

**RELOCATION AND LOSS OF HOMELAND
THE STORY OF THE SAYISI DENE OF NORTHERN MANITOBA**

BY

VIRGINIA PHYLLIS PETCH

A Thesis

presented to the University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements of a

Doctor of Philosophy

in Anthropology

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OF NORTHERN MANITOBA

BY

VIRGINIA PHYLLIS PETCH

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

In 1956, the Sayisi Dene residing at Little Duck Lake in northern Manitoba were relocated to Churchill. The move nearly destroyed the cultural integrity of this small band of people who were still practicing a seasonal round comparable to that of their pre-European-contact ancestors.

An ethnohistorical approach was used to document the story of the relocation. The dissertation is divided into two sections. The first provides an explanation of the theoretical principles and methodologies used. As well, a general understanding of the importance of the Qaminurjak caribou population to the survival of the people is presented. Section II describes the sequence of events which led to the relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake to Churchill and discusses the effects of the relocation in terms of the cumulative effects of imposed change.

In 1973, the Sayisi Dene voluntarily left Churchill in order to flee the social despair caused by the relocation. Today they reside at Tadoule Lake, Manitoba and struggle to repair the damage wrought by the federal government and Indian Affairs some 40 years ago.

The relocation of the Sayisi Dene is viewed as one of the most grievous errors committed by the federal government. It stripped the Sayisi Dene of a productive life and almost destroyed the very fabric of their existence.

This dissertation is dedicated to the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake

Where there is no vision people perish

(Proverbs 19:18)

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SECTION I

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

RELOCATION AND LOSS OF HOMELAND
The Story of the Sayisi Dene of Northern Manitoba

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Preface

The following dissertation concerns the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake in northern Manitoba (Figure 1). Forty years ago, in 1956, a unilateral government decision to relocate the people who were living at Little Duck Lake, changed the course of Sayisi Dene history. This action is viewed by members of the Sayisi Dene First Nation as responsible for the cultural and social instabilities which continue to plague this small First Nation community. That this issue has still not been resolved weighs heavily on the hearts and minds of the Sayisi Dene.

The Sayisi Dene state that the relocation was uncalled for because their life at Little Duck Lake was sustainable; the federal government made promises which it failed to uphold; it restricted their mobility and opportunity to sustain themselves and their families, and it destroyed the cultural integrity of the people.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this thesis is to document the relocation of the Sayisi Dene through an ethnohistorical study.

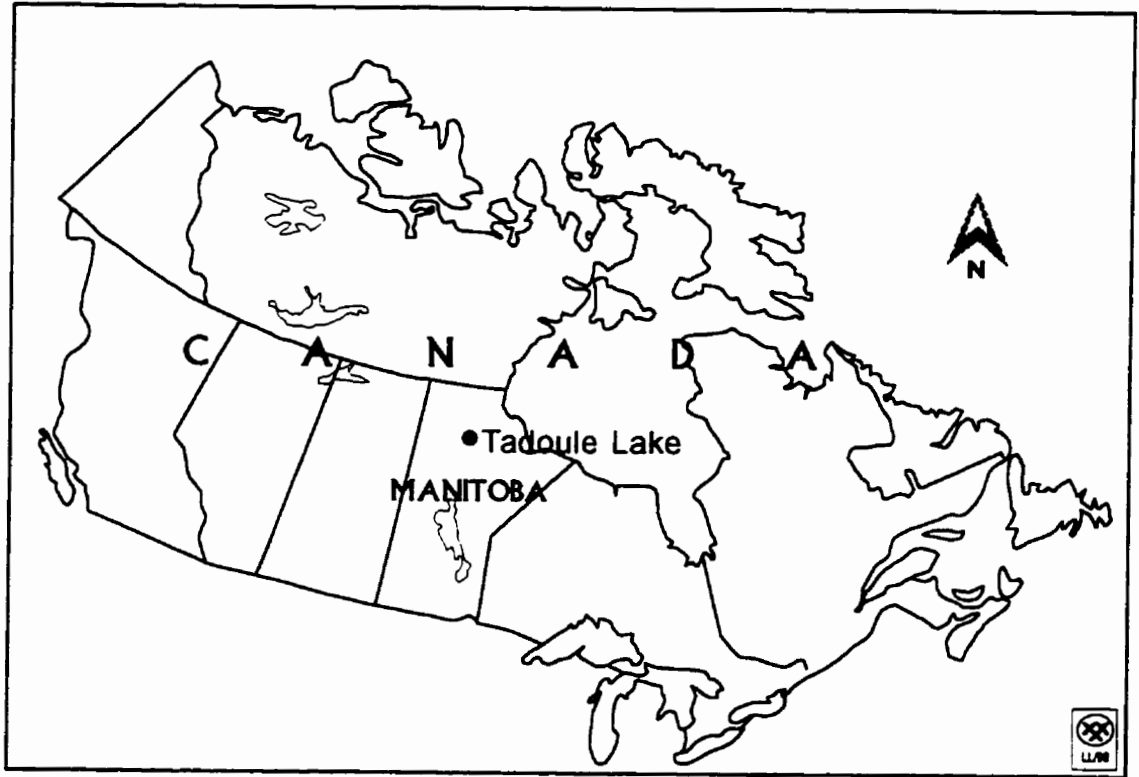


Figure 1. Location of the Sayisi Dene.

The objectives are to :

- provide a general knowledge of the ecological environment which characterized the traditional lands of the Sayisi Dene;
- appreciate the importance of the relationship the Sayisi Dene had with their natural world;
- trace the chain of events which led to the relocation, and
- understand the cumulative effects of imposed change.

The process of relocation of the Sayisi Dene in northern Manitoba and the effects it had on the cultural integrity of the people are the main problems to be addressed in this thesis. The Sayisi Dene believe that all their current social and cultural situations stem from this forced move. Loss of traditional homeland and adaptation to a new physical and social setting are seen as contributing to the ongoing dilemma .

From a humanitarian position the story of the appropriation of traditional homeland and relocation for government convenience needs to be told. From an anthropological perspective, these events have to be examined within a context that is relevant to, and reflects the cultural history of, the Sayisi Dene.

Relocation can have serious repercussions, not just because people have to familiarize themselves with a new physical setting, but they also have to make the mental adjustments to their cognitive map in an effort to maintain continuity. The intent of this dissertation is to demonstrate that the relocation of the Sayisi Dene affected every dimension of life and induced a state of uncontrolled grieving and long-term personal and collective trauma

which continues to be manifested in current socio-economic issues.

This dissertation is conducted under the domain of applied anthropology, which is defined, in part, as being concerned with the solutions to practical problems (Van Willigen 1986:7). The theoretical approach taken in the study of the Sayisi Dene is one of cultural materialism, which is based "...on the simple premise that human social life is a response to the practical problems of earthly existence" (Harris 1980:ix). The universal structure of cultural materialism allows for a systematic and holistic study of cultural behavior and is guided by a commitment to the rules of science. At its foundation is the infrastructure where the "...biological and psychological constants of human nature... " are located (Harris 1980:51). Here, the exchange between culture and nature occur. Harris has also stated that the restraints imposed by the ecosystem in which a cultural group resides will be manifested in the structural and superstructural components which help form the identity of the group.

Culture, defined simply as the "...socially conditioned repertoires [sic] of activities and thoughts..."(Harris 1994:63) is the ultimate product of a feedback system, which has, at its base an infrastructure that acts as a monitor of the physical environment, and a regulator of socio-economic and ideological activity. For this reason a description of the cultural ecology of the Sayisi Dene plays an important role in setting the stage for the dissertation.

The interaction of the pre-European-contact Sayisi Dene to their physical setting is revealed, in part, by the archaeological record. Previous archaeological investigations, as well as those which were conducted for this study contributed significantly to the overall success of a holistic

understanding of the people. For example, based on over 20 years of personal research, Gordon (1996) has provided substantial evidence to support his discrete band/discrete herd hypothesis (1975). Using Gordon's hypothesis, Petch *et al.* (1997) regional study of the Robertson Esker, also provided convincing evidence that not only upholds Gordon's thesis, but also verifies the oral tradition of the Sayisi Dene. The dissertation therefore includes archaeological, as well as ethnographical and historical data of the Sayisi Dene and is presented within an ethnohistorical framework.

An Ethnohistorical Approach

Perhaps Carl Russell Fish (1910) was the first to call for a three dimensional approach to understanding the relationship between archaeology, history and ethnography (including oral history). He recognized that while the archaeological and historical records contributed to a scientific preservation of the past, the oral traditions which were preserved within the family and community contained a local perspective which was most often missed in the writing of history. This holistic approach lay dormant for many years, occasionally resurfacing for brief period, but never being taken seriously. However, in recent years (for example, Brown 1978, Deetz 1978 and Schulyer 1978), research has demonstrated the overwhelming success of what has been called the "cultural inventory approach" (Brown 1978:283).

An ethnohistorical study is considered appropriate and important in understanding the present-day situation of the Sayisi Dene, as it traces their history from the pre-European-contact past to the present. As such, the archaeological and historical records play as important a role as the ethnographical data collected during field studies. The inclusion of

archaeological and historical data is crucial to understanding the relationship of the past to the present. The study of a human population should include a knowledge and understanding of the cultural process through which the particular cultural group has passed. Bodley (1996) emphasized the need for a holistic approach to understanding contemporary socio-cultural issues; where the interaction of economic, social and ideological systems must be examined in relation to the natural environment. This is viewed as vital to the study of a cultural group, such as the Sayisi Dene, which, until forty years ago, enjoyed an economy which focused primarily on local country produce. An ethnohistorical approach provides the freedom to move between subsystems and cross-disciplines is, as Bodley states, "...a marvelously adaptive quality" (Bodley 1996:9), where methodology is used as the tool for problem-solving.

The events which led to the relocation are viewed in light of changing government policies and decision which failed to account for the ancient and intimate relationships of the people to the land. The dissertation describes the process of the relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake to Churchill and their eventual return to the southern part of their traditional lands at Tadoule Lake, and discuss the effects of the relocation on the Sayisi Dene in terms of loss of homeland.

Homeland Defined - The Problem

Loss of homeland has been identified by the community of Tadoule Lake as the source of all Sayisi Dene ills (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1995). This general belief continues to surface throughout the many discussions the Band has with government and non-government organizations.

Homeland is more than a physical setting of a human population, it is the arena for cultural expression. It is also the cradle for learning and adaptation. Adaptive processes serve the purpose of maximizing the use of resources of a particular habitat, and at the same time, provide the *raison d' être* for social organization.

Hunter-traveler¹ populations, in general, devised a number of successful strategies that allowed for maintenance of the existing, or adaptation to a new, habitat. Over the years, through the accumulation of knowledge based on the experiences and observations of past resource users, the people carved out their niche. The resultant symbiotic relationship between humans and the natural world not only sustained the physical requirements of both populations, but also provided a forum for emotional, spiritual and cultural well-being for the people.

The goal of a human population, then, should be to maintain the productive system of the ecological niche by functioning within its carrying capacity. Wilkinson, in fact, has stated that "...the maintenance of ecological equilibrium... [is]...a precondition for cultural stability" (Wilkinson 1973:).

Given this statement, how does involuntary relocation and loss of homeland affect the cultural stability of a human population? Marris (1974) and Fried (1963) compared the loss of "habitual physical setting" with the loss of a loved one. Fried (1963), in his study of relocation of people from West End Boston slums noted that the period of adjustment to new surroundings took up to two

¹

I prefer to use the term hunter-traveler when referring the ancestors of the Sayisi Dene as it defines and underlines the modes of production employed.

years. The removal from one's familiar surroundings invoked a kind of bereavement. People actually grieved for their old home as if they had lost a loved one. The ensuing grief and inevitable disruption of social organization had serious repercussions, as the affected people struggled to regain cultural equilibrium. In many cases, relocation led to a state of uncertainty and depression. Marris' (1974) study of slums in Lagos also revealed the state of disequilibrium that was caused by relocation. He stated "When people are forced to move from a familiar neighborhood, they lose, most obviously the habitual physical setting of their lives" (Marris 1974:54). Not only was the comfort and security of familiar surroundings lost, but the network of economic contacts necessary for survival was destroyed. Loss of habitual physical setting was especially devastating for the Sayisi Dene because of their dependence on the rhythms and cycles of their natural world for their most basic substances.

Lynch (1960) further describes the image of the physical setting in terms of legibility, or "...the ease with which..." it is organized into a coherent, and understandable pattern (Lynch 1960:2). This cognitive process incorporates the physical traits of the ecosystem into a world view model which "...adds identity and structure..." to the perceptual world (Lynch 1960:10).

Biesheuvel has stressed that "cognition...deserves priority because of its major role in the process of adaptation to change...(1974:xii in Bourguignon 1979:199). Equally important is the manner in which change is perceived. While the physical setting must be legible, the reader must also be literate. That is, the observer must not only recognize the sensory cues of his/her surroundings, but also understand the message being transmitted.

The physical setting must be analyzed in terms of identity, structure and meaning. Identity involves recognizing physical patterning of the physical image based on experience and knowledge, noting subtle changes and obvious landmarks. The structure, and/or spatial distribution of notable landmarks and the state of ecological equilibrium become crucial to forming a cognitive map. The mental image thus created becomes a “way-finder” or mnemonic device for movement from one location to another. More importantly, this knowledge of location adds to a sense of security and well-being. Loss of homeland, through involuntary relocation, thus disrupts the cognitive map and frustrates the experience of change.

Weinstein *et al* (n.d.) also outlined a process of adaptation and social change, stating that it depended, in part, on the “...absorptive capacity of natural or social systems for changes...that...consist of people, who feel pain, loss, and grief, and whose ability to function as whole and healthy members of their societies is crippled by the experiences which give rise to those feelings” (Weinstein *et al* n.d.:20). Rapid change therefore, runs the risk of upsetting the systemic balance of a cultural group, and the rate at which the group is able to adapt.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

Introduction

Harris states that “Cultural materialism is a paradigm whose principles are relevant to the conduct of research and the development of theory...”(1994:62). These principles, and the structure of the paradigm itself allow for a greater degree of flexibility and interaction of ecological and socio-cultural data than is possible with other theoretical models. It supports the idea of a holistic interpretation of culture, and at the same time, allows for detailed examination of specific parts of the system.

The study of the Sayisi Dene is complicated by the fact that little previous research has occurred. Because of this, the practicality of using one methodology in attempting to understand the Sayisi Dene is not feasible and so three epistemological principles are employed. The dissertation, while most concerned with the relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake to Churchill in 1956, draws from the historical, ethnographical and archaeological records of the people which can be traced to 600 B.C. (Epp *et al.* 1983, Gordon 1996, Nash 1975) in order to understand the cultural underpinnings of the people.

A methodology of triangulation is employed which embodies archaeology, ethnography and history. This is considered to provide the most valid and reliable data as compared to using only one data collection procedure (Little and Robbins 1984). Trigger (1982:5) has cautioned that such approaches “...may involve too many theoretical eggs in one basket”. However, by

working within a framework of cultural materialism, each facet can be identified for its contribution to the expression of the cultural group.

This tripartite approach is especially valuable for archaeologists as it provides "...a common theater..." for interaction and "...a directed, but flexible orientation for theory building" (Rossignol 1992:4). Fundamental to this approach are the relationships amongst these three bodies of data. The challenge to the archaeologist studying subsistence people, while not news but seldom elaborated, is to "...discover how the interaction of human subsistence systems and environmental systems is reflected in the organization of archaeological remains..." (Rossignol 1992:5). This can be achieved partially through ethnographic and ethnohistorical sources, as well as more popular or emic accounts, such as traditional ecological knowledge. However, some caution should be used when considering these sources. While the studies can provide a substantial body of synchronic data, both subsistence land use and behavior have changed over time (Novak 1988, Nudds 1987). Recent sites may reflect changes in socio-spatial organization due to, for example, European disease and/or new marriage patterns. Some historical archaeological sites may not reflect the pre-European contact subsistence system.

A Question of Terminology

A specific terminology that describes the multi-faceted approach to the research problem is, in itself, a problem. The term *ethnoarchaeology*, most often used by archaeologists, describes the interrelationship between archaeology and ethnography. However, the historic record, which can often furnish descriptive detail about a cultural group at specific time periods and

under particular circumstances, is also valuable. There is little or no concern with historical events leading up to the study. The term *ethno-archaeological-historical* is too cumbersome, although it explicitly outlines the various components to be included in the study. *Ethnohistory*, on the other hand, appears to exclude archaeology.

The archaeological data, while not the main focus of this dissertation is important as it, along with the ecological landscape, sets the stage for understanding the causes of change, the cumulative effects of change, and the manner in which the Sayisi Dene adapted to abrupt and imposed changes in their subsistence economy and habitat. For this last reason the geological, floral and faunal resources have been included in this text.

For the purpose of this dissertation ethnohistory is perhaps the most correct term. *Ethno-* describes the anthropological portion of the study. This includes both archaeology and ethnography.

The *archaeological record* provides time-depth which is necessary to identify cultural links with the past, as well as detail ancient cultural groups through the examination, analysis and interpretation of material remains. Links with the ethnographical and historical records provide a continuity with regard to cultural process and resource use. For example, Gordon (1975, 1976, 1996) in particular, has influenced the archaeological paradigm for this study, with regard to strategy and theoretical approach. The concept of discrete band-discrete herd developed by Gordon is supported by the archaeological record.

The ethnographic record describes the cultural traits of a living group of people as they existed at the time of study. This is referred to as the ethnographic present. Ethnographies are synchronic in that they are temporally fixed. An important technique which is utilized in ethnographic studies is the personal interview. The importance of the oral tradition to land-use and map biography studies has taken on new meaning. Through this medium, information and knowledge about the people and their relationship to their physical environment can be gleaned. This is called *traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)*. Of late, TEK has been used to argue for treaty land entitlements. Traditional ecological knowledge is discussed in detail below.

History is self-descriptive, and includes European and Euro-Canadian written records, and documents which concern the Sayisi Dene. The manuscripts of the Hudson's Bay Company, government records, Anglican Church archives and many secondary sources form the body of data for this category. The historical record completes the process of triangulation by providing written accounts of events, people and processes which may be responsible for the direction taken with regard to social change and cultural continuity.

The ethnohistorical approach synthesizes the present with the archival and ancient past. The ethnographical and historical records are the source of valuable factual, anecdotal and descriptive information which cannot be recovered from archaeological remains. Together, these three sources of information combine to provide a better understanding of the defining features of the cultural group.

The aim of ethnohistory is “...to synthesize the field experience of a community (ethnography and archaeology) with an investigation of its archival past (history)” (Sahlins 1994:377). This diachronic approach provides an ongoing knowledge and understanding of the process of change within a cultural group. The process allows for the identification of events which effect change. Sahlins, drawing on Locke, states that because we know the characteristics of historical matters, we recognize the influences that these things have on other facets of history. This also applies to cultures. “They reveal their properties by the way they respond to diverse circumstances, organizing those circumstances in specific forms and in the event changing their forms in specific ways.” (Sahlins 1994:393).

Ethnohistory then, is ethnography, history and archaeology, which extends over time. It is a method of linking the past with the present, for identifying specific events which appear to have influenced the direction of cultural and social change, and of using the information derived to the benefit of the cultural group.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Cultural Materialism

The collection of indigenous or traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) by anthropologists has, for years, been an integral component of the ethnographic methodology used to understand the systemics of culture (Brumbach and Jarvenpa 1989, Cruikshank 1990). Informant testimony and modeling, which involve a combination of participant observation and techniques such as map biographies continue to be important techniques used by ethnographers and archaeologists.

More recently, indigenous people have recognized the need to document the teachings and knowledge of the Elders and resource users not only for their own local needs, but also as a means of empowering their communities in the decision-making process of natural resource management and of telling their own history (Blondin 1990). This process has also been important in strengthening the cultural identity of indigenous people (Ryan *et al.* 1990).

Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Towards A Definition

For generations, indigenous people have sustained themselves through an intimate relationship with their local environment. The accumulated knowledge gained through years of experience has become the medium through which indigenous people nurtured both body and soul. It is only recently that this wisdom has been acknowledged as possibly contributing to a sustainable planet (Bodley 1996).

Knowledge which belongs to Aboriginal people is so woven into all aspects of life that it falls into many categories of study, such as ethnobotany (Kuhnlein and Turner 1991, Walker 1984), ethnoarchaeology, traditional environmental (Inglis 1993, MacDonell 1997) or traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous knowledge, customary law, folk lore, local ecological knowledge, and “our understanding”. However, traditional ecological knowledge appears to be the most commonly used term. The use of the term “traditional” presents some concern because it connotes a sense of being fixed in time, being synchronic rather than diachronic. Berkes (1993) cautioned that because of the ambiguity of the term “traditional” and its misleading interpretation about the nature of cultural dynamics, the term “indigenous” may be more appropriate. However, if the arena of this body of ancient

ecological knowledge is to be assigned to aboriginal people, then indigenous may not be the correct term either, because in its proper definition, “indigenous” represents anybody “...living naturally in a particular region or environment” (Merriam 1965). For this reason “traditional ecological knowledge” is the preferred term, understanding at the outset that because of the dynamics of the cultural and their adaptive qualities, that TEK is not static, only the process of obtaining it is (e.g. ethnography).

Traditional ecological knowledge is defined as representing “...experience acquired over thousands of years of direct human contact with the environment” (Berkes 1993:1). It is the accumulation of information about a particular ecological setting which has resulted from experience and observation, and which has been passed down from one generation to the next, through the oral tradition, and by learned behavior. TEK is holistic in that it accounts for the interaction between the physical and social. In fact, it would appear that TEK transcends the physical senses and becomes enculturated as a conceptual configuration in the human psyche. In many ways, TEK can be viewed as gestalt. It is the core of a philosophy for living.

This explanation of TEK is difficult for many scientists to grasp because it departs from scientific philosophy. Indeed the two understandings of ecological knowledge seem to be at opposite ends of the intellectual spectrum. Whatever TEK is, western Scientific Ecological Knowledge (SEK) is not.

Western Science - Roots

Western science was founded on the intellectual revolution of the “Age of Enlightenment” and was probably the single most important element in the

establishment of a new world-view. Most notable was the idea that precise experimental observation and mathematical reasoning were paramount to discovery, and, more importantly, they were neutral and independent of religious teachings. Because of these factors scientific inquiry based on the measurable, quantifiable and observable came to represent the only valid and acceptable research strategy. In an effort to maintain “pure” scientific methodology, scientists distanced themselves from their objects of study, in order to maintain objectivity and reduce the chance of tainting their data with personal bias. The evolution of the scientific approach meant that traditional knowledge was set to the side and, over time, the contributions of traditional practitioners minimized or ignored.

The influence of western constructs in the accumulation, analysis, interpretation and ordering of knowledge has resulted in very definite approach to ecological knowledge. These constructs, which have evolved with industrial progress, continue to shape western ideology.

Comparing TEK and SEK - A difference in approach

While there are many differences in approach, it can be stated that generally, both traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and scientific ecological knowledge (SEK) “...are a result of the same general intellectual process of creating order out of disorder” (Berkes 1993:3). This cognitive configuration is molded during the enculturation process, and is a product of child-rearing practices, existing codes of culture and personal experience (Whiting & Whiting 1975).

Wolfe (1991) and Berkes (1993) provide substantive lists of differences

between TEK and SEK which reflect the different philosophies of thought. Table 1 lists the most popular comparison of TEK and SEK. However, there are several categories which suggest that some of the concepts of TEK are not clearly understood, and need to be modified. For example, the relationship between humans and the environment is often viewed as one of “subordination”. However, according to Elders at Tadoule Lake, a more appropriate description may be a relationship of “*status quo*”, where all life-forms are considered of equal value. This is in keeping with general traditional aboriginal philosophy; while the main avenue of communication for traditional ecological knowledge is through oral tradition, it is necessary to include *petroglyphic* and other forms of pictography that continue to be used and/or interpreted by aboriginal people. For example, the Tie Creek Petroforms in the Whiteshell area of Manitoba (Three Fires Society 1990), the sacred birch bark scrolls of the Ojibwa as part of the Midewiwin (Dewdney 1975), and the pictography of the Dreamtime of the Australian Aborigines (Tonkinson 1978). Equally important is the art of observation, where younger members of the cultural group learn by watching the activities of their Elders; data collection which is viewed as “slow/inconclusive” is in fact *cumulative* and *progressive*;. Since traditional knowledge is a blueprint for cultural identity, as well as resource use, it is continually building on the experiences of its past, assimilating and accommodating change as the need arises; furthermore, the term “explanations”, which is designed as a means of providing an understanding is both cultural and spiritual. TEK is explained in culturally significant terms which, within the cultural group, often require little explanation, because they are inherently understood. The holistic nature of TEK does not require observed facts to be empirically recorded; another aspect that should be considered is that TEK tends to be more *idiographic*

while SEK is *nomothetic*. That is, TEK emphasizes the unique aspects of the cultural group while SEK underlines the systemics. This will be discussed in greater detail later in the paper. These broad generalizations however, are not rigid and past studies (Berkes 1977, Feit 1987) indicate that TEK can include quantitative and experimental aspects.

TEK and Anthropology - Understanding the cultural

As alluded to above, TEK is more than data collection, it is an integral part of the social system and world view model of indigenous groups. What may be viewed by the non-anthropologist as abstract concepts are, in actuality, symbolic representations on which the unwritten laws of the cultural are founded (Levi-Strauss 1963). Grammars or rules for socio-spatial organization (Jarvenpa and Brumbach, 1988), kinship obligations (Brumbach and Jarvenpa 1997, Myers 1988, Sharp 1988) and resource management (Freeman 1985, Usher 1981) are inextricably woven into the very fabric of the cultural group and are part of the protocol which guides the applications of traditional ecological knowledge (Bernard 1994, Wavey 1993).

Pam Colorado called for a “bicultural research model”, emphasizing participatory research (Colorado 1988). This method is considered to “bridge the gap” between TEK and SEK, producing a super-holistic model which builds on the strengths of both forms of knowledge. By this means, both forms of knowledge are valuable and contribute equally to the decision-making.

Cognitive anthropologists often use the principle of etics and emics to sort out the grammar of cultural behavior; that is, how do people acquire information,

**Table 1: Interpretation of relationships - humans/environment
Comparison of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and western
scientific knowledge (SEK) (Modified from Wolfe 1991)***

Comparison	TEK	Western scientific knowledge
Relationship	Status quo (subordinate)	Dominant
Dominant mode of thinking	Holistic (intuitive)	Analytical [reductionist]
Communication	Oral [storytelling, subjective, experiential] Petroglyphic [rockpaintings, inuksuit]	Literate/didactic [academic, objective positivist]
Data creation	Cumulative, progressive (Slow/inconclusive)	Fast/selective
Prediction	Predictions are made based on animal cycles. (Short-term cycles [recognize the onset of long-term cycles])	Short-term linear [poor long-term analysis]
Explanation	Cultural as well as spiritual. (Spiritual [the inexplicable])	Scientific inquiry [hypothesis, laws]
Biological classification	Ecological. [inconclusive, internally differentiating]	Genetic and hierarchical [differentiating]
Strategy	Idiographic	Nomothetic

*Bracketed values in TEK column indicate Wolfe's description of comparative topics. I have replaced these with my own description, which is based on discussion with Elders and resource users at Tadoule Lake (Petch 1992c).

process it, reach decisions and act. The principle, borrowed from linguistics (Pike 1954), notes that human beings distinguish *emic* operations (the basic set of underlying cultural constructs that guide the cultural group, the subjective) from their *etic* representations (the techniques and results of making generalizations about cultural behavior that are measurable, the objective) (Goodenough 1970). The *etic* approach then is nomothetic, universalist, objective and "culture-free", whereas the *emic* approach is ideographic, culturally specific and subjective. The *emic* approach describes the culture

from within, from the viewpoint of the participant, not of the observer. This is one of the chief ways to discover native systems of classification, and the principles on which these systems are based. From an anthropological perspective, the emic approach is seen as vital to understanding TEK, not only because it involves non-western people, but also because non-anthropologists involved in the collection of TEK gain an appreciation of the importance of cultural variables for their methods and analysis.

Anthropologists, by the very nature of their discipline, have a unique contribution to make to the application of TEK. As a social science, the analytical tools for discovery are well ingrained. In fact, it is because of the methods of observation, that is, participant observation, that anthropologists are able to cross over that line which separates science from tradition and transcend the barriers which separate emic from etic behavior (Harris 1980)

Harris (1980) expounded on the role of “emics” and “etics” with respect to the terms “mental” (thoughts and feelings experienced within one’s mind) and “behavioral” (body motions and environmental effects produced by such motions on all humans), stating that there should be four discreet domains for inquiry:

	Emic	Etic
Behavioral	I	II
Mental	III	IV

(After Harris 1980)

What this implies is that there is an inherent relationship between what we

think and feel based on our cognitive processes (mental) and how we evaluate various situations based on measurable observations (behavioral). Harris (1980:41) suggests that the etic behavioral domain provides the foundation of scientific theory.

In his universal pattern model, Harris (1980) developed a tripartite scheme: infrastructure, structure and superstructure, into which he arranged the major etic behavioral categories. Parallel to these was a set of mental and emic components (Table 2). What Harris attempted to do was to sort out the various components of culture and the environment and promote a strategy of cultural materialism. This strategy is based on the notion that "...human social life is a response to the practical problems of earthly existence" (Harris 1980: ix).

The principles of cultural materialism are built on the premise that the components of infrastructure give rise to the structure, which in turn determines the behavioral and mental superstructures. Infrastructure is considered the principal interface between culture and nature, where humans seek to maintain equilibrium with their environment. It is here that traditional knowledge responds to the immediate state of the ecosystem, and, as Harris suggests, is transposed into the structure and superstructures of the cultural group.

However, this is not to say that change at the infrastructure level is the only thing that will affect change in the sociocultural system. Harris states that

The most likely outcome of any innovation - whether it arises in the infrastructure, structure or superstructure - is system-maintaining negative feedback, the dampening of deviation resulting either in the extinction of the innovation or in slight compensatory changes in the other sectors, changes which preserve the fundamental characteristics of the whole system (Harris 1980:71).

Harris' strategy may have contributions to make to the overall success of recording TEK, as it does put into perspective the role that infrastructure plays as an interface between the ecological setting and cultural expression. It is the front line across which ecological restraints interact with humans who aim to overcome the restraints or modify them in an effort to maintain system equilibrium. It is at this critical point that TEK comes into practice at the community level. The accumulation of knowledge about similar situations comes into play. The success or failure of the use of past knowledge is tested and mental and behavioral adjustments are made and recorded in the oral tradition.

For the anthropologist, local TEK provides the basis for comparative studies of subsistence, and mixed-subsistence based cultural groups. It also offers an opportunity to examine the role of traditional ideology in relation to the management of the natural environment.

Bodley provided an interesting comment regarding the role of ideology in traditional and industrial cultures when he stated that traditional "...ideological systems often express humanity's dependence on nature and tend to place nature in a revered, sacred category", while the global (industrial) culture was characterized by "biblical injunction" which supported dominion over nature

Table 2 (After Harris 1980:52-54)

The Relationship of the Universal Pattern to the Natural Environment

	Mental & Emic Components or Cognitive Superstructure	Etic Behavioral Components
Superstructure	World View: Symbols, myths, aesthetic standards & philosophies, epistemologies, ideologies, magic, religion, taboos.	Median: Art, music, dance, literature, advertising, rituals, sports, games, hobbies, science.
Structure	Relationships: Kinship obligations, political and ethnic obligations and ideologies.	Political Economy: Political organization, etc, division of labor, taxation, tribute, political socialization, enculturation, education, class, etc. discipline, war. Domestic Economy: Family structure, domestic division of labor, domestic socialization, enculturation, education, age and sex roles, domestic discipline, hierarchies, sanctions.
Infrastructure	Traditional ecological knowledge: Ways of knowing and doing. Ethnobotany, ethnozoology, subsistence lore.	Mode of Reproduction: Demography, mating patterns, fertility, natality, mortality, nurturance of infants, medical control of demographic patterns, contraception, abortion, infanticide. Mode of Production: Technology of subsistence, Techno-environmental relationships, Ecosystems, Work patterns.
Nature	Traditional observation	Scientific observation

(Bodley 1996:55). Bodley further illustrated that “seemingly irrational beliefs” such as certain rituals, totems and taboos actually contributed to stability in the human and resource populations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Research methodology is a protocol of ethics and procedures which establish the framework within which a particular topic is to be studied and understood. It includes theoretical and practical concepts which direct the research to achieving its goals. Methods are various research techniques which enlist a set of strategies designed to carry out specific segments of research. These function as the working tools for the collection of data.

The methodology which has been employed for this dissertation is both ethnohistoric and community-based in that the research, while drawing in part from written documents, is directed by the community to address issues which are deemed important by the community. The Sayisi Dene view the relocation as an important issue which needs to be chronicled. At the same time the intimate relationship that exists between the people, the land and the caribou needs to be understood in Sayisi Dene terms.

Section 1 Oral History Methods and Traditional Ecological Knowledge of the Sayisi Dene

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), used successfully in present-day land-use studies (Usher 1992), as well as a body of emic knowledge gleaned from oral histories, legends and hearsay (Cruikshank 1990), all provide behavioral clues about decision-making. However, one of the limitations of TEK and "emic" information is that they tend to span three generations of knowledge (E.Hart 1994 personal communication; personal observations 1992, 1994). In other words, interviews collected today will only reflect a

personal understanding and knowledge of land-use no earlier than 1900. Nevertheless, because of the cultural preferences which may be inferred through this form of data collection, as many sources of land-use information as possible should be accessed (Jochim 1979) in order to facilitate hypotheses regarding the decision-making process of pre-European-contact people.

To accomplish this, the oral history tradition was relied upon to gain an understanding of the local interpretation of Dene roots, the series of events which led to the relocation, the years in Churchill and the present status of the residents of Tadoule Lake. The oral tradition embodies a wealth of knowledge that weaves ancient traditional ecological knowledge into a modern understanding of why things work the way they do. It allows for a greater degree of interaction between the interviewer and the local residents and it is a very important component of data gathering.

