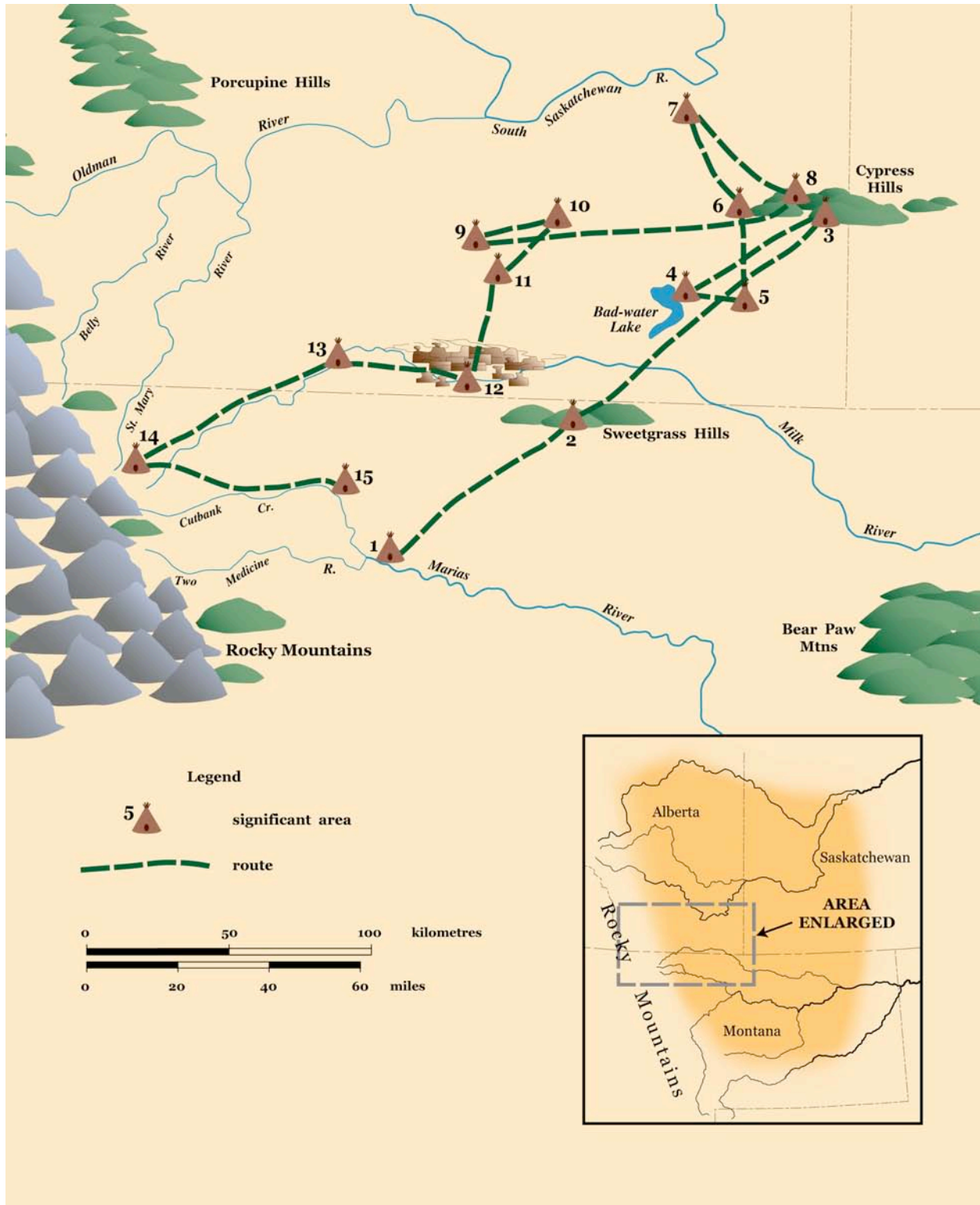




Relationship with the Land - Resources



This map shows one year's travels of a clan of Amsskaapipikani in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Courtesy of Glenbow Museum

