

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

INDIAN--TRADER RELATIONS: AN ETHNOHISTORY OF  
WESTERN WOODS CREE--HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TRADER CONTACT  
IN THE CUMBERLAND HOUSE--THE PAS REGION TO 1840

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of


Master of Arts

in the Individual Interdisciplinary Programme  
(Anthropology, History, Education)

by

Paul Clifford Thistle

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## ABSTRACT

In an attempt to provide an historical and cultural context for contemporary interethnic relations, this study examines the early interaction between the Western Woods Cree and Hudson's Bay Company traders from first contact until 1840.

The ethnohistorical method used to analyse documents from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives reveals that relations up to the end of the period under consideration were symbiotic, not ones characterised by migrant superordination.

The findings demonstrate that, contrary to the widely held interpretation of Indian dependence on the fur trade, the Western Woods Cree were able to maintain control over the relationship and to avoid being inextricably integrated into the mercantilist economic system.

The Western Woods Cree continued, throughout the period, to withdraw from the system at will and to impose their own conditions on their participation.

The explanation for the loss of the Crees' dominant position to the European migrants must come from events after the close of this study in 1840.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Found Poem/Grafitti

white trash got no class  
fucken indian  
same to you white ass

Collaborating Authors Unknown,  
The Pas 1978

#### The Problem

The above epigraph is not as spurious as it first might appear. Anthropologist C. F. Blake (1981) insists that the "archaeology of grafitti" can provide significant insight into the status of interethnic relations. The sentiments expressed above are indeed clear indications of the present attitudes underlying Indian/Euro-Canadian relations in The Pas. Evidence for fundamental conflict is not always confined to washroom walls however.

For documentation of Indian/non-Indian relations in Canada, we need only consult John Porter's (1965) The Vertical Mosaic, Harry B. Hawthorne's (1967) A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada, or DIAND's (Canada: 1981) recent Indian Conditions: A Survey to see that Indians as an ethnic category continue to be relegated to the lowest socioeconomic ranks in society. Despite the

recent contentions of social scientists R. J. Ponting and R. Gibbins (1980:67ff) and James Frideres (1978) for instance that attitudes among Canadians toward Native people are ameliorating, the indications are not all positive. Evidence marshalled by educators G. McDiarmid and G. Pratt (1971); the findings of anthropologists D. H. Stymiest (1975) and P. D. Elias (1975) in settings such as Sioux Lookout and Churchill; as well as the non-Indian attitudes revealed in the Kenora pamphlet Bended Elbow (Jacobson 1975?) point to continuing problems of interethnic prejudice and discrimination which reinforce the socioeconomic deprivation experienced by most Native peoples in Canada. Although prejudice alone cannot explain social inequality (Forbes 1982: 57), basic attitudes are significant contributors to interethnic conflict manifested in contemporary class structure (Allport 1979:15).

Functionalists and positivists to the contrary, many historians and social scientists alike take it as axiomatic that in order to understand contemporary social structure and ethnic relations a knowledge of their historical evolution is necessary (cf. Dobyns 1978: 103; Brislin 1981: 177).<sup>1</sup> In the context of this study, it must therefore be asked, Can the litigation between The Pas Band and the town of The Pas concerning school taxes on band-owned trailer court property be understood without a knowledge of the contentious shifting of reserve land in 1910 from the present town site to land "across the river"? Can this issue be understood

without knowing the details of reserve allocation and treaty negotiations in 1875--1876; or the previous settlement patterns? Can the strong resistance among town businessmen to the development of a large shopping mall "across the river" on the reserve; the 1978 protest over migratory bird hunting rights; the continuing controversy surrounding the use of the Saskeram wildlife area; the 1912 conflict concerning the ceding of land for the railway right of way; or the continuing dissatisfaction of Indian Band members with DIAND administration<sup>2</sup> be explained in isolation from the above sequence? Can any of these relations be clarified without understanding, among other things, the influence of missionary activity among the Cree of the area since 1840 (cf. K. Pettipas 1972; R. McKay 1983), or indeed about the prior Indian/non-Indian relations in the fur trade?

Very simply, the basic contention of this study is that we cannot understand these historic and continuing relations without first comprehending the patterns of initial contact and adjustment; without first establishing an historical and a cultural context for these contemporary socioeconomic relations.

### Purpose

The central purpose of this study therefore arises out of the problem of how to begin to explain contemporary Indian/non-Indian relations in The Pas. If those scholars who maintain that in order to understand modern conditions

we must first understand their historical antecedents are correct, the origin and development of Indian/non-Indian relations over time must become a focus for research. It is <sup>not</sup> only historians such as E. Palmer Patterson (1971:4) and R. J. Shafer (1980:19) who may be expected to hold such a view, but even sociologists such as Pierre Van den Berghe (1970:11-12), R. W. Brislin (1981:11) and J. E. Farley (1982:130) agree.

