribou babiche net**
Chipewyans made nets of rawhide strips, or "babiche," cut from a caribou skin, before European

twine became available. Hearne (1958:211) described Chipewyan nets in his 1795 account:

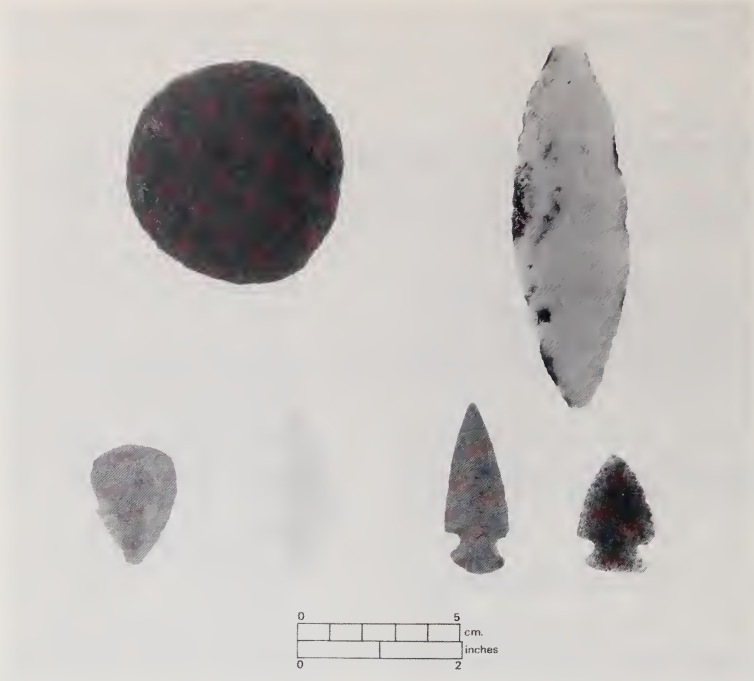
When they make a new fishing-net, which is always composed of small thongs cut from raw deer-skins, they take a number of birds bills and feet, and tie them, a little apart from each other, to the head and foot rope of the net, and at the four corners generally fasten some of the toes and jaws of the otters and jackashes. The birds feet and bills made choice of on such occasions are generally those of the laughing goose, wavy, (or white goose,) gulls, loons, and black-heads; and unless some or all of these be fastened to the net, they will not attempt to put it into the water, as they firmly believe it would not catch a single fish.

Private collection
Snowdrift, N.W.T., 1971
Chipewyan
W. 108.0, H. 88.0 cm

4 **Bark fish net**
Bark nets were used by many Indians, including Crees. They were hand made from the inner bark of the willow, which is twisted to form a cord and then netted. This net was collected by Bob McLaughlin, a trader and trapper in Fort Chipewyan in 1907. While "Holland twine," a commercial product, was available for making nets a century earlier, some Indians continued to make nets in the aboriginal manner.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H64.12.1
Fort Chipewyan, Bob McLaughlin, c.1907
Cree or Chipewyan
W. 538.0 cm

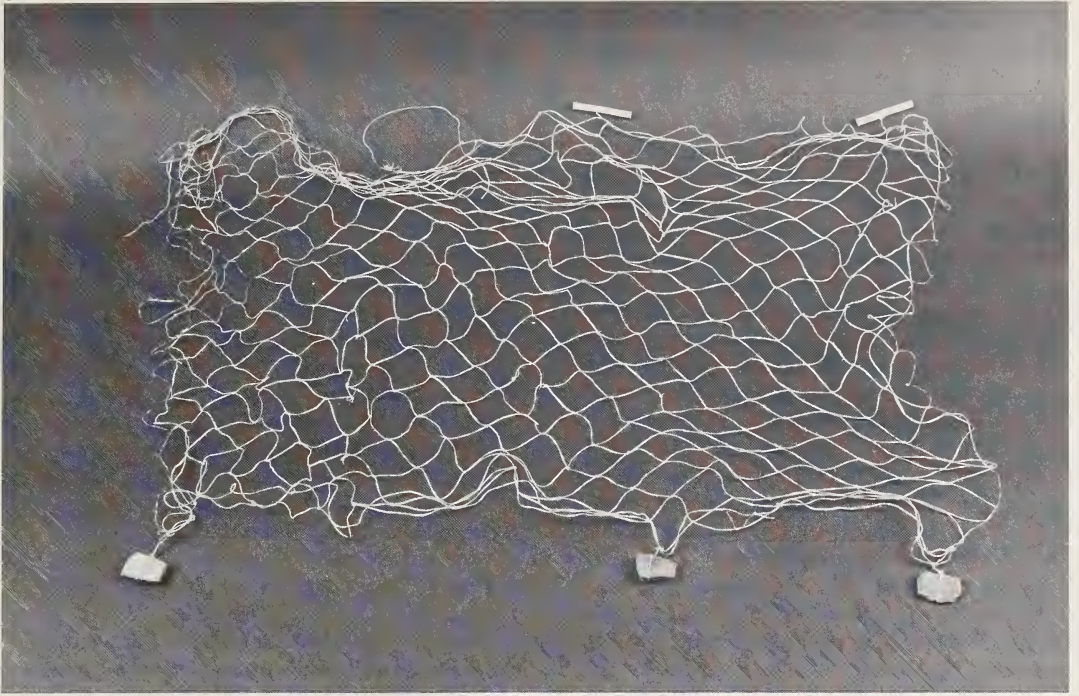
1 a b
c d e f



2 a b
c d e f g



3



4

FORT CHIPEWYAN: "THE GREAT MAGAZINE OF THE ATHAPISCOW COUNTRY" (Philip Turnor 1791)*

Early European exploration

In 1778, Peter Pond, one of many Montreal "pedlars" or free traders on the Saskatchewan River, became the first European trader to enter the Athabasca region. He made several trips to Lake Athabasca in the following decade and established posts on Great Slave Lake and Peace River. He drew several maps of the country, based on his own explorations and Indian reports. In 1787, Pond drafted a map to present to the Empress of Russia. It was copied by Ezra Stiles, the President of Yale University, when Pond visited his old home in Connecticut after leaving the Athabasca. Stiles included information about Pond's travels, fur trade transport routes and trading posts, and Indians. Other maps which Pond drew showed his belief that the Mackenzie River, draining Great Slave Lake, turned into "Cook's River," actually Cook Inlet in southern Alaska.

This error encouraged Alexander Mackenzie to search for this route in 1789. The great river which he travelled, and which he called "River Disappointment" because it emptied into the Beaufort Sea, not the Pacific Ocean, was later named after him. Mackenzie used Fort Chipewyan as a staging area.

Following Pond and Mackenzie, other European surveyors mapped Lake Athabasca and explored new trade routes. In 1791, Philip Turnor and Peter Fidler surveyed Lake Athabasca for the Hudson's Bay Company. David Thompson nearly lost his life when he explored the Black (Fond du Lac) River, searching for a shorter route to Lake Athabasca in 1796. In the 19th century, John Franklin and other explorers stopped at Fort Chipewyan as they headed for points farther north. All European explorers were guided and assisted by local Indians and Métis or "Halfbreeds." Fort Chipewyan was an outpost of civilization for parties heading north and for those who returned.

The superior equipment and education of the Europeans allowed them to draft more reliable maps than those of Peter Pond. Their maps and

knowledge about the fur trade country were quickly incorporated into maps of North America and the world.

Some Indians believed that surveyors had special supernatural power, because of their equipment and their concentration on the heavens. For example, Crees believed that David Thompson could raise the wind. Said one hunter,

I came to you, in hopes that you had power over the winds; for we all believe the Great Spirit speaks to you in the night, when you are looking at the Moon and Stars, and tells you of what we know nothing (Thompson 1962:103).

Peter Pond maps

5 Travels of Capt. Peter Pond of Milford from April 1773 to March 1790. Extracted from his own Map by Ezra Stiles March 25, 1790. (Plate 1)

This map includes Lake Athabasca, or "Lake of the Hills," and a portion of Great Slave Lake. Pond also named the Athabasca River the "Great R. Araubauska."

*The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Stiles Papers, Miscellaneous Papers No. 974
W. 46.4, H. 37.4 cm*

A Map showing the communication of the Lakes and the Rivers between Lake Superior and Slave Lake in North America.

Another version of Peter Pond's map was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1790. This hand-tinted, printed map illustrates the water routes and portages west of Lake Superior, with "Arabaska Lake" also named "Upper Lake of the Woods or Hills." Two rivers drain Great Slave Lake, one flowing north into the North Sea and the other flowing west to "Cook's River" on the Pacific coast.

*University of Alberta Map Collection
1790
W. 23 cm, H 19.4 cm*

*Turnor 1934:398

Alexander Mackenzie map

CARTE DE LA PARTIE DE L'AMÉRIQUE, Comprise entre le 40ème et le 70ème Degrés de Latitude Nord et le 45ème et 180ème Degrés de Longitude Occid.le où l'on a tracé la Route D'ALEXANDRE MACKENZIE, Depuis Montréal au Fort Chipiouyan et à la Mer Glaciale en 1789, et du Fort Chipiouyan au Grand Ocean Boreal en 1798.

This map was published in 1802 in the French edition of Mackenzie's journal. Rich in ethnographic and geographic information, it was based on his explorations. He located "Fort Chipiouyan" on "L. des Montagnes" (Lake of the Hills), into which flowed the "Elk River," or Athabasca River. *Lac des Montagnes* is the source of an alternate name for Chipewyan Indians, the "Montagnais."

*University of Alberta Map Collection,
Canada C-67
1802
W. 78.0, H. 46.0 cm*

Portion, Philip Turnor map

"To the Honourable the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company This Map of Hudson's Bay and the Rivers and Lakes Between the Atlantick and Pacifick Oceans is most humbly Inscribed By Their most obedient & dutiful Servant, Philip Turnor"

This portion of Turnor's map shows "Athapiscow Lake" and other landmarks. Turnor used information which he and his assistant, Peter Fidler, collected in 1791 when they surveyed Lake Athabasca, as well as information from explorations undertaken by others in western Canada.

*Hudson's Bay Company Archives, G.2/32
1794
W. 193.5, H. 260 cm*

John Franklin map

"Route of the Expedition from Isle a la Crosse to Fort Providence in 1819-20"

Competing Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company posts are marked on this detailed map. "Lake Mammawee" and the "Embarras River" are included southwest and south, respectively, of Lake Athabasca (also indicated as Lake of the Hills).

*University of Alberta Map Collection,
Western Canada C-48
1823
W. 25.6, H. 57.5 cm*

"British Possessions in North America" map

Drafted by Arrowsmith, a famous map-maker, this early map is possibly the first to include the Athabasca in an atlas of the world, *Pinkerton's Modern Atlas*. British territories are hand-tinted in pink. Lake Mamawi is wrongly designated "Athabasca L.," and Fort Chipewyan is drawn on the south side of the lake, although it had moved by this date.

*University of Alberta Map Collection,
Canada C-77
1802 or 1807
W. 74.7, H. 57.5 cm*

"British North America" map

This detailed map was drafted by J. Arrowsmith. An inscription on the map reads, "by permission dedicated to the Hon.ble Hudsons Bay Company, containing the latest information which their documents furnish."

*University of Alberta Map Collection,
Canada C-44
1834
W. 63.0, H. 55.6 cm*

"Partie de la Nouvelle Bretagne" map

Published in a Belgian atlas in 1827 and drafted by Belgian cartographer Vandermaelen in Brussels, this Belgian atlas contains individual sheets of an unprecedented large scale. However, the map contains some of the same errors as the 1802 Arrowsmith map (University of Alberta Map Collection, Canada C-77), which suggests that little new information was used.

*University of Alberta Map Collection,
G 1019 V.28
1827
W. 57, H. 47.5 cm*

Joslin's Terrestrial Globe, Containing the latest Discoveries

This six inch globe was produced by Gilman Joslin of Boston in 1846. Lake Athabasca is marked, as well as the locations of Chipewyans, Crees, and other Indians, information which would not be included on a globe of similar size today.

The Athabasca Fur Trade

Fort Chipewyan was a principal trading center in western Canada. Originally located on the south shore at "Old Fort Point," it was moved about 1798 to a site on the north shore adjacent to its present location. The post was rebuilt several times.

The bitter, final battle between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company for control of the fur trade was fought at Fort Chipewyan. The "Canadians," the men who worked for the North West Company, had the upper hand for most of the years of conflict. Nottingham House was the Hudson's Bay Company's first attempt to compete with the North West Company in the Athabasca. Peter Fidler built this post on English Island in 1802, living there with his Cree wife Mary and a crew of men from the Orkney Islands. He was driven out by the aggressive Canadians in 1806. They robbed his nets, burned his canoes and wood, and threatened the Indians who wanted to trade with him.

John Clarke established Fort Wedderburn on Coal (Potato) Island in 1815 for the Hudson's Bay Company. This post persisted through the 1820-21 season, when George Simpson spent a winter running the trade. Simpson refused to be intimidated by his Canadian rivals; he gave blow for blow.

In 1821, the two rivals amalgamated under the Hudson's Bay Company name. Fort Chipewyan continued as the headquarters of the Athabasca District. It outfitted other posts, such as Fort Vermilion and Fort Resolution, and it collected their furs for transport to the east.

The "Honourable Company" held a monopoly on trade until 1870, when it sold its holdings to the Dominion of Canada. Today, "The Bay" is still the most important commercial center in the community. The latest Hudson's Bay Company store was erected in the last decade. On April 30, 1987, the Hudson's Bay Company sold its northern stores, ending a chapter of Canadian history.

Most goods traded at the post were commodities manufactured in British factories and other loca-

tions which were part of Britain's trading domain. Some items were manufactured locally, especially some metal tools. There was also a trade in "country" products, including food and hides. The artifacts displayed in this exhibit were excavated from Fort Chipewyan (post-1800), Nottingham House (1802-06), Fort of the Forks (1787-1802), and Fort George (1792-1800), a contemporary post on the Saskatchewan River. Fort of the Forks was a provisioning post at the confluence of the Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers run by the North West Company and subsidiary to Fort Chipewyan. These goods are characteristic of the diverse selection available in northern Alberta during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Indians had to be cultivated as consumers. In the early days of the fur trade, there were few items which Indians needed, as Samuel Hearne (1958:51) pointed out for the "Northern Indians" or Chipewyans:

The real wants of these people are few, and easily supplied; a hatchet, an ice-chissel, a file, and a knife, are all that is required to enable them, with a little industry, to procure a comfortable livelihood....

The nomadic habits of many Indians prevented them from carrying large amounts of personal possessions. The Hudson's Bay Company strengthened its control on the fur trade by using individual credit relations with the Indians to bind them closely to the trader and his post and to encourage them to spend more and trap regularly.

As the local trade expanded and a world-wide network of trade developed in the 19th century, traders imported a wider variety and quantity of commodities. Indians were discriminating consumers, and they insisted on quality merchandise. Goods such as metal tools, beads, clay pipes, and jewelry replaced items made by the Indians. Other goods were novelties, such as china, mirrors, and liquor. Indians were willing to trade for additional goods as they became more sedentary during the 1800s.

By 1859, Indians had replaced much of their aboriginal inventory of goods and clothing with imported items. Robert Campbell, the factor at Fort Chipewyan, sent a selection of goods to the new Industrial Museum of Scotland, now the Royal

Museum of Scotland. He wrote to Director George Wilson,

You will perhaps be surprised to learn, that even in this Northern District, the "Indians" appreciate the convenience of the articles of civilised usage so much, that hardly a trace now remains of their former dress, domestic utensils, or weapons of war, or the chase; all have already fallen into disuse among them, and will soon be as rare in the far north....[Royal Museum of Scotland, 5 May 1859].

By the beginning of the 19th century, Europeans knew where Fort Chipewyan was located, and Fort Chipewyan had become an integral part of the trading system of the growing British Empire. Through their roles as consumers and producers and their ties to the traders, the inhabitants of the Fort Chipewyan region were linked to events happening elsewhere, such as the Highland Clearances, the growth of the tobacco industry, the colonization of India, and the overall expansion of European manufacturing and shipping.

6 Colin Fraser's bagpipes (Plate 6)

Colin Fraser (1807-1867) was the piper employed by the Hudson's Bay Company to accompany Governor General Simpson on his trip through western Canada in 1828. He also acted as his servant. Simpson's visits to the posts were highly ceremonial. Piper Fraser played the pipes in full highland dress when they arrived at the posts, and he played for the men along the way:

...we got Colin Fraser to give us a few of his favorite strathspeys on the bagpipes, that went off very well to the ear of a Highlander, but as yet makes but a poor accordance with either the pole or the paddle [McDonald 1828:2].