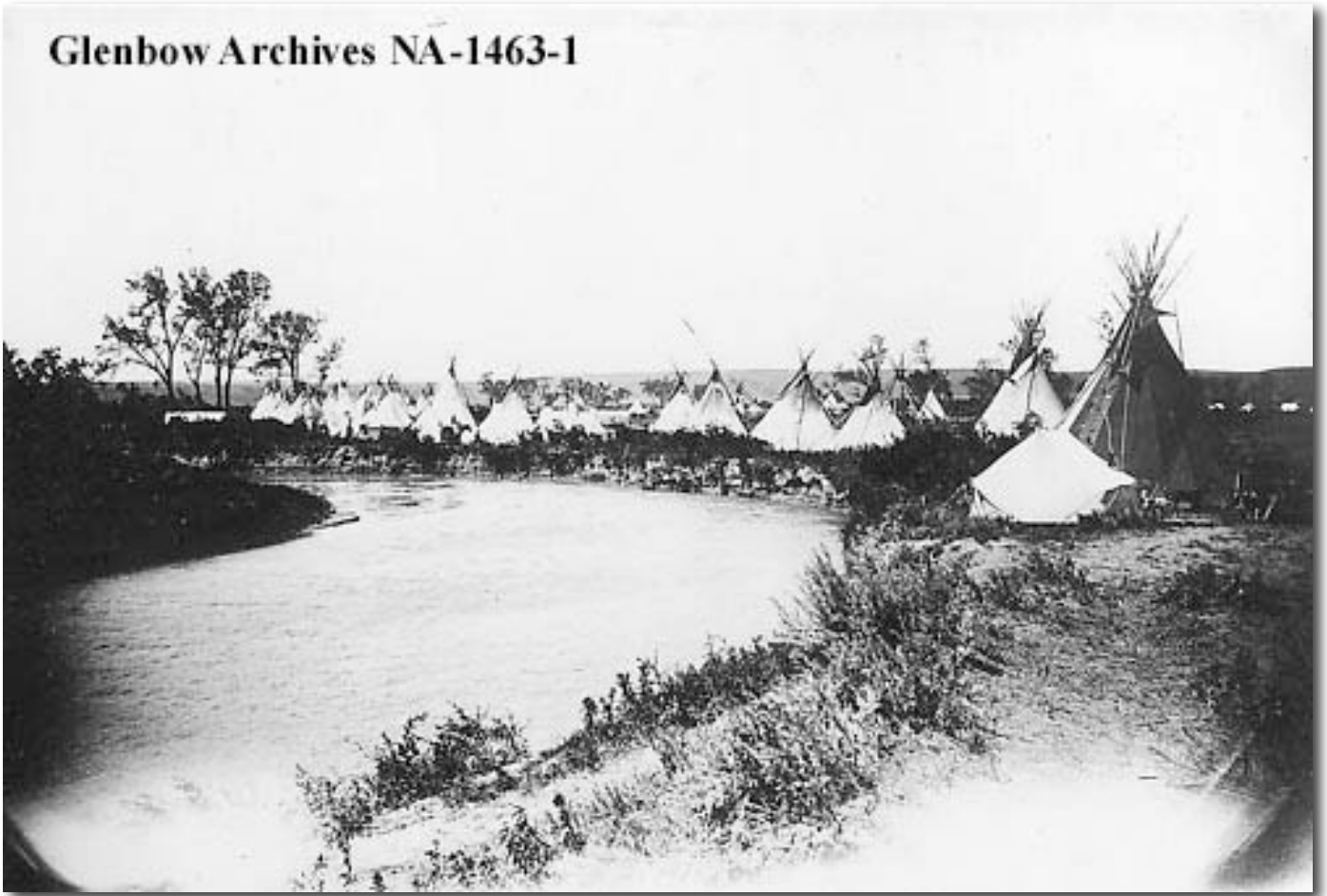


Place Names on the Map:

1. Itsiputsimaup – Battle Coulee
2. Katoyissksi – Sweet Grass
3. Aiiymmikoi – Cypress Hills
4. Pakoki Lake – Pakowki
5. Akaiiniskio – Manyberries
6. Einiotoka'nisi – Buffalo-Bull's Head
7. Ihkitsitapiksi – Seven Persons
8. Aiiykimmikuyiu – Cypress Hills
9. Nokomis's – Long Lakes
10. Matokeks oma'nistamoai otsitskiiitapiau – Women's Society Left their Lodge Pole
11. A'ykomoasiu – Green Lake
12. A'isinaiypi – Writing on Stone
13. A'kekoksistakskuyi – Women's Point
14. Ponakiksi – Cut Bank Creek



Glenbow Archives NA-1463-1



Blackfoot camps were composed of members of an extended family and other people who may have joined the clan. The arrangement of the tipis was not strictly defined in these camps, although all of them faced east. This allowed the morning prayers to travel towards the rising sun, helping it to come above the horizon for another day.



Definition of the term – “Seasonal Round”

The Blackfoot tribes had an enormous land base they inhabited. Within this territory they had areas where they would travel well over 500 miles during a yearly cycle to hunt, gather and renew religious commitments. Being knowledgeable of their environment and respectful of their gifts from the creator they would carefully select locations or places to travel to in a lifetime.

They were many things to be considered and nature played a great role in their decisions. They paid careful attention to the new emerging plants, the return of the migration birds and changing habits of the animals. The type of winter they endured, if severe might bring great hardship.

The Blackfoot were taught from infancy and through out their lifetime how to survive and be in harmony with their environment. A yearly cycle not only replenished their food, material sources but also rekindled their mental, physical and spiritual well being.

These places were mapped out according to their resources and sometimes not visited as often as we read about from our written sources. The average seasonal round usually started out from a winter location on a sheltered river valley near a main water source, such as a river bottom. This particular seasonal round happened around the middle 1700's, when they first started using the horse. In the pedestrian days the Blackfoot would average about 30 miles per day. However during the horse travel days they could double the miles they traveled.

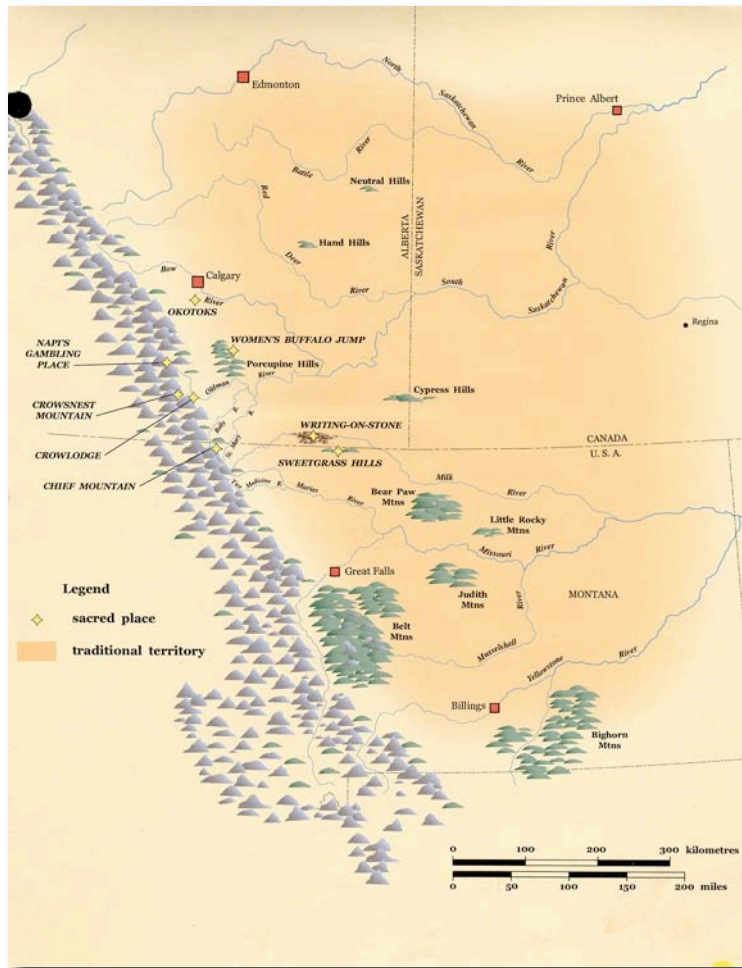
The weather was another important component in a seasonal round. They carefully monitored signs that would predict successful traveling. They knew where the water sources were which was of great importance in daily survival of both man and animal. All things considered the average seasonal round revolved around a seven month period.