The purpose of this study is therefore threefold. First, since present interethnic relations in The Pas do not exist in an historical vacuum (although community awareness of this factor may be lacking), a descriptive narrative history will answer the question: What were early relations like and how did they develop? Second, the social scientific end is to test the applicability of generalisations concerning ethnic/race relations with historical data (e.g. Does conflict theory explain early relations?). Third, a more immediately pragmatic purpose is to serve as a resource index for local use, and to promote an analytical model based on modern social theory for the interpretation of contemporary cross-cultural relations in The Pas.

### Scope

The study will focus on relations between Western Woods Cree Indians<sup>3</sup> and European traders in the Cumberland House--The Pas--Grand Rapids corridor from first contact



until 1840. The latter date has been chosen for the termination point of this study since in that year the Church Missionary Society established lay preacher Henry Budd at The Pas, thus introducing important new acculturative forces and effectively ending the exclusive fur trade contact period. In addition, subsequent missionisation of the Cree and later government relations have already received the attention of historians (K. Pettipas 1972; R. McKay 1983; Raby 1972).

The data for this study will be extracted from Hudson's Bay Company documents including a nearly complete set of journals from the Cumberland House post beginning in 1774 through 1840, York Factory journals, as well as various published journals and diaries.

### Significance

Such a study becomes important not only because relations along ethnic/racial lines remain a salient characteristic of modern life in many northern towns like The Pas, but also because the conditions of initial contact as the foundation for continuing relations between Indians and non-Indians have been seriously neglected in the literature to date, especially in the case of the Western Woods Cree (Smith 1981:257). Both anthropologists like Wilcomb E. Washburn (1957:48) and historians such as James Axtell (1975:131) agree with this assessment. Much of the previous scholarship has focussed only on the last century and, as

a result, has really dealt only with the results of prior processes (Bishop 1972:58). Washburn (1961:42) argues that traditional ethnography has interested itself primarily in the Native culture, whereas historians have ignored Indians after the demise of their economic importance [and even before this--cf. Walker (1971) and Knight (1978)]. As a result, the history of the relation itself has been peripheral to the interests of both disciplines. In their approach, sociologists have only recently begun to recognise the value of historical data on ethnic/race relations [other than that on slavery (Noel 1968:172)] which to date has remained largely untapped. (Shibutani and Kwan 1965: 14).

Further, historian Sylvia Van Kirk (1980a:164), in her outline "Fur Trade History: Some Recent Trends", has identified the need for more intensive investigation of Indian/trader relations per se., as distinct from additional fur trade history in the tradition of scholars such as Innis (1956), Rich (1960b) and Ray (1974).

Although Katherine Pettipas (1972) and Raoul J. McKay (1983) have examined the missionisation of the Cree in The Pas region, little if any work has been accomplished on the prior relations with traders. In another relevant study K. Pettipas (1982) focusses mainly on changes in Cree subsistence and settlement patterns. This study will, therefore, help to fill the gaps in the research dealing with interethnic trapper/trader relations beyond the econ-

omically focussed work of Innis, Rich and Ray.

The areal focus for this study will also help to fill the void of research dealing with the Central Subarctic culture area. Scholarly neglect in this region is clearly evidenced by the recent Smithsonian Institution's Handbook of North American Indians: The Subarctic (Helm 1981) where most of the attention [as witnessed by the number of articles and amount of reference material found in the bibliography] is given to Athapaskan and eastern Algonquian groups.

In terms of the significance to social science theory, this study will test a fundamental assumption. R. A. Schermerhorn (1970:195) in his book Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research and M. T. Hodgen (1974:15) in her Anthropology, History and Culture Change have argued that theory developed within modern social contexts cannot be automatically applied to explain historic situations which may in fact lack the structural characteristics assumed for the validity of the theory in question. The predictive, or "retrodictive", power of such theory as applied to historical contexts must be tested. As sociologists E. A. T. Barth and D. L. Noel (1972:335) have asserted for example, conflict theory may not have the importance often ascribed to it with regard to patterns of initial development of interethnic relations. This study will, therefore, help to determine the usefulness of modern theory in an historical context.

In applied terms, this study will also have signifi-

cance for the present situation in The Pas. As a resident of the town one becomes aware that a major factor preventing improved interethnic relations is the continuing lack of knowledge, and attendant misunderstandings, about the historical development of Indian/non-Indian relations in the area. Local Band members and teachers working with the Native Studies curriculum, for instance, have expressed a need for more materials dealing with local ethnography and history. This study will help to provide increased awareness of, and access to, the information available, as well as to establish a model of a balanced approach from the ethnohistorical perspective on cross-cultural relations.

Finally, this study will have usefulness in contrast to the previous work in the field of Indian/non-Indian relations. Several authors such as Washburn (1957), Walker (1971), Sheehan (1980), and Martin (1979) have been critical of previous scholarship.