This set of pipes may have been purchased by Duncan Finlayson, a Hudson's Bay Company employee, for Fraser when he visited Britain in 1837. A note in his memorandum book in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA E.12/4, fo. 42) reads,

Should I visit Scotland promised to purchase a stand of Bag Pipes for Colin Fraser to cost about L5 & not to exceed L8. So also a stock of Reeds - the Bag to be plastered with a mixture of sweet oil and

Beese wax - They can be procured either in Edinbg or Glasgow.

Ordered the above from McDonald Pipe-makers to the Highland Society of London 529 Castle Hill Edinburgh....

Fraser later managed several trading posts: Jasper House 1835-1850, Fort Assiniboine 1850-1853, Fort Edmonton (post manager) 1853, Lesser Slave Lake 1854-1862, and Lac St. Anne 1862-1867, where he died. These pipes were passed down through the Fraser and Wylie families of Fort Chipewyan.

Constructed from green duffel with commercial cotton fringe on outside with an inner bag of stitched sheepskin. Chanter, mouthpiece, and three drones made of Cuban cocus wood with ivory mounts. Made by McDonald of Edinburgh.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H80.99.1
Horace Wylie (Colin Fraser's great-grandson), McDonald of Edinburgh, chanter 1825-1835, ivory mounts 1900
L 104.0 cm*

Colin Fraser's contract

Colin Fraser came from Sutherland County, Scotland. He travelled to Stromness, Orkney, to sign on with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1827. Signing on behalf of the Company was its resident factor, John Rae Sr., the father of the famous Canadian trader and explorer.

Printed contract on beige paper, with ink signatures.

*Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park,
HBC Collection; G68.10
June 19, 1827
W. 25.2, H. 40.3 cm*

Pipes

Pipes were smoked by Chipewyan and Cree Indians and the post staff. The traders imported stone and clay pipes, and pipes were also manufactured locally. Tobacco was a prized trade item, sometimes mixed with *kinikinik*, made from the inner bark of the red willow or from bearberry leaves.

7a English-made clay pipe

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:T.P.A2:1345*

7b Stone pipe

The steatite used to make this pipe, found in a garden in Fort Chipewyan, may have come from the lower Fraser River.

Lloyd Guilbault, Fort Chipewyan

7c Stone pipe

Carved to imitate a commercial clay pipe.

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:A10P2:23
Fort Chipewyan, post-1800*

7d Incised stone pipe

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
HeOu 1:1A3:4
Fort of the Forks, 1787-1802*

7e Stone pipe

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, R8M 3A2:30
Fort George, 1792-1800*

7f Pipe blank

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta, 84I K2:16
Nottingham House, 1802-06*

8 Stone pipe

In 1859, Robert Campbell sent a selection of pipes from Fort Chipewyan to the new Industrial Museum of Scotland. This elaborately carved pipe belonged to John Rae, a Hudson's Bay Company employee.

*Royal Museum of Scotland, L.304.117
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859
H. 8.9, W. 8.0 cm*

9 Stone pipe with stem

While pipe bowls are common, wooden stems are rare in museum or archaeological collections.

*Royal Museum of Scotland, 1910.19 & A
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859
L. 17.5 cm*

10 Stone pipe

Stone pipe carved to imitate a clay pipe.

*Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.14D
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859*

Containers

11 Copper pot

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:F30:231
Fort Chipewyan, post-1800*

Minton bowl, Swiss Cottage pattern

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:F30:232
Fort Chipewyan, c.1825-31*

Tableware with Hudson's Bay Company crest

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:T.P.A1:835-859
Fort Chipewyan, early 20th century*

Metal goods

12a Trade ax

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:A28H1:7
Fort Chipewyan, post-1800*

12b Hudson's Bay Company trade ax

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta, 8R2 C2:14
Nottingham House, 1802-06*

13 Fish hooks

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
8R1 C4:22 b,c,d
Nottingham House, 1802-06*

Guns

Although early muskets were unreliable, they were nevertheless a popular item. The availability of muskets was one factor which enabled Chipewyans to shift to moose hunting from caribou hunting, partly because muskets made it easier for hunting to be done by individuals, rather than requiring cooperation by groups of hunters.

14a Gunlock

Made in London after 1865.

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:W17A2:3
Fort Chipewyan, post-1865*

14b Serpent sideplate from a Hudson's Bay trade gun

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, R8M 11F1:5
Fort George, 1792-1800*

Personal adornment

Aboriginally, Indians used quills, seeds, shells, and paint to decorate their clothing, personal belongings, and themselves. Most natural products were replaced by imported goods, such as beads, buttons, tin cones, jewelry, ribbons, and braids. The traders and their Métis employees also used a wide range of decorative items.

15 Button bearing Peter Fidler's initials

*Canadian Parks Service, 8R3 F2:9
Nottingham House, 1802-06*

16a Bracelet

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:F32:55
Fort Chipewyan, post-1800*

16b Tinkling cones

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta, 8R1 H5:26
Nottingham House, 1802-06*

16c Silver brooch

Made by Robert Cruikshank of Montreal for the North West Company

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, R8M 3A2:11
Fort George, 1792-1800*

16d Silver turtle pendant

Made by Robert Cruikshank of Montreal for the North West Company

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
HeOu 1:1B3:1
Fort of the Forks, 1787-1802*

16e Brass finger ring

*Provincial Museum of Alberta
R8M 3K2-3
Fort George
1792-1800*

16f Brass finger ring

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
HeOu 1:1B:1
Fort of the Forks, 1787-1802*

Ring with portrait stone

*Canadian Parks Service, 8R1 H5:24
Nottingham House, 1802-06*

Miscellaneous

Mouth harp

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:T.P.A4:556-557
Fort Chipewyan*

Turlington's Balsam of Life bottle

This tiny bottle contained a widely used 19th century patent medicine

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, R8M 11Q2:5
Fort George, 1792-1800*

Baling seals

Bales of goods were sealed to insure that they were not opened until they arrived at the post

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
R8M 3H2:26
Fort George, 1792-1800*

Women's work

Traders and their employees often married Indian women "after the custom of the country." These women were a major labor force at the post, preparing food, tanning hides, sewing clothes, making snowshoes, and raising children. They were expected to undertake these duties, as George Simpson (1938:174) noted in a letter in 1820 to Joseph Greille at Berens House, a post on the Athabasca River near present day Fort McKay:

Your people complain bitterly that Mrs. Greill makes no shoes for them; it is customary for the Ladies of this country to do all that is required in that way about the Fort, and I hope there will be no further cause of complaint on the subject; the Woman & child you know are a heavy expense on the Post and it is not unreasonable to require that she works for her maintenance.

Altered bones

Animal bones were often broken to extract the rich marrow.

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
IeOs 3:F30:1,2
Fort Chipewyan, post-1800*

Snowshoe needle

Women used needles to fill snowshoe frames with babiche webbing.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, R8M 3H1:25
Fort George, 1792-1800*

Crooked awl

Iron awls used to make holes in hides for sewing.

*Archaeological Survey of Alberta,
8R1 C4:19A
Nottingham House, 1802-06*

Crooked awl in antler handle

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, R8M 3C1:30
Fort George, 1792-1800*

7



8



10



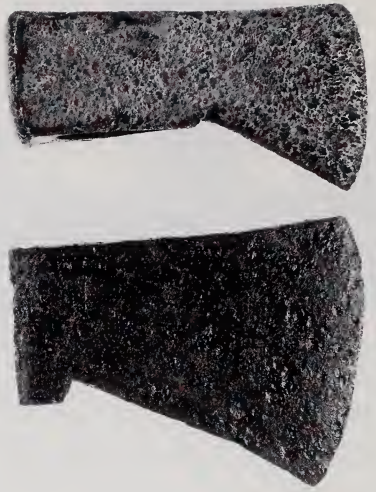
9



11



12^a
b



14^a
b



13





a
16 b c e
d f



FORT CHIPEWYAN BECOMES PART OF CANADA

The Hudson's Bay Company sold its territories to the Dominion of Canada in 1870. The federal government sent agents into the Northwest Territory to define and take control of its new property and exercise the jurisdiction of the Crown.

Surveyors

First to arrive were surveyors for the Geological Survey of Canada, mapping travel routes and mineral riches which the Survey hoped would encourage mining to "develop" the north. The Dominion Land Survey followed in the early 20th Century, measuring townsites and homesteads to support immigration and population growth. Additional detailed surveying was conducted in the 20th century by university professors and their students

Police

In 1897, hundreds of prospectors headed for the Klondike gold fields through Fort Chipewyan, using the traditional fur trade river system. The North West Mounted Police sent Inspector Jarvis on a long winter patrol to prevent conflicts between the newcomers and Indian and Métis residents (Plate 13). Jarvis was the first Canadian government official to enforce Canadian laws in the Fort Chipewyan region. The NWMP, later the Royal North West Mounted Police and now the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, established an outpost in Fort Chipewyan in 1898 and have been there almost continuously since that date. They were replaced briefly after World War I by the Alberta Provincial Police, who were stationed in Fort Chipewyan for several years.

The police enforced federal and provincial regulations which restricted traditional Native land use practices. For example, the Unorganized Territories Game Act of 1896 prohibited the hunting of wood bison, to protect the remnant population near Fort Chipewyan. In 1907, the new Alberta government passed its first Game Act, which introduced closed seasons for hunting and trapping. Officers in Fort Chipewyan rarely had difficulties enforcing the law among the Indians or Métis. Said Inspector

Routledge, Indians "...have a wholesome dread of the police" (Routledge 1899:96).

Treaty 8

The Klondike gold rush also led the Canadian government to decide to settle aboriginal claims to the lands surrounding Lesser Slave Lake, Lake Athabasca, and Great Slave Lake and the connecting rivers. In 1899, a treaty party and a parallel scrip party travelled the Athabasca and Peace Rivers, negotiating land cessions with the Indians and Métis. Indians who signed the treaty at Fort Chipewyan were assigned to either the Chipewyan or the Cree Band. Status Indians were promised annuities, reserves, and other benefits. Annuities were paid and treaty promises were renewed each year during the annual "Treaty Days." Much later, an Indian Agent was stationed at Fort Chipewyan to administer Indian Affairs locally.

Métis were given a certificate, called "scrip," worth either \$240.00 or 160 acres. Most Métis chose money scrip. Because scrip was difficult to redeem, it was often sold for ready cash at a lesser value to scrip buyers who were close in attendance. After this one-time settlement, Métis were considered legally to be ordinary citizens with no special protections.

Wood Buffalo National Park

Wood Buffalo National Park was created in 1922, with a large section added in 1926, from lands used by Chipewyan and Cree Indians and Métis for hunting, trapping, and fishing. It was meant to protect the endangered wood bison, as well as plains bison which were shipped north to the park in the 1920s from the Wainwright reserve. The plains bison probably transmitted tuberculosis and brucellosis to the wood bison. The two bison represent separate subspecies, but considerable hybridization since the 1920s has produced intermediate forms.

The park and its warden service restricted traditional land use of the Indians and the Métis of the Fort Chipewyan region. Only Treaty 8 Indians were allowed in the "old park," the part of the park

created in 1922, north of the Peace River. When the park was enlarged in 1926 to include land south of the Peace River, only people present at that time were allowed to continue to hunt and trap in the "new park." As a result, many local Natives were not allowed in the park to hunt or trap, while some trappers from outside the region were granted hunting and trapping privileges.

After World War II, the federal government began to exploit park resources to encourage economic growth and provide local jobs for Native residents. It allowed commercial fishing in Lake Claire and commercial logging of white spruce stands along the Peace River. It introduced bison slaughters for commercial meat production. Park staff hoped that selective bison slaughter would also help eliminate the tuberculosis found in the herds. Of the many projects, only one - Swanson's Lumber - was successful financially. Commercial operation ended in the 1970s, as it was incompatible with the current national park policy.

Today, trapping and hunting continue as they have historically. Native users cooperate with Park management in the development of park regulations. Wood Buffalo National Park is a unique northern multi-use park.

17 Transit and case

Surveying tools allowed surveyors to locate property lines and resources. The transit was an instrument used to measure horizontal and vertical angles. It was placed on a tripod when in use. This transit and its accessories were stored in a sturdy leather and wood case.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H73.24.115, .122, .123*

*Transit H. 28.5 cm.; case L. 31.5, W. 38.0, D.
18 cm*

Tripod

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H87.274.4A

Level-compass

The level measures elevations; the compass measures cardinal directions.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H87.274.4C

Surveyor's measuring tape

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H73.24.124

Chain

A chain is a specific unit of measurement. The 66 links of this "Gunter" chain equal 20.12 meters.

University of Alberta Engineering Department

Field manual

University of Alberta Engineering Department

Map holder

University of Alberta Engineering Department

Field book

The surveyor kept his notes and calculations in his field book.

University of Alberta Engineering Department

Iron marker

Once a townsite had been surveyed, iron markers were put in place as a permanent indicator of boundaries.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H88.319.1

North West Mounted Police tunic

This tunic was owned and worn on special occasions by a North West Mounted Police Constable, who served with the force from 1891 to 1897. Men in the field normally wore a plainer uniform.

Cut from scarlet wool serge and lined with white cotton and red satin. Decorated with yellow cord, brass belt-hooks and brass buttons embossed with the NWMP crest and Queen's crown.

*Glenbow Museum, C-1231
C.1885
Back L. 85.0 cm.*

Handcuffs

*Glenbow Museum, C-1229 a/b
Late 1800s*

Enfield revolver

NWMP officers were issued revolvers.

Glenbow Museum, C-610

Mitts

Worn on winter patrol

Glenbow Museum, C-2006 a/b

NWMP Revised General Orders, 1895

Glenbow Museum, C-212 n

Alberta Provincial Police signboard

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1152.30

18 Treaty 8

This printed version of Treaty 8 was sent to all chiefs who had signed in 1899. Indians claimed that the terms of this document differed from the agreement negotiated at the time of the original signing.

Printed black and red on white parchment.

*Boreal Institute for Northern Studies
W. 75.0, H. 49.5 cm*

19 Treaty 8 medal

The Indian leaders who signed Treaty 8 received commemorative medals. This medal was given to Alexandre Laviolette, the first Chipewyan chief in Fort Chipewyan.

Sterling silver circular medal with 2 linking rings. Near the bottom of both sides are the makers' initials, "J.S. & A.B. Wyon."

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.49.1
Fort Chipewyan, c.1899
D. 7.6 cm.*

20 Chief's treaty suit

This treaty suit was worn on official occasions by Fred Marcel, Chief of the Fort Chipewyan Indian band from 1954-1983. An hereditary chief, he was the nephew of the first two chiefs and is the uncle of the present chief, who was elected to office.

Jacket: navy blue wool serge lined with blue rayon? fabric in the body and navy blue wool flannel in the sleeves. Decorated with gold braid and silver shank buttons with an embossed crown design.

Pants: navy blue wool serge with a red flannel fabric strip on the outside seam and unbleached cotton muslin pockets. Four button fly closure, buttons stamped with the same embossed crown as on the jacket. Machine sewn.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.49.4 A/B
Fred Marcel, Fort Chipewyan, c.1960
Jacket back L. 81.0 cm, leg inseam 76.5 cm*

Park warden jacket

This jacket was worn by Ron Davies, the Assistant Chief Warden at Wood Buffalo National Park.