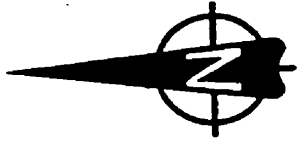
The traditional knowledge gathered was, for the most part, emic in nature, and based on a personal memory and understanding of events and ideas, as well as one's autobiographic experience. It was imperative then, to gather the collective memory of as many knowledgeable cultural participants as possible. By interviewing a number of people, the chance of error or misinterpretation was mitigated.

Traditional ecological knowledge as it related to past land use practices and information relevant to the relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake to Churchill was gathered through informal and formal interviews held at Tadoule Lake and Churchill, during a total of nine months of community field work. Additional data was gathered during numerous casual visits to the

community, and by community member visits to Winnipeg. Informal interviews consisted of casual meetings over coffee at the various consultants' homes or after bingo. As per ethical guidelines related to human subjects, detailed agreement to interview forms were completed and signed by all those who were formally interviewed on audiotapes. Copies of the tapes were made for those who were interviewed, for the Band Office, and Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Elders and resource users who were interviewed were made aware of the purpose of the interviews and the manner in which the data would be used. Anonymity was an option to the interviewee, however, it was not an issue with any of the people interviewed on audio-tape. Anonymity was requested by several people regarding issues that they perceived as culturally or community-sensitive. The data gathered was used to assist in the identification of potential archaeological sites, as evidence of land use, for description of the events which led to the relocation of the people, and the impact the relocation had on their lives.

One of the final products of the oral history interviews was the completion of a map of traditional land use based on the memories of the Elders. On this map, the place names of major lakes, rivers and features indicated the community's knowledge of geographic location (Figure 2).

The oral tradition, and early historical documents and maps indicated that the ancestors of the Sayisi Dene made great use of the esker systems which ran a north-east to south-west axis. Samuel Hearne noted that the Dene (Chipewyan) thought nothing of walking hundreds of miles in a short period of time. Early Hudson's Bay Company maps of Rupertsland were drawn



TRADITIONAL LANDS

OF THE

SAYISI - DENE

CALVING
GROUNDS

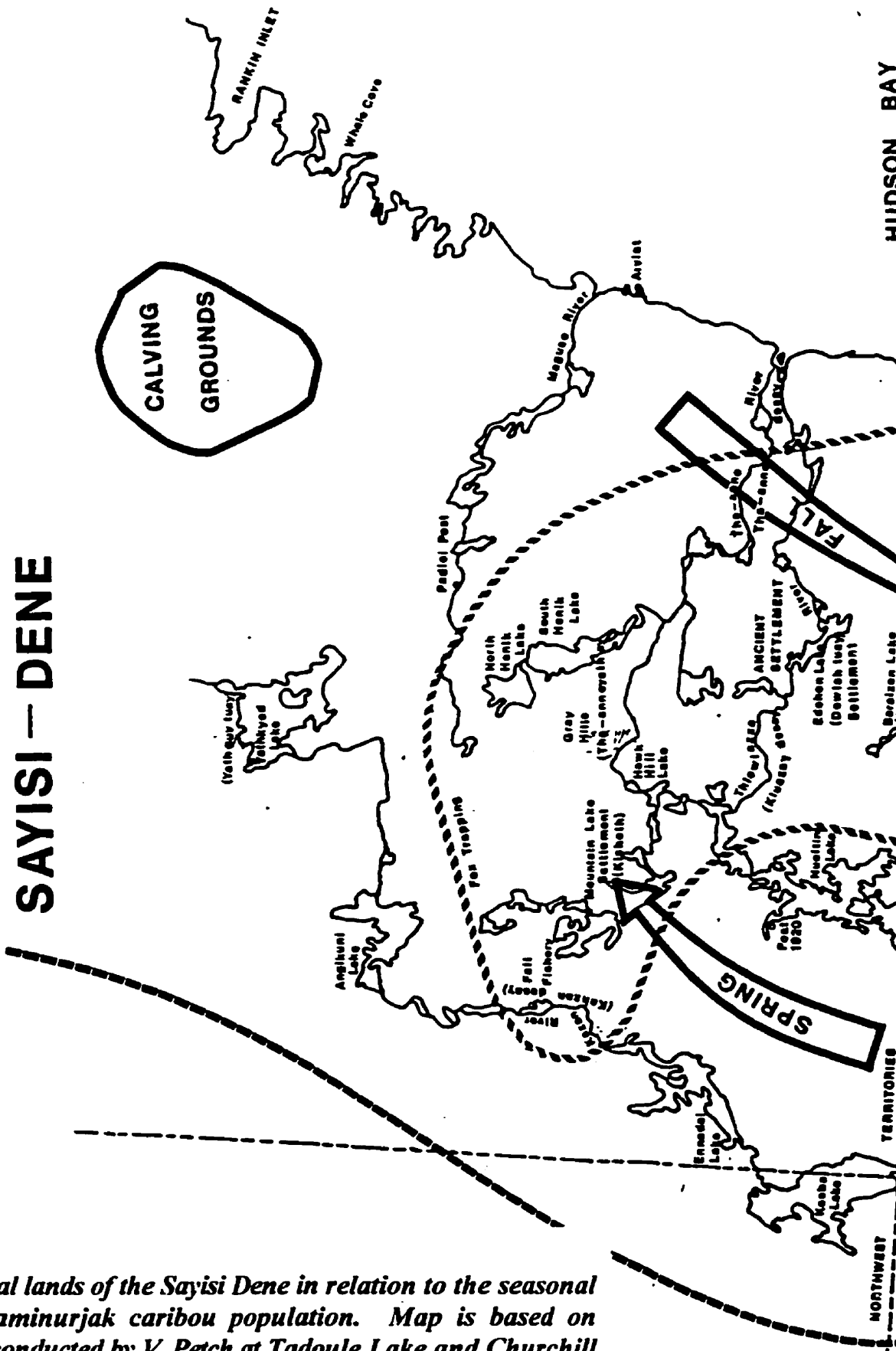
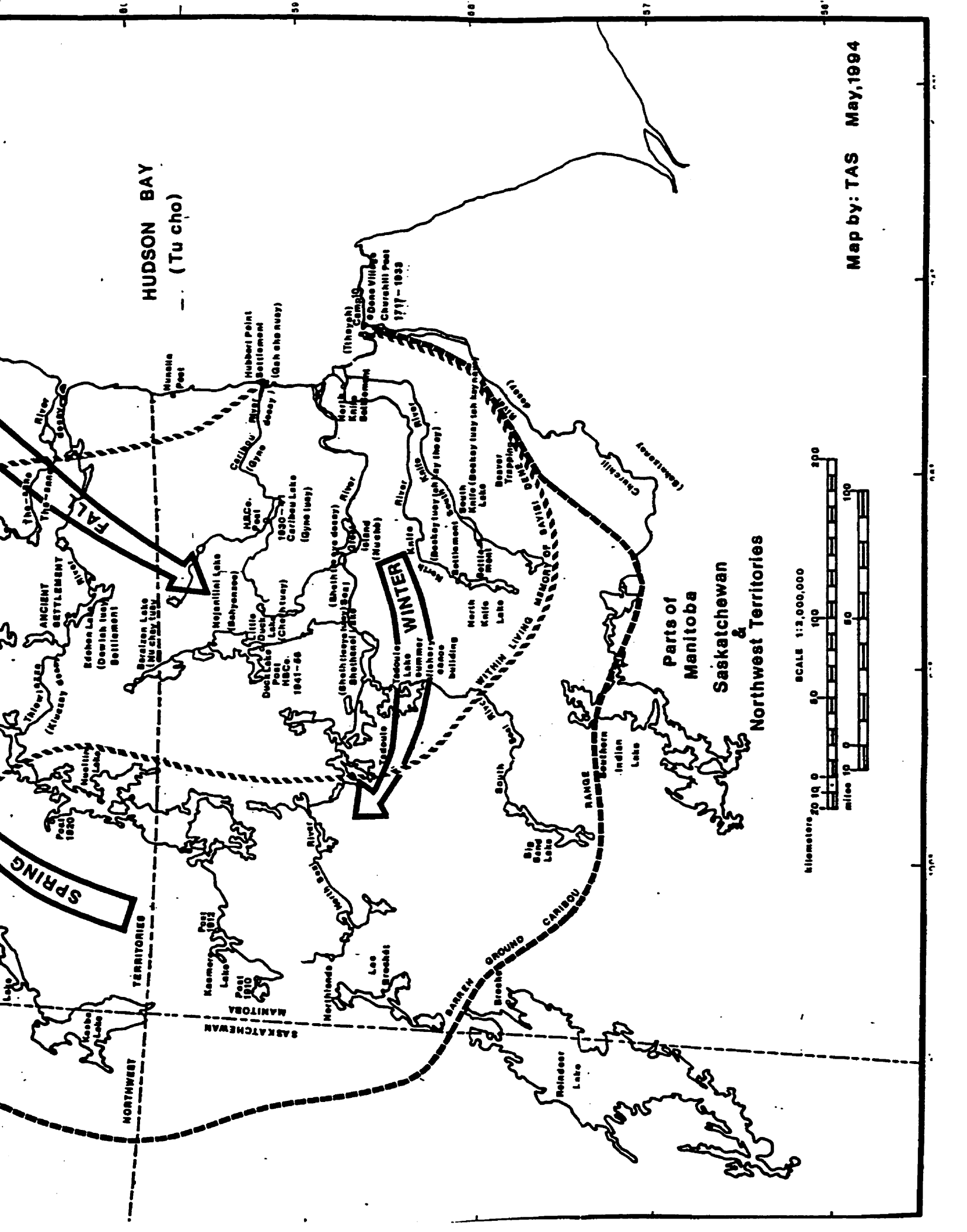
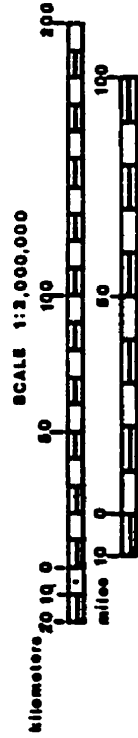


Figure 2. The traditional lands of the Sayisi Dene in relation to the seasonal movements of the Qaminurjak caribou population. Map is based on audiotaped interviews conducted by V. Petch at Tadoule Lake and Churchill in 1992 and 1993.



HUDSON BAY
(Tu cho)

Map by: TAS May, 1994



from composite descriptions given by Dene hunters and indicate detailed knowledge of the geographic locations of various river systems and natural resources.

The oral tradition contained many stories and legends of people walking many miles which verified Hearne's observation. The physical landscape is such that eskers provided the only medium for walking great distances. Tom Fortin recalled his mother's stories of her family walking to Reindeer Lake from Little Duck Lake (T. Fortin, personal communication, 1998).

To this information was added traditional ecological knowledge regarding the strategies of caribou hunting with regard to the use of eskers. For example, it was noted by several Elders, and documented by M. Code (1993) that a protocol was followed when hunting

Where the caribou come into the water is called Beh Kah Dah. This part of the land was sacred and left untouched. People believed that if a person went there, the caribou would catch the scent and the caribou wouldn't cross. The opposite shore, across from the Beh Kah Dah was the Chah'l Dah (lookout). This was where the hunters waited (M. Code 1993: 3-4).

This information was extremely valuable to archaeological field work in determining where seasonal kill sites could occur.

The fall and spring fisheries were extremely important as a "survival" food. N. French stated that her dad told her that they could always count on the jackfish. "You will always be able to find jackfish. They are a gift and they are always there" (N. French, personal communication, 1992). Winter fishing

was rarely conducted, except occasionally at open water near rapids because winter ice in most of the lakes was too thick (T. Duck, personal communication, 1992).

Memory-mapping, a land-use technique which has been used extensively in native land-claims (MKO 1993, Usher 1992,1993b), has proven to be a valuable resource in identifying traditionally used ecozones and may well be an important link to recognizing land-use patterning of past people. For instance, the application of this technique to Sayisi Dene lands around Tadoule Lake in northern Manitoba identified a network of trails which were not visible in aerial photographs or during field survey due to the forest growth which has occurred over the past years. Knowing the locations of the trails and their destinations resulted in the identification of numerous late historical campsites and activity areas. As well, the oral history record assisted in determining the potential locations of archaeological sites. This is discussed below.

Section 2. Archaeological Methods

The direct historical approach used by ethnographers and ethnohistorians (Bishop 1974, Murphy and Steward 1956), is a valuable tool in linking pre-European contact land-use activities and locations with the present (Hamilton and Larcombe 1994). As well, historical documents, such as the Hudson's Bay Company collections contain rare glimpses of past land-use which can, in some instances, be traced to the present. The direct historical approach is often preferred by archaeologists to address specific problems in the archaeological record, whereby the known is projected into the past. However, for this dissertation a chronological description of the Sayisi Dene

is presented.

There were two reasons for this. First of all, the succession of vegetation and animals into the study area following deglaciation paved the way for human habitation. Environmental conditions were an important concern to early people. Climate, availability of resources and mobility across a water-logged landscape were all very real conditions that the first people had to contend with. The second reason for choosing the chronological approach was concern that presentation in the direct historical approach would fragment the flow of information by virtue of returning to the time of the relocation in 1956.

Appreciating the environmental setting and the pre-European history of the Sayisi Dene through archaeological investigations were seen as a necessary introduction towards understanding the effects of loss of homeland.

Archaeological Constraints

Research in the boreal forest/tundra zones has been sporadic, site-specific and limited in its interpretation (CHIN 1977, Nash 1975). This is especially true for the region which straddles the Manitoba/NWT border.

Archaeological investigations have been hampered by several logistical factors: the extremely isolated location tends to inhibit long term research projects; field seasons are short; and transportation costs are high. For these reasons, most studies occurring near large bodies of water on which float planes can land. Hence the majority of archaeological sites which form the basis of cultural interpretation are associated with littoral areas, which may or

may not be a true representation of cultural activities. However, given the summer field conditions which have been experienced by archaeologists in the boreal forest/tundra zone, camping inland in sheltered areas is definitely not a choice of summer residence, but preferred for winter. Summer campsites which offer a “bug-free” environment are of first and foremost importance².

Another problem with boreal forest/tundra archaeology is that the preservation of organic material is almost non-existent. Archaeologists are forced to focus on inorganic evidence and occasionally, animal bone, drawing inferences from ethnographic analogy and limited excavations within the boreal forest/tundra regions.

A major characteristic of the tundra/northwestern transitional forest zone is the thick blanket of moss which covers the land. This obscures visibility of potential archaeological sites, making site identification difficult.

In spite of the many obstacles which detract from field investigations, close to 500 archaeological sites have been recorded in the last forty years (CHIN 1998; Historic Resources Branch 1998).

Archaeological Approach

The problem in choosing a specific method in order to conduct field work was

² During interviews with members of the Sayisi Dene First Nation, the question of summer campsite preference was posed to the Elders. All Elders voluntarily agreed that biting insects were the biggest concern, especially between June and the end of July, and so windy points such as the ridges of eskers or vegetation-free peninsulae were preferred for camping. This was valuable information when considering the line of decision-making that any group of people inhabiting this area would make towards establishing a summer campsite.

magnified by the sporadic nature of past research. For example, the pioneering work of Nash (1975) within the boreal forest/tundra transition zone was conducted within a loose framework of cultural ecology. However, no further work occurred until 1992 when Petch began a series of archaeological studies. Because time was of the essence due to short season and restricted funding, Petch employed a predictive model in order to expedite field work. For purposes of this study the archaeological model will not be discussed, as it was a technique for conducting field work, and is not considered relevant to understanding the relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake to Churchill. However, knowing the ethnic identity of archaeological material, and sorting out the various cultural occupations was important in understanding the land use patterns which represented the Sayisi Dene prior to 1956.

Mason (1976) proposed two approaches for determining ethnic identity of archaeological material, *site-unit* and *territorial*.

The former approach is dependent on the existence of one or more historical documents which can be related to a specific site or component of a site, which in turn yields datable evidence. In other words, the time/space variables are well defined and provide a “restricted ethnic locus” (Mason 1976:360), or ethnic identity. However, as Mason points out, such a well-defined Aboriginal site with historical documentation is rarely found. He also cautions that one site should not be taken as representative of the entire ethnic group, nor should similar artifact assemblages be considered as always representing the same types of activities.

Archaeological Approach Used

The territorial approach is inductive in that it examines the areal distribution of archaeological data related to a specific group which is believed to represent the group historically. The territorial ethnicity approach is considered less reliable than the site-unit approach in that it often lacks definite references to time/space. This vagueness may "...result in ethnic identifications that by their inclusiveness, depart from the constitution of original real societies than is the case with site-unit ethnicity" (Mason 1976:361). However, this approach to archaeological site identification has met with success, and at present provides reliable data when used with other data sources. Ethnicity studies of the archaeological past require rigorous cross-referencing with ethnographic, traditional ecological knowledge and historical data. Unfortunately, this has a limited application, because the archaeological record extends thousands of years into the past beyond written records and often beyond the memories of the inhabitants. This record is usually reduced to non-organic remains, such as stone tools which hardly represent the cultural values of a former cultural group. In vegetative zones, such as the boreal forest, a greater degree of variation in the stone tool assemblage between and within sites is found, representing a wider range of resource harvesting activities. The boreal forest/tundra zone, however, does not enjoy the variability of, or carrying capacity for, a high density of harvestable resources. As a result, the array of tools appears to be limited to hunting and hide-working implements. Activity areas tend to be very small, indicating a higher degree of mobility than is noted for more southerly sites. Additionally, based on the existing archaeological record for the study area, there appears to be less change in tool types over time, possibly reflecting the efficiency of design for a specialized harvest. At present, there appears to be very little variation of human activities in the

tundra transition zone. The archaeological record is sparse given the vastness of the study area, and it depicts resource users as predominantly caribou hunters.

Spatial archaeology is concerned with the distribution of archaeological material across a landscape (Parker 1985:173). The location of individual sites, when examined from a territorial perspective, can reveal patterns of land use that prevailed in the past, and this is important to understanding the cultural systems of past people (Trigger 1968, 1989). Site context and function may provide detail about site selection. This, in turn, has the potential to demonstrate ways in which pre-European-contact people interacted with, and adapted to, their natural setting. However, the tundra/northwestern transitional forest zone presents some unique problems that may limit conceptual and theoretical ideas that have merit in more southerly regions. In other words, a general theoretical concept may be valid for a specific cultural group, but may not apply to highly mobile groups such as the pre-European-contact and historic Dene, or the Paleoeskimo groups who occupied the tundra zone. Other considerations such as the effect of change in settlement patterning due to conflicts between various cultural groups and overlapping of resource areas, needs to be examined.

Section 3. Understanding the Historical

One of the hallmarks of the ethnohistorical approach is its ability to reconstruct the past in an unbiased and scientific manner. The importance of the written record in understanding certain segments of the historical past is such that it provides a temporal data-base to events, which often are unclear or approximate in the oral tradition. Historical documentary evidence

complements and corroborates the archaeological and ethnographical records.

Archival documents, in particular, the records of the Hudson's Bay Company, provide the initial descriptive account of the Sayisi Dene (Northern Indians) at the time of contact. Papers such as early post journals, correspondence, district reports, account books and maps for the Churchill and Nelson Districts offer a window of opportunity to view the Sayisi Dene, their mode of life and commerce and their spatial distribution across a vast territory (Esau, 1986). For example, maps compiled for James Knight (HBCA G.1/19), and later Moses Norton (HBCA G.2/8), were based on the geographic descriptions of several Sayisi Dene (Northern Indians) and contained important annotations concerning the spatial distribution of people and resources (Figure 3 and 4).

Historical documents provide a synchronic description of places, events and people which suggests the types of material remains that an archaeological investigation might uncover in specific locations. Records, such as account books, provide insight into the types of goods which were being traded to the Sayisi Dene and, over time, these accounts indicate cultural change through preferences for certain items and replacement of traditional modes of production. Account books in particular were effective measures of trade, seasonal movement and resource use (see Ross 1862).

Bishop and Ray (1976) and Ray (1974) have demonstrated the utility of combining archival research with the ethnographic record in order to plot cultural change. Given that the barren ground caribou was the single most important resource to the Sayisi Dene, the early accounts show sporadic involvement in the fur trade. Except for the Sayisi Dene who seasonally

NATIVE MAP SEVENTEEN RIVERS BEYOND CHURCHILL

POST - 1719

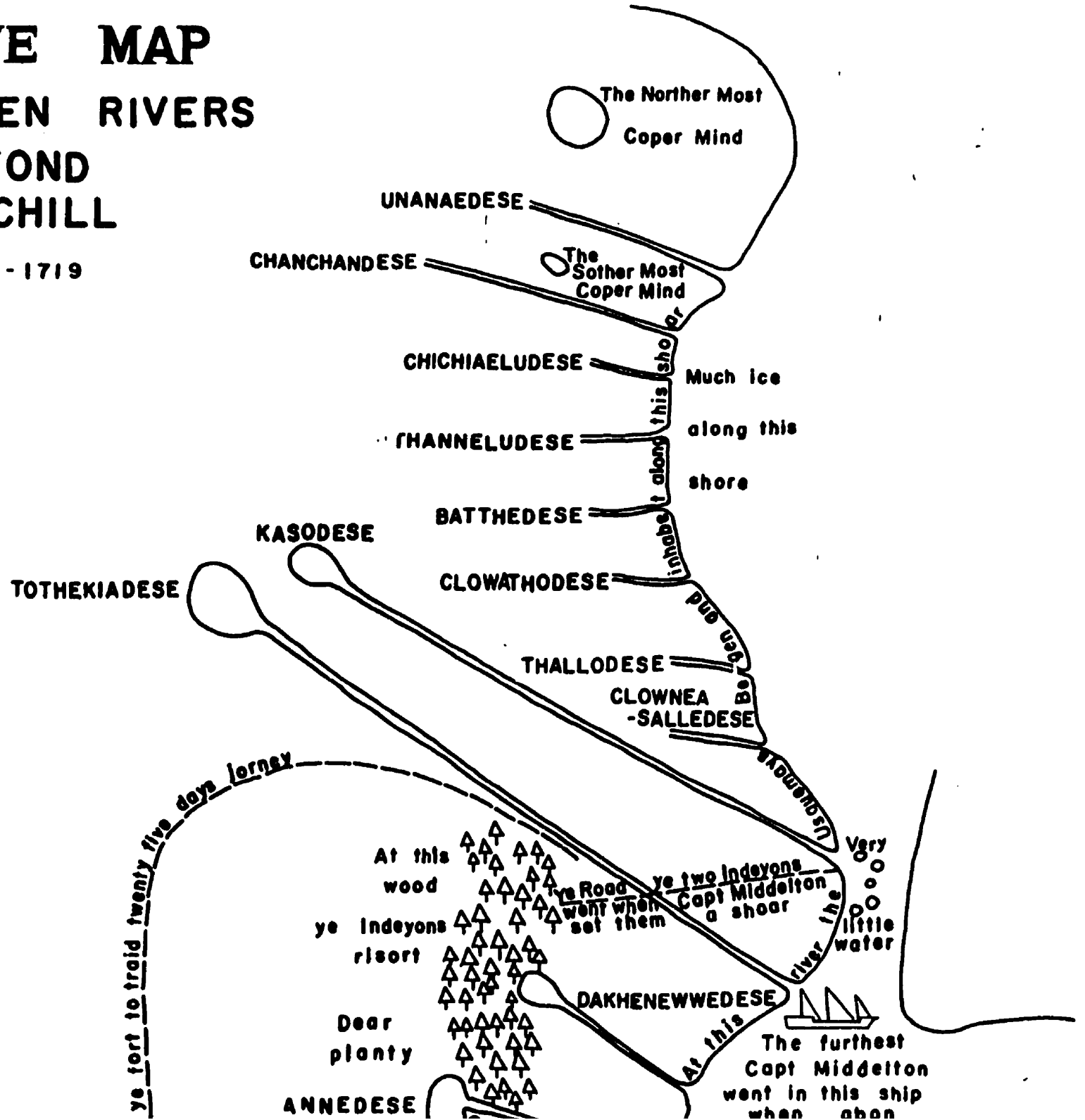


Figure 3. Map of information provided 1970:87.

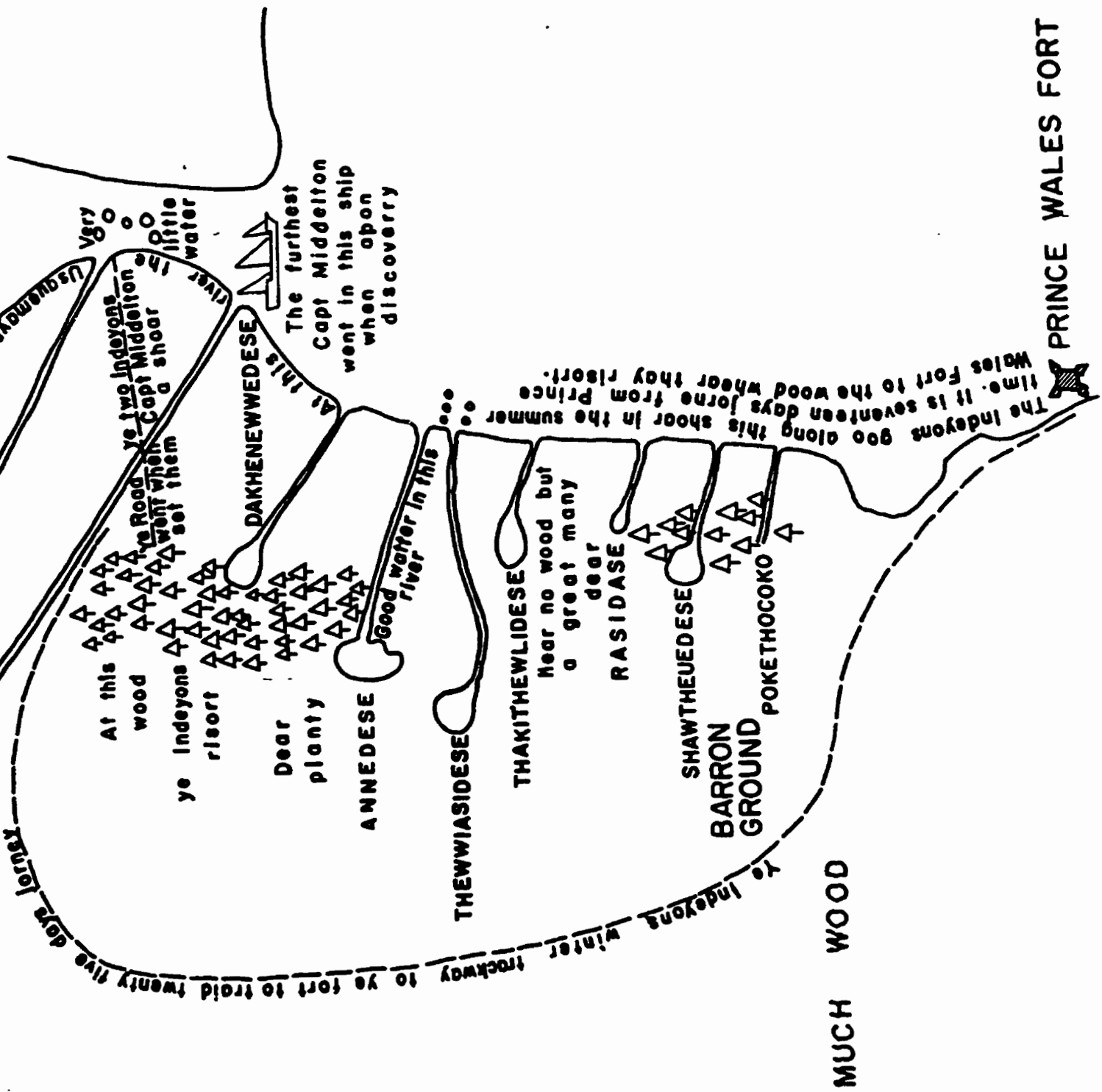


Figure 3. Map of the Hudson Bay area and the interior based on information provided by the Dene. Copied from Warkentin and Ruggles 1970:87.

MOSES NORTON'S DRAUGHT

OF THE NORTHERN PARTS
OF HUDSONS BAY

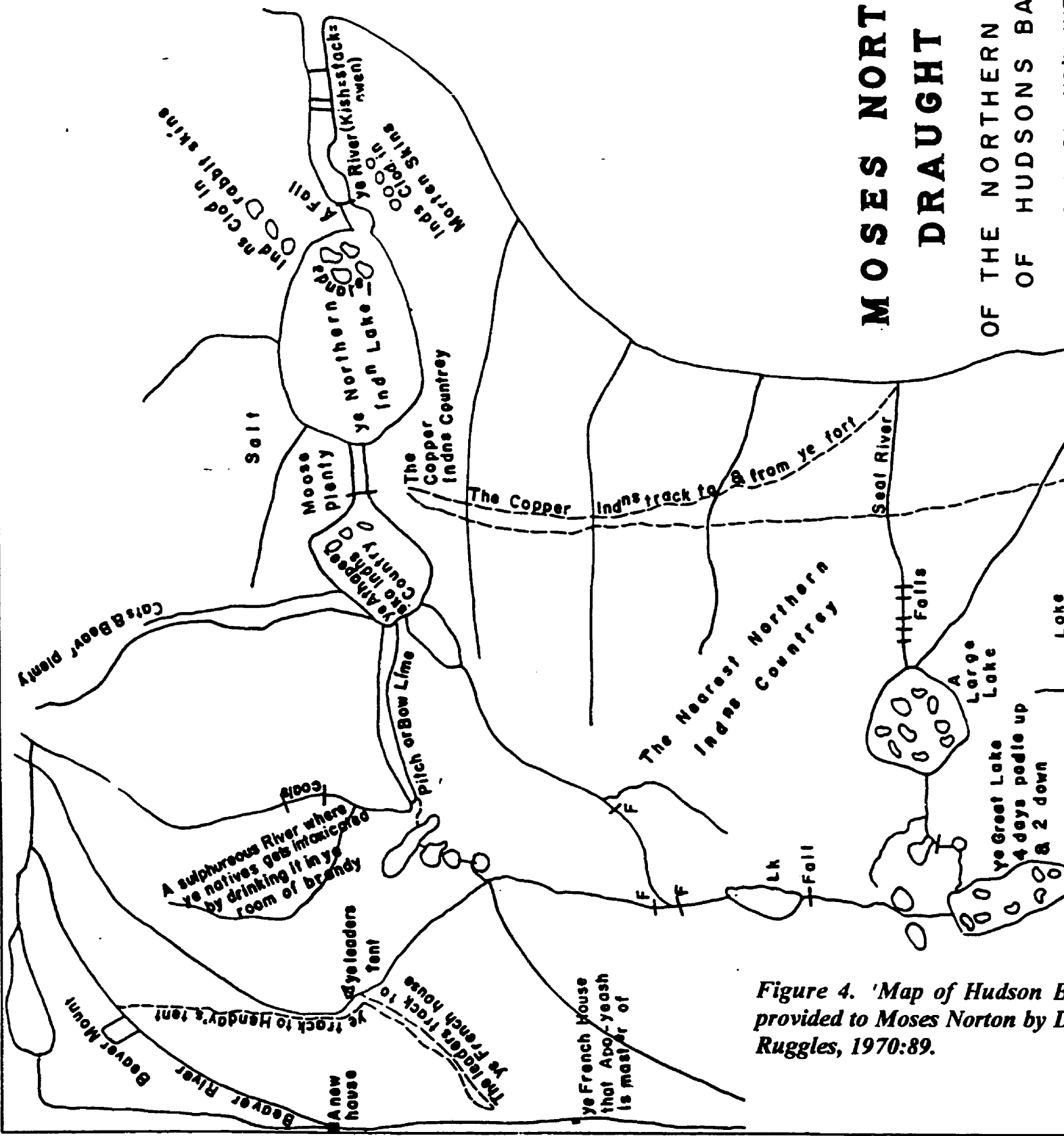


Figure 4. 'Map of Hudson B
provided to Moses Norton by L
Ruggles, 1970:89.

MOSES NORTON'S DRAUGHT

OF THE NORTHERN PARTS
OF HUDSONS BAY

LAI'D DOWN ON IND'N INFORM'N
& BRO'T HOME BY HIM
ANNO

1760

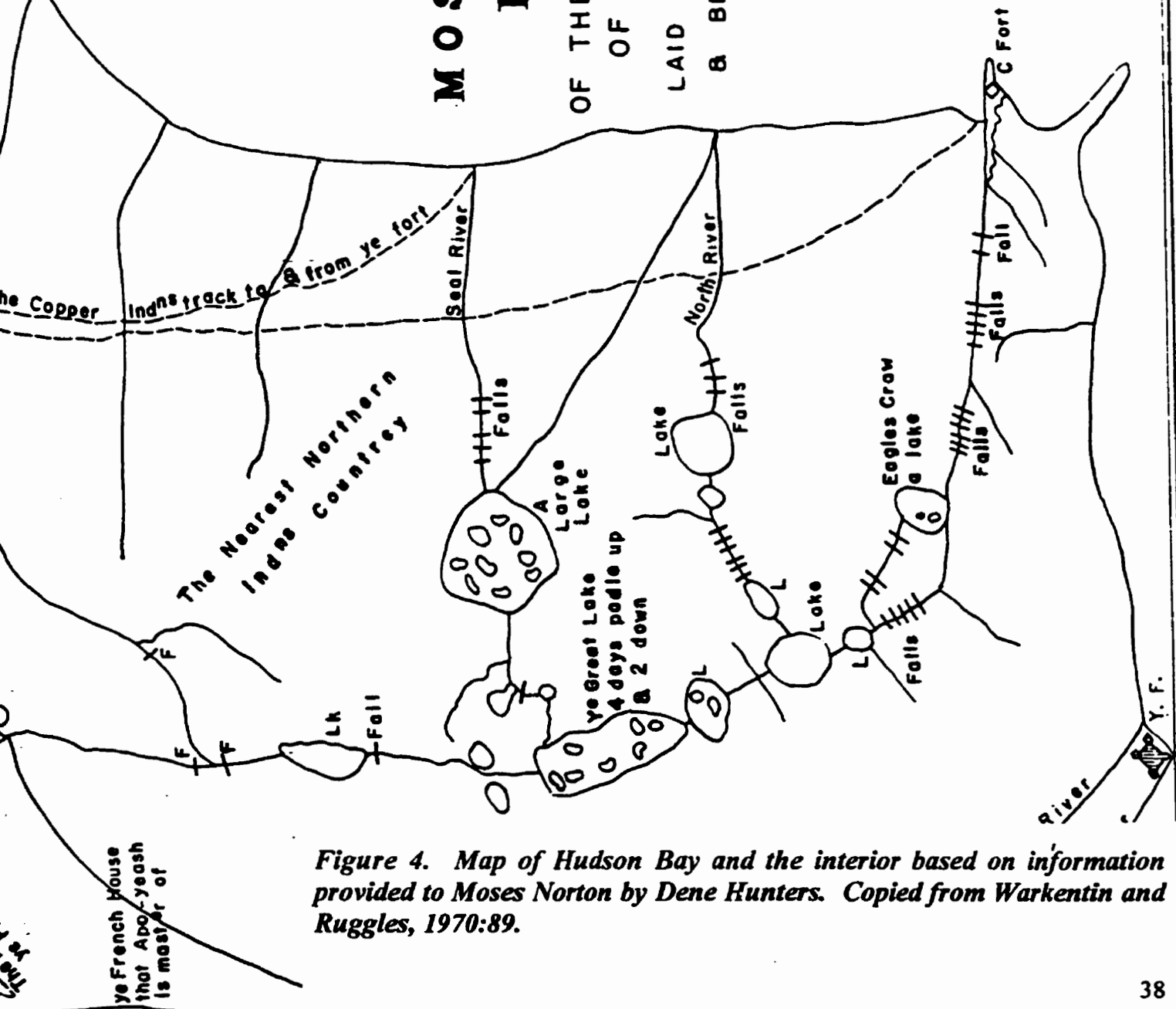


Figure 4. Map of Hudson Bay and the interior based on information provided to Moses Norton by Dene Hunters. Copied from Warkentin and Ruggles, 1970:89.

occupied the Churchill/Knife Rivers areas in the winter, the majority of this cultural group were scattered inland along the waterways, well within the northern boreal forest.