In the past, accounts of the contact between North American Indians and Europeans have been written to explain, and indeed in some respects to justify, the superordination of the migrants over the aboriginal inhabitants of the New World. The basic question to be asked is: How did Europeans gain their present dominant position?

The traditional answer to this question has been that Indians soon after contact slipped into a subordinate and dependent relationship vis-a-vis the representatives of an implicitly superior European civilisation. Europeans are

said to have quickly destroyed Indian societies, dominating and exploiting them more or less mercilessly according to the particular ideological perspective of the scholar in question (cf. A. G. Bailey 1969:190; 1938:276; Innis 1956:83; Rich 1960b:35; Anderson and Frideres 1981:218-20; Myers 1972:11; Hickerson 1973:23-24; Rothney 1975:25, 114; Knight 1978:20-22).

However, such an approach to Indian/European relations fails to acknowledge the facts of the Europeans' limited adaptive capacity or motivation; and more particularly the realities of Indian initiatives, economic and sociopolitical control over the relationship in its early stages (cf. Drinnon 1980:xiii; Walker 1971:28-30; Bibeau 1981).

One central interpretation in nearly every study of this relationship is the concept of early "dependence"<sup>4</sup> of the Indians--dependence not only on European technology, but on European knowledge, political leadership, and economic organisation as well. Historian Toby Morantz (1980a:39) indicates that the "theme of dependence" is a dominant one in much of past historical treatment of the fur trade relationship.

The approach of modern ethnohistory, on the other hand, brings more balance to the analysis and has led to some important re-interpretations of Indian/European contact relations (Moore 1983). For example, in her work on the East Main Cree of James Bay, Morantz (1980b:70) has found that:

The arrival of Europeans could not have created as great a dependency as historians have led us to believe.

This corresponds in some respects to the findings of other recent studies of Indian/European relations by ethnohistorians such as Trigger (1976), Bishop (1974), Ray (1974), Fisher (1977), Gibson (1978), and Ray and Freeman (1978). These scholars have recognised that the ideas of early European dominance and Indian dependence are essentially myths--misinterpretations, if not a racist approach to history.

The anthropological perspective within the ethnohistorical method creates the strong intuition that Indians did not automatically abandon their own smoothly integrated cultures in response to European stimulus for innovation. This is particularly true in the sociocultural realms of values, beliefs and the essential elements of social organisation which are more deeply embeded in the matrix of core culture than any superficial attachment to lithic or other natural materials vis-a-vis metal, textiles and gunpowder. Nor is it easy for an ethnohistorian to accept that Indians immediately acceded to European control of the situation and allowed themselves to be "forced" into inescapable "dependency" on a role of primary commodity production within the European mercantilist system as many scholars have suggested in one way or another. An understanding of cultural processes precludes such a facile interpretation.

Answers to the basic questions (how relations developed and whether or not Indian dependence occurred quickly) which differ from those traditionally proffered, therefore, will have contemporary significance for the interpretation of continuing Indian/European relations in so far as no modern situation can be explained in an historical vacuum.

### Method

Identification of basic underlying assumptions and processes of the research at the outset is essential for establishing the validity of any study (Stymiest 1975:vii ff.). The following discussion therefore centres on the central process of this study--"ethnohistory"--the idea that a combination of historical and social scientific approaches will produce a more valid picture of the past than history or social science alone.

In the last thirty years there has been an increasing amount of scholarly discussion about the conjunction of history and social science in ethnohistory. This trend is notwithstanding the fact that anthropologists have always used documents and historians have always employed sociological assumptions (however naively on both sides). Nevertheless, it is only quite recently that this methodology has been systematically outlined and rigorously applied (Lurie 1961:80; cf. Lantis 1970:5; Hickerson 1970:6-7; Wilson 1971; Cochran et al. 1954:107).

The major features of nearly all definitions of

ethnohistory stress a foundation in the critical use of historical documentation along with oral, archaeological, linguistic and other ethnographic evidence; a combination of critical techniques for interpreting documents; a synthesis of diachronic and synchronic perspectives; a prime utility in the study of sociocultural change; while focusing on an ethnic group (usually one which is non-literate and therefore ignored in traditional historical efforts) as the unit of analysis. This method, beyond the techniques of historiography (cf. Gottschalk 1969; Shafer 1980; Carr 1961), involves the input of a comparative anthropological view, culture contact and acculturation theory, and knowledge of the differences between small scale aboriginal and complex societies (Fenton 1978)--all of which the traditional historian often lacks (Berkhofer 1969:161). In other words, as Lurie (1961:90) asserts, training in ethnology and the ability to apply valid sociocultural generalisations to historical analysis are keys to the ethnohistorical approach.