Green wool-polyester with a brown twill weave lining. Four black buttons embossed with "NPC," maple leaves and a crown; smaller buttons used on the pockets. Machine and hand sewn.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.158.3A
Ron Davies, Fort Chipewyan, c.1970s
Back L. 77.0 cm*

Wood Buffalo Park map

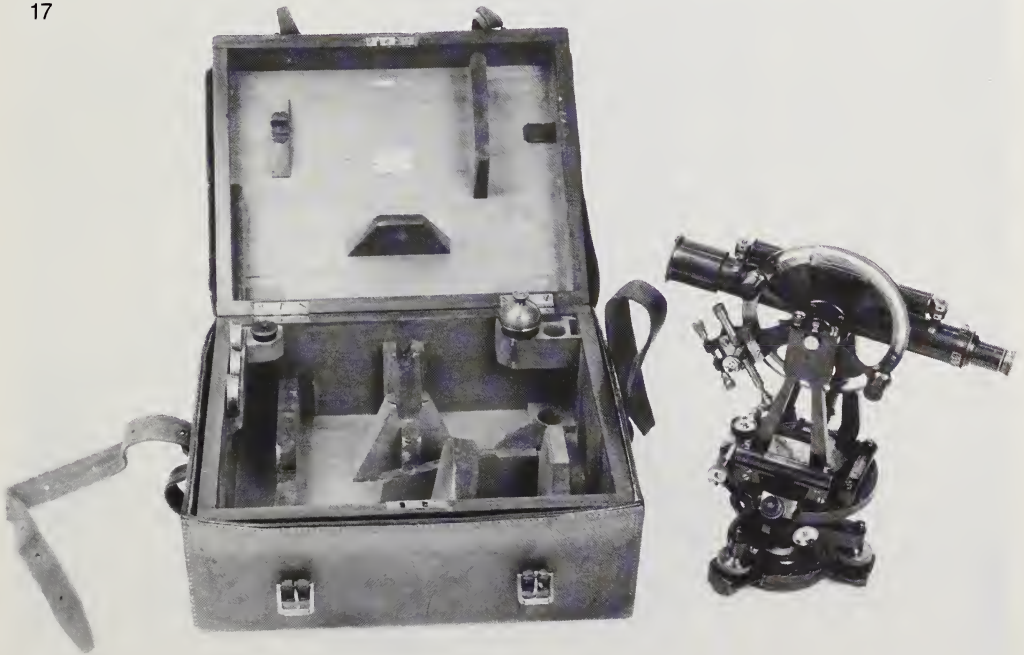
This detailed map of Wood Buffalo Park was published in 1931 by the Topographical Survey of Canada of the Department of the Interior, using information supplied by the Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch NWT and contained in aerial photographs taken by the Royal Canadian Air Force. The scale is 8 miles to 1 inch (1:506,880).

*University of Alberta Map Collection,
Canada G-9
1931
W. 61.0, H. 76.0 cm*



Plate 13. Inspector Routledge on winter patrol to Fort Chipewyan, January 1899. (RCMP Museum NA 949-49)

17



19



20



LIVES OF THE PEOPLE

Since the coming of the fur trade, the people of Fort Chipewyan have supported themselves by means of a "mixed economy." Historically, they relied on hunting, fishing, and wage labor, with occasional assistance from the traders when in special need. Hunting, fishing, and wage labor are still important in the local economy today. Government transfer payments are available in Fort Chipewyan as in other Canadian communities.

While the community is strongly Christian, the Native religions continue to be important.

The Indians and Métis living at the post or in the "bush" - the country surrounding Fort Chipewyan - have a long tradition of decorative needlework. People who have visited Fort Chipewyan since the 19th century have taken home examples of mocasins and other crafts as souvenirs. Many are preserved in museums in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain.

Labor and industry

The fur trade

Wage labor, or labor reimbursed "in kind," was always an important part of the economy of Fort Chipewyan. Fur traders relied on hired staff to provide food, transport goods and furs, and do a myriad of tasks required to operate a northern trading post. The North West Company hired French-Canadian and French-Métis voyageurs, as well as local Indians. While the Hudson's Bay Company also used Indian and Métis workers, they recruited their labor force in Britain, especially in the remote Orkney Islands and to a lesser extent in highland Scotland. In the 19th century, up to 75 per cent of the Hudson's Bay Company workers were Orcadian.

Fur trade employees traded with the trappers, provided food for the post, worked on the boats, and provided other services. They made and repaired items, such as gun parts and chisels, which are now imported from Edmonton. Today, jobs in Fort Chipewyan tend to fall into the service sector. Little manufacturing occurs locally. As the com-

munity has "modernized," this component of its productive economy has shrunk.

The Roman Catholic mission

The Roman Catholic missionaries also needed workers to operate their two establishments: the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mission, established in Fort Chipewyan in 1849 by Oblate priests, and the Holy Angels Convent, a residential school and orphanage opened in 1874 by the Grey Nuns. The priests, nuns, and Oblate lay brothers looked after large numbers of children with very little government assistance. They hired local Natives to assist them in their labors. They did all their own construction, put up fish each fall for winter food, helped with the buffalo hunts, planted and tended large gardens, and provided hay for their horses and cattle (Plate 14). Robert Campbell (n.d.:87) described them in 1857-59:

They are most industrious and avail themselves of all the resources of the country to better their position and increase their comforts and thus teach the Indians both by precept and example how to add to their own comforts and enjoy them.

Commercial fishing

A new industry entered the region in 1926, when McInnes Fish Company began commercial fishing on Lake Athabasca. McInnes brought most of its workers from Lake Winnipeg, although some local people found work, especially at Crackingstone Point fish camp up the lake (Plate 15). Commercial fishing reduced the fish populations in Lake Athabasca and made subsistence fishing more difficult. McInnes operations on the lake ended in 1969, when the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board was created, now Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Commercial fishing today is conducted for walleye (pickerel) only by local residents through the Delta Native Fishermen's Association, a local cooperative affiliated with the Corporation.

Northern transportation

All northern operations and industries were and are affected by the infrastructure available, par-

ticularly transportation linking Fort Chipewyan to the "outside." Transportation itself has become a major industry, as modes of travel by water, land, and air have been transformed from the early days of the fur trade.

The early traders used canoes and York boats to transport furs and freight. After 1870, wood-burning sternwheelers were built to reduce labor costs and increase the efficiency of supplying the northern posts. They were replaced by boats with more modern engines in the 20th century. Many local transportation companies operated on the Athabasca River, including those run by the Hudson's Bay Company, McInnes Fisheries, and the Roman Catholic Mission.

During World War II, river transport modernized rapidly, thanks to an investment of capital and equipment by the U.S. Army. The Army was responsible for the CANOL project, a scheme to pipe oil from Norman Wells, NWT, to Whitehorse, Yukon. It had to move huge amounts of men and equipment down the river system from Waterways, the end of rail near Fort McMurray, to Norman Wells. Once the project was completed, local entrepreneurs were able to obtain much of the modern equipment which had been used.

The traders relied on dog teams for winter travel. At the turn of the 20th century, Fort Chipewyan trappers would occasionally drive their teams to Edmonton to obtain higher prices for their furs. Bombardiers were adopted by the RCMP and the Indian Agent in the 1950s, when they became available. Snowmachines - commonly known as "ski-doo's" - were eagerly purchased by most residents, largely replacing dog transport by the 1970s. Since 1986, there has been a winter road bulldozed by Fort Chipewyan residents which links Fort Chipewyan with Fort McMurray. There is also a winter road to Fort Smith. Although there is no all-weather road to the community, this possibility is often discussed.

The introduction of air travel revolutionized northern transportation. The first plane arrived in Fort Chipewyan in 1927. The first official mail flight occurred December 10, 1929, in a plane piloted by Wop May and co-piloted by Archie McMullen. The following summer, geological parties used float planes rather than canoes for the first time to travel into the bush. All early flights were made on skis or floats. Fort Chipewyan's first airstrip was built after

World War II, and its airport was ceremoniously opened by Lieutenant Governor Grant MacEwan in 1966. Today, Fort Chipewyan is served by scheduled flights from Edmonton and Fort McMurray. Small planes and helicopters are still essential for travel in the bush.

Orkney goods

A young Orkney lad signed a contract to work for the Company for five years. He left home for the fur country with few personal possessions, such as those represented here:

21a Linen shirt

Tankerness House Museum, 1984.47

21b Hand-loomed woolen blanket

Tankerness House, 1445

21c Snuff-box

Tankerness House Museum, 1984.196

21d Shot horn

Tankerness House Museum, 1976.348

21e Fiddle and bow

L. Wilson, Orkney

21f Bible

This bible bears the inscription, "William Allan - Albany fort, Hudsons Bay North America, March 23rd, 1871."

Tankerness House Museum

S. P. Robertson, Orkney

21g Horn spoon

Tankerness House Museum, 702

Hudson's Bay Company service contract

Printed blue paper with ink signatures.

In 1862, William Wylie of South Ronaldshay, Orkney, signed a five year contract with the Company to work as a laborer. He was stationed in Fort Chipewyan, where he worked as a carpenter and a blacksmith until 1908. He built the *S. S. Grahame*, the first northern steamer. He died in Edmonton in 1909. His descendants still live in Fort Chipewyan today.

Provincial Archives of Alberta, 86.460

Horace Wylie; Stromness, Orkney, and Fort

Portrait of John Sutherland

John Sutherland was a Scot from Caithness who spent his life working for the Hudson's Bay Company in Fort Chipewyan. He joined the Company in 1883 to work on its first river boat, the *S.S. Grahame*. He served 52 years, eventually becoming first engineer, and retired on pension in Fort Chipewyan. His first wife was Colin Fraser's daughter. This portrait was done in colored pastels by Kathleen Shackleton, one of a series of pictures of Hudson's Bay Company employees commissioned by the Company in September 1937. Shackleton made a number of sketches at Fort Chipewyan.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives, P-284
Kathleen Shackleton, Fort Chipewyan, 1937
W. 46.3, H. 64 cm

Portrait of Pierre Mercredi

Pierre Mercredi was a Métis descended from a Scot or Irishman named "MacCarthy" or "Macardi." This man married a French-Métis woman, and over the years the family became French-Métis. Pierre Mercredi served with the Hudson's Bay Company for over 40 years. This portrait was done in crayon.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives, P-291
Kathleen Shackleton, Fort Chipewyan, 1937
W. 46.3, H. 64 cm

22 Chair

Samuel Emerson, the chief engineer on the *S.S. Grahame*, made this chair in 1884 for Mr. Grahame.

Hand made from wood with iron rod supports; painted red.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H73.39.1
Samuel Emerson, W. J. Flett (a retired Hudson's Bay Company employee in Fort Chipewyan); Fort Chipewyan; July 17, 1884
Back L. 67.0 cm, W. from arm to arm 53.0 cm, W. of seat 49.5 cm; L. of seat 38.5 cm

Trunk

People made trunks, or cassettes, to hold their personal possessions when travelling. This trunk is made from local poplar painted black, with an unfinished interior.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H76.6.3

Drawknife

Buildings and fences in Fort Chipewyan were all made of local wood. Logs were square hewn with an ax for building. A drawknife was used to peel bark from fence posts. It would also be used to form hollows or curved parts. "W. Gilpin-Wedges-mills" is marked on the blade of this drawknife.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H73.39.2
W. J. Flett, Fort Chipewyan, c.1880
Blade L. 11.5, W. 3.5 cm; wood handles L. 13 cm

Froe

A froe is a tool for making shingles. Buildings in Fort Chipewyan were formerly roofed with hand-made shingles. This iron froe was used in Fort Chipewyan.

Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park, HBC Collection; 2302C
Fort Chipewyan
L. 36.5 cm

Shingles

In earlier years, shingles were split from local woods. These cedar shingles were recovered from a house built in the 1920s which was torn down in 1983. They suggest that cedar blocks were imported at this time for use in making shingles, because of the durability of the wood.

Private collection
Peter Wylie, Fort Chipewyan, c.1926
W x H: 9.5 x 40.3, 13.1 x 40.2, 15.3 x 40.0 cm

Cartridge reloader

Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park, HBC Collection; 2302C
Fort Chipewyan

Bullet loader

Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park, HBC Collection; 2302D
Fort Chipewyan

Capping and cartridge pliers

These were used in Fort Chipewyan

Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park, HBC Collection; 2302H

Fort Chipewyan

23 Woodworking tools

Brother Ancel, O.M.I., used these tools in his carpentry. They include (left to right, top to bottom): a wooden screw and die, smoothing plane, gouge, chisel, thonging chisel, gouge.

Northern Life Museum, Oblate Collection; screw and die 67A-20-6 a/b, smoothing plane 70A-15-8; gouge 70A-15-63; chisel 70A-15-68; thonging chisel 70A-15-70, gouge 70A-15,72

Brother Ancel, Fort Chipewyan, early 19th century

24 McInnes Products fish box

McInnes Fish Company began fishing Lake Athabasca commercially in 1926, shipping fish to southern markets in boxes such as this one. After the Roman Catholic Mission at Fort Chipewyan stopped fishing about 1954-56, it also bought fish from McInnes, now McInnes Products Corp. Ltd.

Constructed from wood boards nailed together. Stamped with "McInnes Products Corp. Ltd. Edmonton, Canada, Lake Athabasca, North Saskatchewan.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.226.6
Brother Louison Veillette, Fort Chipewyan,
post-1955
L. 74.5, W. 39.0, H. 52.5 cm*

25a Picking hook

The picking hook helps a fisherman grasp his fish net or remove fish from the net.

Hand-made from a nail set in a wooden handle.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.156.2
J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, c.1970s
French-Métis
L. 19 cm*

25b Dressing spoon

The dressing spoon is used to gut and clean fish.

Hand made from a file that has been flattened and rounded into a spoon with the edge sharpened. Wood handle attached with seaman's twine; repaired with electrical tape.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.156.1
J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, c.1970s
French-Métis
L. 22.0 cm*

Archie McMullen's log book

The log book kept by Archibald (Archie) Major McMullen, who co-piloted the first airmail flight to Fort Chipewyan on December 10, 1929 in a Bellanca. He made an entry in the log book to document the occasion.

Provincial Archives of Alberta, 84.27/1

26 Airmail envelope

This commemorative envelope and stamp marked the first official mail flight from Fort Chipewyan to Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan, in 1934, piloted by Archie McMullen.

*Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, 981.8.54
Archie McMullen, 1934
W. 16.6, H. 9.2 cm*

21 b ^a e f g
c d







Plate 14. The Roman Catholic mission staff grew vegetables in their garden and kept a few cows for milk. (University of Alberta Archives, Oblate Collection 86-106-169)

23





Plate 15. McInnes Fish Co. brought men and boats to Lake Athabasca each spring to fish commercially. (Provincial Archives of Alberta, A14347)

24



25 a b



Hunting and Trapping: A Northern Way of Life

Hunting and trapping were and remain the core of the Fort Chipewyan economy and lifestyle. Before World War II, most people lived in log cabins in bush settlements during the winter, hunting moose and caribou and trapping fur bearers. Men, women, and children hunted and trapped. Dog-drawn toboggans or sleighs were used to travel between the settlements and the traplines and the trading posts in winter, while canoes and boats were used at other seasons.

In the spring, families moved to their muskrat trapping grounds. They lived in tents and used light canoes for hunting "rats" and beavers, important as food and fur. They also hunted swans, geese, and ducks during their northward migration. Spring trapping was a festive time, because of the warm sun and plentiful food (Plate 16).

People travelled to Fort Chipewyan with dog teams before break-up, or in skiffs after break-up. They traded their furs and obtained some supplies for summer, which they spent in the bush, hunting moose and fishing (Plate 17).

When fall came, people hunted migratory waterfowl and moose for winter food, and they put up hundreds of fish. Trappers obtained their winter "outfits" from the trader they dealt with at Fort Chipewyan. Supplies were always advanced on credit, with the debt repaid after trapping had begun.

27 Tent

In the early 20th century, canvas tents replaced hide tipis for summer residence and shelter when people travelled through the bush. Formerly, women sewed them by hand with needle and thread, sometimes with the help of a hand-operated Singer sewing machine. Today, people usually buy commercial canvas or synthetic tents. This canvas tent was hand stitched by Josephine Mercredi in traditional fashion for the Provincial Museum. She is a Chipewyan who has spent most of her life living in the bush.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H88.24.1
Josephine Mercredi (née Flett),
Fort Chipewyan, 1987
Chipewyan

L. 274.5, W. 233.3, H. 185.9 inches

28 Toboggan (sleigh)

Dog team transportation became important to the Indians in the 19th century, when they began to trap more intensively and established permanent winter settlements. Dog teams have been largely replaced today by the widespread adoption of snow-machines. This modern dog toboggan, made in a traditional style with upturned head, hand-made birch boards, and wrapper, was made for the Provincial Museum by Daniel and Margaret Marcel, a Chipewyan couple who divide their time between Jackfish Lake, a Chipewyan settlement along the Athabasca River, and Fort Chipewyan.