The historical journals also document how the people coped with changes to their ecosystem, and illustrate the ways by which choices among alternative resources were made. From an analysis of the records, the Sayisi Dene emerge as marginal fur producers, but important suppliers of country produce, such as caribou.

Other historical documents such as the journals of early explorers such as Samuel Hearne (1958), James Isham (Rich 1949), Tyrrell (1894a, 1895, 1897, 1911) and later Cockburn (1986) provide critical information regarding the changes in political boundaries over the course of 100 years. Factors such as epidemic disease, new kinship alliances and inland posts were instrumental in dramatic changes in the demography. Neither the archaeological record nor the oral tradition captures the full extent of the adaptations which occurred as a result of these agents.

In addition to the historical documents, government records provide an important body of information regarding the larger society's attitudes towards the "hinterlands" and the First Nation people who inhabited them. As well, changes in government policy after 1870³ accelerated the process of cultural change. The cumulative effects of change dictated by government policy and

³ In 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company relinquished its control over Rupert's Land and turned lands which were included in its Charter (all lands draining into Hudson Bay) over to the Dominion of Canada. This is the same year the "postage stamp" Province of Manitoba became part of Confederation.

decision can be viewed as contributing to cultural, social and economic instability amongst all First Nations people, and most important to this study, the Sayisi Dene.

While I attempted to approach the relocation in an objective manner, the emotion and sadness of the Sayisi Dene is overwhelming. The many hours spent listening to Elders recount their days on the barren grounds and the move to Churchill were full of emotional energy and grief. Many Elders have passed away, their stories only partially told. There is an ethical and moral responsibility to reveal the historical events of the relocation, from the written record and the voices of the people, past and present. What follows is an account of the Sayisi Dene, *the people of the rising sun*.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATURAL SETTING

The traditional land of the Sayisi Dene is called *dechinule*, or “land of little sticks” (S. Ellis 1992). This not only refers to the size, but also the number of trees. The natural setting which the Sayisi Dene inhabited, helped to direct their course of cultural adaptation. A subsistence pattern developed as a result of available resources, and this in turn had considerable effect on the social structure of the Sayisi Dene. Steward (1973) suggested that in areas of low productivity, the subsistence patterns generally influenced the form of social organization, however he cautioned that this should not be viewed as determinism.

The following description characterizes the natural setting of the homeland of the Sayisi Dene. It embodies two major ecozones.

The Tundra/Boreal Forest Zones

The circumpolar regions of Eurasia and North America are composed of a homogeneous band of tundra with associated boreal forest or taiga. In North America, this region is dominated by the Precambrian Shield which arches north-west across northern Canada to Alaska. During the early Holocene, the tree line was further north than its present location (Diaz *et al.* 1989). The land is characterized by a physical landscape that has been sculpted by ice and water. Bedrock outcrops and moss-covered, undulating hills and eskers are interspersed with pockets of stunted taiga vegetation and myriad swamps, lakes and streams. There is a gradual transition from the boreal forest to the tundra zone, where the forest gives way to heaths and mosses. There is little

variation in the vegetation or fauna in the tundra zone as compared to the southern taiga, where wildlife resources are more varied and abundant.

Overview of Geological History and Resources

The quaternary geology for this region reveals a complex pattern of features which are a result of the Late Wisconsin glaciation. According to Dredge *et al.* (1986), glacial progression originated in the western Keewatin, flowing southward over Precambrian bedrock and depositing sand and boulder till. Less than 2% of the bedrock surface is exposed. The results of active ice movement are visible in the many drumlins and esker systems which are found throughout the study area. The esker systems in particular were of great importance not only as conduits for migration of animals and plants, but also as alternative travel routes for ancient people (Petch *et al.*, 1997). Esker systems in the study area cross-cut many river systems, and made four-directional movement a possibility. Esker ridges are windswept and snow-free in winter, with snow accumulations of up to 10 metres on the lee side slopes (Petch, personal observation, 1992).

A gradual warming trend about 16,000 years ago marked the end of the Pleistocene epoch and onset of the Holocene. As the ice slowly retreated, meltwater ponded between the ice front and regional heights of land creating glacial Lake Agassiz. The size and shape of this vast water body varied with the position of the ice front which continued to block the natural drainage to Hudson Bay (Teller and Lee 1983). As the ice continued to retreat new outlets for the flow of the glacial lake were freed. The incremental decrease in the height of glacial Lake Agassiz resulted in a series of beach ridges, the most prominent being the Campbell Beach Ridge which marked the former western

shoreline in southwestern Manitoba. In northwestern Manitoba, Lake Agassiz was a prominent feature around 8800 B.P., and slowly migrated eastward as deglaciation proceeded. According to Groom (*Petch et al.*, 1997), the North Seal River marked the northern limit of Lake Agassiz. The land to the north of the North Seal River was also covered with smaller glacial lakes which gradually drained, exposing a new landscape. Deglaciation of the study area was probably complete by 7000 B.P., with forest colonization occurring shortly after. An influx of animals into the study area followed close behind.

Physiography

The study area is within the West-central Plains physiographic unit which is characterized by glacial deposits of patterned drift (Dredge *et al.* 1986). Drumlins (elongated hills of glacial drift), moraines (accumulated deposits of earth and rock), and eskers (long, narrow ridges of sand and gravel deposited by superglacial, englacial or subglacial streams) provide relief. Hawk Hill and the Grey Hills reach elevations over 400 metres above sea level (masl), but these, as many of the other elevations, rise steadily rather than dramatically. The large lakes drain to the east to Hudson Bay through six major river systems: Seal, Caribou, Thlewiaza, Tha-anne, McConnell, and Maguse (Figure 5). Stream drainage is immature and many areas drain through muskeg. Four kinds of soil dominate the landscape: Dystric Brunisols, Turbic Cryosols, Organic Cryosols and Mesisols (Canada Soil Inventory 1989). Most of the study area lies within the region of continuous permafrost, although exposed, eskers are usually free of permafrost (Dredge 1992).

Climate

The tundra portion of the study area is under a climate that is generally

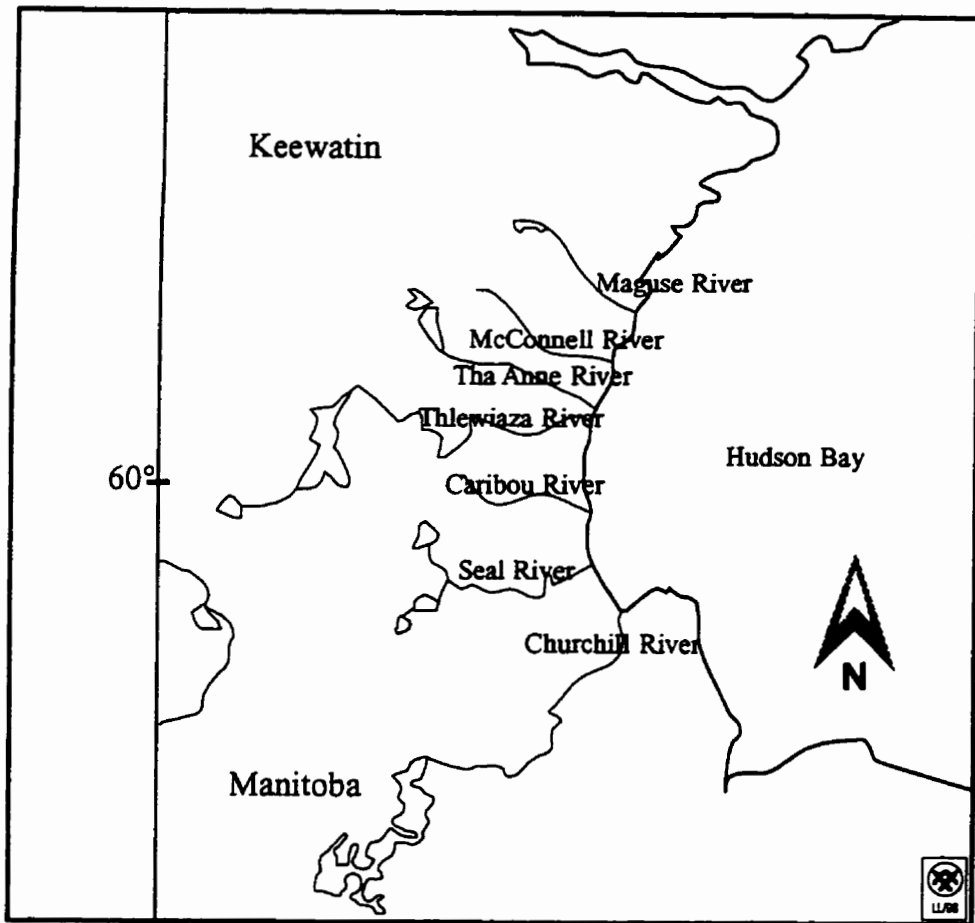


Figure 5. Major rivers which drain into Hudson Bay through the traditional lands of the Sayisi Dene

influenced by marine winds from the Arctic Ocean and Hudson Bay. Long, cold winters and short temperate summers occur throughout the region, with a rapid transition from winter to summer. Frost has been recorded in all months. Mean annually daily temperature is -4.9°C , while summer temperatures may average 15°C . Precipitation is evenly divided between rain and snow, about 254mm in total.

The northwestern transitional forest region is within the Boreal (Subarctic) Climatic Zone. Temperature variation is extreme with January average daily minimum plummeting to -33.4°C in January and rising to $+20.4^{\circ}\text{C}$ in July (Environment Canada 1992). There are few frost-free periods in the summer and the growing season is short. Precipitation averages about 457mm annually.

Floral Resources

The research area is located within the northwestern transition region of the boreal forest, and the tundra (Figure 6). The former is a zone of open subarctic woodland. Timber resources in the northwestern transition region are not considered to be merchantable due to their small size and long regrowth periods. Unfavorable climate, thin soils and frequent fires are identified by Rowe (1972) as factors contributing to the stunted growth. Forest fires due to lightening strikes, at least historically, seem to be the most damaging ecological factor in loss of habitat (Johnson and Rowe 1975). However, forest fire can be viewed as beneficial, especially in the boreal forest where disturbance is needed for regrowth (E. Punter, personal communication, 1998). Furthermore, while fire destroys habitat for some species, it creates habitat for others (Chandler *et al.* 1983).

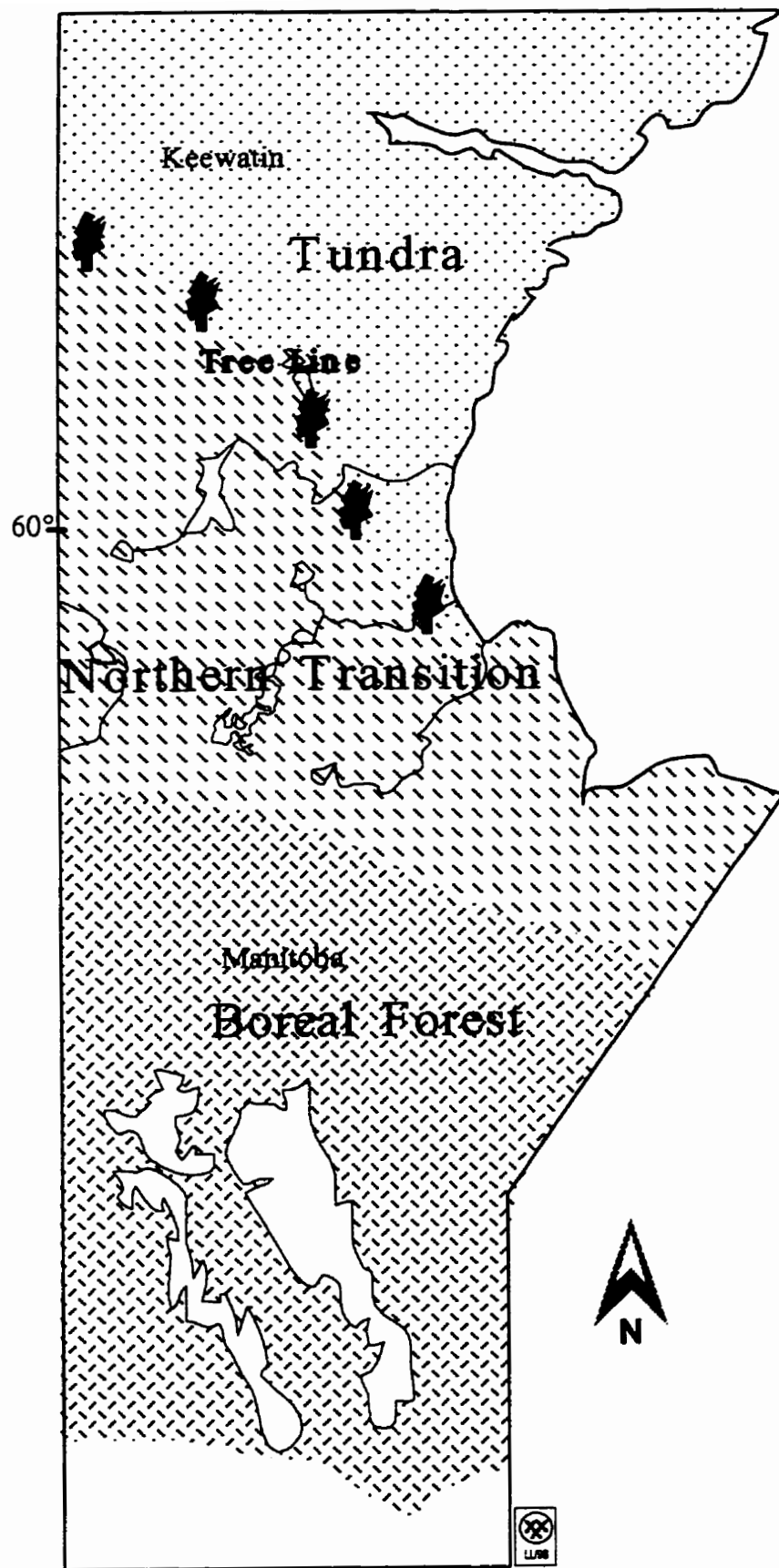


Figure 6. Vegetative zones of the traditional land of the Sayisi Dene.

Palynological and paleoclimatic studies conducted at Ennadai Lake also indicated that since the beginning of the Holocene, several advances and recessions in the tree-line had occurred as a result of climatic fluctuation. Forest fires were also noted as a factor in periodic habitat destruction for some wildlife species during the early Holocene (Nichols 1975).

In the northwestern transition region, the most abundant tree is black spruce (*Picea mariana* (Mill.) BSP.). White spruce (*Picea glauca* (Moench) Voss) are also fairly common. Other species include white birch (*Betula papyrifera* Marsh) and tamarack (*Larix laricina* (Du Roi) Koch). Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana* Lamb.) is found only in the southern extremities. Trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides* Michx.) and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera* L.) also occur, but in stunted form. Very little understory occurs, but a variety of woody and herbaceous plants occur amongst the lichen (*Cladina* spp) ground cover. *Empetrum nigrum* (crowberry), *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* (mountain cranberry), *Vaccinium uliginosum* (bog bilberry), *Ledum groenlandicum* (Labrador tea) and *Vaccinium myrtilloides* (velvet-leaf blueberry) as well as *Geocaulon lividum* (northern comandra), *Epilobium angustifolium* (fireweed) and *Corydalis sempervirens* (pink corydalis) are regularly noted (Petch *et al.* 1997). The tundra is almost devoid of trees. Dwarf birch (*Betula glandulosa*) and willow (*Salix* spp.) are occasionally found in sheltered pockets. Vegetation consists mostly of mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.) and lichen (*Cladina* spp.) ground cover. Woody plants such as Labrador tea and blueberry are occasionally encountered in sheltered wet areas. *Rubus chamaemorus* L (cloudberry) are prolific in moist, mossy areas (Johnson 1987).

Floral resources were valuable to the Sayisi Dene for a variety of reasons,

including medicinal, food, shelter and firewood purposes (Walker 1984).

Faunal Resources

Animal populations reflect the carrying capacity of the land. In the more southerly portion of the northwestern transition region, there is more variety and a larger population of animals in general.

At least 35 species of birds are found in the southern part of the research area (Petch *et al.* 1997). Important eating birds include the ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), spruce grouse (*Dendragapus canadensis*), ptarmigan (*Lagopus* spp.), and sharp-tailed grouse (*Typanuchus phasianellus*). Historically, Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*), a variety of waterfowl, gulls (*Larus* spp.) and the arctic tern (*Sterna hirundo*) eggs were gathered. Raptors include the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), hawk (*Buteo* spp.), boreal owl (*Aegolius funereus*), and bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). The most popular scavenger is the common raven (*Corvus corax*), an important bird in Dene legend. A variety of song and other birds are also present.

In the tundra region, the species of birds which are good for humans to eat include the willow ptarmigan, waterfowl, including ducks and geese, and gulls. Gulls and terns' eggs can also be harvested (Jones, personal communication, 1992). The snowy owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*), rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) and parasitic jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) are the main raptors.

Fish species include northern pike (*Esox lucius*), arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*), lake whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*), lake trout (*Salvelinus*

namaycush), longnose sucker (*Catostomus catostomus*), cisco (*Coregonus ariedii*), and Burbot (*Lota lota*). Walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*) and white sucker (*Catostomus commersoni*), found in some waters of the northwestern transitional forest zone, are near the northern limit of these species' ranges, and are not found in tundra waters.

Moose (*Alces alces*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), and wolf (*Canis lupus*) are a regular occurrence in the boreal forest zone. Smaller mammals such as red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), American marten (*Martes americana*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), fisher (*Martes pennanti*), least weasel (*Mustela rivalis*), ermine (*Mustela erminea*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), lynx (*Lynx lynx*), snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*), porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), mink (*Mustela vison*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), muskrat (*Ondrata zibethicus*), and river otter (*Lutre canadensis*) are present.

In the tundra, voles (*Phenacomys* spp), lemmings (*Dicrostonyx hudsonicus* and *Lemmus trimucronatus*), least weasel, ground squirrel (*Spermophilus undulatus*), arctic fox (*Alopex lagopus*) and wolf are present. Large mammals include barren-ground grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), and muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*). Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*) are the most plentiful large mammals within both zones of the study area.

The importance of caribou to the Sayisi Dene cannot be overstated. In the past, the caribou supplied all the necessary requirements for survival. As a food source, it was a mainstay for healthy living. Clothing, tents and utility articles were fashioned out of the hides and a variety of tools were manufactured from various skeletal remains. Ecological adaptation to the

habits and habitat of the caribou was therefore critical to the continuing existence of the Sayisi Dene.

Caribou Behavior and Movement

As Spiess has stated, understanding caribou behavior is a mandatory prerequisite to "...theorizing about caribou-dependent adaptations" (Spiess 1979:245).

Harper (1955), Banfield (1954,1961), and Kelsall (1968, 1972) conducted the first detailed studies of the various caribou populations. This was followed by studies of the Qaminurjak population by G. Parker (1972), Miller (1976), Miller (1972) and Dauphiné (1976). This particular block of research provided valuable information regarding caribou movement and demography.

Banfield (1961) recognized nine modern subspecies of caribou, with *Rangifer tarandus tarandus* and *Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus* representing the main tundra subspecies in Eurasia and North America respectively. In addition, he identified four extinct subspecies. *Rangifer tarandus muscatensis*, (17,000 B.P.) was considered to be ancestral to *R. t. groenlandicus*. The transition from the extinct to extant subspecies may have occurred at the advent of the Holocene and retreat of glacial ice.

In North America there are four barren ground caribou populations: Bluenose, Bathurst, Beverly and Qaminurjak. The Qaminurjak population in turn is comprised of three major herds, the Churchill or eastern, the Duck Lake or central, and the Brochet or western (Figure 7). These in turn, are further reduced to smaller subherds depending on the time of the year.

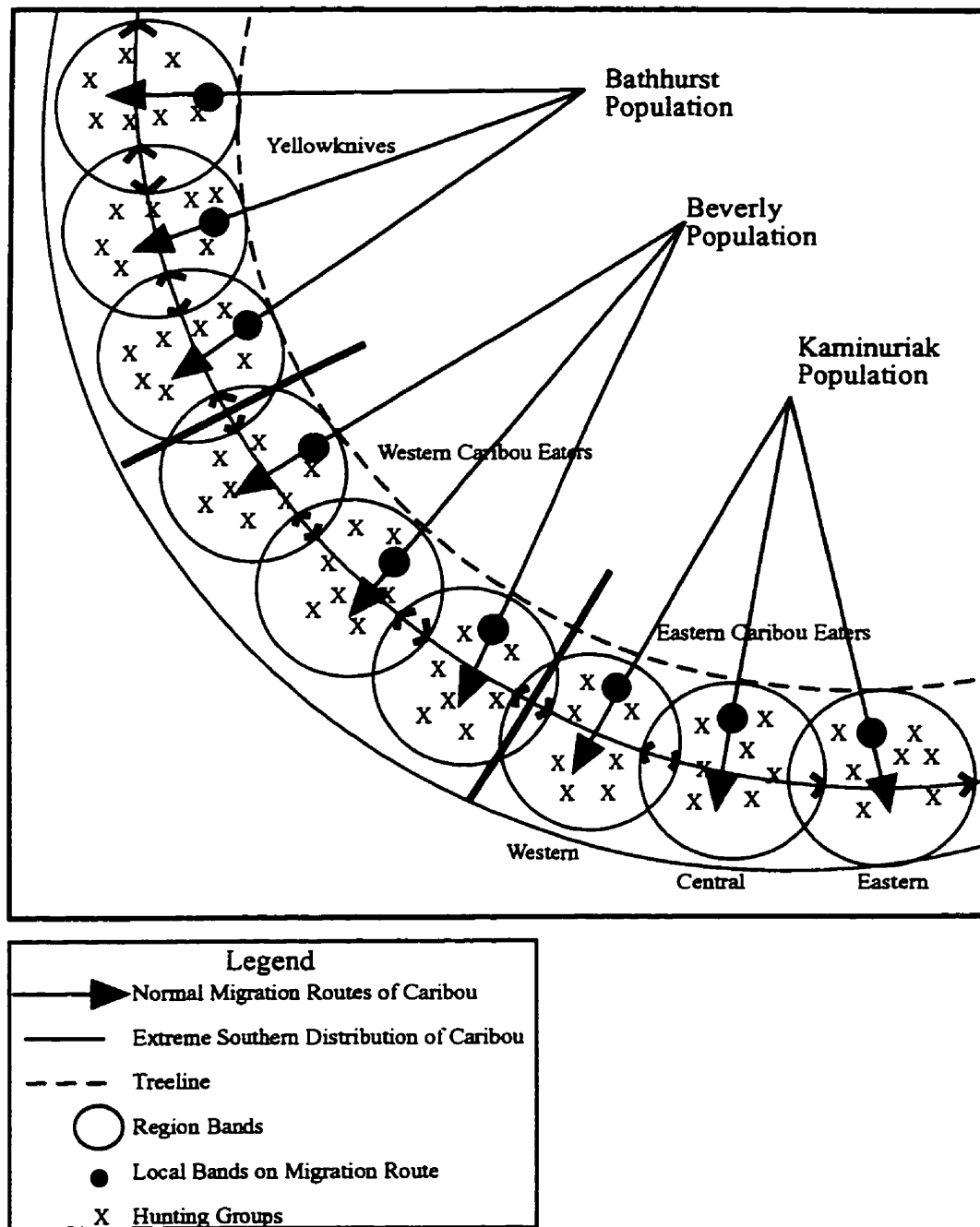


Figure 7. Barren Ground Caribou populations across the Sub-Arctic and Arctic regions of Canada (J. Smith, 1978).

The general seasonal cycle of the Qaminurjak population is characterized by migratory movement between the tundra in summer and taiga in winter. Migration of cows and yearlings to the calving grounds usually begins in April, with the individual herds merging into larger herds as they reach Qaminurjak Lake area. The adult males can be found at the southern perimeters of the calving area. Once calving is complete the nursery bands join together, possibly as a socialization activity. The non-calving segment, including males and females of various ages congregate and by early July are dispersed across a wide territory. A brief congregation and further dispersal occurs with some periodic movement towards the south, but it is not until October or November, after the rut, that the migration to the forest occurs in earnest. At that time the herds disperse and pass most of the winter within the shelter of the forest. In the spring there is once more a general staging at the edge of the forest until the environmental conditions appear to be right for the northward summer migration (G. Parker 1971, 1972).

While caribou movement is generally dependable, there are several important natural variables which are difficult to control and which may influence the location and size of herds: 1) Forest fires caused by lightning strikes destroy the rich carpets of lichen (*Cladina* spp), a major food of the caribou. These slow-growing plants take at least 25 years to develop into good forage (Symington 1965).

Kelsall (1961) identified large tracts of fire-burned taiga which not only resulted in lost wintering area, but also acted as a barrier for movement of caribou to an unburned area (see also Chandler *et al*, 1983); 2) Snow may be an inhibiting factor in both food access and herd mobility. Pruitt (1959)

pointed out that snow depth and hardness were important factors in the concentration of females and juvenile caribou in particular. 3) Most animals have a natural cycle of population increase and sudden decrease. Caribou may be no different. A variety of parasites and insects are known to invade the caribou seasonally. In spite of listed variables, and their use of regular, conservative migration routes, caribou have been known to strike off on an alternate course for no apparent reason.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE PEOPLE

The Sayisi Dene are members of the Chipewyan subgroup of the Northern Athapaskan linguistic family (Birket-Smith 1930). They are further distinguished from other Chipewyan-speakers by the term Edthen-eldeli-Dene, or “Caribou-Eaters” (Figure 8). Historically, the Sayisi Dene occupied the eastern portions of the tundra/transition zone, a vast area which extended far north of the present Manitoba/N.W.T. border (Figure 9).

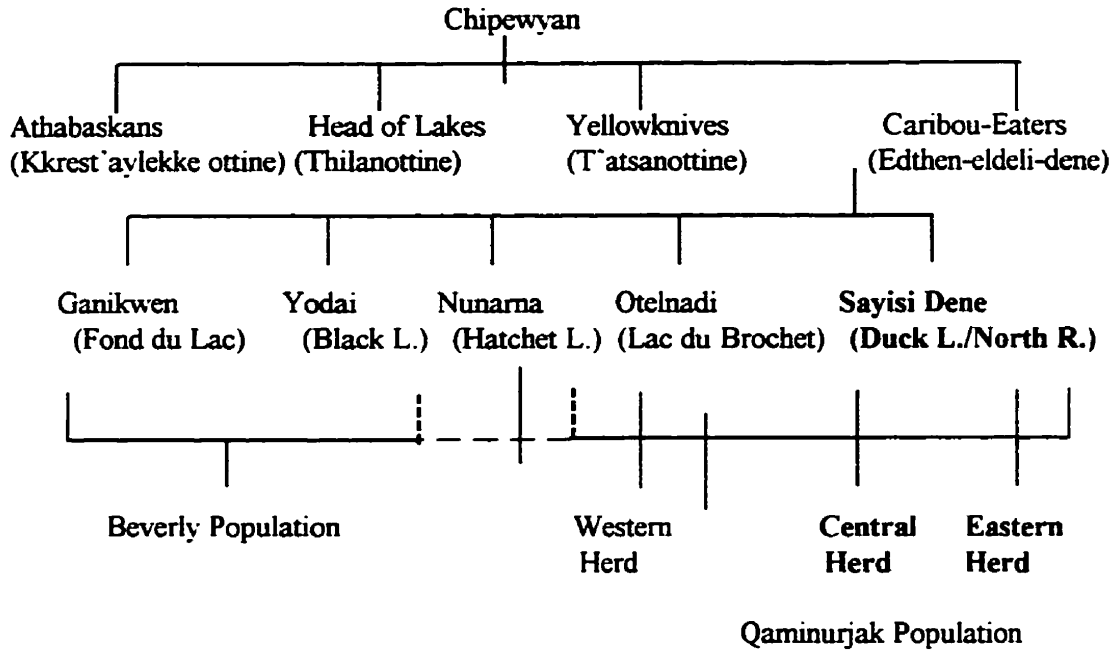


Figure 8: Sayisi Dene genealogy. During ethnographic research, two discrete Sayisi Dene bands were revealed in historic association with discrete herds. In this schematic diagram, the relationship between the Central Qaminurjak herd and the Duck Lake Sayisi Dene, and the Eastern Qaminurjak and North River Sayisi Dene is seen (Petch 1992c).

Historically, their identity was determined by other groups of people. They were referred to by the Cree, for example, as *Chipewyan*, and, *Northern or*

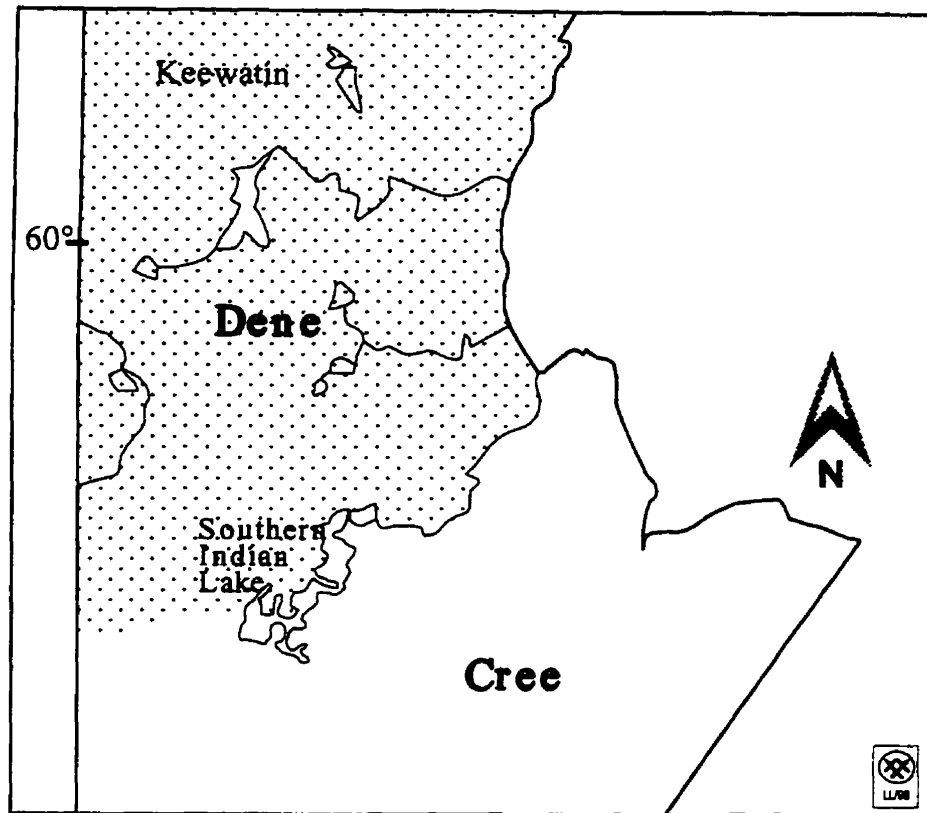


Figure 9. The Sayisi Dene traditional lands encompassed a vast area which stretched from the Churchill River far north beyond Dubawnt Lake, NWT.

Northwards Indians by the early European traders and explorers (Kenney 1932). Anthropologists have referred to the Dene as *Edthen-oedeli-Dene* or *Caribou-eaters* (Gillespie 1976, Helm 1981, Smith 1976). This term was believed to have been applied by other Lake Athabaskan groups to the Eastern Dene (Cooper and Penard 1973). The Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake belong to the *Sayisi Dene First Nation Band*.

At Treaty they were designated as the *Fort Churchill Chipewyan Band*. This name is considered derogatory by the Sayisi Dene because it represents an identity based on European and Cree description (J. Clipping, personal communication, 1992). The name was changed several years ago in order to demonstrate the group's ethnic identity⁴. Heber (1989) in his study of Chipewyan people in northern Saskatchewan described the use of traditional names as a means to define self and effect solidarity as a nation-group. The name change by the Sayisi Dene was considered as a move by the people to regain and emphasize their ethnic identity.

The location of the Sayisi Dene at the eastern edge of a vast expanse of tundra, is not accidental. The archaeological record suggests that around 600 B.C. bands of Taltheilei hunters⁵ (Harp 1961, Irving 1968, MacNeish 1951, and Noble 1971), the ancestors of the Dene entered the study area from the west in pursuit of barren ground caribou (*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*). The oral tradition of the Sayisi Dene tells of a time when the people hunted bison,

⁴ The name Sayisi Dene will be used throughout the dissertation. However, the identity given by the various authors cited will be marked by brackets and will follow the name Sayisi Dene

⁵ The Taltheilei cultural tradition was named after its type site at Taltheilei Narrows at the northeast end of Great Slave Lake (MacNeish 1951). The tradition is considered to represent the immediate ancestors of the Chipewyan people.

gradually moving north and east (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1998)⁶.