In addition to the types of questions and concepts used in traditional historiography (i.e. the internal and external criticism of source documents), ethnohistory adds a scientific dimension. Control over, and awareness of, ethnocentrism and bias, as well as an anthropological understanding of other cultures and social theory are key (Sturtevant 1966:13). Indeed, historiography is to a large extent ethnographic (Sturtevant 1966:25) and,



despite the fact that many traditional historians do not consider themselves to be scientists, the methods of historiography itself are in fact scientific (Hodgen 1974:8-9; Gottschalk 1969:205).

Nevertheless, it must also be said, as I. McKay (1982) cautions, that there exists no one theory of culture that can be applied in historical studies, there is only a series of competing paradigms within the social sciences. This is a difficulty which has the effect of complicating the entire process a good deal.

One of the greatest difficulties to be faced by the ethnohistorian is the practical problem of how to successfully blend historical and social scientific methods, skills and perspectives, along with a mastery of the various sub-fields, in a balanced and readable form (Bishop and Ray 1976:123). Wilcomb E. Washburn (1971:276) feels that the heart of this problem lies in integrating the synchronic analysis of anthropology with the diachronic perspective of history. It is difficult, if not impossible, in his view to utilise time as a setting and as a sequence simultaneously. In the journal Ethnohistory P. Dark (1957:243) has evaluated various methods for attempting this conjunction and has concluded that what he calls the "Cultural Continuity" type of synthesis is the most effective approach.

In this study, following Dark's (1957:243) suggestion, descriptions of synchronic periods or "scenes" utilising archaeological and ethnographic as well as ethnohistorical

data will be interspersed with diachronic narrative segments. By interrupting the narrative flow in order to deal with synchronic descriptions at intervals, the process of change will be demarkated.

The documents will be evaluated and used in analysis with the cultures of both groups firmly in mind according to the ideal established by Washburn (1957:47) and Axtell (1979:2-3). The historical data available will then be presented, evaluated and analysed utilising the theories established by social scientists in the field of ethnicity, intergroup relations and culture change. A brief outline of the theories to be employed follows.

### Theory

The central focus of this study is the historic relationship between Cree Indians and European traders in its beginnings and early stages of adjustment. As historian K. E. Bock (1964:38) and others maintain, all historical research is conditioned by theory. Indeed, Kinlock (1974:23) asserts that without theory it is impossible to understand social phenomena. A number of theoretical problems present themselves in this study. First is the area of intergroup contact itself. There is a bewildering array of literature on the theory of what is variously referred to as "race", "ethnic", "minority", or "cross-cultural" relations. Second, of prime importance to the analysis of contact relations in this study is the concept of per-

cieved group differences and boundaries which leads into the whole field of "ethnicity". Third, since it is axiomatic that any sort of contact between different groups inevitably results in some form of cultural adjustment between the parties, the theories of sociocultural change and acculturation also have an important bearing on the analysis.

Many scholars, both historians and social scientists, call for the synthetic combination of disciplinary perspectives, theory and levels of analysis into a multilevel conceptual framework (Berkhofer 1969:209; Jaenen 1978:44; Kinloch 1974:4-5, 119). For example, there is a need for North American fur trade history to be written in light of the theory of so-called "primitive economics" which has been developed by social scientists such as Sahlins (1972), Dalton (1961) and Paine (1971). As a consequence of this theoretical orientation, an eclectic combination of power-conflict, cultural materialist, psychoanalytical and functionalist analysis will be utilised in order to explain the social relations brought about by the contact of Indian and trader in the study area.

This will be accomplished keeping in mind the serious caution about the "fallacy of misplaced generality" put forward by Kaplan and Manners (1972:130) (cf. Schermerhorn 1970:195; Fenton 1979:12; Conviser and Fararo 1973:164). The borrowing of concepts among disciplines, although useful and stimulating, can lead to confusion when theories

and concepts from the theoretical context of one discipline are applied to phenomena for which they were not specifically created.

Nevertheless, generalisations must be tested--the more widely applicable they are shown to be, the more valuable they become.

#### i) Ethnic/Race Relations Theory

Much of the theoretical work on ethnic and race relations has been criticised for its narrow focus on the Afro- vs Anglo-American relationship, while the historical work in the field has received its share of criticism for ignoring the early contact between autonomous groups of Indians and settlers (Van den Berghe 1981:ix-x; Kinloch 1974:29; Axtell 1975:131; Washburn 1957:48). In contrast, sociologists S. Lieberman (1961), D. L. Noel (1968) and E. A. T. Barth and D. L. Noel (1972) have developed complementary theoretical perspectives on first contact relations in general.

For Barth and Noel (1972:333-4) it is crucial to distinguish among explanations for the different processes of 1) emergence, 2) stabilization, 3) adaptation, and 4) change in patterns of interethnic relations. These authors identify four major frames of reference, or "perceptual contexts", which have been applied to the analysis of interethnic relations: 1) the "Race-Cycle Framework", 2) the "consensus Framework", 3) the "Interdependence

Framework", and 4) the "Conflict Framework". Each of these frameworks according to Barth and Noel has its particular explanatory value depending on which stage of the ethnic/race relationship is being considered.