Base of hand-sawn birch boards; upturned front portion covered with moose hide for extra protection and painted grey. Backboard of plywood with carved wooden handles; painted grey. Machine stitched white canvas wrapper. Backboard and wrapper tied to the base with yellow polypropylene cord.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H88.22.1
Daniel and Margaret Marcel,
Fort Chipewyan, 1987
Chipewyan
L. 284.5 x 38.0 cm

29 Model toboggan

This model of a Chipewyan birch toboggan used for hauling freight or personal possessions was acquired by Dr. J. Hector in 1861. It has a wrapper of tanned caribou skin tied with cord made from split spruce root; probably cord made of caribou skin would have been used with a full-sized toboggan.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 686.2
Dr. J. Hector, 1861
Chipewyan
L. 38 cm

30 Model toboggan

A Chipewyan model of a birch passenger toboggan is enclosed by caribou parchment sewn with sinew.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 686.1
Dr. J. Hector, 1861
Chipewyan
L. 39.5 cm

31 Dog blanket (Plate 7)

Highly decorated dog blankets, or *tapis*, were worn by dogs when they made a special trip. Blankets were made in matching sets, with each blanket varying slightly in its beadwork or embroidery. Steel bells were fastened along the back strip. This blanket was collected in 1900 by Dr. O. C. Edwards, a physician who accompanied the Treaty 8 party to Fort Chipewyan and other communities in the region.

Black velvet with red wool fringe. Heavily beaded in a complex floral design, divided by a navy blue wool stroud center strip to which bells would have been attached; edged with contrasting fabric and beads. Backed with canvas with four circular pieces of hide and leather thongs for fastening the blanket to a dog's harness. Machine and hand sewn with thread.

University of Alberta Collections,
ADX.965.24.77
Dr. O. C. Edwards, Fort Chipewyan region,
1900
L. 43.7, W. 37.2 cm

32 Dog blanket

An embroidered dog blanket from Fort Chipewyan made more recently shows a simpler pattern.

Black velvet with red and green wool fringe. Decorated with wool embroidery in chain stitch floral design, divided by a red felt center strip for bells; edged with red rickrack. Backed by canvas and leather loops for fastening to a dog's harness.

Northern Life Museum, Oblate Collection,
69B-24-4
Fort Chipewyan, post-World War II
L. 49, W. 49 cm

33 Dog pack

Dogs packed furs in the spring, when it was no longer possible to use sleighs. They also carried personal items whenever people travelled through the bush on foot. Packs were tied on by rope. P. G. Downes, who travelled through Fort Chipewyan in 1938, photographed "Coffee," a dog who carried a full pack for his Indian owner (Plate 18).

This pack was made by Elsie Ladouceur for her husband Pete, who used it twelve years ago to pack out beavers from his spring hunt. At that time they still lived at Big Point, a traditional bush settlement

for French-Métis from Lac La Biche. The pack is still redolent of beaver pelts.

Canvas pack with six leather tabs machine sewn with thread.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H88.77.1
Elsie Ladouceur (née Powder),
Fort Chipewyan, 1976
French-Métis
L. 66.0, W. 50.0 cm

Dog whip

In 1908, anthropologist Robert Lowie visited Fort Chipewyan to study Chipewyan Indians and their culture. He collected this dog whip and a few other items. While he did not provide information about them, it is reasonable to assume that they were made by Chipewyan Indians.

American Museum of Natural History,
50.1/8274
Robert Lowie, Fort Chipewyan, 1908
Chipewyan

34 Model canoe

While the Chipewyans were not considered expert canoeemen in the early years of contact, their skills must have improved greatly after settling in the Fort Chipewyan region. This model Chipewyan canoe and its distinctive long-bladed paddle were collected before 1850. The gunwales are painted with circles of red ochre; the paddle is painted dark green.

Royal Museum of Scotland, UC.829 & A
Pre 1850
Chipewyan
Canoe L. 38.5, w. 9.5 cm; paddle L. 14.0 cm

Canvas canoe

Birchbark canoes continued to be made into the 20th century, when they were replaced by canvas canoes and wooden skiffs. They were used for hunting muskrats, waterfowl, moose, and caribou, and for general summer travel. Charles E. Gillham, a traveller through Fort Chipewyan in the early 1940s, described the local "rat canoe":

A rat canoe is a boat made by the natives for travel in the marshes as they hunt the muskrats. Barely ten feet long and thirty inches wide, it is the only rival of an Eskimo kayak for tippiness, unseaworthiness and

general cussedness. ... These canoes have a rib structure made of thin veneer from packing boxes, strengthened with a few strips of willows running lengthwise. The whole thing is covered with eight-ounce canvas and painted (Gillham 1947:24).

This canvas canoe was made about 1957 by François Bruno, a Chipewyan Indian born in 1909. It is slightly larger than the rat canoes described by Gillham. Canvas is stretched over a hand-made wooden frame. The canvas, which is preserved with paint, probably has been replaced at least once.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H88.28.1
François Bruno, Fort Chipewyan, c.1957
Chipewyan
L. 365, W. 91.4 cm

Model snowshoes

Snowshoes were essential for walking in the northern snows in winter. This pair of model snowshoes was collected in 1861 by Dr. Hector from Chipewyan Indians. Traditionally, men carved the frames, and women laced them with caribou or moose babiche.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 686.3 and A
Dr. Hector, 1861
Chipewyan
L. 46.0, W. 10.0 cm

Snowshoes

Robert Lowie collected these snowshoes in Fort Chipewyan in 1908.

American Museum of Natural History,
50/7107 A/B
Robert Lowie, Fort Chipewyan, 1908
Chipewyan
1908
L. 92.5, W. 22.5 cm

35 Snowshoes

These modern snowshoes were made by Louis Boucher in 1977. A Chipewyan Indian, he made them in a style very similar to those collected by Lowie in 1908 (American Museum of Natural History, 50/7107 A/B). Louis Boucher, born in 1893, was fifteen years old when Lowie visited Fort Chipewyan.

Birch frames; caribou babiche webbing.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,

H72.23.1 A/B
Louis Boucher, Fort Chipewyan, 1971
Chipewyan
A - L. 115.5, W. 30.0 cm; B - L. 113.0,
W. 30.5 cm

36 Rabbit snares

Women usually had a regular line of rabbit snares near the settlement. Travellers might set a few snares when they stopped for the night. A large number of snares would be stored and carried on a piece of wood. Snares similar to these were described by Fort Chipewyan residents.

Twenty-four snares made of sinew, each with a wooden toggle, mounted on a wooden carrier with skin carrying-strap.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 848.28
B. R. Ross, Fort Simpson, 1862
Slavey
L. 63.5 cm

37 Caribou snare

Chipewyan Indians relied on barren-ground caribou for food and hides into the 20th century. Before guns were widely available, they would construct pounds into which they drove caribou, setting heavy snares into openings in the wall to catch caribou attempting to escape.

Cord made from four strands of twisted caribou babiche, with a loop at one end to form a slipknot.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 482.7 and A
B. R. Ross, Fort Prince of Wales (Churchill),
1859
Probably Chipewyan
L. 438.0 cm

38 Snare

This contemporary snare was hand-made from a steel wire cable, with a locking mechanism.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.71.21
J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, c.1980s
French-Métis
L. 101.2 cm

Oneida Victor #1 long-spring trap

This small single spring, steel leghold trap is set for muskrats and other small fur-bearers. "Made in Canada, Animal Trap Co., Niagara Falls" is marked on the pan.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.71.16

J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, post-1958

L. 46.0 cm

39 Oneida, Hawley and Norton #4 long-spring trap

A double spring steel leghold trap is designed for large fur-bearers, with an older style anchor chain. "Made in Canada, Animal Trap Co. Niagra Falls" is marked on the pan.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H67.277.727

Post-1924

L. 114.0 cm

40 Conibear #330 trap

The Conibear trap was invented by a trapper in Fort Smith. It kills an animal outright.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.114.19

Ernie Rideout, Hudson's Bay Raw Furs,

post-1958

L. 28.7 cm

Muskrat stretcher

The muskrat skin is turned fur-side in and tacked to a single-piece form, or stretcher, to dry. A belly stick is inserted between the pelt and the stretcher during drying, so that the pelt can be easily removed. This stretcher was made by Sammy Tucaro, a trapper whose trapping area lies in the Baril Creek (Deep Creek) region of Wood Buffalo National Park. Fort Chipewyan trappers carve their stretchers from local wood, although stretchers can now be purchased.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.69.2

Sammy Tucaro, Fort Chipewyan, c.1980

Cree

L. 60.7, W. 15.0 cm

41a Single-piece stretcher

Single-piece stretchers used for mink or small marten are longer and thinner than those for muskrat.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.70.5

Alex Auger, Camsell Portage, c.1970s

French-Métis

L. 80.2, W. 9.8 cm

41b Split stretcher

Three-piece split stretchers were common in earlier years. The middle piece served the same function as a belly stick. This hand-made spruce or pine

stretcher was fastened together at the top with a piece of brass wire. The middle piece had disappeared, and the stretcher was being used as a two-piece split stretcher, with a piece of wood tacked across the base. A replacement was carved by the maker's son when the artifact was collected. This stretcher was used for marten or mink.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,

H86.71.5A/B/C

Alphonse and J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan,

c.1950s

French-Métis

L. 87.8 cm

Split stretcher

Two-piece split stretchers are used today for all larger skins, including larger mink and marten. Alphonse Bourke carved this stretcher for otter. A piece of wood tacked across the base of the stretcher has replaced the middle piece of the earlier style three-piece split stretcher.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,

H86.71.10A/B

Alphonse Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, c.1970s

French-Métis

L. 125.9 cm

Scapula moose caller

Hunters rubbed the scapula or shoulder blade of a moose against a tree to call moose during hunting season.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, Z80.42.2

L. 38.9, W. 23.8 cm

42a Birchbark moose caller

Hunters try to attract moose in the fall by grunting through a birch bark cone of birch bark fastened with wood pegs, as in this example, or sewn together with spruce root. It is an aboriginal device still in use today.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H77.27.1

1977

Slavey

H. 61.0, D. 16.0 cm

42b Birchbark moose caller

This hastily made moose caller was fastened with tape and used - unsuccessfully - on a fall hunting trip in 1985.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1142.1
Gabe Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, 1985
French-Métis
H. 51.0, D. 12.0 cm

Gun case

Victoria Robillard made this traditional gun case for Edgar Garton about 1935 or 1936, when he worked at Goldfields Mine on the north shore of Lake Athabasca.

Smoked, hand-tanned moosehide, decorated with caribou fringe and embroidery thread in a floral pattern. Hand-sewn with thread.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1125.1
Victoria Robillard, Goldfields, c.1935
Chipewyan
L. 28.5 cm

43a Flesher

The flesher is used to scrape off fat and bits of flesh from a skin in the first step in the tanning process or when stretching pelts. It is made from the leg bone of a moose.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H83.142.1
C.1964
Beaver
L. 33.0 cm

43b Scraper

The hair is removed with a scraper if a skin is to be made into leather. This scraper has a metal blade set in a bone handle.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H70.132.2
Cree
L. 31 cm

44 Crooked knife

This knife, a trade item, was used to carve wood, such as snowshoe frames, stretchers, and canoe ribs. It came from Colin Fraser's store in Fort Chipewyan. His father was Colin Fraser, Sir George Simpson's piper. Colin Fraser (Jr.) became a successful free trader in Fort Chipewyan, establishing a post there before 1900. His descendants still live in Fort Chipewyan today.

Hand-made wood handle with four metal pins securing the curved, square-ended blade to the wood; the blade marked "Sheffield England-hand forged" and "E.X. 844".

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H73.146.1
Horace Wylie, Fort Chipewyan, post-1880
Blade L. 14.92 cm; handle L. 13.75 cm

45 Woven bowl

This bowl is one of a set which Robert Campbell sent to Edinburgh from Fort Chipewyan in 1859. It is woven from coiled, split spruce root, or *wattape*, and decorated along the upper rim with dyed quills in bands of color.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.10B
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859

46 Woven dish

This basket was acquired by Bob McLaughlin in 1907 in Fort Chipewyan. It is woven from coiled spruce root, and the rim is reinforced with spruce root. The blue, green, and orange dyes which were used to decorate it are now badly faded. It demonstrates the persistence into the 20th century of a craft no longer known in Fort Chipewyan.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H64.12.4
Bob McLaughlin, Fort Chipewyan, 1907
D. 21, H. 7 cm

47 Bark bucket

Also from Fort Chipewyan, this birch bark bucket is decorated with goose quills. The high collar suggests that it once had a lid. Robert Campbell described it as a water can.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.12
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859
D. 11.0, H. 16.5 cm

48 Bark dish

The rim of this neatly seamed and decorated bark dish from Fort Chipewyan is decorated with bands of colored goose quills.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.11
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859

49 Birch bark basket

James Parker received this basket from Lillian Charlotte Wylie (née Laboucane) of Fort Chipewyan in 1965, when he taught school in the community. Her grandmother had made it for her about 1900.

Birch bark with leather thongs. Decorated and edged with strips of dyed and undyed birch bark.

James Parker
Fort Chipewyan, c.1900
D. 19.0, H. 6.0 cm

Strike-a-light

The strike-a-light was struck against flint close to tinder to make a fire.

Commercially forged steel.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, Collection of
the Missionary Oblates - Grandin Province/
de la Missionnaires Oblats - Province
Grandin*
H68.2.281
C.1868
L. 9.0, W. 3.4 cm

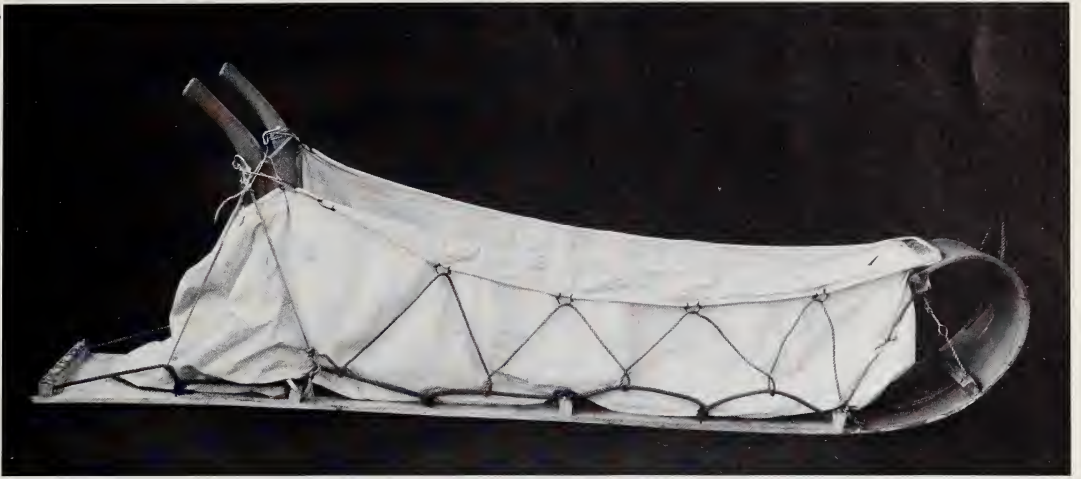


Plate 16. Roddy Fraser's spring camp on Lake Mamawi. (*University of Alberta Archives 86-111-21, and R. Fraser*)

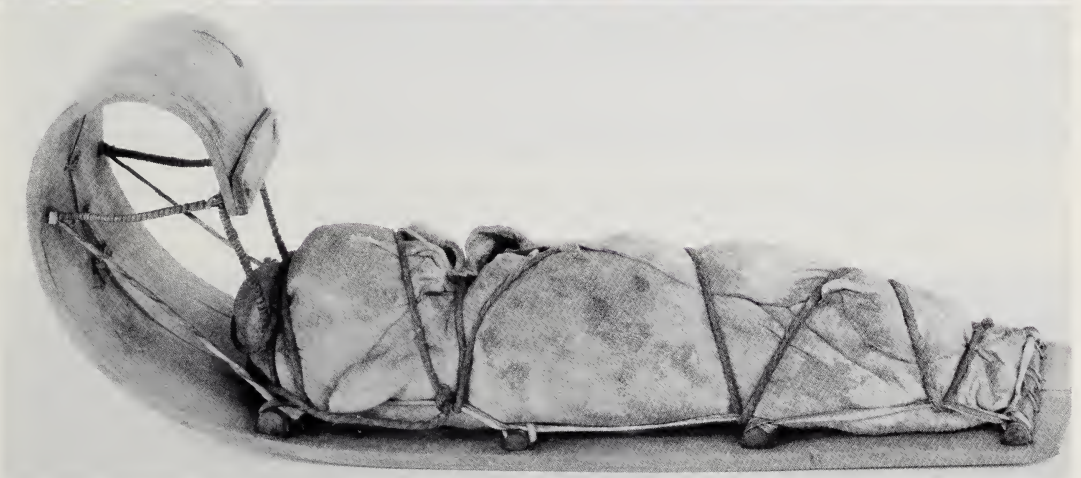
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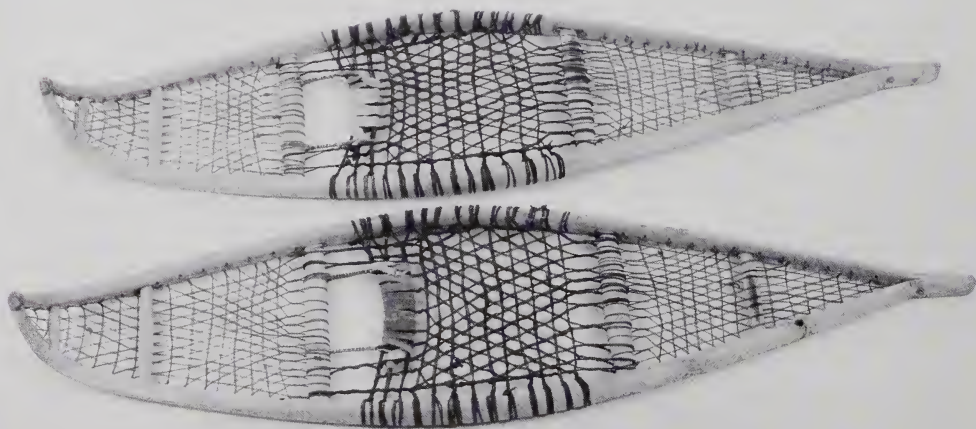
Plate 17. Women trading furs for fabric, rickrack, stockings, Eddy matches, and other goods, c. 1927-30.
(Provincial Archives of Alberta, Photo Collection 87.355)