As the people became more familiar with the unexplored country, they continued to press further to the north and east, seasonally isolating themselves from their kin to the west. Paleoeskimo occupation along the coastal regions does not appear to have had any influence on Taltheilei culture. No archaeological evidence of trade between the two groups has been located to date. The proto-Cree to the south appear to have kept the Sayisi Dene restricted to an area north of the Churchill River, and as a result little social contact with this cultural group seems to have occurred (Dickson 1983). The Sayisi Dene may have developed in relative isolation of other cultural groups, and this possibly served to maintain an ancient hunting subsistence economy.

Other ethnohistorical and oral sources within the community of Tadoule Lake indicate that the Dene people identified themselves by their geographical location. The people of Tadoule Lake were Sayisi Dene, or *people of the eastern sun* (Code 1992). Interestingly, they were also referred to by other Dene as *The ye ottine* or *dwellers at the Stone Fort* [Prince of Wales' Fort at Churchill] (J. Smith 1981b:271). This term may apply to the North River⁷ Sayisi Dene, who were most likely the descendants of *The ye ottine*, or Homeguard Chipewyan. Interestingly, a river which drains into Hawk Hill Lake, NWT, is called *The tinne*, which means *water running over rocks* (E.

⁶ E. Bussidor related a story told to him by Betsy Anderson. Many years ago the people hunted bison. One day they killed a white calf, and ever since then the Dene have had bad luck (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1998).

⁷ The term North River refers to both the geographic settlement and the area of the North and South Knife Rivers which merge near the estuary region to form the North River. See map.

Bussidor, personal communication 1998). The Sayisi Dene at Tadoule Lake stated that the people who traditionally used the North Knife/Churchill region as part of their annual round were referred to as *Nu Nah Day Nah Day*, or people on the outskirts, while those far to the west were called *Nas Ne Yu* and were considered to be Dogrib (M. Code, personal communication, 1994).

The various names given by the people to describe themselves, as indicated above, is important because it illustrates a sense of regionalization based on physical location, and, more importantly, identifies traditional homeland. This also provides some important clues to understanding the archaeological record in terms of similarities and variations in the tool assemblage and the locations of regional bands of people in relation to the various caribou herds and sub-herds.

A variety of terms have been used to describe the size of the Chipewyan hunting group (see J. Smith 1978). Helm's (1968) use of the "regional band" has been questioned because it connotes a sense of territoriality. However, while bands did not have a clearly delineated territory due to ecological factors beyond their control, the term "regional band" loosely defines the range of human mobility based on specific caribou populations and may reflect the various names people used to describe themselves based on their location. Gordon suggested, each regional band was most likely composed of smaller band units, with the regional band size "...depending upon herd size, a leader's organizational ability, kin group alignment and demography" (Gordon 1975:85).

The homeland of the Sayisi Dene is located in the tundra/northwestern

transitional forest zone which straddles Manitoba and the Keewatin District of the Northwest Territories. This is a corner of the country which has not received a great deal of attention. Recent caribou population studies by, for example, Banfield (1954), Harper (1955), Kelsall (1955), D. Miller (1976), F. Miller (1972, 1987, 1988), have formed the largest body of biological data. Studies such as these reflect the post-war emphasis on the collection of scientific and empirical information.

While an impressive body of ethnographic research on the *Chipewyan* people has appeared over the past 25 years (Bone 1973, Brandson 1981, Clark 1977, Gillespie 1975,1976, Honigmann 1968, Irimoto 1981, Jarvenpa 1975, Koolage 1970, Krech 1978,1980, Ostwelt 1966, Raby 1973, Sharp 1977,1988, D. Smith 1976, J. Smith 1975, Van Stone 1974, and Yerbury 1986) data related to the Sayisi Dene is minimal. This may, in part, be due to the cultural evaluation of Kaj Birket-Smith (1930), who concluded that the Dene (*Chipewyan*) in and around Churchill were deculturated⁸. His study area was restricted to a small group the Dene living in Churchill, and it did not include the majority of the cultural group who were living in the traditional lands. Because of this research, the Dene continued to be considered deculturated and no further research occurred until the mid-1960s. As a result, we do not have a clear picture of the manner of how or what kinds of cultural changes voluntarily occurred amongst the Dene. For example, with the Ahiarmiut settling in around Ennadai Lake during the beginning of the 20th century, increased contact between the two groups led to some cultural homogeneity and kinship

8

Vanstone (1965) described the process of deculturation as one where "...the abandoned aboriginal culture is not replaced by white equivalent"(Vanstone 1965:110). The is a Eurocentric bias which invokes a negative response.

alliances as the Dene taught the Ahiammiut caribou-hunting skills (A. Denecheze, personal communication, 1998).

Koolage (1970) was the first anthropologist to conduct “post-Birkett-Smith”, anthropological research with the Sayisi Dene. Ten years after they were relocated to Churchill, he examined cultural change amongst the Sayisi Dene. He summarized, “..anthropologists dealing with the Chipewyan since 1930 have characterized them as being deculturated, disorganized and disintegrated...”(Koolage 1970:19). The studies “...fail[ed] to elaborate the many ways in which the Chipewyan are adapting to changing socio-cultural conditions in northern Canada” (Koolage 1970:45-46). Heber added to this the fact that negative ethnological descriptions were misleading and failed to account for identity change (Heber 1989: 29). Unfortunately little data was available with which to measure the degree of change within the Sayisi Dene community at Churchill. Koolage further suggested that changes amongst the Chipewyan were brought about by numerous social and economic factors which were beyond their control. He concluded that by the mid 1960s the Sayisi Dene were adapting in a “marginal manner to the larger society” (Koolage 1970:145). What were described as white social norms were rejected by the Sayisi Dene and replaced with what was viewed by whites as a maladaptive structure. Studies conducted by Bone 1969, Dickman 1971, Lal 1969a, and Hlady 1960, in addition to Koolage’s research (1970, 1975, 1976), did not have the opportunity to examine and assess Sayisi Dene cultural and social adaptation in their natural element - the barren grounds. All research studies were conducted in Churchill at a time when the Dene were attempting to adapt to change which resulted from the relocation process. This appears to have been a time of struggle for survival, when those elements which

usually define a cultural group were discarded in an attempt to adapt to a foreign situation. The hand game, for example, was only occasionally played by the men during the Churchill years, whereas it had previously been a regular pastime.

The Sayisi Dene relocated to Tadoule Lake in 1973. Surprisingly, no anthropological studies occurred during this time of readjustment. It appears that the people were once again left on their own to cope the best they could. For the old people, the move was a return to their homeland. For the children who had grown up in Churchill, it was a culture shock. *"We had electric guitars, but no electricity"* (A. Thorassie, personal communication 1992).

Pre-European-Contact Background

The archaeological record suggests that human habitation in the northern coniferous forest transition/tundra zone occurred as early as 7000 B.C. At this time, people belonging to a tradition that archaeologists refer to as Northern Plano, or Agate Basin (Wright 1976) emerged, probably out of the central plains region of North America. The large amount of caribou bone excavated from sites such as Grant Lake (KkLn-2) suggests that at this early stage of occupation, caribou were preferred over other large mammals. A height of land between glacial lakes McConnell (Criag 1965) and Agassiz (Teller and Clayton 1983) may have provided the passage way into a new and rich habitat.

Wright (1996) continues to believe that the Northern Plano tradition evolved into the Shield Archaic tradition sometime around 4000 B.C., but there is only minimal evidence to support this hypothesis. Few transitional tools have been recovered, but similarities in adzes found in the Keewatin District and around

Caribou Lake, Manitoba suggest that there are indications of movement between the two regions. However, it should be remembered that independent invention given a similar state of variables may be responsible for similarities in the tool assemblage. The physical landscape 6000 years ago was much different than that of today and it may have actually been easier to move across the vast area than present conditions allow. For example, according to research conducted by Manitoba Energy and Mines, post-glacial Lake Agassiz Manitoba consisted of a large south-central plain in which the present Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba and Winnipegosis were of much different configurations than they are today (Matile *et al.* 1996).

Artifactual objects which can be identified as Shield Archaic have a wider distribution across the northern coniferous forest transition/tundra zone, and occur more frequently. According to Gordon (1976) the centre of Shield Archaic development may occur on the Dubawnt River.

Changing climatic conditions responsible for shifts in the distribution of vegetation and animals ultimately caused groups of people who used these resources to search out new and more productive areas. The archaeological record indicates that around 1500 B.C. a cooling trend may have been responsible for a shift in cultural occupation. Within the study area, the Shield Archaic tradition was replaced by that of Pre-Dorset. The new people have been classified as Paleo-Eskimo, suggesting a distinct genetic and linguistic group. Pre-Dorset material culture has been recovered from the coastal regions of the high arctic and Hudson Bay, and inland throughout a good portion of the barrenlands. Several sites in the interior of Manitoba give evidence that Pre-Dorset people were also caribou hunters, although their tool

assemblage was much different than that of the previous Northern Plano and Shield Archaic. Pre-Dorset people appear to have been maritime in origin, adapting to an interior subsistence, if only seasonally.

Around 700 B.C. a general migration of a new cultural group from the west occurred. The Taltheilei tradition, first identified by MacNeish (1951), appears to have spread across the northern tundra/transition zone at a rapid pace. Small bands of hunters most likely pursuing caribou, quickly adapted to the seasonal movement of specific herds, a strategy which persisted until the 20th century.

Gordon identified four distinct phases of Taltheilei tradition based on his research of site location in relation to the Beverly caribou herd: earliest, early, middle and late.

The Earliest Phase has been carbon-dated at 2575 B.P., and site distribution suggests that even at this early stage of development, the ancestral Dene were practicing a form of herd following. This phase appears to be absent in northern Manitoba and it may be due to the fact that the cultural group had not yet reached the eastern boundary of its historical territory.

Based on Nash's (1975) and Petch's (1997,1998) field work, the Taltheilei tradition appears to have entered northern Manitoba and the Southern Keewatin during the late Early Phase (ca. 700 B.C.). The location of these early sites are noted to be near the mouths of rivers, suggesting that seasonal fishing may have occurred. Interestingly, Petch (1997) recovered projectile points and semi-lunar knives on the North Seal River (EgLw-18), similar to

those found by Nash (1975) at Mountain Lake. Research conducted by Petch *et al.* in 1996 along the Robertson Esker in northern Manitoba suggests that this esker may have played an important role in the movement of people from the tundra to forest zone during the late Early to Middle Taltheilei Phases.

By A.D. 100, the Middle Phase of the Taltheilei tradition appears to have established itself across the southern Keewatin and northern Manitoba. As Gordon (1996:85) proposes, this may have been due to the favorable climatic conditions which this region enjoyed.

The Late Taltheilei Phase which evolved around A.D. 600 indicates a continued growth in population and employment of hunting strategy along caribou migration routes. During this phase, the bow and arrow were used more regularly. Tools in general, appear to poorly made. It is difficult to know for certain why this occurred, but the following reasons may be valid: a change in technology may have caused a short-term transition from one tool type to another; interaction with people to the north and south may have contributed to changing tools; if groups of people were attempting to follow the caribou herds at a more regular pace, there may not have been time to prepare tools with the same careful techniques; Function may have taken precedence over form.

J. Clipping remembered that during the late 1940s he speared his first caribou from a canoe at Little Duck Lake. The spear point was made of cut metal (J. Clipping, personal communication, 1992). According to Clipping, this form of hunting was common as it was so easy to kill caribou as they swam across a body of water.

Fleshers and beamers manufactured of caribou long bones were used to prepare the caribou hides for clothing. S. Clipping still used bone tools to complete preparation of the skins that her husband brought home (V. Petch, personal observation, 1992). These types of tools are often not recovered from archaeological sites because if they have not been subject to decay, the rodents and other small mammals have destroyed them.

The archaeological record provides only a portion of the material culture, but evidence that does exist indicates that caribou hunting formed a major part of Dene subsistence economy.

As well, the location of pre-European-contact sites and late historical Dene fall hunting sites occurred in many of the same locations - campsites nearby caribou travel routes, lookout sites (Chal'l Dah) on esker ridges overlooking caribou travel routes and processing sites at the base of eskers.

Historical Background

Early historical accounts of the Dene (Chipewyan) from the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company tell of Henry Kelsey, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company stationed at York Factory, who in 1689, traveled along the west coast of Hudson Bay with a *Chipewyan boy*, in an attempt to entice the Dene (*Northern Indians*) to trade. Isham, in 1746, Graham (Williams 1969) and, more importantly, Hearne (Glover 1958) between 1769 and 1772, provided valuable ethnographical information about the Dene (Chipewyan) and their lands. Hearne described the vast tract of land used by the Dene, which extended from the barren grounds to the transitional forest zone. It appears from entries in the Churchill journals of the Hudson's Bay Company,

that during the historical period the English presence at Churchill had very little effect on the economic well-being of the Dene. In fact, there appears to have been a general complaint amongst the traders that the Dene could not be brought into the fur trade because the caribou hunt constantly interfered with trapping.

While European trade goods such as copper and metal tools and implements were a novel and valuable addition to the Dene, many believe that the major social impact came with the introduction of the gun⁹. The Cree trading at York Factory were the first group of First Nations people in this area to have access to the European musket. This acquisition shifted the balance of power, and placed the Cree at an advantage over the Dene. The ethnic boundary established by the natural barrier of the Churchill River temporarily shifted to the northwest. With the construction of Fort Churchill in 1717, and the acquisition of guns by the Dene, the boundary shifted back to the Churchill River, where it remained throughout the historic period. Today, the Dene still look at the Churchill River as the boundary between themselves and the Cree (Figure 9). The archaeological record supports the oral tradition that this has been a long-standing ethnic boundary.

In 1910, the Saysi Dene signed an Adhesion to Treaty 5 with the Dominion of Canada, in which they were promised access to hunting, fishing and trapping throughout their traditional lands. Interestingly, the present northern Manitoba boundary was not established until the following year. This political border

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However, the musket was often inefficient as it could only fire one shot at a time, and was inaccurate when compared to the bow and arrow. Additionally, the extremely cold winters often froze the lock mechanism, rendering the gun useless.

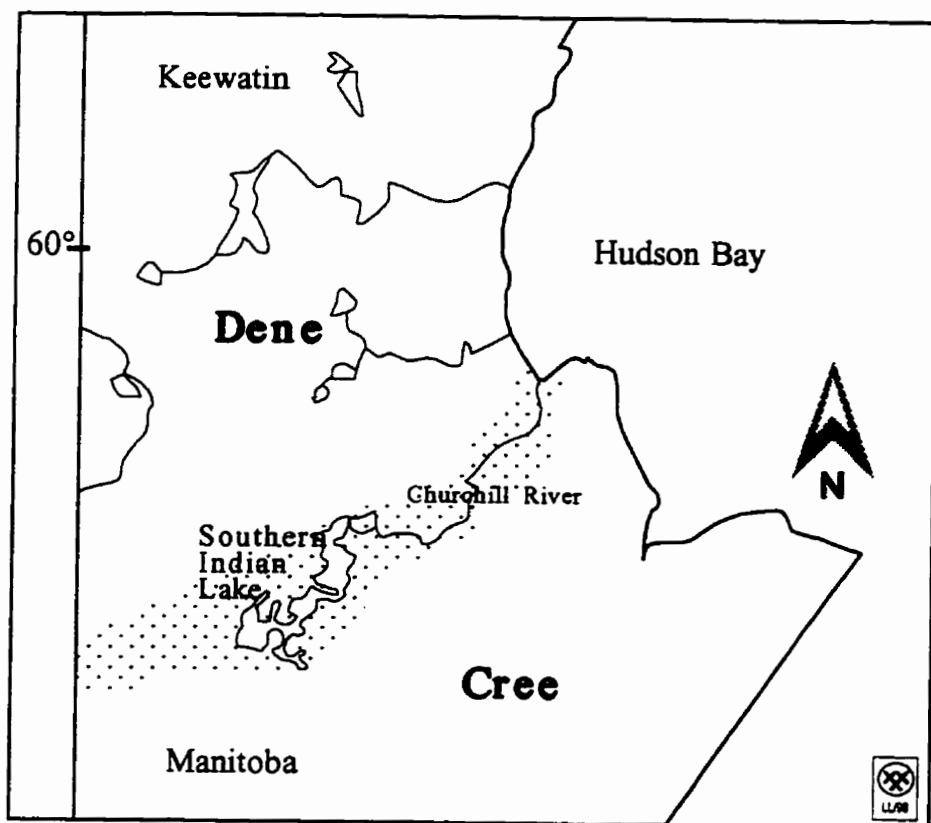


Figure 10. The boundary between the Sayisi Dene and Cree was temporarily shifted north of the Churchill River during the early years of the fur trade.

technically divided their traditional lands in two, although as far as the people were concerned, a border did not exist or effect them because Treaty promised that they could carry on as before. Betsy Anderson was a young child at the time of Treaty. She recalled,

The land was not talked about. The way we understood that piece of paper [Treaty], the land was not part of the deal. If we had been told that we were signing away our land for the amount of five dollars a person, there was no way our people would have agreed (Bussidor and Reinart 1997).

During the early decades of the twentieth century, Euro-Canadian traders and trappers spread out through the area which was Dene traditional lands. A Hudson's Bay Company trade outpost, Fort Hall, was briefly in existence between 1910 and 1911(A74/20 fo. 16; A74/21 fo. 12) at Thanout Lake near Kasmere Lake. Competition from Revillon Freres at Windy River Post near Nueltin Lake, threatened much of this inland trade until 1936, when the Hudson's Bay Company bought out Revillon Freres. Between 1936 and 1939, Frederick Schweder managed the Windy River (Nueltin Lake)Post for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBCA Post History), and then as a free trader until 1946 when he retired (Robert Schweder, personal communication, 1996; Charlie Schweder personal journal 1946) (Figure 10). His son, Charlie, continued the small operation until 1948 (Charlie Schweder personal journal 1948).

The people on the barren grounds appear to have been left alone with minimal contact or interaction with the European community until the early 1950s, but epidemics of influenza, measles and other highly infectious diseases regularly swept across the land, greatly disrupting social structure and subsistence patterns. Dene and Inuit alike were affected. Not only were the people

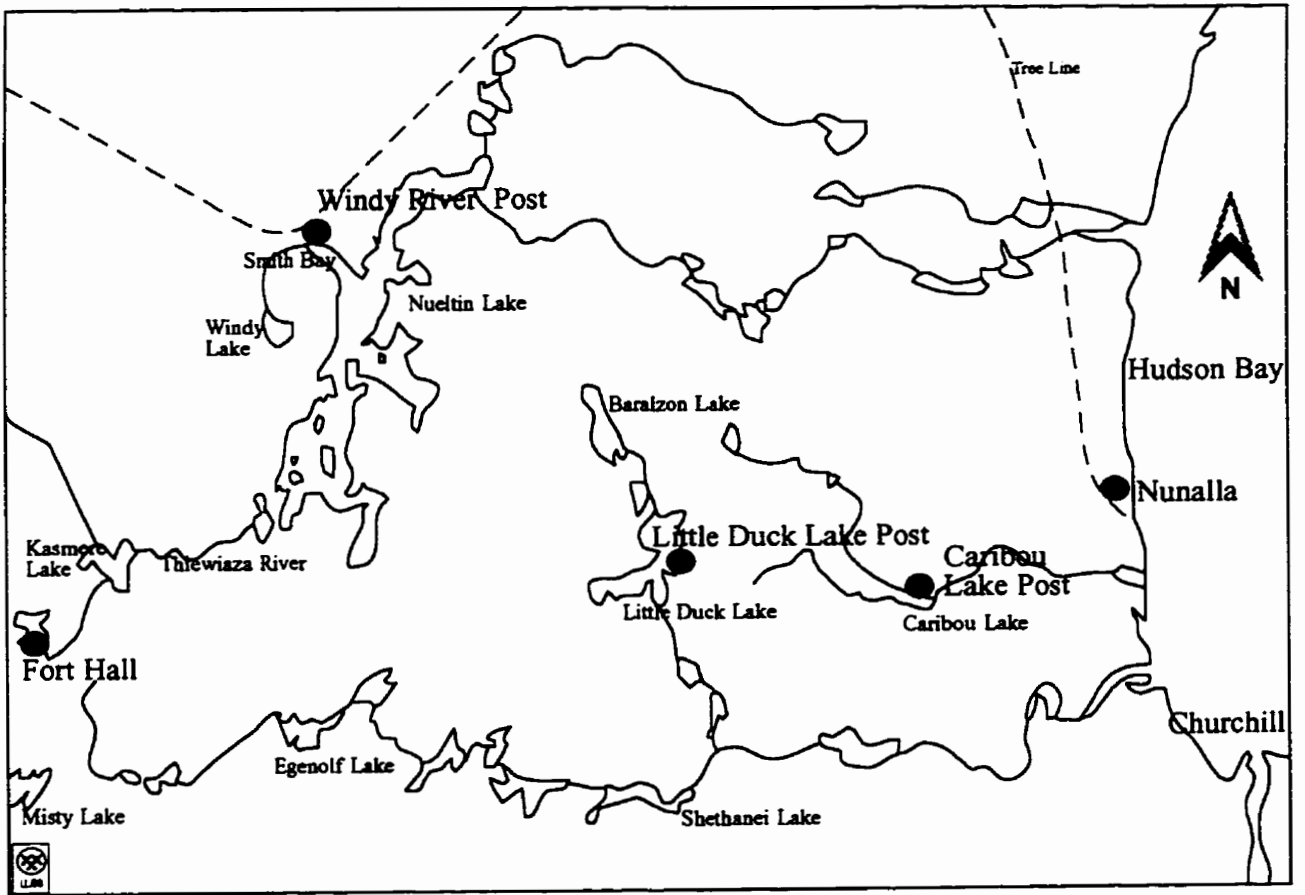


Figure 11. Trade posts in the Nueltin Lake area from 1908 to 1948.

ravaged by disease, but the animal populations appear to have suffered a variety of diseases and population setbacks. The debilitating effects of disease coupled with diminished and erratic resources helped set the stage for the process of relocation.

The policy of relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake to Churchill in 1956 appears to be based on institutional attitudes, the decline in the fur market, and the perceived caribou crisis, and by stories of death and starvation which reached the outside world by researchers such as Harper (1955) and Mowat (1947) in 1946-47. Charlie Schweder also drew attention to the tragedy of a small group of Ennadai Lake Inuit (Schweder 1947). In any case, decisions regarding the relocation of the people were made by government officials, far removed from the Dene, who acted on the advice of provincial natural resource authorities and regional federal agents. The Sayisi Dene had no control over the decision to relocate themselves, and in fact, prior to relocation, were hoping to establish a reserve at Little Duck Lake. The move from Little Duck Lake was to be to North River. There, they were promised, that they would be looked after; that houses, medical attention and schooling would be available to them. None of this materialized, except that the school aged children were shipped off to residential schools.

Few country food resources were available, and those that could be found were quickly depleted. The Sayisi Dene gradually drifted towards Churchill and social, cultural and economic disaster. Economic development programs which were instituted after the move, were short-lived, poorly funded and added little economic benefit to the Sayisi Dene. Programs did not offer many new skills to the people. Often, the Sayisi Dene were described as

“uncooperative and primitive” (DIAND 138.29.2).

After a failed attempt to marginally integrate the Sayisi Dene into the community at Churchill, the people themselves began the process of returning to their homelands. The “back to the bush” program which was gaining government support can be viewed as an admission of failure by the bureaucratic system to deal with the complicated mess they had created ten years earlier. Nevertheless, the prospects of returning to a familiar lifeway ignited the spark in many of the Sayisi Dene, and spirits soared as the idea became a reality. By 1973, the people who had been part of the “back to the bush” program were eager to re-establish a new community. The North and South Knife Lakes were not capable of supporting a large population, and so Tadoule Lake was chosen as the location of the new settlement.

The return to the homeland temporarily rejuvenated the Sayisi Dene. But it was not long until the nightmares of abuse and feelings of despondency resurfaced. The community had no professional support to deal with the mental and emotional well-being of its people and the people were left to heal as best they could.

Today, many of the Sayisi Dene feel they are entrapped by political boundaries, government decisions and management boards which have failed to take into account the social injustices and cultural despair that have been inflicted over the past 40 years.

CHAPTER SIX

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION, IDEOLOGY AND ECONOMIC PATHS

...One year, there was a lot of caribou everywhere. The people had lots to eat, and lots of hide to keep them warm. A young Sayisi Dene woman walked up to one of the caribou and tagged it on the ear with a piece of hide dyed with berries. "Next year when the caribou come back," she said, "I'll know that this one is mine. I'll be able to identify it because my tag will be on its ear." But the caribou were offended. It wasn't right for somebody to claim ownership to any animal in the herd. They decided to go away.

Next year, people kept looking for signs of the caribou, but they saw none. All over the land, the Dene were starving. Their clothes made of caribou hide became tattered. The caribou stayed away. This went on for years.

Finally, some medicine men got together to figure out a way to find the caribou and to make them return. One of the medicine men set out on a long journey to look for the caribou. He traveled far away. Other animals helped him along the way. A loon and a swan helped him cross a big lake. At long last he found the caribou herd. He transformed himself into a warble fly and he crawled under the skin of the caribou, near his ear. He talked to the animal who was the leader of the herd. "My people are starving," he said. "We need you to come back."

The caribou agreed to return - but on one condition. "As long as the people live and as long as you depend on us," said the caribou, "don't ever allow anyone to claim ownership of us again." The young girl who had tagged the caribou had to remove that tag and ask for forgiveness. The caribou roamed free after that. They were there when the people needed them. (Betsy Anderson in Bussidor and Bilgen-Reinart 1997)

Introduction

In chapter three, the application of traditional ecological knowledge as a means of understanding the systemics of a hunter-gatherer group was examined. This approach allowed for detailed studies into the modes of production and reproduction, and patterns of spatial organization of hunter-gatherer groups Irimoto (1981), Jarvenpa (1980), Oswalt (1966), Paine (1973) and VanStone

(1974).

The concepts of modes of production and reproduction were further explored by Ingold, who, in contrast to most North American anthropologists, preferred to approach the subject of herding, pastoralism and ranching using a Marxist paradigm. While three ecological conditions were recognized as necessary for pastoral growth: 1) continuous association between humans and animal populations; 2) animal protection against non-human predators, and 3) selective slaughter of non-reproductive component of the herd (Ingold 1980:113), he pointed out that it was not only ecological relations of production which directed and determined human behavior, but also social relations of production. That is, patterns "...of access to land and other resources ..." (Harris 1980:220). The importance of resources "exists only as they are defined by a given structure of social relations of production which, in turn, determines the rationality of their exploitation and hence the ends to be pursued" (Godelier 1972: 264 in Ingold 1980:93). Therefore, according to Marxist theory, if caribou within Dene social relations of production were to be defined as an unfettered resource, there was no chance of pastoralism as an economic activity, because they, caribou, were not socially valuable.

However, the ethnographic, oral history and historical records concerning the Dene, indicate the social and subsistence value attached to caribou. Furthermore, all three ecological conditions noted above were present to varying degrees in Dene subsistence economy. Ingold's thesis does not adequately explain the relationship of the caribou and the Dene. As with the ecological studies, Ingold paid little attention to what Harris (1980) referred to as emic (thoughts) or cognitive superstructure. Harris emphasized that all

economic events cannot be reduced to the infrastructure, nor can the *etic* (actions and effects) or behavioral conditions of the superstructure explain the reason behind certain types of behavior. However, he suggested that it was best to examine the problem from these various perspectives before approaching the *emic* superstructure. This allowed for an understanding of systemic components which in itself set the stage for understanding the contribution of cognitive components (Harris 1994).

While the presence of an indigenous philosophy was alluded to in some ethno-ecological studies, little consideration was given to its contribution to, or influence in, directing economic activity. However, studies, such as Feit's (1987) of Waswanipi Cree ethno-ecological management, revealed the underlying Cree ideology behind hunting, and suggested that indigenous philosophy may have had a more powerful position in decision-making than had been given credit.

Ideologies are recognized as contributing to the maintenance of social and spatial patterns, but seldom are individual cognitive components identified as exerting a specific influence over the economic activities of hunter-gatherer groups. Ideology has been described, most often in terms of visible religious and artistic media, and more generally, in the manner in which political and domestic relations are manifested within the social group (Pearson 1984; Ingold 1987,1988). From a cultural materialist perspective, this *etic* behavioral component focuses on structure and system maintenance. The *emic* cognitive component is most often discussed in terms of religion, magic, taboos, folk medicine and folk lore; in other words, that body of knowledge that is based on real world experience, which is held within a cultural group

and on which the group relies to maintain its integrity and identity. Seldom is this information used to account for specific behavioral patterns which are perpetuated in the etic behavioral component. However, Myers (1988) has suggested that applied hermeneutics as they relate to "indigenous concepts" need to be included in the analysis of cultural interpretation. The *emic* components or cognitive superstructure have only occasionally been considered as exerting influence on the subsistence patterns of the group (Tonkinson 1978); the infrastructure has been viewed as the window through which hunter-gatherer groups are understood, and at which level all subsistence decisions are made and perpetuated. In many cases when cultural group members offer explanations of ideological underpinnings of traditional knowledge and social behavior these are often discarded or overlooked because they do not fit into the western scientific model. The reasons for some practices have been lost but the practices continue because they have always been done that way.

Here the role of ideology in the subsistence economy of the Sayisi Dene is examined as it relates to the caribou (Pearson 1984). It will be argued that emic components, or the cognitive superstructure formed, in part, by real world experiences, may have played an important role in maintaining the type of subsistence economy conducted by the Dene up to the late fur trade period.

The Dene, as far as anthropologists are concerned, have always been a hunter-gatherer (traveller) group. There have been numerous accounts of caribou ecology and descriptive ethnographies (Bone 1973, Jarvenpa 1980, Irimoto 1981, J. Smith 1975), which have provided detailed information about the structure and process of socio-spatial relationships with regard to hunting

practices and caribou herd location. Brumbach and Jarvenpa (1989, 1997), Jarvenpa (1977), Jarvenpa and Brumbach (1988), in particular, have continued to revisit the relationship between socio-spatial organization and hunting strategies, building an ethnoarchaeological model into their general methodology. Fawcett (1987) also provided interesting commentary on the structure of communal hunts with regard to bison.

Burch (1972), J. Smith (1978) and Spiess (1979) provided convincing arguments for Dene hunting strategies and socio-spatial organization. Based on the behavior of barren-ground caribou, all three authors have inferred that it was virtually impossible for Dene people to move with the caribou because of the vast distances covered by the animals as compared to their counterparts in Fennoscandia (Ingold 1976).

Burch identified two basic techniques probably used by the Dene for locating caribou: “head-’em-off-at-the-pass” and “search and destroy” (Burch 1972:346). The former technique was described by J. Smith (1978) as the interception method. This method has been modified and has now been replaced with community hunts which involve a combination of the techniques. Individual and small hunting groups occur closer to home. Irimoto (1981) used the terms extensive and intensive hunting. This latter form of hunting is more in line with the interception or “head-’em-off-at-the-pass” techniques because it involves a complete knowledge of animal behavior. However, Irimoto’s study was confined to a restricted area around Hatchet Lake at a time when the hunting system had undergone radical changes.

In the ensuing twenty years, since he wrote his essay on caribou/reindeer as a human resource, Burch (1991) has somewhat changed his opinion with regard to human mobility due to ongoing archaeological evidence presented by Gordon (1976, 1990) supporting a discrete band/discrete herd hypothesis for ancient Dene. Burch, it must be remembered, based his research on caribou-hunting [Eskimo] Inuit, who were relative newcomers to the interior (Clarke 1977), and were restricted in their mobility to the south by the Dene. Gordon, most recently (1996), has provided convincing data regarding discrete band/ discrete herd relationships of ancestral Dene people, identified in the archaeological literature as Taltheilei. These archaeological finds indicate that the Dene, prior to the fur trade, seasonally travelled far to the north, following the caribou. This supports his earlier hypotheses that 1) Human movement is usually confined to herd routes and forage areas; 2) Somewhat different cultural patterns develop in the hunting societies within herd areas which can be detected archaeologically, and 3) Tool types are more homogeneous within herding areas, primarily due to restricted lateral movement and communication (Gordon 1976:76). As noted earlier, recent work by Petch (1988,1992a, 1992b, 1997; Petch *et al.*1997) has resulted in the recovery of distinct Taltheilei stone tools which may have been part of a discrete band tool kit. Similarities of tools found along the course of a particularly long esker, when compared with those recovered by Nash (1975) further north bear similar attributes and are within the range of the Central Qaminurjak herd. While there is insufficient archaeological data at present to support a discrete band/discrete herd relationship between the ancestors of the Sayisi Dene and herds of the Qaminurjak population, evidence amassed by Gordon further to the west, reveals hundreds of ancient camps along a 600 km Beverly caribou population migration route. It is highly likely, given the similarities of artifact

attributes along these ancient trails, that herd following occurred. Tool variability may be indicative of occasional lateral movement into overlapping territories of adjacent caribou populations.