The idea of conflict has long been an interpretation common to both Marxist and non-Marxist analysis of inter-ethnic relations (cf. A.G. Bailey 1969; Cox 1948). However, in his review of recent trends in the field, Spores (1980: 590) has indicated a need for ethnohistorians to take greater care in the application of conflict theory. Indeed, Barth and Noel (1972:335) believe that the sequence of emergence and stabilisation of interethnic relations is explained best, not by the conflict framework, but by a race-cycle and consensus analysis.

Noel (1968) attempts to distinguish the variables which influence the development of equalitarian as opposed to stratified outcomes of contact. Noel (1968:158, 153) argues that ethnocentrism, competition and differential power are the necessary and sufficient conditions for the emergence of stratification. An absence of any one of these variables will result in an equalitarian relationship. In agreement with Noel (1968:163), Lieberman asserts that the power to impose conditions on the relationship for maintaining the most favourable aspects of the precontact social, cultural, political and economic order becomes the key. According to Morton H. Fried (1967:13), power, as distinguished from "authority" or mere "influence", is

defined as "the ability to channel the behaviour of others by threat or use of sanctions".

Liebertson (1961:905) predicts that "indigenous superordination" will result in significantly less conflict in the early stages of contact than if the migrants become dominant. He explains that the threats of demographic and institutional imbalance are reduced when the indigenous groups are in control. As a result the potential for conflict is reduced.

A major task of this study will therefore be to test this prediction in contrast to the conclusions of scholars such as Wissler (1960), A. G. Bailey (1969; 1938) and Stanley (1961) who maintain that cross-cultural contact per se. inevitably leads to conflict. If Liebertson (1961) and Barth and Noel (1972:157) are correct, contact of culturally different groups in and of itself cannot be used to explain the development of conflict.

In summary of this literature, the operative variables explaining relations between ethnic groups are: 1) the precontact characteristics of the groups in question; 2) the rate, type, composition and motivation behind the migration; 3) the nature and context of the initial contacts including the elements of "cultural congruence",<sup>5</sup> ethnocentrism, competition and especially differential power (cf. Berry 1967:147-149; Barth and Noel 1972:337; Gordon 1978:85). These variables will be the focus of attention in the following chapters.

## ii) Ethnicity Theory

It is difficult if not impossible to separate the theory of cross-cultural relations from considerations of "ethnicity". As is the case with many concepts in social science, however, the passage of time, the increasing application since the late 1960s, and simple sloppy usage have resulted in a plethora of usages for this term. "Tribe", "community", "culture", "ethnic group", "ethnic category", and "ethny" have all been used in the literature, and often interchangeably (Cohen 1978:27). Each purportedly has its own particular shade of meaning. Unfortunately, however, many scholars do not take the trouble to define their terms, but assume the meaning is implicit (Isajiw 1974:111).

University of Toronto sociologist Wsevlod Isajiw (1974:117-118) in his survey of definitions of ethnicity finds the following common referents: 1) national or geographic origin or common ancestry, 2) the same culture, 3) common religion, 4) race or physical characteristics, 5) language, 6) consciousness of kind, 7) internal "Gemeinschaft"-type relations, 8) common values and ethos, 9) separate institutions, and 10) minority or subordinate status. To these characteristics we might add endogamy (Wagley and Harris 1958:9), and territoriality (Francis 1976:39). A more recent approach to ethnicity is that propounded by Pierre L. Van den Berghe (1981) and W. S. Abruzzi (1982) who stress the sociobiological and ecological basis of ethnicity. Ethnic groups are said to be a

result of natural processes which select for nepotistic behaviour.

However, use of many of the above referents has been criticised by Barth (1969:11), Hymes (1968) and Abruzzi (1982:14). Both C. F. Keyes (1976:203) and W. S. Abruzzi (1982:15) argue against the use of cultural criteria for defining the ethnic group, although agreeing that culture is an important factor. Boundaries, however, although permeable and situational, are much more valuable concepts since they persist longer than any particular content. To many such as E. H. Spicer (1971:795, 799) and Shibutani and Kwan (1965:41) the key to ethnicity is a persistent identity ("boundary" being an implicit defining characteristic) which is maintained despite changes in other facets. R. Cohen (1978:387-397) in his American Anthropologist article "Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology" also stress the importance of salient boundaries for defining the ethnic group.

In concert with Hymes' (1968) critique of Narrol's (1964) concept of ethnic classification, most contemporary scholars now recognise the fluid and situational nature of ethnicity (cf. Stymiest 1975) following E. K. Francis' (1947:396-7) early apprehension of this characteristic. S. K. Sharrock (1974) has for example pointed up the difficulty in distinguishing Cree from Assiniboine in eighteenth and nineteenth century co-residential groups.