Plate 18. Coffee, 1938: "He is carrying all the bedding, a tarp of William and Nigorri's, the hatchet, and both tea pails. As all of this has become wet, it is a tremendous load." (*P.G. Downes, in R.H. Cockburn 1985:143*)

33





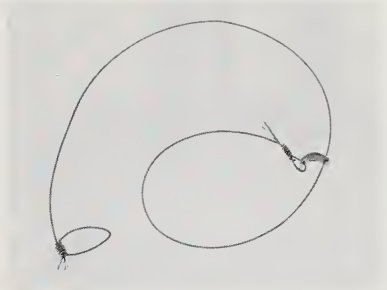
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41 a b



43 a b



42 a b



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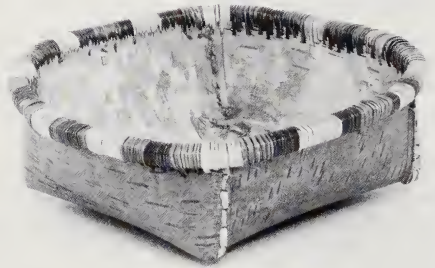
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Fishing

Fishing provided the economic underpinnings of the subsistence economy, the fur trade, and mission life. Everyone fished, winter, summer, and especially in the fall, when they put up fish for winter food for both people and dogs (Plate 19). As Robert Campbell explained (n.d.:87):

Like most of the forts in the Northern department, Fort Chipewyan's staple winter food for its inhabitants was fish, and the most productive season for taking them is the spawning season, about the setting fast of the ice or previous to it. We kept two fisheries going all winter (1857-59) to meet the requirements. Sixty thousand fish was what we looked upon as sufficient for men and dogs for winter. Four fish of about 4 pounds weight each was a man's daily rations, with perhaps a few potatoes when such were available.

Some Fort Chipewyan residents still fish for personal use. Fish is widely shared among family and friends and is a important food in the community.

50 Skiff

Boats made of hand-sawn boards replaced canoes in the 20th century for lake and river travel. Known locally as "skiffs," their design probably derived from the York boats, which were adapted in the 19th century from the Orkney yoles. They were originally pointed at each end. A narrow transom was added to support the early outboard motors. After World War II, plywood eventually replaced boards in skiff construction, with a broad transom to support a big motor. Some men still know how to build skiffs, but this skill is disappearing among the young. Today, most people prefer aluminum boats.

Painted (blue and white) plywood and spruce; constructed with glue and nails.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1153.1
George Nokoho, Raymond Ladouceur;
Fort Chipewyan, c.1981
Chipewyan, Métis
L. 987.0, W. 172.0, H. 530.0 cm

Evinrude outboard motor

Outboard motors, or "kickers," revolutionized northern water travel. This 1911, 8-10 h.p. Evinrude was one of the earliest in the region.

Northern Life Museum, Oblate Collection;
TO463
L. 97.5 cm

Fishing net

While people used to make their own nets, and some elders still know this craft, commercial cotton nets were a time-saver. Floats and sinkers had to be attached. This unused net was found in the warehouse of the Roman Catholic Mission, which until about 1955 used to fish extensively for winter food and which also sold some goods to its Native employees.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.160.4
Father Lucien Casterman, O.M.I.,
Fort Chipewyan, pre-1955

51 Netting shuttle

A netting shuttle or needle carries the twine for making and repairing fish nets. This example was hand-made from birch wood by Solomon Cardinal. Plastic shuttles are available today.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1140.1
Solomon Cardinal, Big Point
(Fort Chipewyan), pre-1945
French-Métis
L. 16.3, W. 2.9 cm

52a Wooden float

Wooden floats were tied to the upper edge of a fish net. Until recently, floats were hand-carved from local woods. P. G. Downes, who travelled through Fort Chipewyan in 1938, commented about Indian fishing equipment:

Indian method of floats is superior, as the net does not tangle so badly. I examined some floats, and they use wedges, or at least pieces of wood which bob up vertically and are tied by a short line to the net. Furthermore, stones or leads attached by lines are much superior [in Cockburn 1986:167].

Three styles of floats have been identified in the Fort Chipewyan region. One type is long and narrow, as this example shows. It was found at the site of a trapper's cabin abandoned in the 1950s, near Fishing River on the north shore of Lake Athabasca. The hole at the base of the float for tying it to the net has rotted away.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.227.2
Solomon Cardinal?, Big Point
(Fort Chipewyan), c.1950
French-Métis
L. 41.3, W. 10.0 cm

52b Wooden float

Shaped like a truncated wedge, this hand-made wooden float was found at William's Point, on the north shore of Lake Athabasca, a trader's outpost abandoned by the 1950s. The bottom of the float, which contained the hole for tying the float to the net, has rotted away. One fisherman in Fort Chipewyan claimed that this float tangled less than the longer type (H86.227.2).

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.227.17
William's Point (Fort Chipewyan), c.1950
L. 31.5, W. 11.0 cm

52c Wooden float

This style of wooden float, hand-made from a small spruce tree, was used for ice-fishing. It has a center groove for tying the line.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.227.19
Fishing River, c.1950
French-Métis
L. 20.6, D. 4.5 cm

Wooden float

Machine-made wooden floats were used by fishermen working for McInnes and by some local fishermen. Today's plastic floats show the same style.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.227.18
Lake Athabasca, post-1926
L. 12.0, D. 4.0 cm

53 Stone weights (sinkers)

The stones are pecked around the mid-point to form a groove, where a cord was tied to attach the weights or sinkers to the net. These examples were made by the Roman Catholic mission workers, mostly French-Métis men and Oblate brothers, based on local Native traditions.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.227.5,.6,.10,.12,.16
Brother Louison Veillette, O.M.I.
French-Métis
Lengths 15.4 to 10.0 cm

54 Fishing net

Today, Fort Chipewyan fishermen buy 100 meter nylon nets, to which they tie plastic floats, lead weights, and bridles, using nylon cord. They must also prepare anchors for each net. Nets used for open-water fishing must have buoys bearing the fisherman's licence number. Net, floats, weights, and cord are supplied by Leckie's Freshwater Fishing Supplies, a commercial supplier in Edmonton. Commercial fishermen may tie two or more nets together, with an anchor and buoy at each end.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.230.1
J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, 1986
French-Métis
L. 100 m

55 Buoys

Fishermen in Fort Chipewyan are creative in their construction of buoys. The flotation material for these buoys is a piece of insulated pipe lashed to a wooden pole with rope. A lead weight at one end and two felt flags at the other end complete the buoy.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.230.4 & .5
J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, 1986
French-Métis
L. H86.230.4 - 236.0 cm, .5 - 233.0 cm

Anchors

Metal anchors are purchased, then tied with rope for attaching to the net and buoys. The net is anchored at each end.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.230.2 & .3
J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, 1986
French-Métis
L. 45.5 cm.

56 Wooden net tray

This net tray was used by McInnes fishermen and some local fishermen to hold nets and occasionally fish. This type of tray can be seen in photographs in the collection of the Provincial Archives of Alberta (see especially A14365) taken by Andrew Koziol, who worked for McInnes from 1936 to 1953.

Hand-made from three-quarter inch plank board; corners mitered and reinforced with metal strapping nailed in place.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1207.1
J. Bourke, Fort Chipewyan, c.1940s
L. 87.0, W. 67.0, H. 21.5 cm

57 Fish box

Plastic fish boxes are typically used by all fishermen today, an offshoot of a long history of commercial fishing activity and its related equipment on Lake Athabasca. When fishing commercially, fishermen fill their boxes with ice from the fish plant to store their catch out on the lake. They write their names or initials on their boxes for identification when the boxes are brought back to the plant full of walleye, known locally as pickerel.

Green plastic fish box with metal handles.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H87.66.1
Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, John
Mercredi; Fort Chipewyan; c.1970s
L. 71.0, W. 38.0, H. 31.5 cm

Fish box

Later type of fish box, made of red plastic with metal handles.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1153.2
Raymond Ladouceur, Fort Chipewyan,
pre-1985
L. 80.0, W. 45.7, H. 26.0 cm

58 Fish stabbing sticks

Until improved transportation systems allowed foods to be imported to Fort Chipewyan at all seasons, people relied heavily on fish year round. Each fall, everyone would fish the whitefish spawning runs, stringing the fish on stabbing sticks, and hanging them on platforms:

At the fishery, whitefish are hung upon sticks across a permanent staging to dry and freeze; an inch-thick stick is pierced through the tail, and the fish hang downward in groups of ten [Cameron 1910:131].

The Hudson's Bay Company and the Roman Catholic Mission would put up thousands of fish each fall. Fish stored in this way were sometimes

sold by the stick and referred to as "hangfish" or "stickfish." Today, only people who are still feeding dogs hang fish. Most fish for human consumption is preserved in freezers.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.227.21-.26
Louis Ladouceur, Fort Chipewyan, 1986
French-Métis
Lengths 107.6 to 82.5 cm

Fishing clothing

This rubberized clothing was worn by Brother Louison Veillette, O.M.I., when he used to fish for the Mission each fall at Point de Bretagne, known today as Fidler's Point. Mission fishing ended about 1954.

"Kaufman Bluenose" rubber jacket

Seams are folded in and glued; fastened with four plain metal buttons.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.226.3
Brother Louison Veillette, O.M.I.,
Fort Chipewyan, late 1940s
Back L. 76.5 cm

Rubber waders with cloth suspenders attached to bib

Metal buttons stamped with "Kaufman Lifebuoy Clothing."

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.159.3 A/B/C
Brother Louison Veillette, O.M.I.,
Fort Chipewyan, late 1940s
L. 112.5 cm

Rubber boots

Black, with a red rubber sole and a red rubber edging on the top.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.226.5 A/B
Brother Louison Veillette, O.M.I.,
Fort Chipewyan, late 1940s
H. 86.0 cm, L. of sole 29.5 cm; size 8

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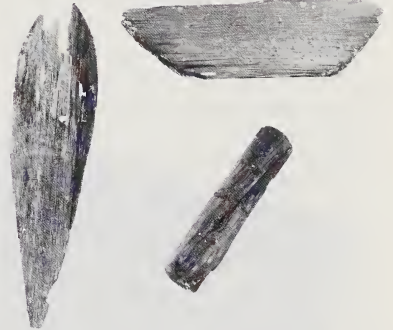


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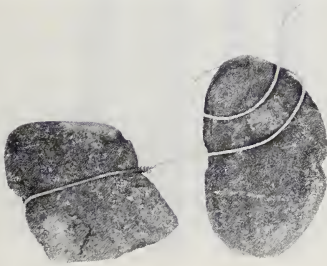


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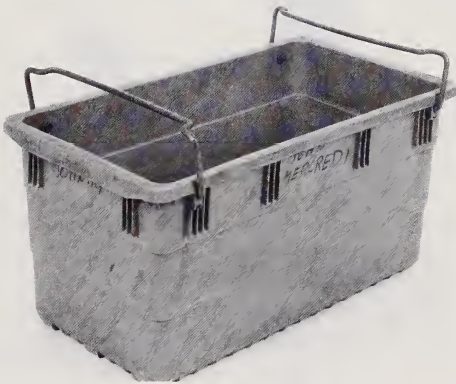
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Plate 19. Families with their winter food. (Provincial Archives of Alberta, A-5473)

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Fort Chipewyan Finery: Handwork Traditions

Fort Chipewyan has a tradition of finely crafted and beautifully decorated items made for personal use and for sale to tourists. They show continuity with earlier Indian traditions, while at the same time they incorporate European materials - fabric, embroidery thread, and beads - and European styles of construction and design. Indian and French-Métis girls who lived in the Convent were formally instructed in European crafts, which contributed to these changes. Women who left their natal communities to follow their husbands to new areas also contributed their techniques. Regional decorative styles emerged as a result, with Fort Chipewyan part of a broader Great Slave Lake/Mackenzie River tradition (Duncan 1982: 144). In 1938, P. G. Downes observed that the "Mackenzie influence on style" extended as far east as Ile a la Crosse, in northern Saskatchewan (in Cockburn 1985:325). Because of the paucity of documentary information about artifacts from Fort Chipewyan and the surrounding region, and because of the ethnic ambiguity which existed in the region, it is more appropriate to describe a "Fort Chipewyan" style of beadwork than it is to try to identify a "Métis" or "Indian" style.

Bags and Pouches

Indians and Métis used natural and purchased materials to fashion a variety of objects needed in everyday life. Even functional items such as game bags and tobacco pouches were often creatively decorated. People were innovative in their use of unusual materials, such as swan's feet.

Clothing

Early traders provide tantalizing fragments in their journals about aboriginal Chipewyan and Cree garments. For example, in 1801, Alexander Mackenzie described Chipewyans and Crees wearing aboriginal garments, though with some use of woolens and imported ornaments (Mackenzie 1970:132-3, 151-2). David Thompson, writing in the same period (1784-1812), described Cree garments made mainly of cloth (Thompson 1962:73-4). John Franklin visited Fort Chipewyan in 1820. He described Chipewyan dress:

When at the fort they imitate the dress of

the Canadians, except that, instead of trowsers, they prefer the Indian stockings, which only reach from the thigh to the ankle, and in place of the waistband they have a piece of cloth round the middle which hangs down loosely before and behind. Their hunting dress consists of a leathern shirt and stockings, over which a blanket is thrown, being covered with a fur cap or band [Franklin 1969:156].

The women "...were all dressed (after the manner of the country) in blue or green cloth..." [Franklin 1969:285].

By mid-century, the Indians had abandoned most aboriginal clothing in favor of purchased and home-sewn clothing. The Treaty party of 1899 was surprised at their appearance:

But it was plain that these people had achieved...a stage of civilization distinctly in advance of many of our treaty Indians to the south....Instead of paint and feathers...there presented itself a body of respectable-looking men, as well dressed and evidently quite as independent in their feelings as any like number of average pioneers in the East.

...one beheld...men with well-washed, unpainted faces, and combed and common hair; men in suits of ordinary "store-clothes," and some even with "boiled" if not laundered shirts [Mair 1908:54].

The only hand-made items still commonly worn in Fort Chipewyan today are moccasins and mukluks, mitts, and decorated jackets.

Bags and pouches

59 Wall pocket or comb bag (Plate 8)

While the name of the maker has been lost, this wall pocket may have been made by a Scots-Métis woman in Fort Chipewyan, because the words "comb bag" are in English and because it was passed down through Scots-Métis families in the community.

Black velvet, backed with green cotton canvas, and lined with pink fabric. Decorated with beads in a floral design. Machine sewn.

Roderick Fraser, Fort Chipewyan,

early 20th century
Scots-Métis?
W. 40.2, H. 51.0 cm

60 Beaded bag

This bag was collected by Major C. G. Matthews, an employee with the Hudson Bay Company in the Athabasca District from about 1885 to 1905, which helps to date the artifacts he collected. While the intricate floral design shows European influence, the geometric loomed panel suggests older aboriginal designs. The beaded fringe and wool tassels are reminiscent of similar details on artifacts dating to the mid-19th century, such as the Cree woman's hood (Provincial Museum of Alberta H64.64.34).