These studies provided valuable information regarding the etic behavioral components of infrastructure and structure, but they added little insight into how this information was translated into the ideological aspect of the etic or emic superstructure. Müller-Wille (1974), for example, hinted at the relevance of ideology in dictating a specific economy, and changing socio-spatial relationships in his study of the Ganikwen Dene at Fond du Lac, Saskatchewan & NWT but did not pursue this further. Oral tradition suggested that at some point in Dene history, herding had been considered. Moreover, as the introductory legend alluded to, there was a time when the Dene may have been on the verge of incipient pastoralism. However, as the legend suggests, the prospect of losing the caribou forever because of live capture may have precluded any evolution of subsistence practices to the level of herding. For example, Bone (1973) and Smith (1978) stated that the Chipewyan people they worked with, attributed the decrease in caribou to the series of caribou studies by the Canadian Wildlife Service, where caribou were captured and tagged. This opinion was expressed to Petch (1992c) during field work at Tadoule Lake. Interestingly, “taming”, not tagging, caribou was noted by J. McLean, who served both the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company. He remarked in a letter to the London Council

In the barren grounds, bordering on the Arctic regions, reindeer still abound. Why should not the Indians succeed in domesticating these animals, and rendering them subservient to their wants, as the Laplanders do? I have been informed that the Yellow Knives, and some other tribes inhabiting these desert

tracts, have the art of taming the fawns, which they take in great numbers from their dams, so that they follow them like dogs till they see fit to kill them. (Wallace 1932:359)

Taming was defined by Ingold (1988:70) as "...the reduction or possibly total elimination of an animal's flight reaction from man" which may be deliberately induced. In his comprehensive study of the Skolt Lapps (Sami) of Fennoscandia, Ingold indicated that taming of reindeer "...into a part-human environment, is of undateable antiquity" (Ingold 1976:17). Given the docile nature of *Rangifer t. ssp.* taming "deer" was not a difficult or lengthy process. However, it appears that the "deer" would easily revert back to their "wild" state if the human contact was not maintained. Whitaker (1955) noted that two types of herding were practiced by the Laplanders: extensive and intensive. Extensive herding gave the reindeer as much freedom as possible, while intensive herding kept the animals under continuous observation. On the surface, the historic Dene and Sami shared a number of traits, such as single animal subsistence with fishing as a secondary resource; movement dictated by herds of *Rangifer*; ecological limitations such as pasturage; snow transportation technology; and bilateral kinship which allowed flexibility and fluidity within the social groups. Certainly if the Dene were herd following as the archaeological record suggests, they may have been very close to making the transition from herd following to extensive herding. With the larger Qaminurjak population fragmenting into small herds, it would not have been a difficult chore for the Dene to identify with the smaller caribou herds.

Hunting over Herding

Why then did the Dene choose not to herd caribou, when all the conditions necessary to make the transition were present? Harris, in addition to his

statement quoted on page 23 stated, "...ideologies and political movements which lessen the resistance to an infrastructural change increase the likelihood that a new infrastructure will be propagated and amplified instead of dampened and extinguished" (Harris 1980:72). Conversely it could be stated that ideologies which increase resistance to an infrastructural change may decrease the likelihood that a new infrastructure will be propagated and amplified.

This seems to have been the case with the Dene. While they were able to predict the potential location of caribou herds based on their repertoire of past experiences and information about caribou behavior, ecological variables may have selected for a change in caribou migration patterns, and this may have been coincidental with an innovation, such as tagging. The events which followed could not be explained in any way other than through knowledge based on real world experiences, which included an intimate relationship with the animals. The caribou were tagged, and they disappeared. They disappeared because they were offended, not because of forest fire, climate, or any other natural occurrence. The Dene held themselves responsible for the disappearance. The caribou only reappeared after the Dene "promised" not to take ownership. The legend outlined the terms for economic activity and system maintenance - "As long as the people live and as long as you depend on us...don't allow anyone to claim ownership of us again" (Bussidor and Bilgen-Reinart, 1997). Therefore, it seems that while incipient pastoralism was possible at the infrastructure level, the ideology which developed in the emic or cognitive superstructure took precedence and rejected a change in the economic activity.

“Cultural optimizations and adaptations must in the first and last instance conform to the restraints and opportunities of the environment and of human nature (Harris 1994:68)”. By adopting a hunting ethic in which ownership and territories were rejected, the existing social and spatial patterns and ideology were reinforced and retained. The legend continued to serve as an ethical example of the relationship with the caribou, and as a guarantee that the caribou would always be there.

This may have been one of the reasons that the Dene were never too concerned when government officials suggested that the caribou counts were low. The Dene knew of their agreement with the caribou, and never doubted that they would return.

However, it must also be noted that unlike the Saami of Fennoscandia, the Dene did not possess winter skis, and the absence of this technology may have limited their abilities to herd caribou. Furthermore, because the caribou were such a reliable and abundant food source, there may have simply been no need to consider herding.

The intimate relationship which the Sayisi Dene enjoyed in the past is still vivid in the minds of many of the community Elders. Although the ideology, as it pertains to religious beliefs, has been overshadowed by Christian indoctrination, fleeting memories of past lifeways are recalled.

P.G. Downes captured the essence of the importance of caribou to the Dene when he related an anecdote told to him by Father Egenolf. When the priest asked a young Dene girl who was in the process of receiving catechism lessons

what was the most beautiful thing that God created, she replied without hesitation “Edthen, the caribou” (paraphrased from Downes, 1943).

SECTION II
RELOCATION AND LOSS OF HOMELAND

CHAPTER SEVEN

EVENTS LEADING TO RELOCATION

The Years After Treaty

The signing of an Adhesion to Treaty 5 in 1910 left the Sayisi Dene with a feeling of uneasiness (Betsy Anderson personal communication, 1992). A.V. Thomas, the journalist accompanying Commissioner Semmens on the Treaty signing circuit, recorded the Churchill “Chipewyans” concerns at the signing of the Adhesion.

When the Commissioner had finished and the time for asking questions had come, some of the leading Chipewyan expressed concern for their hunting rights. If they gave up their land to the government, would they have the right to hunt as their fathers had done before them? If they were not allowed to hunt they would starve. They had heard about a railway being built to bring the whiteman to Churchill; how would that affect them? Would they have to live within a reserve which the government would give them? According to Thomas, Semmens’s answer to these and many other questions relieved their anxiety and “he assured the Indians that not for many years to come, probably not in the lifetime of any of them, would their hunting rights be interfered with. (Quoted from Tough, 1987:76)

There has always been some controversy about the actual signing of the Adhesion to Treaty 5 by the Sayisi Dene. The treaty document does not contain the signature of any of the Fort Churchill Dene (Chipewyan). Instead, three identical “X’s” are placed under the Chief and Councillors names (Figure 11). Anglican Church records, dated 1903, however, indicate that Chief John French was literate in syllabics (Figure 12). Interestingly, the Adhesion, as signed by the York Factory Chief and his Councillors, was signed in syllabic signatures. Sayisi Dene band members have argued that the treaty was never

Harvey J. Hassard Physician

Wm. H. McEwen Commissary

Signed at Fort Churchill, August, 1st, 1910 by

Chief his
French X John
mark

Councillors his
Sam X Chinashagan
mark

his
Thomas X Crazy
mark

Witnessed by

C.H.C. Kaytor sgt. R.N.W.M.P.
Ashton Atston
P.C. Swier Missionary -in -charge
A Vernon Thomas Clerk
Harvey J. Hassard Physician
James McMiller Macoun

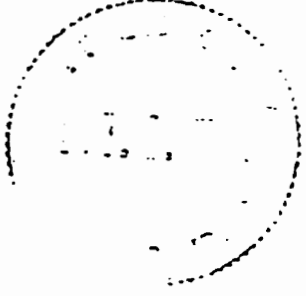
Thomas N. Marcellus
Wm. H. McEwen Commissary
John Siemens
Commissioner.

Signed at York Factory. August 10th, 1910

Chief *6 7 4 4 0 P 8*
his
Charles Wastasskoot X
mark

Councillors *e 4 1 3 0*
his
Robert Deardy X
mark

5 0 1 1 3 0
his
Sandy Deardy X
mark



Witnessed by:-

(Signed) Harvey J. Hassard Physician
Leslie Laing
Thos. Turnbull.
Richard Faries clk in H.O.
R.L. Bayar.
A. Vernon Thomas, Clerk
John Siemens
Commissioner.

Figure 12. The "signing" of an Adhesion to Treaty 5 on August 1, 1910 at Fort Churchill, NWT. Three identical "x's" mark the signing of Treaty by the Fort Churchill Chipewyan (Sayisi Dene First Nation).

Handwritten scribbles	Handwritten scribbles	Handwritten scribbles	Handwritten scribbles	Handwritten scribbles
Signatures		Witnesses		
	French XJohn			
3	m-pa	3	m-pa	
u'p'	u'p'			

Figure 13. A copy of the syllabic signature of Chief John French as found in the 1903 Anglican Church records, archived at Keewatin, Ontario. This is accompanied by a facsimile of the syllabics which compose his signature. (Copied by V. Petch)

signed by Chief French or his Councillors and may, in fact, have been forged. Interestingly, a year after the signing of the Adhesion to Treaty 5, the Manitoba/Northwest Territory border was established. The Sayisi Dene were not aware of this arbitrary border, which divided their traditional lands. They continued in their seasonal round in much the same manner as before.

In 1925 a plan to move the Fort Churchill Dene Chipewyan Band [Sayisi Dene First Nation] from their traditional lands around Churchill to about 300 km to the southwest at Reindeer Lake, was considered by the Department of Indian Affairs. The Sayisi Dene had not been granted a reserve and no apparent reason was given for this potential move. There are several possible reasons for wanting to move the Fort Churchill Dene Chipewyan Band: 1) The Sayisi Dene continued to use the resources in both Manitoba and NWT. The arbitrary division, while non-existent in the minds of traditional resource-users, was a political border which neatly delimited the parameters of provincial jurisdiction. 2) The two groups of Dene continued to maintain strong kinship ties which were reinforced by intermarriage (Sharp 1977). 3) It was more convenient for administrative purposes to have both groups of Dene together. 4) The Catholic missionaries at Reindeer Lake had established a mission at the village of Brochet in 1856. The Dene who traded at the Hudson's Bay Post at Brochet, were those who hunted on the western edge of the Qaminurjak herd, and who had been "converted" to Catholicism during the early missionary days. Even so, many of their kin were Anglican and belonged to the Fort Churchill Dene Chipewyan Band. It appears that a plan was initiated to move the Fort Churchill Band to Brochet. However, the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Keewatin intervened and the move never took place (P.A.C. G.10 Vol. 4093 File 600,138).

The Fort Churchill Dene Chipewyan continued their subsistence and other economic activities in their lands, trading mainly at Churchill, and occasionally at Brochet when necessary. Their independence frustrated post managers. In an undated summary of Caribou Post, J. Smith, referring to the "Caribou-Eater Chipewyan", stated that "... the Chipewyan were never dependent on the fur trade as the Cree immediately to the south..." (Smith 1976a:21). In the eighteenth century, Hearne noted almost despairingly, that the caribou provided so much of their (the Chipewyan) needs that only a few furs were needed to provide them with the new necessities of life" (Smith 1976a:21). Nevertheless, in 1930, Caribou Post on Caribou Lake was established by the Hudson's Bay Company, This tiny post was located approximately 200 kilometres northwest of Churchill near the southern edge of the tundra. Government and Hudson Bay Company officials were most anxious to keep the Chipewyan away from the influx of non-Aboriginals who, in 1929, were pouring into Churchill during the construction of the railway and port terminal. Caribou post was built "...in an effort to keep the Chipewyans inland and away from the doubtful benefits of civilization in its pioneering stage" (HBCA RG3/73A/1 n.d.). However, not all Chipewyans traded inland. Those who held their traditional hunting and trapping grounds in the Knife Lakes and Rivers areas continued to trade at Churchill. While there is no doubt that the interactions between the Chipewyan and non-Aboriginals at that time may have had some social repercussions, the more serious impact was the effect that non-Aboriginal trappers had on the fur-bearing animal population. These trappers penetrated into Aboriginal trapping areas, bringing with them steel traps and poison. Animal resources were very quickly depleted and the Anglican Bishop warned of the consequences of the blatant abuse of the fur resource, and the repercussions that this could have on

the Native people. The problem was considered so serious that the Synod of the Diocese of Keewatin recommended to the Provincial government "...that a decided step be taken in reserving certain areas of the country for the maintenance of the Indians only...Carried" (P.A.M. GR1600 Box 32 33.2.1). This does not appear to have been implemented, but may represent the beginnings of establishing a registered trap line system. By the mid 1940s, a registered trap line system was established by the Province. While this provided some control, at least on paper, of non-Aboriginal trappers, it had the effect of once more restricting Chipewyan movement over their traditional lands. Trappers were only allowed to trap within an area that was registered and set aside for their exclusive use.

Nearly thirty years after the signing of Treaty Five a reserve was still not established. According to M. Code (personal communication, 1994), band members had made several attempts to establish a permanent community base at several locations. M. Jones (personal communication, 1992) recalled one such settlement in the 1920s at Hubbart Point. *"When the people talked about settling down after Treaty, it was suggested that they settle at Hubbart Point..."* at the mouth of the Caribou River. An Anglican mission and several cabins were built and the people lived there seasonally in the summer¹⁰. M. Jones stated that this was considered to be a good location because it was halfway between the tundra, where winter trapping for Arctic fox occurred, and Churchill. It was also the point at which the "road" between Churchill

10

M. Jones stated that she remembered that spot because the Anglican priest used to give them biscuits after church services, and that was something that the children really look forward to (M. Jones, personal communication, 1992). The biscuits may have been communion wafers.

and the traditional homeland turned inland (M. Jones, personal communication, 1992)¹¹. However, there was little wood and no shelter from the winds. The settlement was soon abandoned. Attempts such as this appeared to be self-initiated, or negotiated with the Anglican Church. M. Jones did not remember any government intervention.

Department of Indian Affairs correspondence in 1939 suggested that the Chipewyans asked that a reserve be established at Baralzon Lake (DIAND, OTT F.576/30-52 Vol. 1). However, there appears to have been some confusion as amongst government bureaucrats as to the name and location of this lake. Nejanilini Lake is called *Bah yon zoe* in Sayisi Dene (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1992; Code, 1993). A Hudson's Bay Company map (Figure 14) indicates where the confusion and misinterpretation of place names occurred. Firstly, the names Fishing Duck Lake (Little Duck Lake) and "Baralzon" Lake (Nejanilini Lake) are interchanged on the map. The island, identified as *Wasnayou*, on the map is now called Battle Island on Nejanilini (Bah yon zoe) Lake¹². Baralzon Lake, as per topographic maps (64OP and 65B), is an actual lake which straddles the Manitoba/Northwest Territory border. The real Bah yon zoe Lake is Nejanilini Lake. This is the area that the Sayisi Dene requested as reserve land in 1939. This was not granted. One can only surmise that there was some confusion as to place names. The topographic map with the Euro-Canadian Baralzon Lake place name was

11

M. Jones remembered heading west from Hubbart Point to a spot north of Caribou Post where there was good fishing. Her mother used to trap red fox there, and they would remain at that location until spring.

12

The Sayisi Dene have a legend regarding Battle Island which is supposed to have been the home of the Nasnayou, or "little Dene"

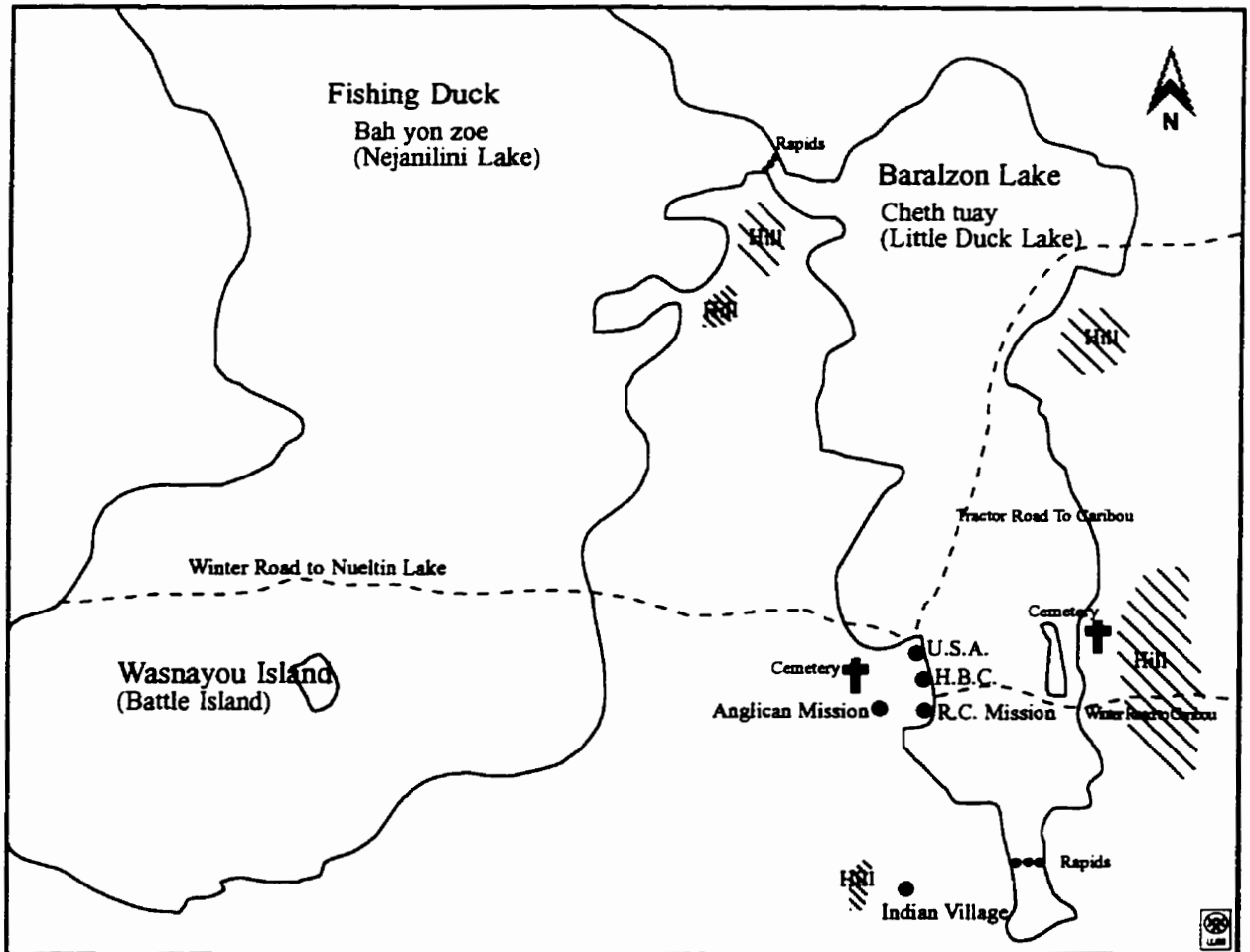


Figure 14. A map which shows the reversal of lake names on a Hudson's Bay Company map. Bah yon zoe is Nejanilini Lake. Baralzon Lake is north of Nejanilini Lake. On this map, Little Duck Lake is incorrectly identified at Baralzon (Courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, HBC fileN12).

assumed to be the lake that the Sayisi Dene requested as reserve. It has been suggested that the move would have been too costly. Yet the people were living at the very location that they had requested for a reserve (DIAND File 576/30-54, Vol. 1). It may be that Department of Indian Affairs officials incorrectly identified the lake that the Sayisi Dene had requested for their reserve. However, denial for a reserve at Bah yon zoe may have been due to negotiations between the Canadian and U.S.A. governments to establish a U.S. weather station at Little Duck Lake.

M. Code (1994) stated that Little Duck Lake was chosen by the Band for a settlement location because of the abundance of resources nearby. Indeed, the narrows of Little Duck Lake and the surrounding area contained an impressive archaeological record of pre-European-contact land use. Even Keighley, post manager at Caribou¹³ stated that "The Duck Lake area was a much better place than Caribou [Lake] for the Chipewyan to live and trap... The lake was right on one of the main caribou migration routes, and the natives had terrific fall hunts there" (Keighley 1989:159,165). This site was a favorite meeting place for the Sayisi Dene and, because of this, the Hudson's Bay Company post at Caribou Lake, about 70 kilometres northeast of Little Duck Lake, was moved to this location in 1941(HBCA. RG3/73A/4). The settlement was close to the U.S.A. weather station, but few of the Sayisi Dene remembered any contact with the military personnel based there. According to Tom Duck the station was self-contained and all supplies were flown in. "People couldn't get over the amount of food that came in, big containers of butter, and bacon" (T. Duck, personal communication, 1992). In 1945, the U.S.A.A.F. closed its

¹³ After the post was moved from Caribou Lake to Little Duck Lake, the post continued to be referred to as Caribou Post.

weather station at Little Duck Lake. By 1946 the Department of Transport permanently closed this facility and the buildings were purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company with War Assets in 1947 (HBCA RG3/73A/2. This had no affect on the Sayisi Dene living in the area.

Not all the Sayisi Dene lived at Little Duck Lake. A small group also lived near the estuary of the North River (Diocese of Keewatin Archives, 1941). This group of Sayisi-Dene had lived at Caribou Lake in 1930 after the post was established, but gradually returned to the area around Churchill, more than likely because their hunting lands were located there. Bishop Hives' journal suggested a small population at North River, "...ten Chipewyan Indians were confirmed...in a trader's tent" (Diocese of Keewatin Archives, 1941 p.95). These people were possibly the descendants of the homeguard Chipewyan who served the Hudson's Bay Company at Churchill during the height of the fure trade. Today, the remains of this settlement are barely visible.¹⁴

The Sayisi-Dene continued to live in these two main settlements and along the river and lakes across the vast tundra/northern coniferous forest until 1956 when the relocation took place.

Post-war economy

The post-war years were difficult for the Sayisi Dene. The collapse of the fur market was directly responsible for losses in income, and therefore access to trade goods. As well, the previous influx of non-Aboriginal trappers continued

¹⁴

This site was visited by Giddings in 1957 and by Nash in 1967 as part of archaeological investigations for Pre-Dorset cultural remains. T. Jawbone, a Sayisi Dene, accompanied both men in the field and located the site which is referred to as Thyazzi (Nash 1969).

to spread into areas which had been Sayisi Dene domain and fur resources rapidly decreased. These events encouraged the Sayisi Dene living at North River to seek seasonal employment in Churchill at the Army base, Port and CN Rail.

For the people who remained at Little Duck Lake, that post continued to supply limited goods. Rising prices made some goods too expensive, and thus out of reach, for many Sayisi Dene. Occasionally, the people would walk to Churchill for certain goods (S. Ellis, personal communication, 1992). However, the shortages of “staples” such as tea and sugar were very apparent in many Sayisi Dene camps. Betsy Anderson recalled living on fish and wildlife for two years “...without whiteman's goods...” (B. Anderson, personal communication, 1992).

Rising costs also affected the Hudson's Bay Company, and isolated posts such as Caribou became more difficult to justify. The policy of closing posts and re-opening them elsewhere was one that had been practiced since the first inland post at Cumberland House in 1774. The Hudson's Bay Company had always tried to maintain a monopoly on the fur trade. However, the post-war influx of entrepreneurial Euro-Canadians into northern Manitoba threatened this monopoly.

Post-war conservation policy

Post-war wildlife policy focused on conservation and commodity production rather than subsistence (Clancy 1991). This approach formed the base for the development of wildlife management policy. Additionally, provincial regulations were enacted to provide management of fur-bearing resources.

Sayisi Dene resource management was based on an ancient subsistence economy whereby the resource areas which were harvested in one year were left to fallow the next (F. McIntyre, personal communication, 1994)¹⁵. This however, entailed utilizing a larger area, and this practice disturbed provincial authorities who were responsible for establishing and maintaining trapping zones and lines. Irimoto (1981) identified spatial needs for *extensive* caribou hunting and trapping (late November/December) as 1200 km² for each seasonal camp or a total of 26,857 km² for the entire Hatchet Lake Dene Band (Irimoto 1981:87,127). The introduction of the registered trapline in 1946 severely restricted movement of trappers, and can be viewed as counterproductive to the aims of conservation and management. Restriction of human mobility meant that the resources within the trapline zone had little time to renew themselves. Trapping by non-Aboriginal people quickly depleted the fur-bearing animal population, and it became increasingly difficult to make a living off the land. Statistics showed an inflated return due to over-trapping in "fur conservation areas". Experimental fox and mink farms may also have contributed to inflated statistics.

Other factors which received little attention in determining fur productivity were: cyclical disease amongst fur bearing animals; the Aboriginal conservation method of selective trapping, which could suggest a "fur-poor" area in the fur returns; forest fires which had devastating effects on resource supply, and a limited supply of particular fur bearing animals, such as marten and fox¹⁶.

¹⁵ See Martin (1978) for a bio-historical discussion on Indian-Animal Relationships.

¹⁶ Northern Manitoba was not a fur-rich zone (Tough 1989).

By 1949, the Game Branch, Manitoba Department of Mines and Natural Resources had turned its attention to the barren grounds caribou and the Branch began to formulate a plan to preserve the animals (Cranstonsmith 1995). One method was to enforce seasonal restrictions on hunting (P.A.M. GR1600 Box 30 15.7.1). Another was to use poison bait on wolves who were seen as the main predators. This program had devastating effects on a number of predatory animals, including scavengers. According to W. Pruitt, University of Manitoba, the program spiraled out of control as conservation officers handed out strychnine pellets to barren grounds trappers with little information provided as to their use and effects. For example, the pellets which were to be placed on lakes only, were used in the uplands (W. Pruitt, personal communication, 1994)¹⁷.

The decline in the early 1950s of the barren grounds caribou is seen by Pruitt as a result of two factors: loss of winter range because of forest fires in the transitional forest (W. Pruitt, personal communication, 1994)¹⁸, and the perception by provincial conservation officers that harvesting methods of the Sayisi Dene were no more than indiscriminate slaughter.

¹⁷ N.A. Paterson, in his General Game Patrol Report, February 21, 1953 stated, "...travelled thro the bush most of the day...set one wolf bait..." and, "I instructed Samuel [a trapper] how to look after this bait, and he's to bring in the scalps of any wolves that get killed here.", and finally, "Used up the last of my poison on the last bait I set..." (P.A.M. GR 1600, Box 30, 15.7.1). This indiscriminate use of strychnine was confirmed by David Duck who stated that during the 1950s he couldn't feed the dogs the meat of trapped animals as they had done in the past because "...they were sometimes using poison" (D. Duck, personal communication, 1992). Pruitt further stated, "...we almost lost the barren ground grizzly..." through this government program (Pruitt, personal communication, 1994)

¹⁸ As noted previously this can drastically affect the habitat and herd size of caribou. Lack of food and environmental stress can cause a random dispersal of the animals making them easy targets for predators.

As previously described, fall hunting was designed to take advantage of ice-free rivers or lakes prior to freeze-up. Carcasses were piled up on shore where some were butchered for immediate use (Figure 15). Winter snows covered the remaining carcasses, acting as a natural freezer. The carcasses were used throughout the winter for dog feed and emergency food (J. Clipping, personal communication, 1992). The extensive hunt was a type of reassurance that "...there would be something to eat in a pinch..." (C. Ellis, personal communication, 1992; see also Ross, 1968, Irimoto, 1981).

Pruitt (personal communication, 1994) pointed out that the people at Duck Lake were situated at perhaps the most reliable caribou crossing. There, they could be assured a supply of animals. The Sayisi Dene continued to hunt in a manner consistent with abundant resource availability. They were not aware of the fact that according to provincial statistics, the overall population of caribou may have diminished substantially, and that what they considered to be part of a larger resource, was possibly the remnant of the resource.

We couldn't understand why they [Conservation officers] said there were no caribou. There were lots of caribou. You just have to know where to look for them. They may not be here this time, but that doesn't mean they're not here, they're just over there (C. Ellis, personal communication, 1992).

No attempt was made by government to persuade the Sayisi Dene, in culturally appropriate terms, of the potential loss of their most valued resource - *edthen* - the caribou. The provincial and federal governments did not conduct any ethnographic (or even vaguely cultural) studies to understand the methods of Sayisi Dene resource harvesting of caribou and land management techniques. Later economic and social studies such as the one conducted by Jean Lagassé



Figure 15. The results of a successful caribou hunt. The strategy was misinterpreted by provincial conservation officers and others as wanton slaughter. Photograph courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

(1959), lumped all Indians together¹⁹.

Post-war Canada had to contend with a more complex society and increased growing pains (Weaver 1983). There was a general lack of awareness of the First Nations peoples, who, at this time, were not considered politically active or cohesive. Their silence made them invisible to most Canadians. In 1961, the joint parliamentary committee recommended an acceleration of Indian integration into Canadian society, but federal and provincial policy created stumbling blocks. It was not until 1966 when the Hawthorn Report was completed that any serious consideration was given to changes in Indian policy regarding the First Nations people. As Weaver (1983) explained, the Hawthorn Report was the result of frustration of senior Indian Affairs Branch officials and public demand. This however provided little benefit to the Sayisi Dene who were relocated ten years before and were near the climax of social despair.

Hawthorn (1966) identified the most impoverished Indian bands as those who had lost their mobility, that is, those who were spatially restricted from carrying out a seasonal round of activities. Hawthorn saw this as contributing to the establishment of band communities. The Sayisi Dene however, had enjoyed an independence that was unique.

Caribou migration dictated the location of the seasonal round. As noted in the

¹⁹ This particular study which was commissioned by the Manitoba government (Order-In-Council 1953/56) focussed on the living conditions of Indians and Métis. This was followed by another study, entitled "The Role of Indian People in Industrial Development in Northern Manitoba 1960-1975" (Jamieson and Hawthorn 1962). This examined the status of Indian people in northern Manitoba. However, little change in living conditions within Native communities occurred as a result of these two studies.

previous chapter, prior to European contact, herd following was essential if caribou were to be a staple food. The migrations north and south may not have followed the exact paths of the previous year, but by maintaining close and regular contact with the herd, hunters were able to monitor movement and predict the probable travel route of the migrating caribou herds.

Plans for relocation

The Administrative Process

Between 1953 and 1956, a series of intergovernmental communications transpired which began the process of relocation. A Hudson's Bay Company inter-office memo dated 1953 stated that according to Mr. Gowans, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ilford, Manitoba "...an appropriation has [sic] been authorized by Ottawa to move the Duck Lake Band to the North Knife River..." (HBCA RG 3/73A/4). The memo implied that Indian Affairs planned, as early as 1953, to move the Sayisi-Dene out of their traditional lands.

It appears that by 1954, some of the Sayisi Dene who had been living around Caribou Lake returned to the North River area. M. Code suggested that the North River area was part of the group's hunting area²⁰. As part of his regular circuit, Anglican Bishop Hives visited this group by helicopter in 1954. The understanding given to the Bishop was that the people would winter at North Knife and seek summer employment in Churchill (Diocese of Keewatin Archives pp 300-301).

²⁰

It was noted earlier that some members of the Sayisi Dene community were more actively involved in the early fur trade, and this sub-group which was situated at the North River was referred to as the Homeguard Chipewyan. One of their tasks had been to supply the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Churchill with fresh meat.

On June 28, 1956, a letter addressed to Colonel Jones, Director, Department of Citizenship and Immigration confirmed the closing of Caribou Post. Mr. Chesshire, of the Hudson's Bay Company, stated that the reason for closing was due to a decrease in fur production and the fact that a group of Sayisi Dene had moved to Churchill (North River in actual fact). His interpretation of the situation was that those who had moved to Churchill were more ambitious while those that remained at Caribou "...were mostly a poor lot, some of whom spend the summer at Churchill, returning to Caribou for the winter trapping" (Correspondence filed with Skoog and McMillan 1991). What is more disturbing is the fact that the Sayisi Dene chose to settle at Little Duck Lake with the intention of establishing a reserve. Why the Department of Indian Affairs agreed to undertake a costly move rather than create a reserve at an area already known to the Sayisi Dene, where a variety of resources were available, is difficult to understand. Chesshire, in correspondence with Colonel Jones, alludes to the reasoning behind such an unreasonable move

Our representative has discussed the problem with your Mr. Nield and the latter has been emphatic in stating that your Department would like to move the Indians from Caribou nearer Churchill in an effort to improve their lot. The plan, I believe, would be to build them houses, etc, which is impracticable as long as they remain at Caribou where their situation is poor (DIAND 138/29-2. June 28, 1956)

A number of issues arise from this statement. Nield was "emphatic" in completing the move, but there is no record as to who provided background information which would suggest this measure. The move was seen by both Indian Affairs Branch and the Hudson's Bay Company as the only way to improve the Sayisi Dene's situation. The excuse of "impracticable" housing at Caribou was weak given that the people had inhabited this area for hundred of years, an active winter road existed between Churchill and Caribou Post

(Keighley 1989), and supplies were readily available for building construction and repair. Additionally, there were at least six large buildings at Caribou Post which could have been turned into dwellings for a least half of the families at Little Duck Lake (see HBCA RG3/55/139). Interestingly, Banfield's article on the caribou appeared in the *Beaver* (1956) at this time. This may have had some influence on the decision to relocate the Sayisi Dene. As noted in the archaeological record, most of the historical Dene winter homes which were located across their trapping zone were constructed of hewn logs. The Sayisi Dene settlement at Little Duck Lake was at the edge of the forest and good construction logs were available. It appears that the Hudson's Bay Company was intent on pulling out of Caribou post for company financial reasons. The opportunity for a free trader to assume trade was not considered for Caribou post, even though the Company had turned the Windy River Post over to Fred Schweder in 1941 (HBCA Post History). Interestingly, when the Hudson's Bay Company had received notice from Mr. Gowans in 1953 of the Department of Indian Affairs intent to remove the Band from Little Duck Lake to North River, they entertained the idea of an outpost at the new settlement site. The costs of relocation for the Hudson's Bay Company would certainly have been similar to the costs incurred at Little Duck Lake. As well, the carrying capacity of the land around North River, as noted in chapter 3, was never sufficient to support a large number of trappers, and in fact over-trapping by Euro-Canadians left little opportunity for the Sayisi Dene trappers.

Chesshire's interpretation of "improving their lot" was based on the knowledge and attitudes of the times, these officials were probably convinced that any changes would improve the conditions of the Sayisi Dene. No research or plan for improvement was conducted prior to the relocation.

The task of dealing with the Sayisi Dene was turned over to R.D. Ragan, Acting Superintendent of Indian Affairs, who, in a memo to P. Ficek, Clerk-in-Charge, Nelson River Indian Agency, at Ilford, Manitoba, stated that the Hudson's Bay Company was pulling out of Caribou Post. This decision had been arrived at after discussion in Ottawa between Hudson's Bay Company and Department of Indian Affairs officials, but as Ragan pointed out "...there is nothing on our files regarding this" (DIAND 138/29-2, July 12, 1956). Ragan proceeded to state that the move

...creates a terrific problem for this office and we have no alternative but to attempt to move these Indians out of the area...it is going to mean that we will have to move very swiftly on returning [from Little Duck Lake] to be sure that construction [of houses] is completed before winter (DIAND 138/29-2, July 12, 1956).