Another difficulty evidenced in the literature is that many proposed definitions of ethnicity assume that



the concept refers exclusively to functional minorities within a larger society (cf. Cohen 1978:384; Kinlock 1974:120; De Vos 1975:8). Scholars such as Cox (1948:312), Schermerhorn (1970:12) and Isajiw (1974:118) take the position that an ethnic group can only be considered a subgroup of a system defined by unequal power relations within one state or economic area. However, to Shibutani and Kwan (1965:35) ethnic groups are not necessarily subsocietal minorities.

It seems obvious that ethnicity cannot be regarded as merely a secondary phenomenon attributed solely to contact and colonialism (cf. Cox 1948: 317). Both Milton Gordon (1978:107-8) and E. K. Francis (1976) recognise the concept of ethnicity among what are referred to as "stone age" peoples. In fact, Francis (1976:39) asserts that ethnicity is more salient among these acephalous societies than among the more politically organised groups. Indeed, Francis regards ethnicity empirically to be little more than the extension of the important kinship organisational principle (basic to band societies) to those beyond the actually known genealogical nexus.

Within the field of contact relations, therefore, there must obviously be a unit of analysis which will allow for continuity between the autonomous sociocultural group (traditionally called "tribe" or "culture") and its antecedent which is incorporated into some larger society (i. e. as a functional minority group). Bruce G. Trigger (1975:52) believes that the concept "interest group", characterised

by shared norms, goals and common action toward these ends, is useful here. Again, the key is a persistent boundary of identity and interest, as opposed to a particular power relationship or cultural content which will be affected more or less drastically by the processes of culture change, acculturation and assimilation (to be discussed below).

### iii) Culture Change and Acculturation Theory

The importance of these concepts for this study is indicated by anthropologist R. R. Gadacz (1979:266) who maintains that any longitudinal study of ethnic relations must be founded in the study of culture change and adaptation. Most scholars would agree with Lee (1974:1) and Broom et al. (1954:984) in the following premises: 1) culture change per se. is a constant in all cultures, and 2) that cross-cultural contact stimulates an increased rate of change. Indeed, Ralph Linton (1963:519), in his often-cited work Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes, states that the only constant to be found in all situations of contact is the fact of mutual accommodation and modifications which allow two groups in face-to-face contact to adapt to each other. As a result of the two-way nature of change under conditions of contact, Lee (1974:113) argues that attention must be focussed on all of the cultures involved in the contact (not just the "exotic" native one as has often been the case in the past). Although the effects of contact on European cultures in America have generally been ignored, the work of Cornelius Jaenen (1976),

James Axtell (1981), and Irving A. Hallowell (1957), has clearly demonstrated that Europeans accepted a good deal of Native culture upon arrival in the New World.

A definition of acculturation first established by Robert Redfield et al. (1936:149) is still quoted by many students in the field.

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original patterns of either or both groups.

Unfortunately, however, apart from the problem of dealing with those changes which result from discontinuous or indirect contact (as opposed to those which are "continuous" and "first-hand") the phenomena of acculturation referred to are so diverse and variable that there still has been no generally satisfactory theoretical assessment established (Quimby 1951:107; Hallowell 1952:105; Lurie 1968:275).

Broom et al. (1954:974) stress that acculturation is first of all only one aspect of the broader field of culture change, and second that it results from the conjunction of autonomous cultural systems. Melvin J. Herskovits (1958:7), in his book Acculturation, stresses that cultural borrowings are not accepted as is, but always modified to some degree by the accepting group (cf. Linton 1963:477, 482, 511). Indeed, the entire process is characterised by reduction of complexity and selectivity by both groups in-

volved in the exchange (Lurie 1968:297; Linton 1963:472; Broom et al. 1954:983). In light of the above, therefore, we must take great care in assigning significance to extraneous elements, particularly those adopted in the early stages of contact.

It is also recognised by many scholars that the only backdrop against which we can appreciate change is that of continuity and stability (Hodges 1971:436). In concert with Spicer (1971:795), Nancy O. Lurie (1968:297) maintains that

...the study of culture change is also by definition the study of cultural continuity because, despite changes, a group of people sharing a culture persists and has a vested and indeed inevitable stake in social and cultural continuity.

Linton (1963:480-1) argues that even if a novelty is accepted, the old element it is replacing remains latent or incompletely replaced in the culture and can remain so for generations. The trait may still exist even though ecological conditions may prevent its re-implementation (Broom et al. 1954:979). This stands counter to many interpretations which see such things as traditional skills and knowledge being quickly replaced in Indian culture by European content.

Most students in this field have noted that material culture change occurs first and most rapidly upon contact (Broom et al. 1954:490; Quimby 1951:146). Indeed Kaplan and Manners (1972:111) assert that technological change

underlies institutional change in all stateless societies.