Upper portion made from black wool lined with cotton, edged with red fabric and white beads, decorated with beads in a complex floral design. Lower portion consists of a square of loomed beadwork, with fringes of beads and wool tassels. Machine and hand sewn with thread and sinew.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H65.235.43
Major C. G. Matthews, Fort Chipewyan,
c.1885-1905
L. with fringe 49.0, W. 36.5 cm

61 Watch pocket

Decorated bags were made to hold pocket watches. This bag is made in a typical pouch style with drawstrings. Residents in Fort Chipewyan also made slightly larger pouches in this style to hold a pipe and tobacco. This item was collected by Dr. O. C. Edwards, the physician who accompanied the Treaty party to Fort Chipewyan and neighboring communities in 1900.

White felted wool and green velvet, lined with cotton fabric. Decorated with embroidery thread in a floral pattern. Red and pale blue twisted drawstrings, with red tassels.

University of Alberta Collections,
ADX 965.24.74
Dr. O. C. Edwards, Fort Chipewyan region,
1900
L. 10.2, W. 7.5 cm

62 Swan's foot bag

Bird's foot bags were popular at the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century. Bags made of the feet of swans and geese are known from Fort

Chipewyan. The large, webbed swan's feet were skinned and stitched together to make small, wide pouches. The claws were left on. Pouches were typically decorated with wool tassels, beads, and other materials. In overall design, they are similar to babiche game bags.

Two whole swan's (Whistling Swan?) feet with claws, finished with a top band of unsmoked caribou skin. Decorated with two rows of dyed, plaited quills, brass and black beads, and wool tassels.

Lower Fort Garry National Historic Park,
HBC Collection; HBC 427
Fort Chipewyan, late 19th century
Cree
L. 21.5, W. 14 cm

63 Swan's foot bag

Frank Russell collected this swan's foot bag in 1892 in Fort Chipewyan. He described it as a tobacco pouch. Russell was a student and ornithologist with the University of Iowa who collected artifacts and animal specimens in 1892-94 in Fort Chipewyan and areas farther north.

Lower portion of four swan's (Trumpeter Swan?) feet tops with claws, joined along the base and sides with a strip of moosehide, edged with red and green rickrack. Decorated with tassels of quill-wrapped strands of babiche, old trade beads and wool. Upper portion of velvet and plaid fabric and braid.

University of Iowa Museum of Natural
History, 9614
Frank Russell, Fort Chipewyan, 1892
L. 23.0, W. 25.5 cm

64 Loon skin bag

Chipewyan Indians used loon skins for a variety of purposes, due to their striking plumage and natural watershedding qualities. Whole loon skins were preferred for use as shot pouches, to keep shot and powder dry. This piece was made recently and demonstrates the persistence of this old tradition. It would probably have been finished with a drawstring.

Hand-made from a whole Common Loon skin and a top band of hand-tanned moosehide.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.70.1
Lake Athabasca, c.1980

L. 34.0, W. 25.0 cm

65 Babiche bag

Babiche bags were once very common in the north and continued to be used at least until World War I. In 1892, Russell referred to them by their Cree name, *muskemoots* (1898:77). While they are usually identified as game bags, they may have been used to carry personal possessions, perhaps with long straps over the shoulder. In 1938, P. G. Downes explained that he and his Chipewyan guides "...all use shoulder-packing (not tumplines), as is the custom with the Chips on long cross-country traverses" (in Cockburn 1985:143). Today's hunters use canvas packsacks with a shoulder strap.

This earliest-known babiche bag from Fort Chipewyan is made from caribou babiche, with horizontal bands of red pigment. The bag has three rows of skin fringes, finished with beads, dewclaws, and wool tassels. The upper edge of the bag is finished with a strip of caribou skin, with decorative strips of red and blue fabric and white and blue beads. The edge of the bag and the babiche loops are wrapped with porcupine quills.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.3
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859
Chipewyan?
L. 47.5, W. 27.0 cm

66 Babiche bag

Babiche bags acquired in Fort Chipewyan at the turn of the century show only minor changes in construction and design from the 1859 example (Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.3). This type of bag, with its distinctive netting technique, is no longer made today.

Made from smoked hand-tanned moose hide and babiche netting. Decorated with dyed porcupine quills and paired wool tassels. A decorative effect has been created on the babiche by changing the pattern of the weave and dyeing these sections with red pigment. The opening of the bag is stitched with wool yarn. Sewn with sinew.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H68.159.439
Mrs. Robert Fraser, Fort Chipewyan, c.1900
Width of bag opening-49.0 cm

67 Babiche bag

Dr. O. C. Edwards collected this bag in Fort Chipewyan in 1900.

Made from smoked hand-tanned hide and babiche netting. Decorated with paired red and black pigment, wool tassels, beads, rows of braid in a zig-zag pattern, and rick-rack on green duffel.

University of Alberta Collections,
ADX.965.24.68
Dr. O. C. Edwards, Fort Chipewyan, 1900
Chipewyan?
L. 31.0, W. 59.0 cm

68 Tea cozy (Plate 9)

Constructed from black velveteen, lined with brown striped cotton and filled with feathers. Decorated with beads in a floral pattern and a purple silk ruffle. Sewn with thread.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H66.233.128
Fort Chipewyan, c.1880-1910
L. 36.0, W. 28.0 cm

Head coverings

69 Woman's beaded hood

This traditional Cree woman's hood sounds like the style described by David Thompson for the "Nahathaway" (Crees), for the period 1784 to 1812:

For a head dress they have a foot of broad cloth sewed at one end, ornamented with beads and gartering, this end is on the head, the loose parts are over the shoulders, and is well adapted to defend the head and neck from the cold and snow [Thompson 1962:74; see also Mackenzie 1970:133].

This hood is part of the Ernest Brown collection. Brown was an early Edmonton photographer (1877-1951) and amateur collector who established the Pioneer Day Museum (1933-1939), now part of the holdings of the Provincial Museum of Alberta.

Fine black wool ("broad cloth") lined with blue silk cloth; decorated with tiny beads in a complex floral design. Finished with a heavy tassel at the point and a beaded fringe at the bottom edge. Sewn with thread and sinew.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H64.64.34
Ernest Brown, mid-19th century
Cree
Mid-19th century
L. 62, W. 26 cm

70 Child's duffel hood

The style of this 20th century hood is similar to the woman's Cree hood (Provincial Museum of Alberta H64.64.34), although it is more fitted. Made and lined from white wool duffel, it is trimmed with a strip of the same fabric beaded in a floral design and a strip of white hare fur. The hood is finished with a combined neckband and ties.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H62.2.285
Ernest Brown, post-1902
L. 30.5, W. 24.0 cm

71 Man's hat (cover)

Frank Russell collected this hat from a Cree man in Fort Chipewyan in 1892. It demonstrates a synthesis of Indian traditions and European style and materials. The hat was hand-made on a frame of birch, covered and lined with cloth, and wrapped with a strip of ribbon which was once bright red. The strip of fabric, sequins, and beads which zig-zags over the ribbon is the same sort of design found on babiche bags from the region. Note the presence of an animal effigy, which may represent the man's personal supernatural helper or reflect a dream which he had. The owner had used the crown for a needle case; the needle is still in place. Russell noted that a piece of cheese-cloth had been loosely tied around the outside which was used to prevent snow-blindness. This style of hat derives from Victorian men's smoking caps, with side-tassel.

In his book, Russell (1898:170) described this and other hats:

North of Athabasca Landing the usual head covering of the Indian is his heavy hair, confined by a bandana handkerchief in summer, which has replaced the hair or deer-skin headband of the past, or by the hood of his capote in winter. A few wear hats obtained from the traders and others a "birch cap" of their own manufacture.

University of Iowa Museum of Natural History, 34497
Frank Russell, Fort Chipewyan, 1892
Cree
D. 19.0, H 6.5 cm

72 Man's cap

Purchased caps such as this one were worn year-round by Fort Chipewyan men. In winter, they

pulled down a flap to cover the ears and the back of the neck. This cap was altered by John James Waquan, who stitched muskrat fur to the flap.

Black and off-white wool tweed with a snap attaching the brim to the crown. Lined with green quilted fabric. Muskrat fur hand-stitched to the flap.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.233.4
John James Waquan, Fort Chipewyan,
post-World War II
Cree
D. 28.0 cm

Mitts and gloves

73 Mitts

B. F. Ross collected these mitts in Fort Simpson about 1861 from Chipewyan Indians, who traded there sporadically. They are made of smoked, hand-tanned moose and caribou skin, lined with white wool duffel and beautifully embroidered with silk thread in a floral design. The cuffs are blue wool cloth decorated red, blue, and green appliqued silk ribbons and tags. They are joined by a braided string with tassels.

Royal Museum of Scotland, 848.7 & A
B. F. Ross, Fort Simpson, 1862
Chipewyan
L. 24.5, W. 14.1 cm

74 Mitts

These mitts were acquired by Ernest Brown at an unknown location along the Mackenzie Drainage before 1902. They are similar to mitts worn by dog mushers on the Athabasca River between Fort MacKay and Fort Chipewyan (Plate 20) and to Chipewyan mitts from 1858 in the collection of the Royal Museum of Scotland (848.7 & A). Note the persistence of ribbon tags, although this pair is decorated with intricate floral beadwork rather than dainty embroidery.

Smoked hand-tanned moose hide with a black velvet cuff; canvas backing. Thumbs, backs, and cuffs decorated with beaded floral design and finished with black and white silk ribbon tags. Sewn with cotton thread and sinew.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H62.2.257 A/B
Ernest Brown, pre-1902

L. 31.0, W. 22.0 cm

75 Gloves

Dr. Frederick C. Bell visited Fort Chipewyan in 1905 with the Treaty party. He acquired these gloves for his personal use.

Made from smoked, hand-tanned caribou skin. Gauntlet-style, with flaring wrist extensions. Decorated with intricate silk embroidery, quill-wrapped fringe, and ermine skin (now completely de-haired). Sewn with sinew and cotton string.

*Canadian Museum of Civilization,
VI-Z-250 a,b
Dr. Frederick C. Bell, Fort Chipewyan, 1905*

76 Gloves

Unsmoked hand-tanned caribou hide; lined with white silk to cover the embroidery stitches. Decorated with embroidery thread in a floral pattern and edged with fur. Fastened with a button closure. Sewn with thread.

*University of Alberta Collections,
ADX.965.24.205.1,2
Dr. O. C. Edwards, Fort Chipewyan region,
1900
Athapaskan
L. 23.0, W. 9.0 cm*

Belts

77 Quilled belt (Plate 10)

Porcupine quill work is an aboriginal Indian mode of decoration. In Fort Chipewyan, elaborate quill work such as this belt was largely replaced by bead-work and embroidery in the early 20th century. This belt was acquired by Bob McLaughlin, a trader and trapper in Fort Chipewyan in 1907.

Strip of dyed, woven porcupine quills in geometric designs; tabs and backing of smoked, hand-tanned skin; edged with metal beads.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H64.12.3
Bob McLaughlin, Fort Chipewyan, 1907
L. 64.0, W. 3.5 cm*

Sash

Woven sashes were worn by Indians, Métis, and European traders. They have become a Métis symbol.

Machine woven wool Assumption-style sash, with a central red core, and zig-zag bands of yarn (beige, blue, red, green, yellow, and red). Ends finished with braids and fringe.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H62.6.4
Early 20th century
L. 318.0, W. 19.0 cm*

Moccasins

Both now and in the past, moccasins have been the item most widely acquired by outsiders, due to their immediate usefulness, portability, and attractive designs. The wide range of Fort Chipewyan moccasins found in museum collections indicates major changes in sewing and decorative styles since 1859, when the first pair from the region was sent to the Royal Museum of Scotland by Robert Campbell (Royal Museum of Scotland 480.7 & A).

78 Moccasins

This plain, serviceable pair of moose and caribou moccasins were probably made by a woman at Fort Chipewyan. They display a pointed-toe style which persisted into the years after World War I: a characteristic small vamp outlined by two rows of blue and red wrapped hair piping, pointed toe with front seam, and caribou ankle wraps with thong ties. The bottom edges of the ankle wraps appear to be a forerunner to the separate ankle flaps which are common on later moccasins.

*Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.7 & A
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859
L. 28.0, W. 12.6 cm*

79a Moccasins

Robert Lowie acquired two pairs of moccasins from Chipewyan Indians in 1908 when he visited Fort Chipewyan. The overall style is the same as moccasins made 50 years earlier (Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.7 & A). In this pair, the vamp is made of black velvet, it is edged with several rows of wrapped horsehair, and the ankle wraps have been pinked.

*American Museum of Natural History,
50/711 A/B
Robert Lowie, Fort Chipewyan, 1908
Chipewyan*

79b Moccasins

In this pair of moccasins, the vamps have been outlined with a row of quill work.

*American Museum of Natural History,
50/7110 A/B
Robert Lowie, Fort Chipewyan, 1908
Chipewyan*

80a Moccasins (Plate 11)

Dr. O. C. Edwards acquired this pair of moccasins in 1900 from a community in the Fort Chipewyan region. The amount of decoration indicates that by this date, there were many design influences in the region. Note the wool ankle flaps, which have become an integral design element.

Pointed-toe, wrap-around style. Smoked hand-tanned moosehide foot, caribou hide ankle wraps, and a notched navy stroud ankle flap. Rust velvet vamp edged with two rows dyed horse-hair piping and decorated with two rows dyed porcupine quills. Hand sewn with sinew and thread.

*University of Alberta Collections,
ADX.965.24.170.1,2
Dr. O. C. Edwards, Fort Chipewyan region,
1900
L. 25.5, W. 10.5, H. 21.0 cm*

80b Moccasins (Plate 11)

Dr. Bell collected this pair of Cree moccasins in Fort Chipewyan in 1905. They are made of smoked moosehide feet, contrasted with unsmoked caribou ankle wraps and ankle flaps. The vamp, also of unsmoked caribou hide, is outlined with wrapped horse hair, porcupine quill work, and embroidered flowers.

*Canadian Museum of Civilization,
III-DD-22 a,b
F. C. Bell, Fort Chipewyan, 1905
Cree
L. 25, W. 13, H. 23 cm*

81a Moccasins

These pointed-toe, wrap-around moccasins were acquired by William Thompson of the American Geographic Society in Fort Chipewyan in 1917. The unsmoked hide ankle flaps contrasts with the smoked hide of the rest of the moccasin. They are decorated with floral embroidery.

*American Museum of Natural History,
50.2/933 A/B
William Thompson, Fort Chipewyan, 1917*

80c Moccasins (Plate 11)

James T. Shepherd worked as an engineer on the boats on the Athabasca River and Lake Athabasca from 1927 to 1930. He acquired these moccasins during that period from one of the communities he visited. The pointed-toe construction, and elaborate design style of the first two decades persisted at least to this period.

Pointed-toe, wrap-around style. Hand-tanned moosehide feet, hand-tanned caribou ankle wraps and lacing, and notched black wool stroud ankle flaps. Black velvet vamp is edged with one row of dyed wrapped horsehair and decorated with one row of dyed porcupine quillwork and embroidered flowers. Hand sewn with sinew and thread.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H87.425.1 A/B
James T. Shepherd, Athabasca River/
Lake Athabasca, 1927-1930
L. 29.0, W. 12.0, H. 20.0 cm*

80d Moccasins (Plate 11)

Clementine Mercredi (née MacKay) made this pair of moccasins in a particularly interesting and probably idiosyncratic style. While it appears to have a small vamp, the vamp is actually false, the appearance created by strategic placement of rows of wrapped horsehair and porcupine quill work. The bottom is cut in two pieces, seamed along the edge of the foot, in a style similar to older slipper moccasins. Both bottoms and ankle wraps are made of smoked moosehide, and they have never been worn; they may have been made for one of the priests of the Roman Catholic Church. These details suggest that these moccasins were made in the years following World War II, when caribou were increasingly difficult to obtain and moccasin styles changed to a round-toe, large vamp style, sometimes referred to as "mitten shoes."

Mrs. Mercredi was born in 1898 to a family that had Scots, French-Métis, and Chipewyan ancestors. Her parents were treaty Indians, and she probably lost her status when she married Victor Mercredi, a French-Métis. Accordingly, the ethnic origin of these moccasins is moot.