Ragan stated that he would meet with the Indians and "...attempt to persuade them to move to a location where they can be looked after" (DIAND 138/29-2, July 12/56). Money had been earmarked for housing assistance (\$21,000 in 522-13-491, Nelson House Agency).

On July 23 and 24, 1956, acting supervisor of Indian Affairs, Ragan, met with the "Duck Lake Band" to pay Treaty and to discuss "their plight" and "intended move". Ragan stated that the Band agreed to move to North River (Lower North Knife River) to join those who were already wintering there. "After a very full discussion it was unanimously and amicably agreed by the Duck Lake Band still at this post that they would move to the mouth of the North River" (DIAND 138/29-2, July 27, 1956). The Sayisi Dene Elders, such as Nancy French, who remember this meeting state that they did not believe that

it was going to happen (N. French, personal communication 1992). Ragan also stated that "A part of their Band live at this point in hovels during the winter and it is the only logical place for those remaining at Caribou to move to". It is incomprehensible that if the people already at North River were living in hovels Indian Affairs would want to make matters worse by increasing the density of population at this location. The logic of moving the people closer to Churchill certainly didn't make sense as many of the people were accustomed to travelling back and forth from Caribou to Churchill all winter (HBCA B.399/a/1-4). In summer they usually fished, hunted geese and gathered eggs, berries, etc. around Churchill (M. Jones, personal communication, 1992). If it was going to be easier to administer the delivery of services to North River, this was never discussed and in fact, the people were left to fend for themselves at North River. The relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake was voluntary only because the people were promised services by Indian Affairs such as good housing, schools and medical services (T. Duck, personal communication, 1992). The families were guaranteed building supplies necessary to complete construction of log cabins. The Sayisi Dene were to be "...look[ed] after and transport[ed]...by canoe up the coast to the North River from Churchill..." (DIAND 138/29/2).

The urgency of the move, aside from the lateness of the season, was revealed in Ragan's letter to Colonel Jones, Director of Indian Affairs Branch.

...it is imperative that we evacuate these Indians not later than the end of August. The large caribou trek reaches this area early in September and we feel we must have them evacuated before that time or they will wish to remain for the kill which might upset our plans (DIAND 138/29/2).

However, it is not clear what kinds of plans Indian Affairs had in mind for the

Sayisi Dene, except to move them out of Little Duck Lake before the caribou migration. The move was to occur in two phases. First, all the people at Little Duck Lake were to be moved to Churchill by Canso planes (DIAND 138/29/2). From there, they were to be boated to North River where they were to be given building and other supplies to prepare for the winter. On August 10, 1956, R. Ragan received authority to temporarily "...move the Indians and their belongings by air to Churchill..." and H. Flett, Post Manager at Caribou was sent a telegram confirming August 17th as the date for the settlement move (DIAND 138/29/2). By August 21, the move was complete (HBCA RG 3/73 A/4).

We saw a big plane landing on our lake (Little Duck Lake). The Indian Agent told us that we were going to be moved to Churchill, but nobody believed him. Why did the government want us to move? We had everything we needed here - the caribou...we lost everything (Alice Solomon, personal communication, 1992).

People were crowded onto the plane with little more than their portable possessions and their dogs. Homes, food, supplies, equipment and toboggans were left behind. The events which transpired over the following weeks are blurred for many of the Sayisi Dene. The people were transported to Churchill where they were set up in a tent camp on the shore of Hudson Bay. They had no food, and little clothing. No one spoke English. Tom Fortin, then a young Dene man who had grown up on the North Knife River with his French-Canadian father, and Dene mother, was given the task of meeting the people as they disembarked from the Canso plane and taking them to their temporary quarters. He stated, "I was told to go and meet the people because I could speak Dene. There was a lot of confusion, and the people didn't know why they were there or where they were going. I did as I was told" (T. Fortin, personal communication, 1997). Within one week, the people began their

move to the settlement at North River where some of the Band members lived. Building supplies were to be boated to the settlement in order to construct new winter cabins. Trappers had no opportunity to collect their equipment from their traplines, and so toboggans and other gear were never recovered. Mink traps were supplied by Indian Affairs Branch. No reason was given for the preference for mink trapping. The area was only medium rich in mink (Tough 1987). However, correspondence between the Hudson's Bay Company Head Office, Winnipeg to Colonel Jones, Department of Indian Affairs stated that in the Shethanei Lake area (southwest of North River Settlement), "...there was a general increase in the cycle...of mink" (DIAND 138/29-2, June 28, 1956) may have influenced the choices made²¹. This proved to be disastrous for several reasons: 1) the Duck Lake component of the Band was more adept at trapping arctic fox and marten further to the northwest; 2) the trapline zone for many of the Sayisi Dene was situated, in part, on the west side of the Seal River, nearer to Little Duck Lake, and 3) the increase in the number of trappers quickly depleted the mink population.

Medical services were located at Churchill. There were no social or educational facilities at the new settlement. School-aged children were sent away to residential schools. Food supplies were scarce and inadequate. When the Chief asked game warden G. Mallaher, who happened to be camping across from the North River settlement, what his people were to do, Mallaher replied that the people could spread out into the bush and build log houses. He was reported to have said "...even the mice and other animals build winter houses..." (T. Fortin, personal communication, 1997). He told the people that

²¹

Shethanei Lake is about 120 km south of Little Duck Lake, and many of the Sayisi Dene trapped in this area prior to 1956.

if they had no food they could go to Churchill to get vouchers. Churchill was 75 kilometres away.

At a Chiefs' meeting held at The Pas on September 10, 1956, less than four weeks after the relocation, Chief Artie Cheekie stated that the Band was unhappy with their location and wanted to move to a place where there were better resources. As Chief Cheekie pointed out, the settlement might be satisfactory for one to three years, but the fish and game would be quickly depleted, and there would be nothing left for future generations of his people (NAC 501/1-2-2-2).

Country foods, namely animals, were quickly depleted with the increase in human population. As winter approached, the usual supply of caribou skins which the people had always relied on for warmth and protection were absent. The social organization which had centred around the caribou was shattered. No longer did the women set to prepare the skins for clothing and other articles, chatting as they worked. What were they to do with their time? How were they to keep their children and themselves warm? (M. Jones, personal communication, 1992). Somehow, they managed to survive the winter in an unfamiliar environment. They did spread out into the bush along creeks and rivers (T. Fortin, personal communication, 1997). The people were bewildered. They couldn't understand why they had been moved. All that had been promised them had not materialized. Men went looking for jobs in Churchill, but the language barrier, and the fact that none of them had any formal education or specific training worked against them. Those who did secure seasonal or occasional work were taken advantage of and grossly underpaid.

Water transportation was also an issue. Because of the condition of the canoes left behind at Little Duck Lake, five new canoes were requested by R. Ragan. Permission to purchase these at Churchill was given (see DIAND 138/29-2 August 7, 1956, August 10, 1956). However, Sayisi Dene Elders state that these canoes were never given to the people. They do not know what happened to them, but again they suspect that they were confiscated along with the house building material (Band meeting, June 24, 1994).²²

The houses at North Knife River never materialized. Instead, because of the lateness of the season, some cabins at North River allegedly belonging to free trader, Art Anderson, were repaired using some government building supplies. The rest of the building supplies (45 tons) lay "...idle at Churchill" (DIAND 138/29-2, October 19, 1956). However, as Ragan suggested, the material could be used at North River the following year. As far as Ragan was aware "...all the Indians are more or less comfortably housed at the moment.", but he wondered "...whether or not they were able to make a caribou kill" along the North River during the winter of 1956 (DIAND 138/29-2, October 19, 1956). M. Cutlip summed up that first winter. "There was no game there (North River), we were only given macaroni. When winter came we needed caribou for clothing, there was none" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Tadoule Lake, Interview #2, 1993).

The fate of the building material was never adequately explained. The understanding was that Robert Hicks was to deliver the supplies to North

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Tom Fortin recalled that very small canoes were taken to the settlement at North River. Several young men drowned while using these canoes shortly after their arrival at the new settlement (T. Fortin, personal communication, 1997).

River during the fall of 1956. When this did not take place, the Sayisi Dene were then charged with, but not informed of, moving the building supplies from Churchill during the summer of 1957. None of the Elders in the community of Tadoule Lake recall ever being approached to move the building supplies from Churchill to North River. It was not discussed how the supplies were to be transported and the building supplies never made it to their destination. Correspondence between Messers Tully and Ragan suggested that perhaps "...the material could be picked up by dog team and transported to the new settlement..." (DIAND 138/29-2, March 17, 1957).

By early spring, the families at North River who usually traveled to Churchill for the seasonal work at the military base, port and CN Rail, were accompanied by those who had been relocated. During the summer many of men were not available for transporting the material because they were working in Churchill. The supplies may have stayed in Churchill. No correspondence regarding this could be located. On discussing this matter with the community of Tadoule Lake, Elders also wonder what happened to this building material because it was never given to them. One Elder stated that they were suspicious of this because the whaling buildings and what is now the Beluga Motel in Churchill were built around the same time and no one knew where those building materials came from. The buildings were later purchased by John Hicks. The Elders believe that Sayisi Dene supplies were used by Hicks to further their own cause. They also believe that a percentage of welfare funds earmarked for the Sayisi Dene were used in this project (Band Meeting, June 24, 1994). No documents were found to verify these issues.

Tom Fortin recalled that some of the building supplies were boated to the mouth of the North River, but the strong tidal currents, and the hazardous rocky shoals broke up the cargo which had been dropped off near the shore (T. Fortin, personal communication, 1997).

The Sayisi Dene, now residing at Tadoule Lake emphatically state that the Provincial Conservation Officer who patrolled the northwestern section of the province was vocal in sensationalizing their caribou kills rather than instructing them on the province's interpretation of caribou management. Personal communication between the Conservation Officer and Indian Affairs Officers in The Pas and Ilford may have been responsible for the move (A. Code personal communication, 1992). However, this cannot be verified. Correspondence from Mr. Ostrander, Superintendent of Welfare to Mr. Mair, Chief, Canadian Wildlife Service, dated November 7, 1955, indicated that Mr. Daggitt of Indian Affairs, Ilford, Manitoba had attempted to teach the Sayisi Dene conservation of meat. Ostrander continued "I am pleased to report that according to a telegram received from Mr. H. Flett, Post Manager at Duck Lake, caches have been made at the narrows on Duck Lake and ten canoe loads of meat have been brought to the settlement and stored..." (NAC WL.U. 228[13]). However, this practice attracted bear and wolverine to the settlement. Caches were often broken into by bear and wolverine and great quantities of meat were lost (C. Schweder 1947)

The Housing Problem at Churchill

At the same time that building was to be taking place at North River, another housing problem was arising at Churchill.

During the early days of construction of the port and railway at Churchill, some of the Sayisi Dene were able to obtain seasonal employment. During the summer months, members of the Sayisi Dene community camped at Churchill behind the port. Here a collection of squatters shacks sprang up, and the Department of Indian Affairs looked at possible solutions. Correspondence between R. Ragan, Regional Supervisor and J. Gordon, Acting Superintendent of Welfare, Indian Affairs Branch, in which intentions of the Department of Indian Affairs to build houses for "Indian" people at Churchill, outlined a plan of action. Ragan summarized the terms of constructing housing units for "Indians" in general. The cost of building houses under the National Housing Act in Churchill was estimated at \$10,000 per house. Each "Indian" family was required to raise \$1000 cash for a down payment and a loan on the remaining \$9000 (DIAND 138/29-2, October 19, 1956). Ragan commented on the arrangement the "Eskimos" had with Northern Affairs, where houses were purchased through small, monthly, interest-free payments, and he wondered if a similar arrangement could be made for the Sayisi Dene (DIAND 138/29-2, October 19, 1956).

The condition of the squatters, who were mainly Dene, was reviewed (DIAND 138/29-2, May 24, 1957). Early in the year, planning for the building project commenced. Manitoba Lands Branch was contacted for purchase of lots in the townsite. The National Harbour's Board was approached regarding water and electricity supply to the Sayisi Dene townsite.

As plans for the Sayisi Dene townsite were being laid out, the National Harbour's Board suddenly announced plans for a Petrol Oil and Lubricant Marine Storage Terminal at the exact location of the "squatters" shacks. When

the Sayisi Dene were offered \$50 to remove their homes, they refused, and instead requested their homes be moved intact. While this may be seen as an unrealistic demand, it must be remembered that this area had been the site of seasonal encampments since the 1930s (DIAND 138/29-2-2, June 24, 1957). While the shacks were viewed as worthless by Euro-Canadian standards, nevertheless they were valued by the people who owned them, as home and security.

The National Harbour's Board, after agreeing to move the houses to another parcel of land, rescinded the offer because "...the Indians are only squatters on the property, and have no legal right there..." (DIAND 138/29-2-2, June 24, 1957). The parcel of land was required for National Harbour's Board expansion.

As J. Tully, Superintendent, Nelson River Indian Agency, expressed "...now is the time for us to acquire land in Churchill where the Indians from North River can pitch their tents in the summer while seeking summer employment and also where the majority of the Indians who live at Churchill 12 months of the year can take up residence and not be called squatters" (DIAND 138/29-2-2, June 24, 1957). The concern for the Sayisi Dene was real. Tully stated, "I cannot visualize a Crown Corporation being so heartless as to turn men, women and children out "into the street" with no thought whatsoever being given to future shelter -this is apparently their attitude...(DIAND 138/29-2-2, June 24, 1957).

R. Ragan, Regional Supervisor, Winnipeg, attempted to have building lots purchased *en bloc* in Churchill in order to build houses for the Sayisi Dene.

However, as J. H. Gordon, Superintendent of Welfare pointed out, the Department preferred a "checkerboard" pattern to assist in integration into the community (DIAND 138/29-2 (W), July 11, 1957). It was proposed that the "Indians...purchase lots themselves..." and then through a "Revolving Fund Loan", purchase a house, assigning the land and the house to the Crown. If the terms of the loan were not upheld, the Crown would repossess the land and house and make it available to another "Indian". This created an impossible situation for the Sayisi Dene who had little knowledge or experience with banks and financial arrangements.

The problem of housing escalated and Department of Indian Affairs officials were confronted with one obstacle after another. The main problem was acquiring land from the Province. Provincial authorities made progress extremely difficult - "...in brief the Indians through no fault of their own, appear to be getting the runaround..."(DIAND 138/29-2 (R.7), July 31, 1957). One point of contention was the treatment, perceived or real, that the "Eskimo" received regarding housing arrangements. The reason the "Eskimo" were situated in the village of Akudlik was that the Department of National Defense leased land from the National Harbour's Board, and then used the land for an "Eskimo" settlement. The site was formerly the National Defense Construction Camp No. 20. Interestingly, while the National Harbour's Board feared that the "Eskimo" might contaminate the water supply reservoirs, no concern about possible contamination by Petrol Storage tanks was expressed.

The issue of assisting the Sayisi Dene to make the transition into the 20th century was a vital one, and M. Kartushyn was hired to assist the Sayisi Dene. The difficulty of his task was magnified by the fact that there were two distinct

groups of Sayisi-Dene with which to work, each at a different level of transition. Tully, in 1957, described the demography of the Sayisi Dene at Churchill. The first group may be the original North River group, and was composed of

approximately 100 souls..." who "...started coming to Churchill each summer over 25 years ago to obtain seasonal employment. Gradually the seasonal employment changed to full time employment...The second group consists of approximately 90 people and are living in tents one mile north west of the first group, along the shore of the Churchill River. This group consists of the Duck Lake Indians which were moved by our department last September from Duck Lake to North River. They will be returning to North River in September, when the construction boom dies and will no doubt return to Churchill next year when employment picks up again (DIAND 138/29-2-2, August 13, 1957).

Two issues were pressing. Firstly, the squatters land situation had to be rectified. Secondly, the seasonal campers needed an area close to the town so that workers would not have to contend with poor weather conditions and tides, a very realistic issue if a campsite was to be established on the west side of the river. Tully continued, "If it develops that some of the second group are of the type that hold steady jobs, then we will provide them with permanent housing along with the first group" (DIAND 138/29-2-2, August 13, 1957).

R. Gyles, Provincial Director of Lands made it clear that the province was unwilling to provide Crown land to the Department of Indian Affairs because of potential townsite expansion. What was suggested was some sort of moveable townsite (DIAND 138/29-2-2, Sept. 17, 1957). By Sept. 19, 1957, M. Kartushyn was expressing extreme concern as to the housing project for the Sayisi Dene. The "squatters" huts had been "pushed down to make room

for the tank farm" (DIAND 138/29-2-2, Sept. 17, 1957) and the people were still in tents. The people had been promised houses and yet the government authorities had not settled anything. Winter was quickly settling in and Kartushyn was very concerned about the welfare of the young children. By Sept. 25, 1957, the Province made available 100 X 200 metres of land immediately west of the cemetery. This was termed Camp 10 because it was considered to be only half as good as Camp 20, or Akudlik where the Inuit were residing (W. Koolage personal communication, 1998).

Dene Camp 10

Dene Camp 10, at Churchill, consisted of a series of hastily constructed, poorly insulated shacks on the north-east edge of town (DIAND 578/29-303 Vol.7). The shacks rested on skids so that they could easily be moved (Figure 16). The site was located on a rocky, windswept, treeless area about 0.5 km from the town of Churchill. It was almost inaccessible except by foot. There was no fresh water source and water was trucked in on an irregular basis (DIAND 578/29-2-303 Vol 7, Jan. 12, 1962). The horror of being located adjacent to a cemetery was psychologically damaging to the people (I. Bussidor, personal communication 1994). Sayisi Dene ideology included a fear and respect of the dead. When a person died on the land, they were buried almost immediately with their possessions and the area was not occupied again and no hunting took place (B. Anderson, personal communication, 1992). To live beside the dead was to tempt the night spirits (M. Code, personal communication 1992). It was a psychological stress that persisted until the Sayisi-Dene moved from Camp 10. The ramifications that this experience had on community members are still recounted with terror by the Elders. Many of the North River people refused to move to Camp 10, and



Figure 16. Two views of Camp 10 which was the makeshift settlement for the Sayisi Dene. (Photographs courtesy of Dr. W. "Skip" Koolage).

those who were fortunate enough to have their equipment and dogteams. camped on the west side of the Churchill River at two ancient Sayisi Dene campsites - *Ghoteilay* and *Thuntonah* (G. Bussidor, personal communication, 1992). The Duck Lake group who had travelled by plane to Churchill and had to abandon all their personal assets had no choice but to endure Camp 10.

The makeshift settlement quickly became overpopulated as people from North River moved into Churchill because of a lack of animal resources in that area. Improper sanitation posed a serious problem to the people's health. Fire protection was non-existent. Weak measures to provide some protection were totally inadequate. By 1961, the federal government had passed legislation allowing "Indians" the right to alcohol and quickly accidental deaths and tragedies began to claim the lives of the Sayisi Dene.

Walter Hlady was hired in 1958 to conduct an experimental program which would "...apply community development principles to the Churchill Band of Chipewyan Indians" (Hlady, 1960:4). Several plans for employment opportunities were added to those already in place. Anticipated expansion of the U.S. Strategic Air Command was also considered as an employer and as a means of acculturating the Chipewyan (Sayisi Dene) into white society through integrated housing.

Hlady suggested the difficulty with the Churchill Band "blending" into the local population was that leadership in subsistence-based economies was ad hoc. No one person possessed the authority to make decisions on behalf of the group. Leadership for a specific issue depended on the nature of the task and a person who possessed the qualities necessary to deal with it effectively.

The solution, as he saw it, was to encourage the development of leadership qualities amongst Band Council members. This sense of leadership acted against the group as intra-band family rivalries grew (A. Thorassie, personal communication, 1992). In band societies, fission is the usual means of dealing with this social problem. However, this was not possible and Band members were forced to co-exist under strained conditions.²³ Since Indian Affairs handled the administration, and no courses in leadership training were offered to any Native people, there was little incentive for the "elected" Chief and Council to learn these skills. Even simple maintenance tasks were done by the Assistant (M. Kartushyn), as it was considered easier than teaching the people. As Hlady (1972) pointed out, the kinship obligations of cooperative support could and should have been transferred from the hunting scene to community development, but how this was to transpire was not addressed.

By the end of the six month pilot project, leadership skills were slowly developing due to the close relationship between the community development officer and the Sayisi Dene involved in the program. However, the momentum was lost with the termination of the project. Hlady presented nineteen recommendations for community development of the Fort Churchill Band (Hlady, 1960) (See Appendix A). In short, he outlined steps which could assist the Sayisi Dene in the process of adjusting to the non-Aboriginal community. These recommendations reflect the deep concern that those who were working closely with the Sayisi Dene had with regard to the lack of

²³

The number of separate settlements at the time reflected the degree of loose social organization: Dene Camp 10 at Churchill composed mainly of the relocated Little Duck Lake people and squatters, two small settlements on the west shore of the Churchill River which consisted of families from Little Duck Lake and North Knife River and two at North Knife (not represented on map) (Figure 17).

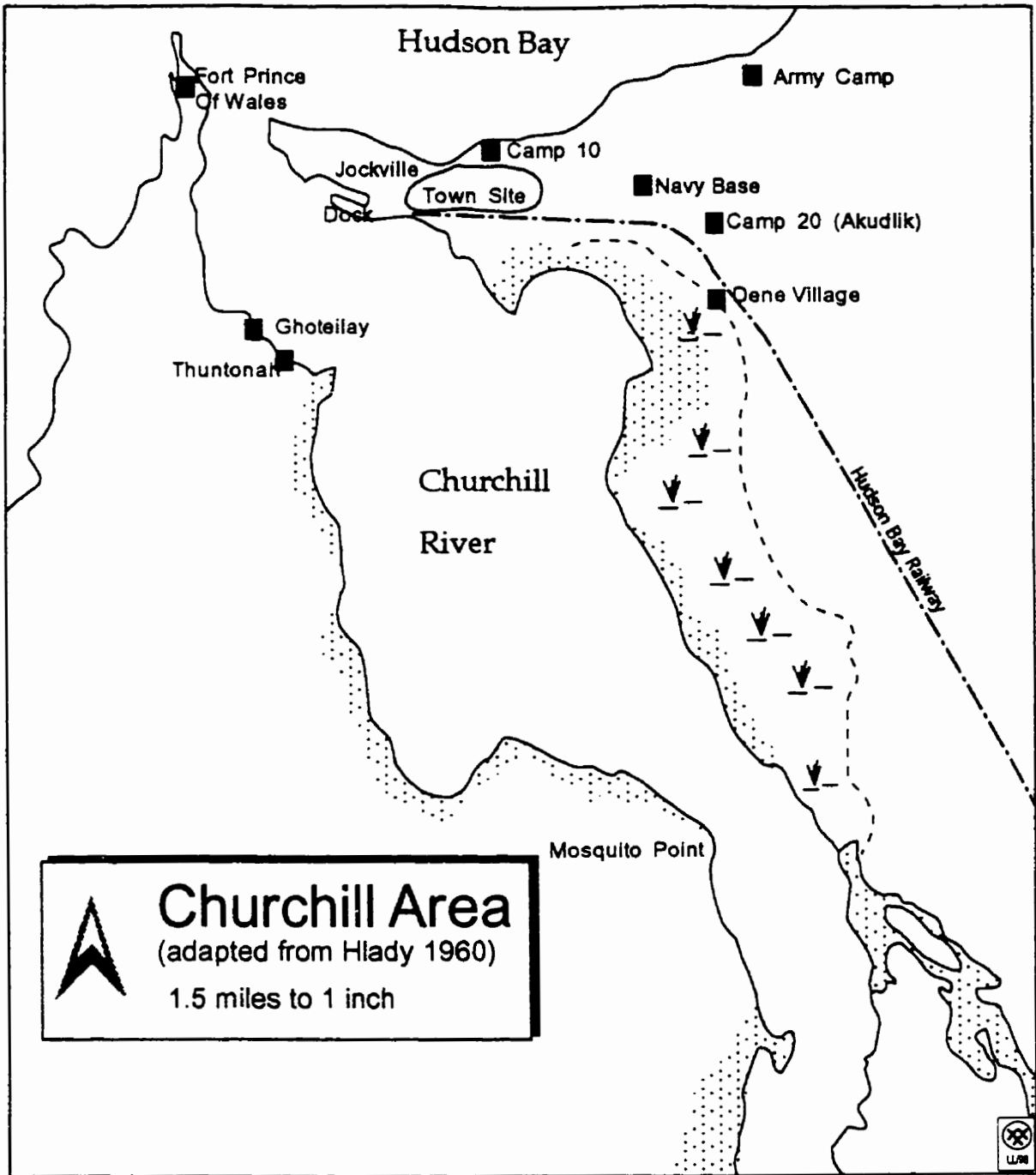


Figure 17. Map of the Sayisi Dene settlements in the Churchill area in 1960. This does not include the two settlements at North River which was located about 70 kilometres northwest of Churchill. Dene Village (1967) is included for reference. Copied from W. Hlady, 1960.

direction from Indian Affairs. Hlady remarked that the Sayisi Dene were “..adapting in the way they feel [felt] is best to the influences which are exerted upon them” (1960:36), an observation that was also noted by Koolage (1970). A full anthropological study was not conducted at this time, and so it was not possible for temporary community officers to get to the “roots” of Sayisi Dene culture.

At the same time that Dene Camp 10 was developing into a third world situation (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1994), the Hudson's Bay Company and Provincial Game Branch were completing another transaction. The Caribou Post buildings at Little Duck Lake were sold to the Game Branch for \$1.00 on August 31, 1960, four years after the Sayisi Dene were evacuated (HBCA RG3/55/139). The Sayisi Dene were not consulted or given the option to buy the buildings at Little Duck Lake. Certainly they would have been able to come up with the \$1.00. No reason for not consulting the Sayisi Dene was found in correspondence reviewed, and the Sayisi Dene were not aware of this transaction until recently. The offer was simply not made available to the Sayisi Dene.

Provincial Game Branch officials continued to enforce their authority on wildlife management by asking M. Kartushyn to issue smaller amounts of ammunition to the hunters, so that they, the Sayisi Dene, would be limited in their caribou kill (DIAND 138/29-4, November 8, 1957). No restrictions were placed on other hunters such as Inuit, Cree or non-Aboriginals. The infamous photographs of the caribou kill in the mid-1950s continued to be used as evidence against the Sayisi Dene (see Figure 15). This, plus correspondence to Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources

(DIAND 138/29-2, September 25, 1958), reinforced the federal and provincial governments' determination to keep the Sayisi Dene away from Little Duck Lake and their traditional hunting and trapping grounds. Provincial Game Branch further discouraged the Sayisi Dene from contributing income in-kind and country produce to their households by imposing penalties for waterfowl sale and trade (DIAND 138/20-4, July 24, 1961) and caribou utilization (DIAND 138/29-4, Sept 11, 1962). Furthermore, the sale of hides was equally scrutinized, the majority were to be used for handicrafts. No mention of use for clothing was made. Careful monitoring of caribou utilization was carried out by provincial Natural Resources in order to ensure that caribou meat was not being fed to the dogs. Additionally, many dogs were shot, often indiscriminately by the R.C.M.P. because they were considered a collective nuisance. This robbed the Sayisi Dene of one of their most important assets and means of procuring country food. Dogs were also an asset for another reason.

Camp 10 was located along a main polar bear migration path. The bears were greatly, and rightly so, feared and revered by the people, and the dogs provided an early warning system for approaching bears. The people needed guns to protect themselves and their children from the bears, or at least be able to frighten the bears away. The people were in constant danger during the "bear season" (July to November), because of the flimsy houses, undisposed garbage and lack of support from community resources, such as the R.C.M.P. When the issue of guns was brought to the Game Branch and R.C.M.P., they pointed out that Camp 10 was within the townsite and guns were prohibited. It was also pointed out that polar bears were on the protected list! No concern for the welfare of the people was expressed, although J. Bell, the author of the

correspondence commented, "All the above is a little confusing to us especially when we are well aware that Eskimos can slaughter these animals at will a little farther up the coast of Hudson Bay" (DIAND 578/20-4, Nov. 15, 1966).

By 1961, it was becoming obvious to the Anglican Church and townspeople that many of the Band's children were being badly neglected and malnourished. The Sayisi Dene had successfully survived for hundreds of years off the resources of the land. Many of the foods that they purchased with their food vouchers were foreign to them. It was not that they did not care about feeding their children, they just lacked the skills necessary to prepare these new foods. Previously, all nutrition came from the caribou, fish and other animals and plants. With no, or limited, literacy skills at their disposal few people could read the package instructions and no attempt was made by Indian Affairs to teach the men or women these skills. Easy-to-cook items such as Klik became a staple (A. Thorassie, personal communication, 1992). A hot lunch program was established in 1961 by the Anglican Church and several concerned local people. This provided at least temporary relief for the young school children, many of whom up until this time scavenged behind the hotels and at the garbage dump for food. One Euro-Canadian resident of Churchill, who attended the same school as the Sayisi Dene children in 1961 stated that he heard at the time that some of his school mates went to the garbage dump for food, but he didn't understand it at the time. Today, he is saddened and angry for what happened to people he knew (Anonymous (6), personal communication, June 1994). Again, the support necessary for transition from one cultural setting to another, was inadequate. While efforts were made to integrate the people into a mixed economy, little

was done to socially and culturally understand the Sayisi Dene.

In correspondence to the Director of Nursing, Fisher Branch Hospital, Bishop Hives of the Anglican Church, expressed his frustration at the situation created by government bureaucracy

....Their present condition in Churchill we regard as being a most unhappy plight for a group of Indians who were accustomed to the life of hunting and trapping of the north. Their life has always been a most rigorous one, filled with hardship and the lack of many of the amenities of normal modern life. However, at Churchill, very little has been done to establish them there in the community enterprises and they are a very degenerate group of people with little help in the way of economic subsistence. They are for the most part on the relief list of the Department of Indian Affairs. My own observation is that so much was done for the Eskimo to be brought out of the north, to give them employment at Camp Churchill, whereas the Government under Indian Affairs has established the Chipewyan Band in very inferior quarters and has provided little in the way of employment for these people. I believe it was a grave error to move them from their trapping grounds simply to make it easier for authorities to give them the relief that obviously they now need". (Bishop Hives, 1962. Diocese of Keewatin Archives)

The extent of sexual, physical and mental abuse of young girls and women and boys and men at Dene Camp 10 will never be completely known. The terrors of rape and gang rape by military personnel and local males, the beatings and psychological humiliations have deeply scarred the middle-aged and Elders (Anonymous (3), personal interviews, 1992,1994; Bussidor and Bilgen-Reinart, 1997). There are some things that they cannot bring themselves to talk about because they are too painful.

While the social atrocities continued to occur very few people outside

Churchill were aware of the conditions of the Sayisi Dene. The Sayisi Dene Elders and Band Chief and Council had very little education and experience in working within a bureaucratic system and relied on the younger generation to translate government policies into Dene and to correspond with government agencies. In July, 1963, correspondence from Chief John Clipping (written by Peter Thorassie) to Archie Leslie, Regional Director, Indian Affairs indicated that the community was desperately in need of help (Figure 18). A suggestion was made that the people be allowed to live near the river as "It is easier for the Chipewyan people to fish and hunt if they are near the river. There is much water to drink, to wash clothes and even take baths at the summer time..." (DIAND 138/29-2-2, July 26, 1963). He also stated that if they were near the river, they could watch their people and reduce the number of drownings. Additionally, fishing nets would not be destroyed if they were closer to the river (DIAND 138/29-2-2, July 26, 1963).

There was no follow-up to any of the requests and the Sayisi Dene continued to live in overcrowded shacks at the edge of society. The community became completely dependent on welfare as opportunities for integration faded.

Recapping Ten Years of Blundering

The Sequence 1956-1966

A recap of events up to 1966 is presented in order to emphasize the cumulative effect of federal and provincial bureaucratic activities.

Mr. Archie Leslie
Regional Director
Indian Affairs
344 Edmonton Street
Winnipeg
Manitoba

172
195/191 2.7

July 26, 1963

Dear Mr. Leslie:

My name is Peter Ithoamie
son of Robinson and Alice Ithoamie.
I live in Camp 10 with my parents,
four brothers, one sister and three
of my sister's children. I am
sixteen years old and I will be entering
the nine grade this September.

I am writing this letter for
John Chipping Chief of Churchill
Chipewyan Band.

The chief would like to tell you
that Camp 10 is now called Chipewyan
Village or "Chipeville".

The chief remembers you when he
saw in February.

He is sorry that he doesn't get
to know the horses in Winnipeg
better.

00093 AUC 263

IV

The chief knows you are trying
to help his people. He is happy to
know more homes are going to be
built because many of our homes

II

The chief and all the people he
sees want to know if the Chipewyan
people will ever be moved to land
near the river. The Chipewyan
people do not want to live next to
the dead people. Many of our people
think that the dead people get up at
12 o'clock midnight and walk
around our camps for dogs and laws.

The younger people do not always
believe in these spirits.

The chief does not like to have
the white ministers angry with
his people. He does not think that
the Chipewyan people are knocking
over the grave markers. The chief
knows that some new homes may be
built for his people and he wants
like to know if when some could be
built near the river. It is easier for
the Chipewyan people to fish and hunt
if they are near the river. There is
much water to drink, to wash
clothes and even take baths at the
summer time if we are near the
river.

IV

The Chief knows you are trying to help his people. It is happy to know more homes are going to be build because many of our homes crumbled. The Chicomungo people could not water the lines and this would help not to have any more of our people drown. When the people are far from the river they sometimes lose their pets because they cannot water them all the time.

The Chief feels that the whitemen are now trying to understand what the Indian wants.

The Chief wants the greeting of his people to you. He is sorry that he cannot be in Alhambra to tell of these things himself.

The Chief will look forward to the time when he can speak to you face to face.

Peter Thorassie

F. P. N. ...
Chief Clipping

Figure 18. Copy of a letter sent to Archie Leslie from Chief John Clipping which was written by Peter Thorassie, 1963 (DIAND 138/29-2-2, July 29, 1963).