A review of the literature on acculturation finds the following identified as crucial factors in determining the type, rate and extent of acculturative change. Spicer (1969: 4) identifies the important factors in the analysis to be: 1) definition of the contact groups (social structure, attitudes, intercultural roles), 2) the demographic ratio, 3) the frequency of interaction, and 4) the situational contexts of the contact (e.g. direct vs. indirect). With regard to this latter context, Linton (1963:495) stresses the degree of closeness, duration and continuity as important factors in the analysis of this contact.

Lee (1974:179) identifies the agents and innovators as significant variables. Broom et al. (1954:980) specify that the motives and values involved are crucial to the analysis, while Lurie (1968:293) adds the need for examination of the psychology of the situation and the process of selection. Malinowski (1966:11) reminds us that the characteristics of the European migrants are crucial to the analysis as well.

Lurie (1968:293) and Linton (1963:496) stress the process of selection itself. In this process of selection Linton (1963:473-4, 488) emphasizes the variables of utility, compatibility prestige (depends on the attitude toward donors), novelty, and ease of perception. The distinction between directed and non-directed change is important here in terms of power relations (Linton 1963:504, 509). Finally, F. Barth (1967:663) and Gadacz (1979)

stress ecological restrictions as important variables.

### Summary Discussion

The above overview of the relevant theoretical literature supplies the ethnohistorian with important tools for the selection of historical data and its analysis.

Following the approach advocated by Cochran et al. (1954:129). This study will be carried out by establishing an historical problem (i.e. What was the nature of initial relations and how did they evolve?) about which a series of questions have suggested themselves. Since preliminary theorising is a necessary and inevitable concomitant to any historical enterprise (Shater 1980:47-48, 176), the working hypotheses arising from social science theory as well as an awareness of the previous scholarship on Indian/European relations will be specified as appropriate.

The following are the central questions to be addressed in this study with the working hypotheses in brackets.

- 1) Were early Indian/trader relations west of Hudson Bay characterised by "migrant" or "indigenous superordination"? (indigenous superordination).
- 2) Did the Western Woods Cree quickly become "dependent on Europeans, their goods and economic system as many fur trade historians assert? (Maintained independence for longer than usually assumed).

- 3) How did Europeans eventually gain dominance over the relation?
- 4) In what ways do modern social science theories have relevance in historical studies?
- 5) In what ways is the history of initial contact and the development of early relations significant for explaining contemporary socioeconomic relations in the study area?

## CHAPTER II

### ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE RELATION

#### Introduction

In keeping with the suggestions of historian James Axtell (1979:2) and anthropologist Victor Valentine (1960:13), who stress the need to deal with both groups in contact (rather than focussing only on one or the other); and following the determination to begin with a synchronic account before launching into the diachronic narrative; the following chapter will outline the immediate precontact socio-cultural lives of the Western Woods Cree and European traders insofar as they are illustrated by the secondary literature.

Axtell (1975:137), agrees with Trigger (1976:8) and Lurie (1959:37) that "Indians made their first adjustments to the problems posed by Europeans in terms of existing institutions." Thus it is crucial to be aware of Cree culture at contact in order to interpret how they reacted to contact with the Europeans.

As Axtell (1975:137) asserts, it is not possible to assess the impact of the European on the Indian [or we might add vice versa] without a perspective on precontact society and modes of change from archaeology. It is understood, however, that the true "aboriginal baseline culture" per se. can never be reconstructed (Valentine 1970:66). What follows, therefore, is a brief outline of



the current archaeological understanding of the time depth of occupation in the Cumberland House--The Pas--Grand Rapids region with major emphasis on the findings dealing with the immediate precontact culture.

### Cree Prehistory

As most scholars working in the boreal forest [more properly the "taiga" biome (Pruitt 1978:3-4)] region attest, there has been little concerted work done on the archaeology of the area until relatively recently. What investigation has been accomplished is limited by major difficulties inherent to the area such as lack of stratigraphy, acidic soils, high water tables, isolation, and dense forest cover (Mayer-Oakes 1970:4; Tamplin 1977:61 Wright 1972:1). These obstacles are not to mention recent destruction of sites through hydroelectric project flooding.

As a result of the relatively undeveloped stage of archaeology in the study area there has been little interpretation or reconstruction done, favouring instead analysis of ceramic and lithic assemblages (L. Pettipas 1982:1). For example, National Museum archeologist J. V. Wright (1972:5, 75) in his preliminary study, The Shield Archaic, deals at length with the contrasting frequencies of particular types of artifacts and the changes in these frequencies over time (i.e. more scrapers and fewer bifaces), but he does not venture even a tentative speculation on the cultural significance of this phenomenon.