The tribe – “Amskaapikani”

The Blackfoot continue to live today, as we always have, on what remains of our ancestral homeland: one reservation in Northern Montana and three reserves in southern Alberta, Canada.

The Blackfoot Confederacy is made up of three distinct nations who share a common language, land base and common history. The Kainai Nation of Many Chiefs is also known as the Blood; the Siksika Nation, or Black-sole are also known as the Blackfoot. The Northern and Southern Piikani are also known as Peigans, or Peigan Nation. The Amskaapikani or Southern Peigans, live in the United States and are known as the Blackfeet Tribe of Montana.



Their ancestral territory extends along the east side of the Rocky Mountains from the Yellowstone river in southern Montana, north to the North Saskatchewan river in Canada, to the Sand hills which borders the south western part of Saskatchewan Canada.

The Blackfoot believe they have always lived in this location and our history speaks of origin and continued intimacy in this area of North America.

Traditional Map: The Blackfoot's traditional territory spread eastward from the Rocky Mountains, across the northwestern plains. Courtesy of Glenbow Museum



The Clan – The Blood Band – “Aapaitapi”

Each tribe was organized into separate clans or family group and was led by one or two headmen or chiefs.

The author John Ewers estimated that the north and south Peigans had about twenty-four clans the Bloods thirteen and the Blackfoot eight, in the late 1800's. Ewers inferred there were more, but some had disappeared or dissolved and joined other groups. The death of a leader and family feuds were some of the reasons clans were formed. People were free to choose which group to live with as long as they cooperated and respected each other.

The leaders of each clan had leadership qualities; such as personality, knowledge of the land, generous, speaking skills, valued judgment and experience before making a final decision.

The leader of the clan was careful to listen to everyone's advice and opinions and experience. The old people were held on high esteem and their advice and wisdom were important. The bundle owners' knowledge and spiritual support were also important. They recognized each person unique skills and experiences. Clan leadership was not inherited but children did learn behavior and values from their adult relatives, as a result, leadership tended to stay within particular families and sometimes an aging leader would publicly identify a relative to replace him.

Clans were named after distinctive characteristics with the group.

The story will focus on “The Aapaitapi – Blood-people band of the South Peigans. One of the leaders was “Ninaastako – Chief Mountain”.



“Kainaikoan – Blood Man” – Jim Blood



Jim Blood., photo with permission from Dr William Farr, University of Montana.



The historian – “Kainaikoan – Blood Man” – Jim Blood

The Places: Aapaitapikdi' Seasonal Round



Kainaikoan – Blood Man – was born in 1859 on the southern part of the Blackfoot Confederacy. His family lived with the Aapaitapi Clan and their leader was Ninaastako – Chief Mountain – who was his grandfather. They wintered on the Marias River at Battle Coulee in what is now Montana. It was late spring and the horses were fat and had finished shedding their thick winter coats.

The Aapaitapi were looking forward to the move away from their winter camp. The next day, just when the break of day appears they planned to move out onto the prairie announced the camp

crier. Be prepared for no one is to be left behind. Our leader Ninaastako has met with the council and they have stated we will be leaving north through the Sweet Grass Hills. The first light of dusk appeared and everyone seemed to be ready at once to break camp. Each called out loudly to their “Ootaka – shadow” to come with them. A few of the men picked willow branches and swept around the campground, calling the spirits to travel with them. They set out offerings for everyone safe travel.

The Aapaitapi clan moved eagerly in an orderly fashion northeast on this fine late spring morning. They traveled at a moderate pace. Off in the distance they could see the hills and by midday they can stop at the first spring well to refresh themselves, and proceed on for a day's journey. There were many encounters that needed be on guard, the sudden weather change, the unforeseen enemy and the unexpected condition of the pathway. The creator was on the lookout for the Aapaitapiski as they moved at an interrupted trip they soon arrived at the Cypress Hills.