1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sayisi Dene are hastily evacuated to Churchill from Little Duck Lake just weeks before the caribou arrive. Most of their material belongings are abandoned because of flight weight restrictions. The people are promised new equipment and supplies. The people are placed in a temporary makeshift tent village on the exposed northeastern shore of the Churchill River • the Sayisi Dene are transported by Peterhead boats via Hudson Bay to North River in early September. The area is subject to violent winds, tides and fall storms. Only a few supplies follow. • the promised building supplies do not reach North River settlement. • no caribou at North Knife River - no skins for clothing. Rations of macaroni run low. Only mink traps are provided. Very few trappers have all their gear. Some have dogs, but no toboggans.
1957	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squatters, including the North River Sayisi Dene, who had seasonally and permanently worked and lived in Churchill since at least 1930 are evicted from their homes by the National Harbour's Board in order to facilitate construction of a petrol tank storage area. • Regional Indian Affairs officials are baffled and frustrated by the lack of compassion and maze of intergovernmental bureaucracy. The federal government makes no attempt to intervene on behalf of the Sayisi Dene. • The Province of Manitoba refuses to grant a tract of land for a settlement until the eleventh hour. Finally, an area 600 feet by 300 feet immediately west of the cemetery was set aside (DIAND 138/29-2-2, September 25, 1957).
1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development Projects initiated, but are short-term. A permanent development officer is recommended.
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hudson's Bay Company sells the buildings at Caribou Post to the Provincial Game Branch for \$1.00. The Sayisi Dene were never consulted about their possible interest in purchasing the buildings.
1961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal legislation makes alcohol available to all Aboriginal people.
1962	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temporary situation of Camp 10 with its buildings on skids is discussed by provincial and federal government officials. No decision can be made for a tract of land because town planning for future expansion of Churchill is not completed.
1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests from Chief Clipping fall on deaf ears. Nothing is done to improve the housing and location concerns of the Sayisi Dene.
1957-1966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued restrictions placed on the Sayisi Dene by Game Branch makes it nearly impossible for families to have income in-kind or country produce to supplement their economic dilemma. The dramatic change in diet seriously effects the general health of the people. The community becomes dependent on welfare.

It was not until September, 1966 that the federal government responded to the desperate situation at Churchill, only because the Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, R.F. Battle, had the opportunity to view the situation for himself, "Camp 10 is a disgrace that must be removed immediately" (DIAND 50/1/29-2, September 21, 1966).

He listed three main reasons: 1) the site "began only as a temporary solution...the Indians were told a permanent community would be established...that promise must be kept; 2) "the community cannot be upgraded where it presently stands - for sound technical and psychological reasons", and 3) "...the rocky terrain is impossible as a home site" (DIAND 50/1/29-2, September 21, 1966).

Chief and Council told Battle that they did not want to live in Churchill, that they wanted to be in an area where they could hunt and fish and yet have employment and send their children to school. "The Minister said we would get land and new homes. Now you [Battle] come here and asked the same questions. Why?" (DIAND 50/1/29-2, September 21, 1966).

It appears at this time that Battle was open to the Band returning to Little Duck Lake. A "back to the bush" program was considered an option to the people. One member was asked if he thought anyone wanted to return to Duck Lake. The answer was he thought not (DIAND 578/30-54 Box. 1, September 15, 1966). The Band member was not identified and so it is not possible to understand why this reply was given. It is equally incomprehensible why Battle would accept the opinion of one person.

Dene Village

The New Townsite

A new settlement was quickly built 12 kilometres southeast of Churchill, past Akudlik, the "Eskimo" settlement. The site of Dene Village was considered superior to Dene Camp 10, but it was not granted reserve status. The same economic and social problems were present, and the situation magnified by its remote location away from the town of Churchill and the military base. While there was road access to the site, transportation services were inadequate. Over the years that Dene Village existed, several people froze to death trying to walk home from town (I. Bussidor, personal communication, 1994).

Within two years 47 new houses and 19 salvaged from Camp 10 were put in place. Homes were built according to Department of Indian Affairs standards. Water and sewage tanks were to be installed in some of the homes, but this was deleted from the plans. The new houses were wired for electricity, but not all houses were hooked up. Koolage (personal communication, 1998) stated that although utilities had been planned, none of the homes had plumbing facilities.

Dene Village did not solve the deep social and economic problems faced by the people. Vandalism of the new homes occurred frequently - a social statement of the young and old. With little money for furnishings, the rooms of the houses echoed with the sounds of social distress. Ravindra Lal (1969a & b) and later P.I. Dickman (1971) argued that the settlement plan of Camp 10 and Dene Village, and the houses were culturally and socially inappropriate. The spatial distribution of the houses was foreign to the Sayisi Dene who were used to living in extended family units or nearby, but out of

sight, of relatives and friends.

Little firewood was available and coal which was supplied to the Dene for heating their homes was of poor quality. "They used to come with a big truck and dump a pile of coal for us. It was dirty and smelly" (Anonymous (3) personal communication, 1992). The 1960s "picture window", so inappropriate in a northern setting, was difficult to adjust to. Sayisi Dene were not used to looking out a large window, or having people, even their friends and relatives, looking in on their privacy. Additionally, the cost of replacing these windows was prohibitive.

Alcohol, child and sexual abuse continued at an alarming rate. Community members and local Indian Affairs officials watched as Sayisi Dene society eroded before them. The cumulative effects of rapid social change caused a series of complicated social problems. The Sayisi Dene continued to be abused on all fronts. The governments paid lip service to their needs; social and economic programs were abruptly ended as community workers were transferred or programs were abandoned or cut, and racial abuse ran rampant in the town. The rapport that community workers built with the Band was continually being destroyed as no program continued long enough for a relationship of trust to be firmly established. Families disintegrated into groups of strangers and Elders passed away humiliated and brokenhearted. What had once been a proud, industrious people was now a helpless collection of broken people.

Lal (1969a) saw the move from Little Duck Lake to Churchill as being the result of poor decision-making on the part of Indian Affairs. He painted a

graphic picture of the social tragedy of the Sayisi Dene at Churchill and stated that "Every decision that has been made, beginning with the move from Little Duck Lake and ending with the construction design of the houses. has been based on two false premises: the first, that outside experts know better than the people; and the second, that a political structure created by government, the band council, expresses the will of the people" (Lal 1969:23b).

It is not fair to say that all Indian Affairs officials were unsympathetic. It is obvious from inter-office correspondence and program organization that they were not able to deliver the services for a successful transition. Plans of regional and local Indian Affairs officials were equally frustrated by government bureaucracy, policy, intergovernmental relations and the ongoing debate with the province over land. Additionally, as mentioned above, community workers' positions were project-oriented and short term. What was required was a long term project and long term commitment in order to build a trusting relationship with the Sayisi Dene community. By 1968, the federal government had spent over half a million dollars on Dene Village (Skoog and McMillan 1991). Half a million dollars at Little Duck Lake could have created a reserve for the people within their traditional lands.

The hindsight of Indian Affairs was captured in correspondence between R. Connelly and J. Bergevin, A.D.M., May 19, 1971

...There was no way we could predict what would happen. There was obviously little or no preparation of the people prior to the move in terms of orienting them to the expectation the larger society would have of them...It was repeated to me by band members on several occasions, and I must therefore believe them, that they solidly believed that "subsequent to the move, the government was going to take full care of them" (DIAND 578/29-1-2 (A).

Experimental Settlements

During the 1960s, the federal government committed itself to settle outstanding land claims (Weaver 1983) and since the Sayisi Dene had not yet located a reserve, there was added pressure placed on Chief, Council and the Band to make such selections. While the Indian Affairs officer pointed out that land around Churchill should be considered because of potential industrial growth, some Band members were more interested in land that they could use for hunting and trapping (DIAND 578/3-6, January 22, 1968). J.B. Bergevin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Indian and Eskimo Affairs, in correspondence with R.M. Connelly, Regional Director, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, stated that he had "...a committee working on..." land entitlement (DIAND 578/29-1, June 7, 1971).

In 1968, W. Koolage and P. Dickman accompanied R. Thorassie, J. Thorassie, S. Duck and A. Sanberry to Brochet for meetings with the Dene community situated at the northern end of Reindeer Lake. It appears that this visit was the catalyst for the Sayisi Denes' decision to change their lives around. Koolage recalled the sadness in the Elders' eyes as they looked at the seemingly ideal situation at Brochet and realized that they could live in a "bush" environment (W. Koolage, personal communication, 1998). The Elders wanted to return to the bush and the young people wanted to stay in Churchill. Indian Affairs decided that an experimental community would be established away from Churchill. The initial selection had been the old Caribou Post at Little Duck Lake. However, North and South Knife Lakes were chosen as the location for the project.

Because of the need for children to remain in school, the Elders, and people

without children were chosen to take part in the project. The area was familiar to some of the Elders, whose parents had traded and trapped around North and South Knife Lakes in the early 1900s (A. Solomon, personal communication, 1992).

P. Dickman, Community Development Officer, was instrumental in initiating the project and in September, 1969, he accompanied a team of seven up the South Knife River to the lake (Dickman, 1971). At South Knife Lake bush skills were relearned and spirits were high. The project provided the opportunity for the people to stand back from the situation in Churchill and decide a course for the future. A letter written by R. Connelly summarized his, and other community workers expectations

The people who returned were especially the elders of the band who had not been able to adjust satisfactorily to life in Churchill. It is certain however that the younger families will not want to return to the bush on a permanent basis...(DIAND 501/30-1-3-303[54]Vol.1).

The reverse occurred as news of the settlement made its way back to Churchill. Soon the communities of North Knife and South Knife Lakes had increased to 16 and 34 people respectively. The hope of a new life acted as a catalyst and soon the communities were larger than the land could support. Additionally, the caribou, an integral part of Sayisi-Dene life were absent and so the search for a location close to this resource was undertaken. Curiously, Little Duck Lake was not considered, possibly because it represented the beginning of the end for many people (J. Clipping, personal communication, 1992).

New Hope and a New Home

Indian Affairs officials were eager to have a land settlement established at South Knife Lake. However, at the last official Band meeting held at South Knife Lake, the Band rejected the surrounding area for a reserve. According to J. Clipping (personal communication, 1992), Indian Affairs officials said "we can't move you anymore...". The following day Band members held their own meeting and decided that they would move themselves. Six men, Thomas Duck, John Solomon, Adam Solomon, John Bee, Jean Baptiste Thorassie and Jim Clipping hitched their dogs and started off towards Tadoule Lake (floating ashes lake) (Figure 19). The lake area was well known for its varied and abundant resources and was a summer encampment for canoe building in the 1910s (C. Thorassie, personal communication, 1992).²⁴ Thirteen days later, on May 8, 1973, the party arrived at Tadoule Lake and set up a small camp. While they were getting settled Department of Indian Affairs officials arrived by plane bringing ammunition and "grub". The following Monday family members began to arrive by plane and a temporary camp was established at the south end of the lake - Summer Camp. The final move was made in the fall to the north side of the lake, 40 km from the Seal River. As J. Clipping stated, the feeling amongst the people was one of relief, of being free of Churchill.

Beginning life anew at Tadoule Lake was probably easier for the Elders and middle-aged. The young people however, somewhat adapted to the larger society, had to struggle during the first few years. As A. Thorassie pointed out, *"it was difficult for us teenagers because we were used to radios and T.V.*

24

Early historic maps drawn for Knight in 1719 and Norton in 1760 showed Tadoule Lake as a prominent lake in the seasonal round of the "Northern Indians" (Sayisi-Dene) (Warkentin and Ruggles, 1970).

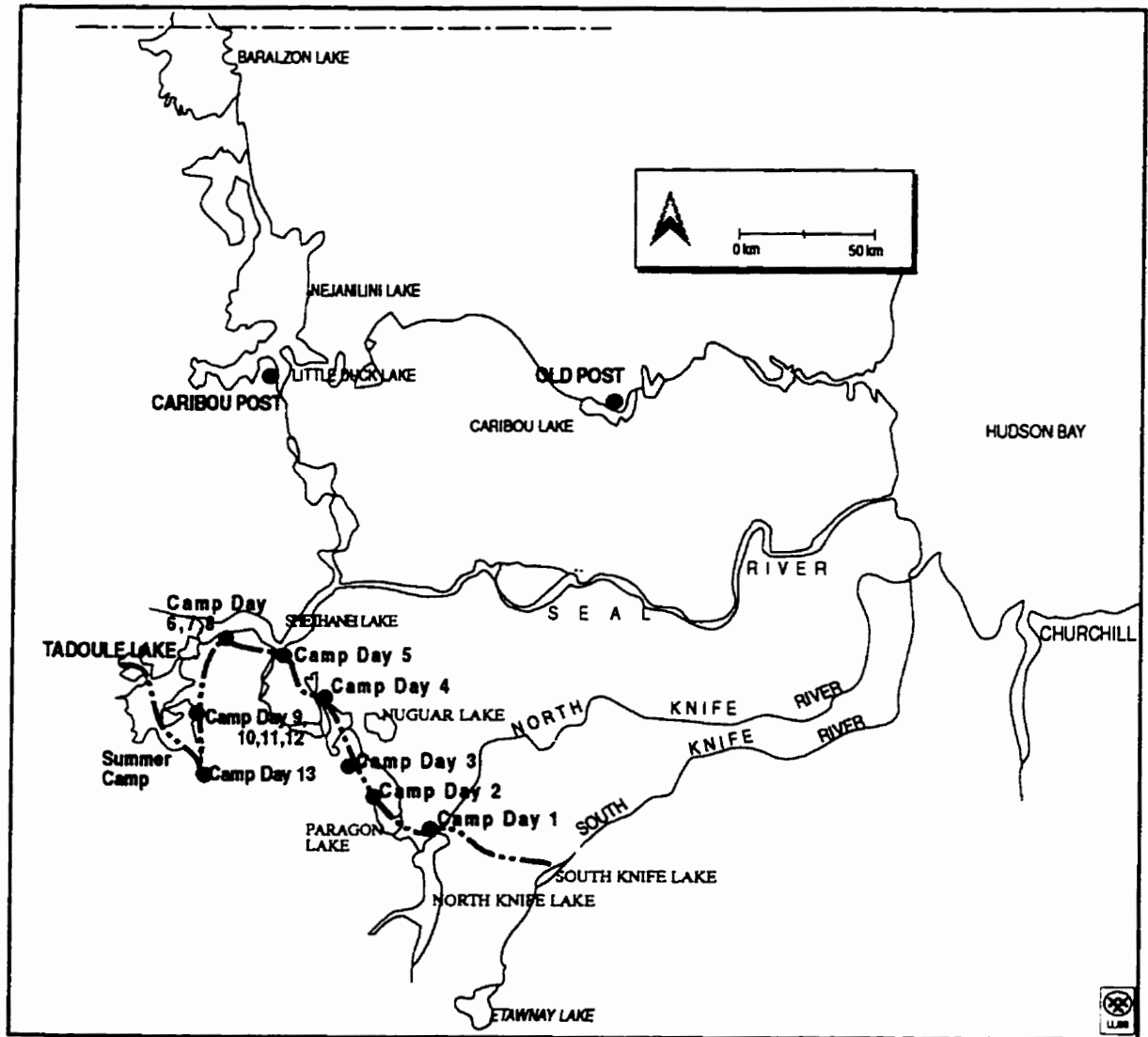


Figure 19. The route taken by the Sayisi Dene from the Knife Lakes to Tadoule Lake, Spring 1973.

- *it was rough*" (A.Thorassie, 1992).

CHAPTER EIGHT

UNDERSTANDING THE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF CHANGE

Modeling Subsistence and Mixed-Subsistence Systems

The method used to evaluate and interpret the relocation of the Sayisi Dene and the cultural, social and economic effects the move had are based on a model developed by Usher (1992), for understanding the evolutionary role of subsistence in northern communities²⁵.

Subsistence Systems

Two elements of his model include the material foundation - natural resource base, and the institutional foundation - kinship and individuals. While the first two components are straightforward, Usher (1992) suggests that the individual within the culture is what sustains the culture. However, in a subsistence society individual goals are community goals and these are aimed at maintaining system stability. Individual goals are secondary, and usually related to the overall well being of the community. Therefore, in this study of the Sayisi Dene, the individual is considered part of the kinship group. Means of production, or the methods and technologies used for obtaining resources, is viewed as an important component of subsistence pattern changes. For example, the introduction of the ski-doo in the 1970s drastically changed trap-line life since a larger area could be covered in a shorter period of time, with

²⁵

Present-day economic activities in northern Aboriginal are identified as mixed-subsistence, or cash economies. However, the subsistence base, or harvesting of wildlife resources is still considered by community members at Tadoule Lake to be a very important part of their lives, even though many do not pursue these activities themselves (V. Petch, personal observation, 1992).

less chance of furs being ruined by scavengers (Pelto 1973). The means of production is therefore used as the third variable in the subsistence model for the Sayisi Dene.

In order for a subsistence economy to survive there must be a resource base which includes mammals, fish, birds, trees, plants, rocks and minerals. Caribou were the main sustenance of life for the Sayisi Dene. However, a variety of other animal resources was included in their diet. Spring, summer and fall fisheries supplemented their diet, as did waterfowl, small mammals, ptarmigan, eggs and berries. Trees were used for a variety of purposes including shelter, snowshoes, canoes and sleds. Plants, such as mosses, were used in place of diapers and also for chinking cabins. Lichen was used as a broth thickener and other plants for medicinal purposes (B. Anderson personal communication, 1992). Mineral waters were also used for medicine (S. Ellis personal communication, 1992). A diversity of resources and a flexible daily routine were key elements in the functional success of a subsistence economy.

Kinship figures strongly in a subsistence economy as it is the organizing force behind production and distribution. Each nuclear unit is part of a complex system of kinship ties and obligations. As Usher states "...while kinship is biologically produced, it is socially constructed..."(Usher 1992). All activity takes place within an egalitarian system where tasks and produce are shared. Usher argues that it is the natural resource base and its products, through harvesting, that perpetuate the obligations of kinship. Loss of the resource causes repercussions in the social system's maintenance (Usher 1992).

The means of production, or ways of getting a living in a traditional

subsistence society include techniques and technologies for accomplishing the task. Hunting strategies, such as caribou drives, fences, ambushes, and fishing weirs are all part of a learned technology.

In a traditional-subsistence model, system maintenance is a result of the security and sense of well-being that occurs when the flow of resources is maintained:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{Collective} & + & \text{Distribution} & + & \text{Mutual} & = & \text{Security} & + & \text{Well Being} & = & \text{System} \\ \text{Production} & & & & \text{Aid} & & & & & & \text{Maintenance} \end{array}$$

The present day mixed-subsistence economy, which is representative of northern Aboriginal communities, has resulted from numerous outside forces such as the fur trade, federal and provincial policy and law regarding arbitrary boundaries and resource management, technology, cash economy and education. As the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry emphasized, Aboriginal people have "...three main aspects of concern related to natural resources: the infringement by federal and provincial policies and legislation of the exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights by Aboriginal people; the negative repercussions for them produced by large-scale exploitation of renewable resources; and the ongoing disputes regarding the exact scope of constitutionally protected rights and their practical import for the decision-making process on the management of natural resources (Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Vol. 1, 1991:184). Response to outside forces has been more influential in inducing change than the maintenance system within the culture. The "traditional" way of life is what the Elders recall as being in place in their youth. The term "tradition" therefore, comes to represent that way of life, or the particular cultural maintenance system in place within living memory of

the Elders. The concept of tradition is perpetuated through oral tradition and is a vital component of system maintenance.

Table 3 outlines changes to the subsistence system based on various historical periods. It allows for an analysis whereby certain changes are known to have caused major cultural adaptation and social change. The table indicates that natural resources are vital to the maintenance of social well being. Natural resources not only provides nourishment, but also act as a conduit for kin-related activities. According to Usher (1992) the obligations of kinship function to maintain the equilibrium of the society. However, as the restrictions on resource use and means of production increase, and wage economy (individual-based economy) becomes more prevalent, the kinship system fails to function as a cohesive unit and the system changes, or in the case of the Sayisi Dene, collapses. Rather than a gradual progression from one historical period to another, the Sayisi Dene were catapulted into 20th century western society and left to adapt as best they could.

The first two "snapshots" relate to the pre-European-contact period. The term "unrestricted" is used to illustrate the freedom of movement that the Sayisi Dene had across their traditional lands, unencumbered by demands of the fur trade. It also includes the fact that the people had no outside restrictions imposed on them. Resource management was self-regulated. Archaeological evidence for cultural adaptation due to external forces is minimal. Evidence for trade between Taltheilei (Sayisi Dene) and Dorset/Thule (progenitors of the Inuit) has not been determined, although it probably existed (Janes 1973). N. Denecheze stated that he remembered hearing that the Dene used to trade with the Inuit for their ulus and dogs in exchange for drums and meat (N.

**TABLE 3. THE EFFECTS OF CHANGING VARIABLES ON THE SAYISI DENE
SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY**

Time Period	Natural Resource Base	Kinship Organization	Means of Production	Effects on the Subsistence Economy
Precontact A.D. 500 ²⁶	Reliable & unrestricted resource base	Bilateral (?) Traditional	Precontact technology	Maintenance of subsistence system with gradual cultural change
- A.D. 1714	Unreliable & unrestricted resource base	Bilateral? Traditional	Precontact technology	Shifts in the seasonal round with minor adjustments to environmental factors
Fur	Reliable & unrestricted resource base	Bilateral? Traditional	Change in Means of Production (e.g. introduction of gun)	Cultural & socio-economic changes in response to external forces
Trade 1714	Reliable & unrestricted resource base	Restructured kinship (e.g. small pox epidemic)	Adaptation of European technology	Social reorganization and continued cultural & socio-economic change
- 1870	Unreliable resource base	Restructured but stable kinship	As above	Environmental adaptation and adjustments to subsistence system
	Reliable but restricted resource base	As above	As above	Environmental adaptation and adjustments to subsistence system Introduction of mixed economy
Government Intervention 1870- present	Unreliable & restricted resource base	As above	As above	Mixed-subsistence economy. Wage economy. Social assistance
	Continued unreliable & restricted resource base	Disintegration of kinship system	Restriction to the means of production	Social dysfunction. System destruction. Dependence on social assistance

²⁶

The date 500 A.D. is based on evidence of Middle Taltheilei cultural occupations identified by Nash's (1975) archaeological investigations. To date, there is no evidence of Early Taltheilei (ca 500 B.C.) in northern Manitoba (B. Gordon personal communication, 1997).

Denecheze , personal communication, 1998). It is difficult to determine how much inter-ethnic relationships, such as trade, existed between groups prior to European contact (see also Jones 1989).

Southern Indian Lake artifact analysis presently underway at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature may shed some light on the Taltheilei/Selkirk relationship. No pre-European-contact Selkirk pottery has been found to date in the Sayisi Dene study area north of the Churchill River. This suggests that trade with, or movement into the area by, the Cree may have limited.

The introduction of European trade goods, for example, the gun via Hudson Bay set the stage for initial socio-economic change for the Sayisi Dene. This had a major impact on inter-Native relationships as well as resource use.

The second event which nearly decimated the Sayisi Dene was disease. According to Hearne, the smallpox epidemic of the 1780s, which swept across the land, may have reduced the Dene by 9/10th of the original population. Entire families vanished. Those who survived regrouped and formed new family units.

A certain degree of stabilization occurred after the introduction of the gun and the outbreak of smallpox. Environmental adaptation was minimal as bands of Sayisi Dene continued their seasonal round as before. However, the number of people required to carry out certain subsistence activities was greatly reduced. This was influential in reducing the spatial area of the seasonal round.

Continued interaction and trade with the Hudson's Bay Company did not greatly affect the Sayisi Dene. They continued to follow their seasonal round. Some did look to a mixed economy as a result of their role as Homeguard Chipewyan to the Hudson's Bay Company at Churchill. Much later, the introduction of registered traplines and government legislations reduced accessibility to some resources, but because the Sayisi Dene were always out on the land, these legislations meant little to them.

CHAPTER NINE

WHEN GRIEF BECOMES TRAUMA

The relocation of the Sayisi Dene from Little Duck Lake to Churchill can be viewed as one of the most grievous mistakes made by the Canadian federal government. The move was ill-conceived and poorly planned, and resulted in cultural despair and traumatic shock.

For many, the Churchill years are a blurred memory of sadness, terror and despondency. Elders describe a lost generation; a brutal severing from a productive past. The memories of the Elders of a time before the relocation are pattered with recollection, nostalgia and grief for what might have been. Each member of the Sayisi Dene First Nation has been affected by the relocation, directly or indirectly.

Grieving for a Lost Homeland

In his study "Grieving for a Lost Home", Fried concluded that "...one of the most important components of the grief reaction is the fragmentation of the sense of spatial identity" (1963:168). His study brought to light an aspect of change that was ignored in previous studies, that the relocation of people from a habitual physical setting invoked a sense of grief amongst members of the former community. The rate of recovery from grief, he discovered was, in part, dependent on the degree of attachment to the habitual physical setting. As Fried suggested the attachment to the habitual physical setting was not limited to the familiarity of place, but was also a product of the cognitive construct created by cultural association.

Relocation then can have serious repercussions, not just because people have to familiarize themselves with a new physical setting, but they also have to make the mental adjustments to their cognitive map in an effort to maintain continuity.

For the Sayisi Dene, the move to Churchill from Little Duck Lake was not just a change in habitual physical setting, it was a traumatic change in social expectations. In fact it could be stated that it nearly destroyed the very fabric of Sayisi Dene life. Ancient patterns which had been adapted over thousands of years of interaction with a particular physical setting were no longer useful in the foreign milieu into which they were thrown. A way of life which had dedicated itself to the biological rhythm of the caribou was suddenly dropped into the 24 hour schedule of government bureaucrats.

Spatial Identity - A Definition

You see this land up here, that's Dene land. We use all the land, it was given to us by our ancestors, by our grandfathers...the caribou, the fish, the birds, they were all given to us. We wanted a reserve here... (Betsy Anderson, personal communication, 1992]

Spatial identity can be viewed as a statement of self. It incorporates social and physical variables, such as social organization, geographic mobility, and resource availability, which work together to create a sense of order and relationships. It is the product of a cognitive process, which has to do with knowing, perceiving, recognizing, thinking, conceiving, judging and reasoning, of ordering and interacting with the habitual physical environment. Spatial identity then, is the reality of the physical space interpreted and structured in specific terms of cultural understanding.

An important aspect of spatial identity is the ability to adapt to changes. Adaptation is seen as a means to regulate the maintenance system of the cultural group. This is usually accomplished through assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is described as "...the process of changing what is perceived so that it fits present cognitive structures...", while accommodation refers to "...the process of changing the cognitive structures so that they fit what is perceived" (Gage and Berliner 1979:152). Adaptation then, is the result of assessment; it is a system of checks and balances, of weighing costs and benefits; it is a recovery of homeostasis through the interplay of assimilation and accommodation. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide an analysis of the cognitive process behind adaptation, it is worth mentioning in order to appreciate the Sayisi Dene cognitive schema as it relates to their sense of spatial identity.

Piaget (1952) believed that the two cognitive structures, assimilation and accommodation evolved during the childhood developmental process as a function of experience. While Piaget's theory is concerned with the developmental process in children, it does have implications for understanding human behavior in general, and adaptation to new circumstances in particular. The way in which adult humans assimilate and accommodate change may be dependent on the cumulative effects of experiences acquired during the developmental stages. As Strauss and Quinn (1994) suggest, while schemas are "...guided by previously learned patterns of associations..." (accumulated experience), there is a sense of improvisation based on individual disposition. An event, such as relocation, could then affect people within the same cultural group to varying degrees, with the more serious repercussions occurring amongst people who have never had their spatial identity challenged by such

a foreign concept.

Relocation is seen as a disruptive force which breaks the continuity of routine and causes fragmentation of spatial identity. With this in mind, the degree of grief caused by relocation, as described by Fried (1963), and later, Marris (1974), may be dependent on the intensity of relationship with one's spatial identity. Marris used the concept of "conservatism" to explain the nature of grief and instinct for survival. He hypothesized that the "...impulse to defend the predictability of life is a fundamental and universal principle of human psychology...an aspect of our ability to survive any situation, for without continuity we cannot interpret what events mean to us, nor explore new kinds of experience with confidence" (Marris 1974:2). He further stated "The will to adapt to change has to overcome an impulse to restore the past..." (Marris 1974:5).

People long for the old way of life because of the sense of familiarity it provides. Change which is incremental and is woven into the daily routine of life has less chance of disrupting the status quo than change which is sudden, and imposed. When adaptive abilities are threatened, grieving occurs. When grief is not reconciled, trauma results.

Studies such as Erikson's (1976) of the Buffalo Creek disaster and Shkylnik's (1985) of the Grassy Narrows relocation illustrate the repercussions of uncontrolled trauma. The "individual" and "collective" traumas as identified by Erickson (1976), result from two types of disasters or conditions, acute and chronic which produce varying degrees of stress and which are often masked by a number of social and psychological disorders. Acute sources of stress

reveal themselves in the form of physical and mental agony from unexpected social and environmental disruptions. Shock waves associated with this form of assault are devastating in that they are immediately destructive. Chronic stress is more subtle. It is an ongoing destructive process that eats at the very fabric of the community. It erodes the bonds of kinship and social organization, severing ties with the past which have maintained the system. It manifests itself in the types of conditions which faced the Sayisi Dene in Churchill, such as poverty, unemployment and homelessness. Chronic stress cannot be healed with band aid solutions, or overnight.

I was walking down the back lane by the old Churchill Hotel, well, I was more or less staggering because I was drunk. I saw my daughter rummaging around in the garbage and I asked her what she was doing. She said she was looking for food. I broke down and cried. [Anonymous(1) 1992]

For the Sayisi Dene, the relocation from Little Duck Lake to Churchill in 1956 can be analyzed, in part, in terms of long term collective trauma resulting from “fragmentation of the sense of spatial identity”. Relocation was more than removal from habitual physical setting, it was removal from habitual social, economic and cultural settings.

Until the time of relocation, the Sayisi Dene incorporated an array of universal physical attributes, such as distance, size, shape, location, resource availability, into their understanding of space. These socio-spatial units “...reflected a kind of organizational flexibility that is widespread among the Northeastern Athapaskan groups. It is an organization that allows rapid concentrations and dispersions of people over large areas and, simultaneously, fluid reshuffling of personnel through bilateral linkages” (Jarvenpa and

Brumbach 1988:612). Irimoto (1981) alluded to this same socio-spatial organization amongst the Hatchet Lake Chipewyan. This “flexibility” in social organization was no doubt an adaptive trait which resulted from the unpredictable migratory routes of the barren ground caribou. At the community level, socio-spatial organization reflected kinship ties. For example, houses or tents were spaced far enough apart to grant privacy, yet close enough to provide assistance when needed. This all changed in Churchill.

When we lived at Little Duck Lake we didn't live like we did in Churchill. Our homes were scattered all over the place, but we knew where everyone was. In Churchill we were all lined up and our homes had big windows. Everyone passing by could look in and see what we were doing. We had no privacy, we had no curtains [Alice Solomon, Tadoule Lake 1992].

The Sayisi Dene were placed in an environment which was physically, socially and culturally foreign to them. They were boxed into a tiny living area with people who were not their kin, or former neighbours. Social rules of behavior which prevailed at Little Duck Lake, and out on the barren grounds were not acceptable as they were not functional in Churchill. Kinship obligations were not possible to uphold in the traditional sense. People were disorientated. They were bewildered and unable to orientate themselves.

Probably the most devastating outcome was the feelings of guilt and helplessness that parents experienced in not being able to provide for their children.²⁷ Alcohol helped to sooth the array of emotions that the people had

²⁷

Tom Fortin recalled the beautiful beaded jackets of the men, the well-made clothing of the children and the bells and ribbons on dog teams from Little Duck Lake (T. Fortin, personal communication, 1998)

never before experienced. In some ways it appears that people punished themselves for not being able to properly care or protect their families. The numbing sensation of alcohol was a temporary escape from the reality of life at Churchill.

The federal government tried to come to terms with the situation they had created by establishing short term development programs. Community development officers were frustrated by the lack of government commitment to programs which, if they had been long term, may have reinstated some sense of accomplishment and pride amongst the Sayisi Dene. However, it was difficult for these officers to get a full commitment from either side. Community development officers focused on economic and social development, the cultural underpinnings of Sayisi Dene life were never evaluated. As Koolage stated, the problem with these earlier studies of the Sayisi Dene was that the researchers were looking for "...a whole culture--integrated and organized--according to traditional models...they found only pieces (Koolage 1967:19). Erikson (1976) provided an interesting observation about the anthropological approach to cultural studies which supported Koolage's earlier observations. He stated that because anthropologists were so eager "...to understand the heart of the culture, they focused on the stabilities rather than the instabilities... (Erikson 1976:80). This may explain why the short-term anthropological studies labeled the Sayisi Dene as "deculturated and disorganized" (Koolage 1967). If they had examined the cultural instabilities within Sayisi Dene life at Churchill, they may have understood that the people were demoralized and disorientated, and suffering from the effects of long-term trauma.

The long-term trauma is linked to what the Sayisi Dene collectively remember. Roth (1995) has suggested that forgetting and sudden recall are the instruments of anxiety. The pain and grief of the uprooting from a safe, secure and productive habitual setting has been compounded by the pain and grief of cultural disorientation, demoralization and humiliation wrought by the Churchill years. For the Dene, memories of a painful past, temporarily muffled by alcohol, continue to resurface, and an interminable loop of further pain has created startling rifts in the present-day community.

Forty years after their relocation many of the people who were interviewed stated that they still missed their old homes at Little Duck Lake. Chronic depression, alcoholism, and physical abuse were the most prominent memories people had of their days in Churchill. As one elder stated, *"I left my heart at Little Duck Lake, at Churchill...I don't remember much because I was usually drunk. I know I cried a lot"* (Anonymous (1), Tadoule Lake 1992).

CHAPTER TEN

THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Housing and Utilities

The community is located on the northern edge of Tadoule Lake, on the side of an esker. The head of the eroding esker has created a sand isthmus which joins a large island to the mainland. Part of the settlement is located on the island.

The original settlement pattern and distribution of houses reflects the traditional spatial distribution of houses based on kinship patterns, where families and extended families are within close walking distance. Interestingly, this pattern was also observed at Oxford House in 1987 and explained in much the same manner (A. Hart, personal communication, 1987). Housing on the "island" which is more recent, is more in line with standard community planning. This may be interpreted as adaptation to western society and a decrease in the importance of kinship obligations.