Northern Life Museum, Oblate Collection;
T0462 a,b
Clementine Mercredi (née MacKay),
Fort Chipewyan, post-1950
L. 27.0, W. 9.0, H. 20.0 cm

80e Moccasins (Plate 11)

Dr. O. C. Edwards acquired several pairs of slipper-style moccasins in Fort Chipewyan in 1900. This dainty pair is essentially a pointed-toe, wrap-around moccasin without the ankle wraps. Made of unsmoked caribou, the vamp is edged with wrapped horsehair and rows of dyed porcupine quills. A row of quills also decorates the notched ankle flap. The moccasin is finished with a pair of ribbon rosettes and fur (now gone) around the upper edge.

University of Alberta Collections,
ADX.965.24.173.1/2
Dr. O. C. Edwards, Fort Chipewyan, 1900
L. 22.5, W. 8.5, H. 6.0 cm

80f Moccasins (Plate 11)

This second style of smoked moosehide slippers from Fort Chipewyan is quite different in construction. The pointed style has been replaced by a two piece construction, with the upper and lower pieces seamed along the side of the foot. The upper surface has been beaded extensively in a floral design across the top of the foot and around the ankle. It is finished with purple ribbon rosettes, a row of ermine fur along the upper edge, and a purple ribbon tab at the heel to assist in putting on the slipper.

University of Alberta Collections,
ADX.965.24.172.1/2
Dr. O. C. Edwards, Fort Chipewyan, 1900
Athapaskan
L. 25.5, W. 9.0, H. 6.0 cm

80g Moccasins (Plate 11)

These moccasins were acquired in 1905 in Fort Chipewyan. They show the characteristic pointed-toe style, with the ankle edge bound in pink silk ribbons. The vamp is decorated with a floral design in silk embroidery threads.

Pointed-toe slipper style. Hand-tanned, smoked moose or caribou hide, with unsmoked caribou vamp and a notched hide ankle flap. Vamp edged with embroidery thread and decorated with a floral design in silk embroidery threads. Ankle edge is bound with pink silk ribbon, with a bow of the same ribbon sewn at ankle front.

Canadian Museum of Civilization,
VI-Z-251 a,b
Dr. Frederick C. Bell, Fort Chipewyan, 1905
L. 23, W. 11.5, H. 7.5 cm

80h Moccasins (Plate 11)

H. A. Conroy visited Fort Chipewyan in 1911, with that year's Treaty party. He acquired this pair of slipper-style moccasins decorated with floral embroidery on both vamp and ankle flap.

Canadian Museum of Civilization,
VI-D-9 a,b
H. A. Conroy, Fort Chipewyan, 1911
Chipewyan
L. 24.7, W. 12.7, H. 7.5 cm

81b Moccasins

William Thompson collected a pair of slipper-style moccasins in 1917. Note that unsmoked hide was used for the embroidered vamp and ankle flap. The designs are quite different from those of earlier years.

American Museum of Natural History,
50.2/947 A/B
William Thompson, Fort Chipewyan, 1917

80i Moccasins (Plate 11)

Unsmoked and bleached caribou slipper-styled moccasins were acquired from Chipewyan Indians in Fond du Lac, a Chipewyan community near the east end of Lake Athabasca, by Brother Berrie in 1969. While the style dates back to 1900, the beads are post-World War II types.

Northern Life Museum, Oblate Collection;
69B-1-4 a,b
Brother Berrie, OMI, Fond du Lac, 1969
Chipewyan
L. 26.5, W. 8.5, H. 6.0 cm

80j Moccasins (Plate 11)

Contemporary slipper-style moccasins now dominate Fort Chipewyan sewing. The large round-toe, large vamp construction allows for elaborate beading, usually with a floral pattern surrounded by white beads. Residents refer to this style as "fully beaded" moccasins. The moosehide welt surrounding the vamp has replaced the hair piping common earlier. There is often no ankle flap. The ankle edge is usually finished with beaver fur.

This pair of moccasins was made by Madeleine Tuccaro. She is of French-Métis descent; her first marriage was to a Chipewyan man, and she learned her sewing skills in the Convent, from relatives, and from her Chipewyan mother-in-law. Today she is married to a Cree man. While she used to do all her own beading, Mrs. Tuccaro now buys the beaded vamps from other women in the community and the smoked moosehide and beaver fur either locally or in Edmonton. She has many orders for moccasins, which she manufactures in her kitchen in Fort Chipewyan - a modern cottage craft. Clearly, while her moccasins have a Fort Chipewyan style, it is impossible to define them as distinctively Chipewyan, Cree, or Métis.

Rounded-toe style. Smoked, hand-tanned moosehide; fully beaded vamps with floral design surrounded by white beads; edged with beaver fur.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H88.156.3 A/B
Madeleine Tuccaro (née Tourangeau),
Fort Chipewyan, 1988
L. 24.0, W. 11.0, H. 7.0 cm (size 7 and 1/2)*

80k Mukluks and liners (Plate 11)

Moccasins in Fort Chipewyan today are often made with hand-tanned, smoked feet and canvas uppers, either wrap-around or tubes, in mukluk style. Liners are sewn of wool duffel. This pair was made by Katie Marten (née Wabistikwan or Whitehead).

Mukluks constructed from moosehide feet and cotton canvas uppers; lined with beige cotton fabric. Decorated with yellow rick-rack. Wool braid drawstring with tassels. Hand sewn.

Liners made from red wool duffel with a navy velcro closure. Pieces stitched together with cross-stitch; upper edges finished with blanket-stitch.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H86.48.3A/B/C/D
Katie Marten (née Wabistikwan or
Whitehead), Fort Chipewyan, c.1985
Cree
Mukluks L. 45.0, W. 32.0 cm; liners L. 44.0,
W. 20.5 cm*

Clothing

82 Man's shirt

This man's shirt or jacket is constructed in aboriginal Athapaskan fashion, characterized by the off-shoulder yoke and upper seams, which have been colored with vermilion (ochre). It was once a pullover which was modified to a jacket at a later date. The bottom edge has also been altered; aboriginal Athapaskan men's garments typically featured pointed bottom edges. This shirt probably dates to the mid-1800s. It may originate in a region to the west of Lake Athabasca.

Made from a single piece of unsmoked hand-tanned hide. Decorated with a band of porcupine quillwork and beaded leather thong fringe, back and front; seams colored with red vermilion. Cuffs decorated with six rows of beads in a lazy stitch. Hand sewn; alterations done with machine.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H67.327.8
C.1850
Athapaskan
Back L. 78.0 cm*

83 Man's jacket

Dr. Bell collected this decorated jacket in 1905 in Fort Chipewyan. By this date, aboriginal styles had been largely abandoned; this moosehide jacket was cut in European style and ornamented with silk embroidery. It is a good example of the sort of finery sought by collectors. More importantly, we know that it was made by Flora Loutit, a Scots-Métis woman descended from Peter Loutit and James Flett, both from Orkney. Agnes Deans Cameron, a journalist who visited Fort Chipewyan in 1908, wrote about the Loutit family:

An interesting family lives next to the English Mission - the Loutits. ... There were Loutits in Chipewyan as far back as the old journals reach. The Scottish blood has mingled with that of Cree and Chipewyan and the resultant in this day's generation is a family of striking young people - the girls...clever in beadwork and quill-ornamentation..[Cameron 1910:103].

Mrs. Loutit...comes in and recounts her arts, wild and tame. In winter she goes off in

dog-cariole, traps cross-foxes off her own bat, shoots moose, and smokes the hide according to the ancient accepted mode. Coming home, she takes the smoked hide and works upon it silk embroidery of a fineness which would be the envy of any young ladies' seminary in Europe or America. She weaves fantastic belts of beads and sets the fashion for the whole North in *chef d'oeuvres* of the quills of the porcupine [Cameron 1910:321].

Smoked, hand-tanned mooseskin man's jacket cut in European style, with full-length, set-in sleeves with cuffs, stand-up collar, straight-cut bottom edge, and centre front opening. Decorated with floral embroidery, quill-wrapped fringe, silk ribbon, and contrasting unsmoked skin trim.

*Canadian Museum of Civilization, VI-Z-249
Flora Loutit, Fort Chipewyan, 1905
Scots-Métis
Back L. 71 cm, W. 56 cm, sleeve L. 60 cm*

84 Man's jacket

This elaborately decorated jacket was acquired in Waterways, near Fort McMurray in northern Alberta by Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Forsyth, who were teachers there. In turn, it was acquired by Dr. A. W. Hardy. Mrs. Hardy remembered that the jacket was made by Natives of that area (Chipewyan, Cree, French-Métis, Scots-Métis), and the jacket was at least twenty-five years old in 1955.

Smoked, hand-tanned moosehide decorated with silk embroidery thread and trimmed with beaver fur; each individual fringe wrapped with dyed porcupine quills. Machine and hand sewn.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H80.7.1
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Forsyth, Waterways,
pre-1930
Back L. 76.5 cm*

85 Man's shirt

This beaded man's moosehide shirt must have been prized by some young man in Fort Chipewyan. The unusual beadwork surrounding the neck opening is done in garish orange beads; the beadwork on the pockets and cuffs is more typical of the work done in Fort Chipewyan. It is possible that two women may have done the beadwork, which is so different in design and execution.

Smoked, hand-tanned moosehide, European cut. Decorated with beads in a floral design, leather fringes. Cuffs trimmed with fur. Machine and hand sewn

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H65.235.76
Major C. G. Matthews, Fort Chipewyan, 1925
Back L. 76.5 cm*

86 Woman's dress (Plate 12)

This Athapaskan woman's dress, yoke, and belt is constructed in modified aboriginal style. In particular, the yoke or cape is reminiscent of the style, although it is heavily beaded in a late 19th century fashion. In earlier years, the belt would have been made of woven porcupine quills; the beaded design is geometric rather than floral, presumably for that reason. The documentation is scant, which underscores the problem faced by all museums in matching artifacts to ethnic and cultural units. Evidently, it came from Fort Chipewyan. However, it is similar to styles known from Mackenzie regions to the north. It could have been made by a woman from a northern region who moved to Fort Chipewyan with her husband, not an uncommon occurrence. Equally likely, it may have been made further north and acquired by someone who brought it to Fort Chipewyan. Finally, it may be typical of a style so widely disseminated that it is inappropriate to try to apply a narrow tribal affiliation. The dress was probably made in the late 19th century; the outfit came with a pair of leggings (H.73.55.1 D/E) which have been dated c.1892.

Dress made from a single folded moosehide, with an additional front panel and sleeves. Decorated with black and brown velvet, navy and red stroud, beads and tassels.
Back length 119.0 cm

Yoke made from three pieces of black velveteen and lined with an old unbleached cotton sack stamped with red and blue ink. Seams hidden by beaded panels; additional panels on front and back pieces, finished with tassels (front) and quill-wrapped, beaded fringe with metal triangles. Lower edge of cape fringed with fine leather quill-wrapped thongs.
L 46.0 cm, W 90.0 cm, neck circum. 44.0 cm

Belt beaded in checkerboard design on band of black velvet; decorated with fringes of leather, cord, wooden tubes, and wool tassels.
L. 80.0, W. with fringe 59 cm

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H73.55.1 A/B/C
Fort Chipewyan, c.1892-1900
Athapaskan*

87 Leggings

These women's leggings, or "leggings" as they are sometimes described, were acquired with the Athapaskan dress (H73.55.1 A/B/C). They are reminiscent of styles seen by Frank Russell in 1892. He observed (1898:171) that "These are worn at all seasons by the métis and Indian woman and by the men in winter." The lining was made from flour sacks from an Edmonton company which began production in 1892. Therefore, these leggings were probably made shortly after that date

Navy stroud, with partial unbleached cotton lining. Lining on one legging stamped "Best Alberta Wheat by the Edmonton Milling Co. Ltd., Alberta Gold 49" in green ink. Cotton ties for fastening leggings to belt. Beadwork sewn with sinew, leggings with thread.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H73.55.1 D/E
Fort Chipewyan, c.1892
Athapaskan
H73.55.1 D - L. 48.5, W. 24.0 cm;
.1E - L. 49.0, W. 23.5 cm*

88 Leggings and garters

Ornate men's beaded leggings and matching garters were collected by Major Matthews in the Mackenzie Valley region before 1905. Russell (1898:171) described similar leggings in regions as distant as Isle à la Crosse in northern Saskatchewan and Fort Good Hope, toward the north end of the Mackenzie River. The intricate beadwork on black velvet is similar to the work on the yoke of the Athapaskan woman's dress (H73.55.1 A/B/C), suggesting that they date to the same period.

Leggings: black velvet tubes, to which were sewn black velvet panels heavily decorated with beads in a floral design. Machine and hand sewn with silk thread.

Garters: navy wool fabric, decorated in matching beadwork with floral rosettes. Backed with dark striped cotton fabric. Four green wool ribbon ties. Hand sewn with cotton thread.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta;
leggings H65.235.34 A/B,
garters H65.235.37 A/B
Major C. G. Matthews, pre-1905
Leggings L. 41.0 cm, W. 15.5 cm; garters L.
39.0 cm, W. 9.0 cm*

89 Leggings and garters

These leggings and garters were made for the Provincial Museum by Mary Rose Waquan (née Wabistikwan or Whitehead), a Cree woman who was asked to make a set as she would have for her husband John James in the days when they still lived in the bush. Trappers still wear leggings today, particularly in the fall when they find skidoo suits too warm. Modern leggings are usually simple, undecorated garments cut from blankets or thick, wool duffel.

Leggings: navy wool stroud with strip of white stroud inserted in side seam for decorative effect; sides finished with three-layer navy and white fringe and pinked scallops. Tied to belt with split strip of smoked mooseskin.

Garters: narrow strip of smoked hand-tanned mooseskin covered with braided red, blue, and white yarn; finished with pom-poms and tassels.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta;
leggings H86.233.2 A/B,
garters H86.233.3 A/B
Mary Rose Waquan (née Wabistikwan or
Whitehead), Fort Chipewyan, 1986
Cree
Leggings L. 74.5, W. 36.0 cm; garters L. 79.0,
W. 3.0 cm*

Shawl

Indian and Métis women adopted shawls by an early date for regular use. Some shawls, such as this example made of fine black wool and deep knotted fringe, were purchased at a local store. Others appear to have been made from blankets or woolen fabric. Plaids were favorite fabrics. This shawl was acquired at Fort Wrigley on the Mackenzie River in 1954. Few have survived in the community, because women were often buried wearing their shawls.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H65.30.1133
Fort Wrigley, pre-1954
Slavery
L. 154.0, W. 146.0 cm*

90 Wedding dress

Lovisa Fraser, the daughter of free-trader Colin Fraser of Fort Chipewyan and granddaughter of piper Colin Fraser, married John Wylie in this dress October 14, 1901, in Edmonton. Flora MacDonald (Mrs. Bill Blythe), her cousin, made this very fashionable Edwardian style dress.

Two-piece dress of purple twill-wool fabric with silk bands on skirt. Jacket collar decorated with beige glass-beads in scalloped pattern.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H73.125.LA-D
Flora MacDonald Blythe, Lovisa Fraser
Wylie; Fort Chipewyan, 1901
Scots-Métis*

91 Wedding dress

Jenny Fraser, age 18, made this wedding dress in 1927, when she married 25 year old Edward Flett in Fort Chipewyan. The bride was the granddaughter

of free trader Colin Fraser and Lovisa Wylie's niece. The groom was the descendant of one of the many Hudson's Bay Company employees from the Orkney Islands who chose to stay in Fort Chipewyan. Jenny bought the light blue satin at the store and made up the dress in a 1920s style, decorating it with bugle beads. She purchased black-heeled slippers to wear instead of moccasins. Edward wore a suit. Shortly after the wedding, the new Mrs. Flett embarked on a life-long career as a community midwife, helping many of the residents of Fort Chipewyan into the world.