Relationship with the Land - Resources

Suddenly a mirage appears out of nowhere. They knew exactly where to camp for they have been camping in the same place for time immemorial. Preparations were immediately attended for the hunting of the buffalo. They were previously seen grazing in one of the basin adjacent to the hills. It was a successful hunt and the butchering went extremely well. The meat was soon processed into thin strips and dried. The thick bull hides were made into shields, par fleche containers and rope thongs.

The scouts saw the buffalo herds near Pakoki Lake and it was time to move out of the Cypress Hills. They traveled in a southwest direction towards the southern area of Pakoki Lake. The two-year-old cows were in their prime for making lodge covers. The people will also replenish our green paint from the banks of Pakoki Lake.

The weather was getting warmer as they looked south to the Sweet Grass Hills, they saw a simmering haze of heat, and knew it is time to move east towards Many Berries for the berries were ripe. This area is plentiful for serviceberries that they use in their ceremonies. The gooseberries and red willow berries were also picked. It is time to process the buffalo hides into lodge covers. The hides were stretched out and staked down. The hides were fleshed out and the hair was removed. Then the hides were made into an average size lodge. About 22 hides per lodge usually lasted about two years.

The Aapaitapi moved north to Buffalo-Bull's Head, on the western edge the higher area of the Cypress Hills. This is an interesting site, if someone was looking north at this place, you can see a buffalo lying down on its stomach and his head facing directly west. It was time to pick chokecherries. The berries were mashed and made into cakes, dried then stored for the winter use.

The clan moved on in a North West direction to Seven Persons. There were plenty of elk herds and more buffalo to hunt. The skins were processed into clothing. It is the season of fall, the Aapaitapi move back to the Cypress Hills. They begin to cut Jack



Relationship with the Land - Resources

Pine trees into lodge poles. They were preparing for the coming winter. This is the only place on the Plains where you find Lodge pole pine trees.

The camp moved almost directly west to Long Lakes, which will place them around the present-day Chin Coulee. They separated into smaller groups to hunt buffalo.

They moved northeast to Where the Women's Society left their Lodge pole. This will place them around the lower half of the present-day Forty Mile Coulee. They chased the buffalo back towards the prairie.

The moved southwest towards Green Lake. It was here they hunted buffalo bulls and process the hides into sinew string, rope thongs and par fleche bags.

After the stray bull hides were processed the Apaitapi departed southward towards Writing on the Stone, which was in the basin of the Milk River. The collected more chokecherries and dried them whole to be mashed for late winter use.

They moved westward up the Milk River to Women's Point, this place was always abundant for antelope; they hunted and processed the hides into clothing.

They moved southwest into Ponalksiksi – Cut Bank Creek. Up close to the mountains this is where they cut new lodge poles. The repaired lodge coverings and sewed some of them for winter usage. They stay in this area till the first snow fell.

They moved eastward towards the lower Cut Bank Creek, where this creek flows into the Marias River. This was going to their winter camp for that year.

Kainaikoan reported once the Apaitapi set up their winter camp, they would build a corral for their horses and hunt near the river valley for small herds of bison. It was equally important that they only hunt two – four year old heifers. They dried the meat and process the hide into winter robes, hair side left on the warmth. They augmented



Relationship with the Land - Resources

their preserved berries and other meat they found locally. The mule, black and white-tailed deer were hunted. There some elk and sometimes moose to be founded. The bull berries, rosehips and silverberries are ready to be harvested. After the first big snow the women would collect and store wood for the winter. Once the band had all their provisions for the winter – their horses corralled, the men were allowed to return out onto the prairies to hunt buffalo for fresh meat and hides for robes to trade.

The long winter nights were excellent time to tell stories. Considerable time was spent on individual projects of painting par fleche bags and repairs on clothing, sewing new clothing. This was time to learn new songs and prepare individuals to their new roles in the different societies.



Relationship with the Land - Resources



Rocky Mountains

Photograph Courtesy of Glenbow Museum



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Grasslands

Photograph Courtesy of Glenbow Museum



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Preparing for Winter

Photograph Courtesy of Glenbow Museum



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Wintering Grounds

Photograph Courtesy of Glenbow Museum