There are no roads into the community of Tadoule Lake. Access is by air plane only, and two airlines have daily scheduled flights. A winter road is built each January at great expense and risk, and construction is dependent on the weather conditions. Community roads are problematic because of unstable sandy esker. They tend to wash out after each rain, leaving deep gullies and holes visible. Since 1987, many of the original log cabins (Figure 20) have been removed and replaced elsewhere with small bungalows (Petch, personal observation, 1987,1992,1994). The smaller houses are around 200 square feet. These are the homes of the Elders. Larger, three bedroom houses are modest in design,

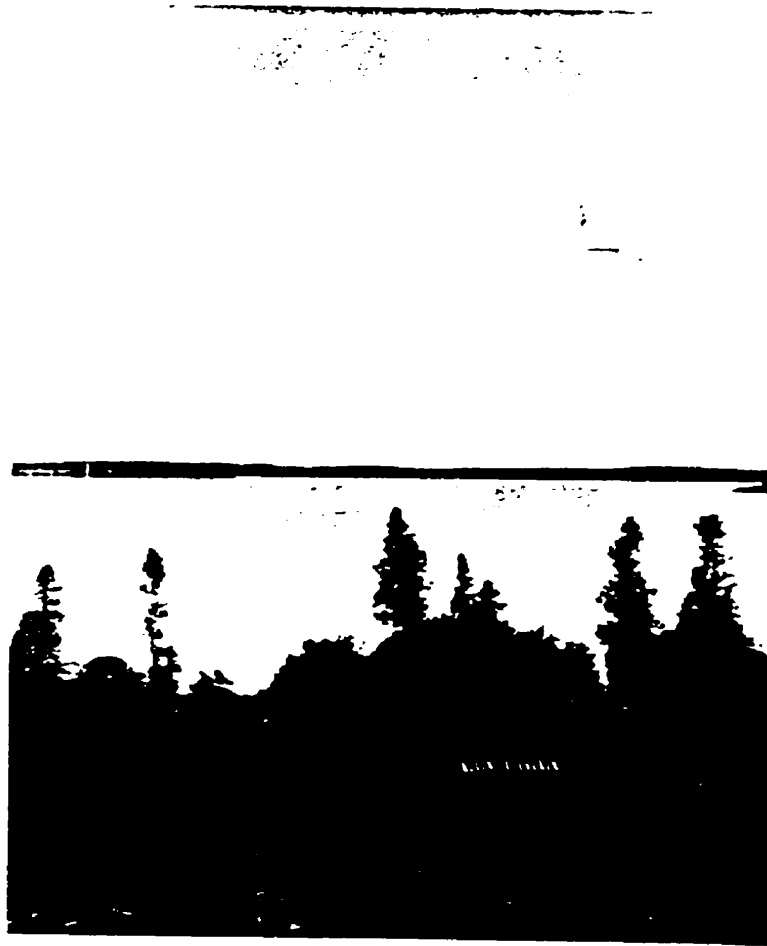


Figure 20. A log cabin under construction in 1973. This cabin was torn down in 1993 (V. Petch, personal observation 1993). (Photograph courtesy of Dr. W. "Skip" Koolage).

average 750 square feet in size and are inadequately insulated for the extreme northern winters. Many of the houses are unfinished. Some lack interior trim, others have plywood sub- floor, others are not painted. Many of the Elders homes need repair.

Electricity is provided by Manitoba Hydro diesel generators. Formerly, the station was located in the centre of the community and created a constant "white noise". A new station was constructed away from the community in an area adjacent to the airport. The new generator has increased the amperage available to each household to 60 amps. Previously all systems were 12 amps, except government facilities. Households now can have both an electric fridge and stove, plus run other small electrical appliances. However, according to former Chief Ernie Bussidor, only 5% of the people have converted. The new electricity rates are expensive and the people cannot afford to convert to the new amperage, or pay the increased rates (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1994). Additionally, most people cannot afford to purchase refrigerators or electric stoves.

In 1992 no community sewer or water system was in place. The nursing station, the Manitoba Hydro staff house, the airport and school were the only buildings which had suitable water and waste facilities. A few homes had flush toilets and holding tanks for waste. Some families had chemical toilets, while others used outdoor latrines. Water was trucked to houses regularly, but the vehicle was prone to breakdown, causing periodic hardships. Water was heated on the stove, although some residents had a heating coil which was inserted in a container of water for washing clothes and bathing. The community of Tadoule Lake has recently begun the installation of a sewage and water system.

Most of the homes are heated with wood which is cut by household members and hauled home. The use of wood to heat homes is an ongoing winter activity. Large quantities of wood do not appear to be stored up to last the entire winter. Most of the areas where wood is cut are increasingly farther away from the community and hauling is an expensive activity. Ski-doo's have replaced dogs for hauling, although some community members are considering using dogs again. This is because the price of gasoline is about \$10/gal.

There is no volunteer fire department for the community. A portable pump and equipment is available for forest fires. House fires are not as frequent as in other northern Aboriginal communities, but when they occur the house is usually burned down. Additionally, recent forest fires caused a great deal of stress on the community, as firewood and animal habitat was destroyed.

There is no regular garbage pickup. Former Chief Ernie Bussidor stated that this is really needed. Community clean-up projects occur each spring, but the collected garbage is soon replaced by new refuse.

A new band hall was constructed and is near completion. The washrooms have not been installed. Additionally, the Band is planning an Elders' home, a four-plex with central heating.

The old Band Office was converted into a small motel, but out-of-town visitors who used this facility stated that it was more of a drop-in centre for community members and there was very little privacy (Anonymous (4), Winnipeg, 1996).

Social services have gradually increased since the move in 1973.

Unfortunately, so have the social problems. Initially the community was "...a quiet, peaceful place. There is no police force and none is needed." (Bruemmer 1977:7). However, the completion of an airstrip in 1987 opened the door to illicit drugs and alcohol. The Reserve is officially "dry", but Band council members note that the community has a serious drug and alcohol problem.

A nursing station is located at the centre of the community and contract nurses and a visiting doctor and dentist look after the health needs of the people. Med-Evac is available as needed. No traditional healer is present in the community, but several years ago, one did visit the community and provided services for a number of people.

Instruction in Dene language and syllabics and traditional activities is part of the curriculum. A small school with annex trailers has been replaced with a large, modern school in which students can complete Grade 12. However, many students move to Thompson either to repeat Grade 12, or complete additional credits which are not offered in Tadoule Lake. One of the concerns of the community is the present lack of discipline displayed by students who attend school out of town. Few students are graduating from high school or pursuing post-secondary education. Homesickness is one of the main reasons for this (A. Thorassie, personal communication, 1992).

The community continues to attend the Anglican Church. A minister occasionally visits the community, but most Sundays, Thomas Duck, a lay reader with the Church conducts the services..

Recreation Activities

The community is lacking in recreational facilities and organized activities. In the winter, children skate and play scrub hockey and slide. Ski-dooing is limited because of the high price of gas. In the summer, many people use ATV's to travel around the community. However, most people walk to their destinations.

Some traditional activities take place, although several Elders expressed the desire to pass on certain skills and knowledge to the younger generation attending school. In the summer the children swim, fish and hang about. A provincial summer swim program is now non-existent due to provincial cutbacks. Satellite T.V. figures prominently in the lives of most people and most homes have colored T.V.'s and VCR's.

Bingo is the centre of adult social life, as it is in most northern communities, and this occurs almost every evening. Only a death in the community is reason to cancel bingo. One traditional gaming activity that is making a comeback is *udzi*, the handgame (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1992). This ancient tradition is popular especially with the young men. Chanting, dream songs and drumming are also being relearned as the people become less self-conscious about their identity. The pan-Indian movement has been a positive reinforcement in the re-establishment of self-esteem and ethnic identity, although some members are concerned that they will lose their Sayisi Dene culture to a more generalized "Indian" culture (C. Bjorklund, personal communication, 1996).

Two stores and an informal cafe operate in the community. Because all goods

must be flown into the community, which results in exceptionally high prices. A part time taxi service also serves local transportation needs.

Many of the older and some younger women continue to produce a variety of leather and beaded goods. The old hand-turned Singer sewing machines are still used and are considered the most efficient method of working with leather. M. Jones related a story of her father buying her mother a sewing machine in Churchill 1920s. This was carted back and forth across the barren grounds several times. M. Jones now possesses her mother's sewing machine (M. Jones, personal communication, 1992).

Soapstone carvings and paintings are produced in small quantities. These skills could be further developed. No one in the community makes snow shoes and babiche-making is becoming a lost art.

Greenhouse experimentation under the Manitoba Indian Agricultural Development Corporation was somewhat successful, but short-lived. Vandalism discouraged attempts to produce fresh vegetables for the community.

Some families still go out on the trapline, but as noted, the price of gas has been greater than the price of furs making such forays unprofitable. Several people stated that they and their families would go out more often if the price of gas was lower. Re-introducing sled dogs has been considered by several people.

The caribou hunt is still central to community life. Today, community hunts are planned and large aircraft chartered. The meat is then distributed

throughout the community. When the caribou pass in front of the village, the pulse of the community quickens and hunters swarm on to the ice with their snowmachines.

The Economic Base

Contrary to Skoog and MacMillans's (1991) analysis, the economic base of the Band is not the same as it was 40 years ago. Forty years ago money was of little value to the community. Any necessities not procured from the environment, were obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company post on credit. Furs, country produce and casual labor paid for these goods. Several changes in Hudson's Bay Company accounting procedures, policy and exchange systems between 1820 and 1940 gradually eased the Sayisi Dene towards a monetary system. In the 1920s a set of tokens representing "made beavers", the standard of fur trade, further introduced the Sayisi Dene to the concept of symbolic value. Additionally, community members who worked in Churchill seasonally understood the meaning of money, although its value in terms of payment, was perhaps less understood. Forty years ago making a living meant providing for one's family through a thorough knowledge of the environment and expertise in hunting and trapping.

Today the community relies mainly on transfer payments to sustain itself economically. There is little opportunity for employment, except when a construction project is underway. Some seasonal employment is available at Nejanilini Lake Lodge about 70 kilometres north of Tadoule Lake. Because the community has no road access and is far from potential markets, economic development has little opportunity for growth. A winter road was built in 1993-94 with good results. Recently, community members have taken over the

construction of the winter road, and have chosen a new and possibly safer, route. Fur prices are lower than that of gas, making any traditional activity an expensive endeavor. The Band would like to develop new economic opportunities but not forget the traditional activities. However, many necessary skills have yet to be mastered. Most of the construction jobs available for the building of the school will be given to "southerners", those with trade papers. The manual labor jobs will be filled by community members.

The Band has tried to diversify. Commercial fishing was considered, but again, distance from market overruled the project's viability. The Band also looked to, and continues to consider, developing a fishing lodge, possibly on Shethanei Lake. An established lodge on Munroe Lake was also recently considered. The possibility of joint partnership with an American whitewater rafting company was explored in August, 1994, but the community was hesitant to partner with an American, based on past experiences. The Band is also looking at the possibility of operating a healing centre and retreat.

The Long-term Effects of the Relocation

There are many silent stories of abuse and pain. As one Band member stated,

the Elders may pass on and take with them the actual pain of the relocation, but the pain is still with the community. It is in the way everything is conducted. We are like a ship without a rudder. Every time we try to get something started, we come up against 'whiteman's' bureaucracy. Our kids are becoming just as frustrated and confused as we are (Anonymous(2), Tadoule Lake, 1994).

Band members who were children during the Churchill years cannot forget the terror that they once experienced as they watched their parents and other

family members struggle and fail to survive the relocation. One band member described how she had been sexually abused by the same man over a period of years. She described the horror and shame, and the painful attempt to block this from her mind. She described how her parents were killed in an alcohol-related house fire, and how she wandered aimlessly for many years. She believes that in order to begin the healing process she must tell her story and many others must follow suit (Anonymous(3), Tadoule Lake, June 1994).

Many of the community members feel that they were denied the opportunity to be enculturated as Dene. This, coupled with the pain and bitterness of broken promises, has left many community members in a state of limbo. As one male community member stated, "I can't settle into a relationship, I can't stay in one place...I think it goes back to the Churchill days" (Anonymous (5), Winnipeg, October, 1992). Most of the younger generation, that is, those from ages 1-15, do not know the sequence of events that led to the settlement of Tadoule Lake. They do not understand the physical and mental trauma endured by their parents and grandparents.

In 1989, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry heard evidence of the social despair of the community (Aboriginal Justice Inquiry 1989), but this did little to raise public awareness or government interest.

Community Concerns

The community is very concerned with present environmental conditions in the northern transitional forest and barren grounds with respect to caribou habitat. Community members believe that both the federal and provincial governments have little understanding or interest in the well-being of the

caribou, let alone the well-being of the community. One community member stated

The Caribou Management Board (CMB) should actually be classed as Caribou Depletion Board (CDP). As it is seemingly not concerned with managing the caribou range. Right now as I write, there are numerous fires going in every direction. Emergency Measures Offices, Natural Resources and the police have been notified, but it continues to rage out of control. If government cannot make money off of the land it is not considered a priority. Therefore it seems fair to say that CMB is not managing the caribou habitat. It has two main functions: 1) The harvest data collection agency, and 2) Border Patrol. Therefore it should be called Caribou Depletion Patrol (CDP) [not Caribou Management Board] (Anonymous(6), personal communication, June, 1994)

This type of statement reflects the frustration of community members who make every effort to adhere to provincial game regulations. It appears to people in the community that as long as a money-making lodge, merchantable timber, hydro facility or community is not in danger, the forest is allowed to be destroyed. The habitat of the many animals, especially the caribou, and subsistence resource base of the people are not considered a priority. Natural resource officers, on the other hand, are restricted by tight budgets and provincial policy regarding renewable resources.

The Sayisi Dene are concerned that when the caribou return to their wintering grounds many will starve or fall victim to predators. With habitat destroyed, there is a great chance that the caribou will move further away from the Sayisi Dene.

When there is enough money, community hunts are held. A large plane is

chartered and a small group of hunters harvest a large number of caribou. These are gutted at the kill site and the carcasses taken back to the community and distributed to the various families.

The Elders tell a story of physical and cultural survival in a land that is not kind. As one Elder stated "...life was hard, but it was good...now life is easy, but it is not good" (E. Anderson, personal communication 1992).

Summary

The relocation to Churchill removed the Little Duck Lake Band away from their subsistence base and restricted their mobility. In their first winter at North River, they were limited in transportation, their boats having been abandoned at Little Duck Lake. Living quarters were inadequate. Animal resources were quickly depleted. There were insufficient food rations and no caribou for food or clothing. The Sayisi Dene had no money. The credit system which they were accustomed to was no longer available. Most of their means of production were gone. The people were confused as to why they had been moved in the first place. The promise made by Ragan for a better life was not evident to them at North River. Certainly, if it was the intention of Indian Affairs to bring the people closer to medical and educational services, it is difficult to understand why were they left at North River, which is only accessible by air, boat or dogteam. It appears from correspondence, that once the people were secured at North River, they were literally on their own. This situation was no different from their former settlement at Little Duck Lake, but it was without the familiar and reliable resource base.

There is no evidence to suggest that those who worked seasonally at Churchill

encouraged the newcomers to try the seasonal wage economy, although they may have set an example. The Canadian government had promised to look after the Sayisi Dene. Social assistance was available if needed. However, this assistance came in the form of food vouchers, not in the form of badly needed training and education.

The dilemma of the "squatters" formerly located at the site of the National Harbor's Board petrol tank farm, and seasonal workers resulted in continued restricted mobility. People were allowed to set up seasonal camps in certain places only. Sayisi Dene and federal regional Indian Affairs officials' suggestions for camp and housing locations were rejected by the Province and federal Indian Affairs Welfare office in Winnipeg. This rejection placed the Sayisi Dene on the very outskirts of Euro-Canadian society. Housing was temporary, inadequate and overcrowded. Health and safety conditions were appalling and protective measures non-existent. The natural resource base at Churchill was even poorer than that at North River. By the mid-1960s, social assistance became a form of dependency as country produce intake was restricted by legislation and smaller allowances of ammunition. The military base and frontier mentality of the town did not contribute positively to the Sayisi Dene's attempt to adapt to a foreign culture. A few concerned citizens in the town did try to assist the people, but also became frustrated when forced to deal the bureaucratic maze of Indian Affairs.

The cumulative effects of adverse change to the availability of the natural resource base, means of production and kinship worked together to cause social dysfunction and behavior which was perceived by the Euro-Canadian residents of Churchill as maladaptive. Because the Sayisi Dene had minimal

contact with government up until 1956, and because social impact assessments were unknown, officials had no idea as to how the people would respond to "externally-imposed" change. The people themselves did not know how they would respond, nor were they instructed or cautioned by Indian Affairs as to what they might expect in Churchill. As a result, neither side was prepared for the social despair that resulted.

Mixed-subsistence economies respond to different changes in a variety of ways. Natural environmental changes such as a forest fire or cyclical decline of an animal resource were, and still are to some degree, accommodated through shifts in the direction of the seasonal round. Alternate areas of resource harvesting were usually available. Imposed restrictions to access to the resources however, had a deleterious effect on the maintenance of the overall subsistence system which included the well-being of the group. While adaptation (sometimes negative) to imposed change did occur, there were limits or point beyond which the social group was unable to cope or respond to sudden or cumulative change.

The relocation of the Sayisi Dene reduced their opportunity to adjust gradually to a foreign system. Additionally, Sayisi Dene world view was not taken into account. No attempt by government officials to understand or record their environmental knowledge and ecological values was made.

If the Sayisi Dene community had not left Churchill when they did, it is doubtful that they could have survived as a distinct cultural group. They would have integrated in a marginal manner to the larger society or have been destroyed.

People today are still not sure why they were moved and continue to search for answers. The inability of some community members who were part of the relocation to tie together the series of events of the first few weeks of relocation, suggests a rapid and emotionally confusing move. The air flight, the temporary camp at Churchill, the move to North River, and gradual drifting back to Churchill are blurred in the memories of many Elders. The promise for a new life turned out to be a costly trick, both for the people and the government. Children were robbed of the opportunity to be enculturated into Sayisi Dene culture. Loss of ethnic identity greatly affected those who are now in their 30s and 40s. As such, the community of Tadoule Lake struggles to come to terms with its past.

Who is to Blame?

There are three groups who at least share responsibility for the destruction of one of the last successful subsistence cultural groups in Canada: the federal government, the provincial government of Manitoba and the Hudson's Bay Company.

The Provincial government Game Branch was paradoxically present and absent in the document research. Conservation officers with their own agendas appear to have created enough of a concern with the scientific and government communities to have caused the relocation. No resource management explanations or training were made available to the people, except when the Conservation officers needed people to poison the wolves. Today, people in the community of Tadoule Lake believe that there is little concern about caribou management or any other kind of resource management, except to make sure that all government-imposed regulations are adhered to

(Anonymous (4), Tadoule Lake, 1994).

The Federal government, namely Indian Affairs, seems to have had a contradictory policy in place. While it appears that the reason for the move was to bring the people closer to government services, they were not incorporated into the town, but left to fend for themselves 75 kilometres from Churchill in a resource situation which could not support the increase in human population. Hasty decisions, poor planning, possibly inadequately trained and overworked community staff, abrupt ending of programs and remote decision-making contributed to setting the stage for cultural trauma.

The people of Tadoule Lake believe that the Hudson's Bay Company manipulated the people and attempted to make trappers out of people who were mainly concerned with caribou and making a living off the land. When fur production and fur prices were down, the Company's solution was to pull out and move elsewhere. The Hudson's Bay Company entertained the possibility of an outpost at North River. It is not clear why they would want to incur the expense of setting up a new store, when that at Little Duck Lake was considered to be so unprofitable.

It is known that a great deal of communication transpired amongst the three groups. However, this correspondence may have met the same fate as the records of Caribou Post at Little Duck Lake. Documents at Caribou Post were burned on order from head office in Winnipeg (RG3/73/a, August 24, 1956).

Additionally, the Provincial government was unwilling to set aside lands for the Federal government for the purpose of Reserves. These delays were also instrumental in weakening the fabric of Sayisi-Dene society.

Many of the Sayisi Dene believe that until the federal government apologizes for its past wrongs against the community, the grieving will continue. The Sayisi Dene want closure on the past.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made during discussions with a number of people living in the community, and at a Band meeting held at Tadoule Lake on June 24, 1994 (Petch 1995). During this last meeting the results of the relocation study were presented. The following recommendations made by the community members.

1. An apology to the Sayisi Dene by the federal and provincial governments for the social injustices caused to them due to the lack of foresight and planning on the part of Indian Affairs.
2. Acknowledgement of traditional lands and cultural values by the federal government.
3. A thorough investigation of the southern boundary of Nunavut. Recognition of the Sayisi-Dene traditional land-use areas within the Southern Keewatin District.
4. A thorough interpretation of Adhesions to Treaty 5.
5. Many community members want a retreat centre with support staff to assist them in the healing process. Bitterness over the past wrongdoings, plus the emotional and physical scars of social injustices have not allowed the Sayisi

Dene to heal. The Sayisi Dene want to make their own decisions related to cultural change. Conflicting values have left many people unsure of who they are, and where they fit in²⁸.

6. Co-management of natural resources and a commitment on the part of federal and provincial governments to provide knowledge and learning opportunities to community members.

7. Financial assistance and planning for those who wish to establish business ventures which require a substantial financial output.

8. Opportunities for employment and training within northern industries such as Manitoba Hydro, Inco, and the various gold-mines. These opportunities should be fashioned after those in the mining industry in northern Saskatchewan (e.g. Cameco, Cigar Lake). Indian Affairs, Employment Canada and the various education agencies should work together with industry to identify future needs and provide trades and skilled labor training for community members.

²⁸

See Usher 1993a regarding the social impact assessment process as it has developed since the 1970s.

Addendum

Coupled with the social despair suffered with the Churchill experience is the fact that part of Sayisi Dene traditional lands will be incorporated into the new territory of Nunavut on April 1, 1999. Quite apart from the relocation and Treaty Land Entitlement issues, the boundary of Nunavut has redefined the Manitoba/Northwest Territories boundary in very political terms. The cultural boundary was ignored during the process of defining Nunavut. The Sayisi Dene believe they were tricked and misinformed about the Memorandum of Understanding between the Inuit and Dene of 1986 (Anonymous (3), Tadoule Lake, June 1994). The Dene Nation, based in the Northwest Territories, did not recognize the Manitoba Dene as members of their nation because they were outside the Northwest Territories jurisdiction. The Manitoba Dene were never a part of the political movement towards the formation of the Dene Nation (Asch 1977; Watkins, 1977) and consequently excluded from discussions regarding the formation of Nunavut (Angus 1991). Little consultation with the community, or support by Indian Affairs was given to the Sayisi Dene. Recent memory mapping, which is a procedure for documenting traditional land use with the aid of maps, conducted by MKO(1993), Usher (1990, 1991) and oral history interviews by Petch, as well as historical documentation (Petch 1993), support the Sayisi Dene claim to lands within Nunavut. Negotiations were carried out with no input from the Band. Again, the Sayisi Dene feel cheated and spurned by the very institution that promised to look after them.

In 1992 the Sayisi Dene were recognized by the Dene Nation in the Northwest Territories. Political boundaries have done much to separate Aboriginal

people in the past. However, the community is now able to enjoy some support of a larger body and promote its ethnic identity. However, this recognition may have come too late, as little support was given to the Sayisi Dene in their efforts to voice their claims.

In 1995, Manitoba Department of Natural Resources, designated three new wilderness parks in northern Manitoba, Sand Lake (826,000 ha), Caribou (764,000 ha) and Numaykoos (360,000 ha) (Rick Wilson, personal communication, 1998). All three parks include traditional lands of the Manitoba Dene and Cree. Caribou Park in particular is within the traditional lands of the Sayisi Dene. The community of Tadoule Lake was not consulted about the development of the wilderness parks and was shocked and outraged by the "...continued lack of respect the provincial government has for the Saisis Dene..." (E. Bussidor, personal communication, 1995). Government officials stated that a letter had been sent to the community in the summer of 1994 which invited the community to respond. However, Band office administrators did not remember any correspondence. During the summer of 1994, the community was evacuated twice within one month due to forest fires. Even if correspondence had been received it may have been lost during the evacuation. Additional preserves of land are expected to be designated in the near future (Anonymous (7), Winnipeg, 1998).

Archaeological investigations in the summer of 1998 will be undertaken as part of the Northlands and Sayisi Dene First Nations claims for treaty land entitlements within the newly formed Nunavut territory. As one Band member stated "They may call it Nunavut, but they will get None of It" (J. Thorassie, personal communication, 1994).

APPENDIX A

Recommendations for the Churchill Band as Proposed by W. Hlady in 1960

1. There is a definite need to continue a community development program for the Churchill Band on a long-term basis.
2. There must be a drastic change in the operational policies existing at the level of the local office of the Branch to ensure that every opportunity is given the Chipewyan to develop self-determination and community/band organization. The Indians must do for themselves rather than have the Assistant and others do for them. This is not criticism of the Assistant. It is criticism of the adaptation made of Branch policies and pressures.
3. The film meetings should be continued to help in the accelerating the acculturation of the group, develop group organization and improve the group's knowledge of English. This would hold open an effective means of communication with the group.
4. Employment skills must be increased to take advantage of the considerable employment available locally even if this entails setting up local courses in bulldozer operation, operation of diesel generators and any other limited skills which are in demand in the area.
5. The Soldier Apprentice Plan should be used as a profitable transition for some young men leaving school at age 16 so that trades training can be obtained.
6. Once the building program is completed or in periods when the program is not operating, the warehouse should be used as a Camp 10 community hall.
7. Efforts should be made to have the band council elected at regular intervals rather than being a life-time position as it is now. This would make possible the use of council positions as incentive to members of the group in developing local organization.
8. Every possibility of involving the Band in local organizations should be fostered. An example is the Churchill Arena Association and the possibility of having a Chipewyan on their executive.
9. Every administrative assistance, but no monetary assistance, should be

given to have telephone and power services made available at Camp 10.

10. A program which would construct an ablution hut or full water service should be investigated fully and every effort to bring this service to Camp 10 should be made. This would eliminate the use of snow and ice for drinking water which is an unhealthy practice in such a built-up area. Band funds should be involved in this venture.

11. Some form of agreement should be made with the various Army mess halls to have scraps separated for dog food. The Army should be approached to fence off the garbage dump and this should be out of bounds to all but those who dump refuse there. An organized method of for delivering the scraps is a simple matter and should occasion no difficulty.

12. Favourable public relations and the full use of the local press and radio should be maintained.

13. The experiment with birch bark handicrafts should be carried out as soon as possible.

14. Once telephone service is established in Camp 10, organizational help should be given the Indians to organize the dogteam service including a booking office, poster and newspaper advertising, and "Tourist standard" outfits.

15. The tanning project should be exploited to provide all possible employment. The men must be involved fully for this project to be adequately meaningful.

16. The experiment in sealskin tanning should be given every assistance.

17. Seasonal projects should be observed to ensure that they are used to provide income for the group. In this respect, the Christmas tree project could be expanded as suggested earlier in the text.

18. A program of community development should be continued by participating with the province in a Churchill area project under the new community development department of the province. Otherwise, a provincial program in the area would necessitate a separate program by Indian Affairs Branch if the present position of the Chipewyan is to be improved. A

combined program would be the most efficient and effective in assisting the development of the underdeveloped native groups in the area. A separate authority would not be saddled unnecessarily by the previous policies and practices of existing agencies.

19. Should the sealskin tanning experiment be successful and a steady flow of sealskins for tanning established, the possibility of developing a co-operative to handle the industry should be investigated.

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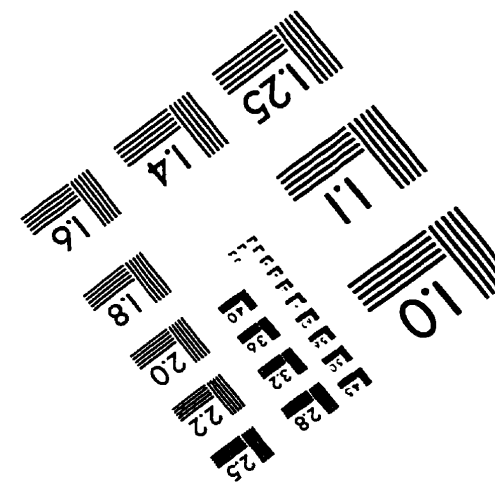
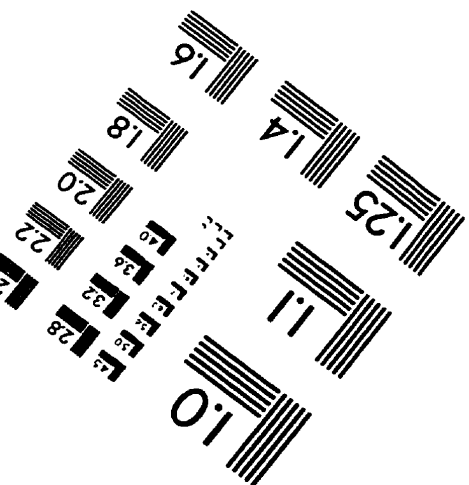
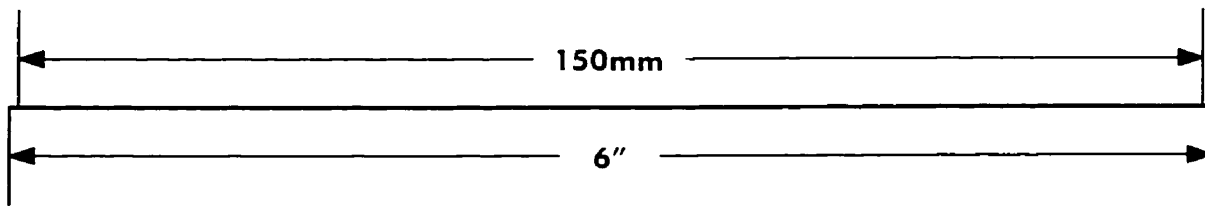
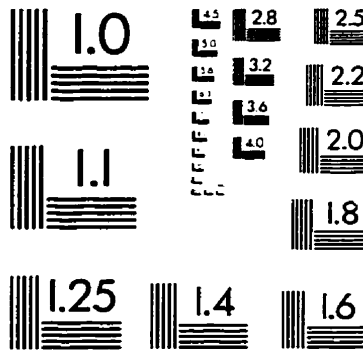
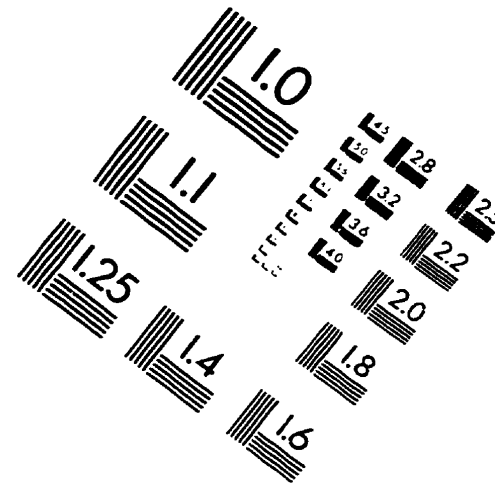
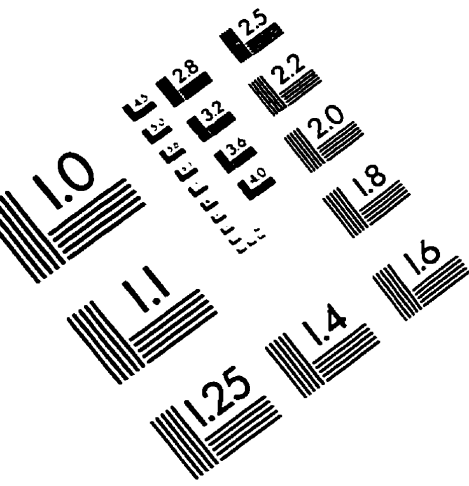
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LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Anonymous	Winnipeg, October, 1992
Anonymous	Tadoule Lake, October, 1992
Anonymous	Tadoule Lake, October, 1992
Anonymous	Tadoule Lake, June, 1994
Anonymous	Tadoule Lake, June, 1994
Anonymous	Telephone (Toronto), June, 1994
Anonymous	Telephone (Winnipeg), May, 1998
Anonymous	Telephone (Winnipeg), June 1998
Anderson, B.	Tadoule Lake, October 16, 1992
Bjorklund, C.	Churchill, August 14, 1996
Bussidor, E.	Tadoule Lake, October 16, 1992
	Winnipeg, June, 1994
	Winnipeg, October, 1997
	Tadoule Lake, July, 1998
Bussidor, G.	Tadoule Lake, October, 1992
Bussidor, I.	Tadoule Lake, June, 1994
Clipping, J.	Tadoule Lake, October 18, 1992
Code, A.	Tadoule Lake, August 26, 1992
Code, M.	Tadoule Lake, October 18, 1992
	Telephone (Tadoule Lake), 1993
	Telephone (Tadoule Lake), June, 1994
Duck, D.	Tadoule Lake, October 16, 1992
Duck, T.	Tadoule Lake, October 16, 1992
Ellis, C.	Edehon Lake, August 27, 1992
Ellis, S.	Tadoule Lake, November 29, 1992
French, N.	Tadoule Lake, October 16, 1992
Fortin, T.	Winnipeg, November, 1997
Gordon, B.	Telephone (Ottawa) September, 1997
Hart, A.	Oxford House, July 2, 1987
Hart, E.	Telephone (Yellowknife), November, 1994
Jones, M.	Tadoule Lake, Nov. 29, 1992
Koolage, W.	Winnipeg, January, 1998
McIntyre, F.	Patuanak, SK, April 19, 1994
Punter, E.	Winnipeg, MB, January 27, 1998
Pruitt, Dr. W.	Winnipeg, April 28, 1994
Schweder, R.	Churchill, November 25, 1996
Solomon, Alice	Tadoule Lake, October 16, 1992
Syms, Dr. E.L.	Winnipeg, October, 1993
Thorassie, A.	Tadoule Lake, October 17, 1992
Thorassie, C	Tadoule Lake, October 17, 1992
Thorassie, J.	Winnipeg, October, 1994

Wilson, R. Winnipeg, May, 1998
General Band Meeting June 24, 1994 Presentation of data to Band.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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