Silk satin decorated with glass beads. Gathered at the waist with elasticized back waist. Machine and hand sewn.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1139.1
Jenny Fraser Flett, Fort Chipewyan, 1927
Scots-Métis
L. 102.4 cm*

60



61



62



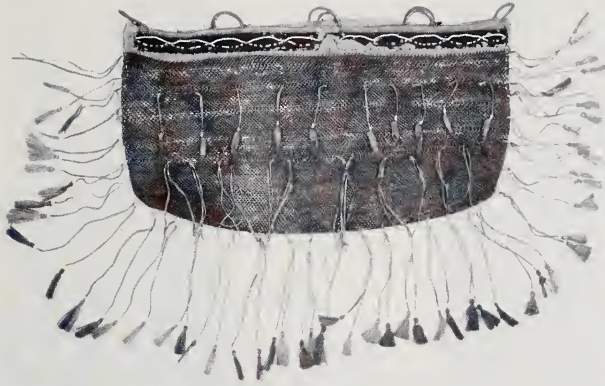
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71 (see cover)



Plate 20. Dog train from Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan. (*Provincial Archives of Alberta, C. Brown Collection, B5741*)

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73



75



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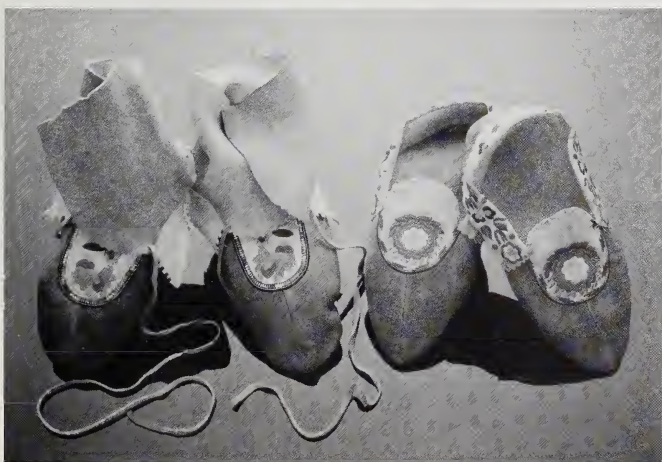
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79 a b



81 a b



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88





Religious Traditions

Chipewyan and Cree Religions

Chipewyan and Cree Indians had elaborate and strong religious traditions. These focused on the ability of individuals to obtain personal power through the assistance of a spirit helper, who provided a link to the spirit world. People obtained power through animals and other living things, sometimes by dreaming and sometimes by having a vision while fasting in the bush. Illness was believed to be caused by the misuse of power, and it could be cured by another person, sometimes in conjunction with medicinal herbs. Some people could control the wind and other forces of nature.

Although in earlier years Christian missionaries tried to eradicate the Indian religions, many traditional Indian beliefs have persisted in Fort Chipewyan.

Christian Religions

Roman Catholic missionaries, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, first visited Fort Chipewyan in 1847. They established the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mission in 1849. In 1874 the Grey Nuns (the Sisters of Charity) arrived to establish the Holy Angels Convent. The Roman Catholic Mission was large and influential. Most Indians and French-Métis in Fort Chipewyan became Roman Catholic.

Anglican missionary William Bompas founded St. Paul's Mission in 1867. The first resident minister was Arthur Shaw. St. Paul's was always a small mission, closely linked to the Hudson's Bay Company, which was managed by Anglican Scots, English, and Scots-Métis.

Both groups of missionaries actively taught and promoted their respective Christian beliefs and European customs. They competed with one another for parishioners. Education was an integral component of missionary work. The Oblates arranged for their school to be established because they were afraid that the Anglicans would start one first. Over time, there were three convents; the last one was torn down in 1975.

The Convent was a residential school. Many children were cared for there, including orphans who might not have survived otherwise. Some

children lived at the Convent from the time they were babies until they left to be married or to go to work. The Convent staff tried to replace Indian cultural values and languages with European ones.

The Anglicans eventually operated a day school; the resident minister was often the teacher. Today all children in Fort Chipewyan attend the Athabasca Delta Community School, a non-denominational school, and live at home.

Although the missions are still influential today, there is only one Roman Catholic priest, one brother, and a few nuns resident in Fort Chipewyan. There is no Anglican priest; the Anglican congregation holds services with the help of lay readers. Also present in Fort Chipewyan today are evangelical Christians, who form a small but active congregation.

92a Cree shaman's bundle

This personal bundle contains items which related to the shaman's source of power. The bag is made from floral print cotton, with a drawstring closure. Enclosed are hide pouches and cloth wrappings of herbs, tobacco and roots, flaked chert pebbles, bells, oyster shell pendants, copper and silver discs, a canine tooth, porcupine quills, a Great Blue Heron feather, a Northern Harrier feather, and a broken rosary with red glass beads.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,

H76.121.4-.17

Cree

Bag L. 36.5, W. 28.5 cm

A shaman or healer may have used other items, such as a rattle, eagle bone whistle, and medicinal plants.

92b Rattle

Made from rawhide, with a wooden and hide handle. Sewn with sinew.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H64.7

L. 24.2 cm

92c Eagle bone whistle

Formed with centre hole, surrounded by pitch on both sides.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H67.42.3

L 9.5 cm

92d Fungus

Powdered fungus was spread on frostbitten areas after the skin had been scratched. It was also used to stop bleeding and induce vomiting.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, Ethnology
Ethnobotany Collection*

92e Rat root

Calamus root, known locally as (musk)rat root, is the most commonly used of all herbal remedies in Fort Chipewyan, for colds, sore throats, stomach upsets, headaches, toothaches, and other ailments.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, Ethnology
Ethnobotany Collection*

92f Pine needles

Pine needles were burned as incense on ceremonial occasions and used to make poultices for fevers and chest colds.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, Ethnology
Ethnobotany Collection*

92g Mint

Wild mint, like domestic mint, is used as medicinal tea, sometimes in combination with other medicines.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, Ethnology
Ethnobotany Collection*

93 Grizzly claw headband

This headband was sent to the Royal Museum of Scotland by Robert Campbell from Fort Chipewyan in 1859. In an earlier exhibit it was interpreted as a shaman's headdress, probably from the western Athapaskan region (National Museum of Canada and Royal Scottish Museum 1974:152). However, in 1807 W. F. Wentzel described a similar item made by Beaver or Slave Indians along the Mackenzie River: "...sometimes bear claws sewed to a piece of leather served the purpose of a (war) cap" (Wentzel 1889:92). While Campbell may have acquired this piece when he travelled in what is now northern B.C. or the Yukon, it is equally likely that he acquired it from Indians trading at Fort Chipewyan. The grizzly bear was a powerful spiritual helper.

17 grizzly claws sewn to a strip of tanned caribou skin with sinew; the middle (front) claw wrapped with blue, white, and red quills. Decorated with quills along the upper and lower edges of the band.

*Royal Museum of Scotland, 480.6
Robert Campbell, Fort Chipewyan, 1859
Athapaskan
L. 53.5, W. 5.2 cm*

Travelling altar

The Oblate priest travelled occasionally to the visit Natives living in bush settlements and camps, especially during the long winter season. He would take a travelling altar with him to use in saying Mass.

Rectangular wooden box which would originally have contained a variety of implements.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, from the collection of the Missionary Oblates - Grandin Province/ des Missionaries Oblats - Province Grandin
H86.110.263
Father Lacombe, 19th century
L. 55.5, W. 30, H. 20.5 cm*

Plank

This decorated plank was part of the chapel in the second convent, torn down in 1947. Its painted gold and red arches are typical of an ornate decorative style which came with the Roman Catholic church to northern Alberta.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H88.25.1
Oblate brother?, Fort Chipewyan, pre-1947
L. 281.5, W. 32.5 cm*

Grave fence

Scaffolds were used for burials by Chipewyans and Crees as recently as the 1918 influenza epidemic. Christian traditions are reflected in the switch to cemetery burials. Some Chipewyans built small "houses" to cover their graves and grave offerings. In 1807, Wentzel (1889:88) referred to a similar practice among the Beaver Indians. Grave fences surrounded the houses. Later, only fences were used. This grave fence had been replaced by a newer one; it was found in the Fort Chipewyan dump.

Whitewashed wooden pickets held together with nails.

*Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1154.4
Fort Chipewyan, post-1939
L. 196.0, W. 78.5 cm*

a
92 b c d e
f g



93



MODERN FORT CHIPEWYAN: A COMMUNITY WITH A FUTURE

Contemporary craft production

Women still do beadwork and embroidery today, although modern designs are simplified, compared to those of former times. Some items are made for family members, while others are sold. Handicrafts provide important additional income.

Physical development of the community

Fort Chipewyan was a small town centered around the fur trade and the missions. People lived in small cabins or frame houses which they built themselves. During the 1950s and 1960s, most of the people who lived in bush communities relocated to Fort Chipewyan. There, they lived in log cabins. A housing program begun in the 1950s provided more and better housing for treaty Indians. Housing development has been important ever since. Frame houses are still built, providing local employment. Trailers are brought into the community to house non-treaty Indians and Métis. A community plan was prepared in the 1970s to accommodate physical expansion of the settlement and allow for the installation of running water and sewage systems.

Local control of local development

In the 1960s, the local Indian bands were given the opportunity to run their own affairs. A local Community Development project tried to bring the Chipewyan and Cree Indian bands and the Métis Association together, into the Cremetchip Association, in order to lobby more effectively for their goals. Some cooperation continues today, in the form of joint projects. For example, the new Fort Chipewyan lodge opened in 1987. It is owned by members of the bands, the Métis Local, and other Fort Chipewyan residents.

Each group has its own special goals, programs, and resources. In 1987, the Cree band signed an agreement with the federal and provincial governments which will establish its reserve - 65 years after the band first requested a settlement of its treaty

claims. The band has made special arrangements with Wood Buffalo National Park to participate in wildlife management. It hopes to develop the granite deposits on its new reserve as a source of local industry for band members; the Chipewyan band and the Métis Local are also involved in developing this resource. The Chipewyan band is investigating new economic endeavors on its reserve, experimenting with wild rice growing and small scale irrigation projects to increase muskrat habitat. The bands have obtained funding for a Multiplex, a large administrative center. The Métis Local has promoted economic development in Fort Chipewyan and is exploring new solutions to problems faced by its members. Members of all groups are being hired as workers in health, welfare, and environmental monitoring programs.

94 Jacket

Contemporary Fort Chipewyan jackets typically have an embroidered or beaded yoke front and back, with a deep double fringe. The pockets may also be decorated. The two layers of fabric on this jacket have been overlapped to give a border. It is more common, however, for the lighter fabric to underlie the darker fabric, so that a contrast is evident. This jacket was made by Mary Rose Waquan.

Navy wool stroud with a white stroud yoke, lined with black polyester. Decorated with wool embroidery yarn in a floral pattern and white and navy stroud fringes. Machine sewn.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.233.1

Mary Rose Waquan (née Wabistikwan or Whitehead), Fort Chipewyan, 1986

Cree

Back L. 82.0 cm

Sash

Hand or machine woven sashes have become a symbol of Métis ethnicity. In Fort Chipewyan, where weaving is not a traditional skill, Vitaline Flett crocheted this sash for her son. The colors have symbolic meanings, according to Mrs. Flett: red for the red blood of the Indians, white for the white blood of the Europeans, brown for the earth, green for the grass and trees, blue for the sky, and yellow for the sun.

Hand crocheted with acrylic yarn.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H87.343.1
Vitaline Flett (née Lacaille),
Fort Chipewyan, 1987
French-Métis
L. 290.0, W. 9.0 cm

95 Socks

Jenny Flett has been knitting all her life. Today she knits only socks and slippers, with brilliant and inventive color combinations in honeycomb pattern, stocking stitch, and ribbed knit.

Provincial Museum of Alberta,
H87.344.1A/B
Jenny Flett (née Fraser), Fort Chipewyan,
1987
Scots-Métis
L. 47.5, W. 13.5 cm

96 Muskrat whimsey

Made for the tourist trade by Maria Houle, this delightful piece is made from a muskrat pelt skinned and stretched as if it were a beaver. Mrs. Houle is the daughter of a French-Métis father and a Chipewyan mother.

Muskrat pelt backed with red cloth and edged with a double thickness of red wool stroud. Decorated with embroidery thread in Alberta wild rose pattern and two moveable plastic eyes. Machine and hand sewn.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H85.1141.5
Maria Houle (née Tourangeau),
Fort Chipewyan, 1985
Chipewyan/French-Métis
L. 45.5, W. 33.0 cm

Beaded rosette

This decorative item may have been stitched to a jacket. It shows pride of community.

Glass beaded canvas backed with a floral print cotton. The words "FORT CHIPEWYAN ALTA" and the initial "L" are spelled out in beads. Hand-sewn.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.20.4
Fort Chipewyan, c.1960s
D. 12.6 cm

97 Beaded necklace

Beaded rosette necklaces have become popular tourist items in recent years. This example has been padded to accentuate the flower, a traditional Fort Chipewyan design. However, the parallel rows of beading which comprise the petals is an uncommon technique. A floral motif has been incorporated into the beaded cord. It was made by Angelique Kaskaman, a Cree woman.

Beaded rosette backed with fabric; cord netted from beads on a string base.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H86.48.2
Angelique Kaskaman (née Pamatchakwew or
Wandering Spirit), Fort Chipewyan, 1986
Cree
Cord L. 44.0 cm, rosette D. 7.0 cm

Fish scale necklace

Whitefish scales were dyed and strung into a necklace by Maria Houle as a tourist item.

Whitefish scales dyed pale orange, orange cut tubular glass beads, and pearlized glass seed beads on white thread.

Provincial Museum of Alberta, H84.88.2
Maria Houle (née Tourangeau),
Fort Chipewyan, 1984
Chipewyan/French-Métis
L. 44.0 cm

Snowshoe Models

Models continue to be a popular tourist craft. Louis Boucher, a Chipewyan man born in 1893, made model snowshoes such as this pair to sell to visitors to Fort Chipewyan during the 1970s.

Wood frames and babiche webbing; ends secured with copper rivets. Decorated with pom-poms.

Private collection
Louis Boucher, Fort Chipewyan, 1975
Chipewyan
L. 40.0, W. 8.5 cm

Fort Chipewyan map

The Alberta Provincial Planning Board drew this map of the town site of Fort Chipewyan. The scale is one inch equals 600 feet. Dated 1966, it shows the long river lots which previously characterized land-holding practices in the community.

University of Alberta Map Collection
1966

Northlands School Division
L. 120.0, W. 150.0, H. 25.5 cm

Athabasca Delta Community School: the architect's model

This school opened in 1986, designed by Peter Lambur and Elizabeth Scott. The architects based their model on old designs of the Hudson's Bay Company post.

Granite

Pink granite carved with contemporary rose motif; some cortex remains.

John Godfrey
Fort Chipewyan
H. 13.0, W. 26.0

94



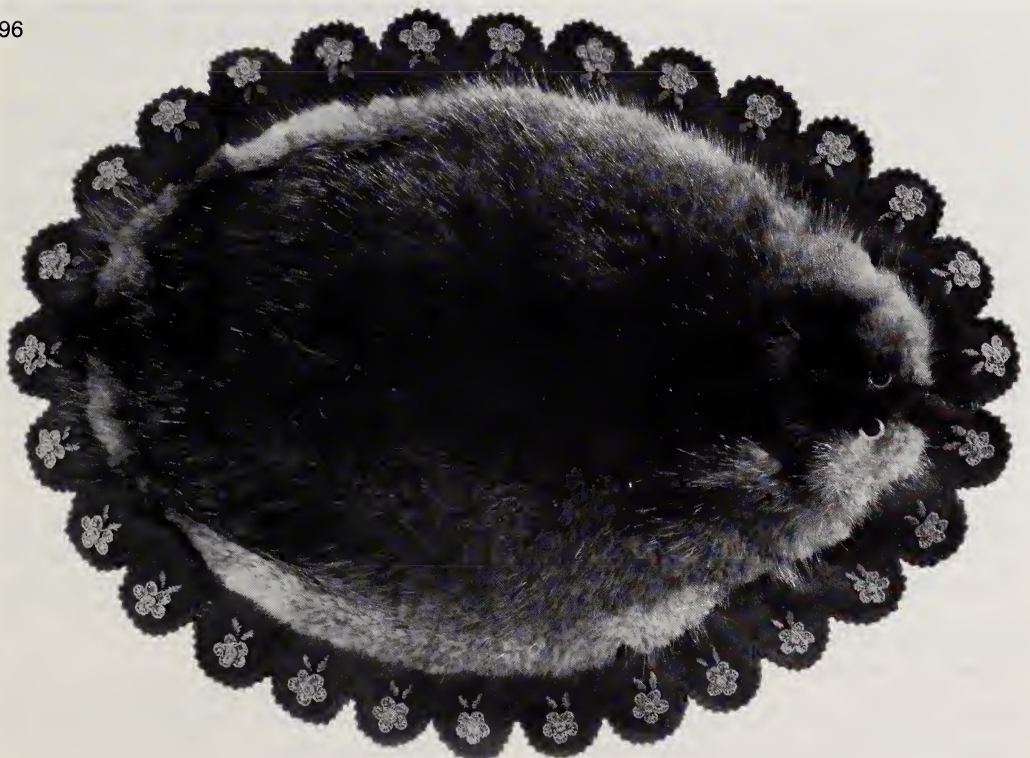
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N.L.C. - B.N.C.



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