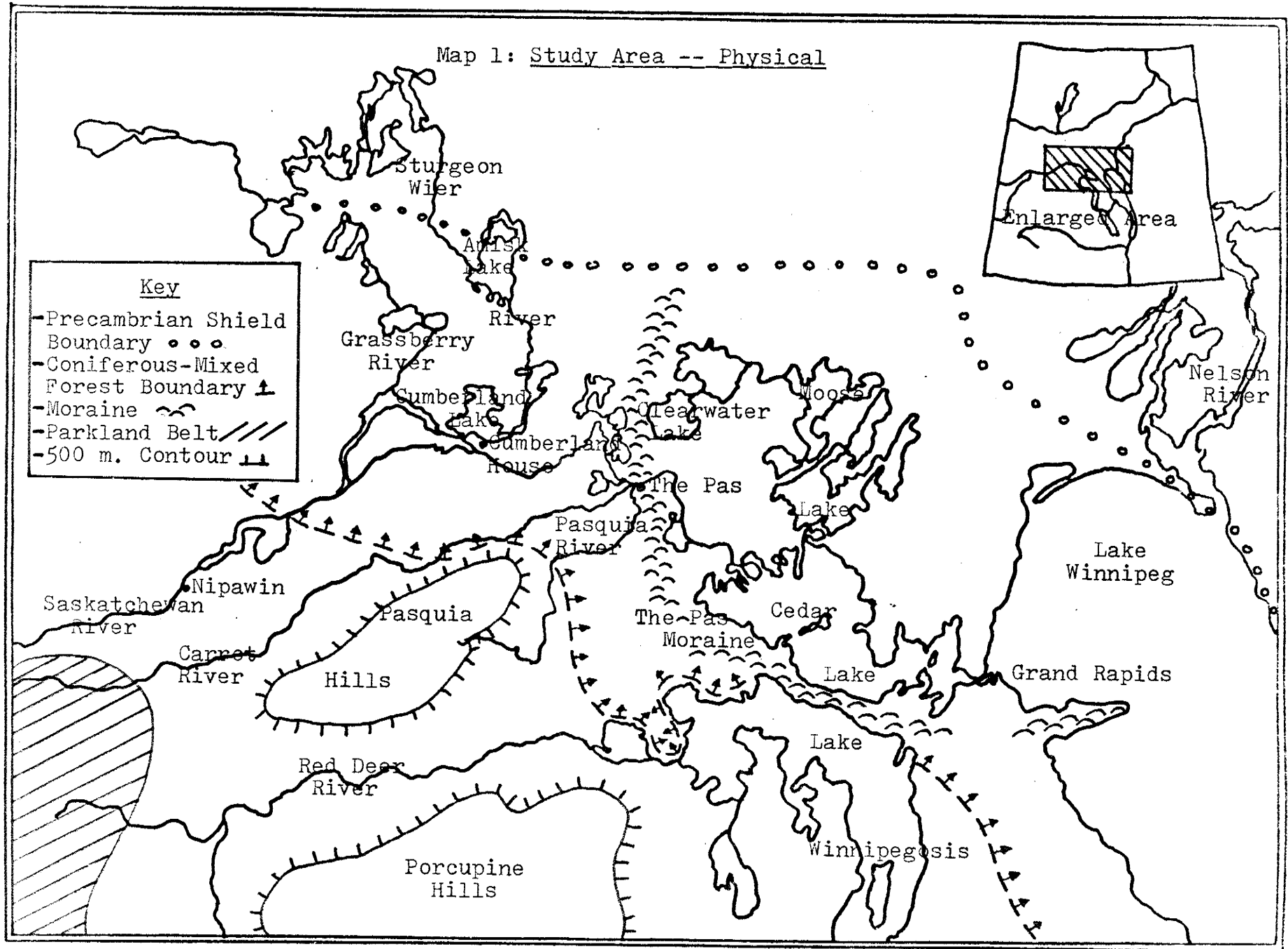
The occupation of Manitoba, and indeed the whole of

North America, has been conditioned by the recurring processes of glaciation and retreat. In their summaries of Manitoba's glacial history archaeologists William Mayer-Oakes (1970:367ff) and Leo Pettipas (1976), indicate that at 11,000 BP all of Manitoba was covered with ice. Between 14,000 and 8,000 BP a warming trend had melted the ice as far north as The Pas and by 10,800 BP remnants were left only in higher areas such as Porcupine Mountain (Simpson 1970:144-6). By 8,000 BP only the extreme northeastern corner of the province was still covered with ice.

In the wake of the ice, glacial lake Agassiz (13,000-8,500 BP) covered the Manitoba Lowland leaving a sequence of beaches along The Pas Moraine (Tamplin 1977:17-18) (see Map 1). These beach ridges are rich areas archeologically since they provided relatively easy travel routes (L. Pettipas 1970:17) and have remained important links between the Manitoba Lowlands and the Manitoba Escarpment right up to the present time. This was especially so during Archaic times (Kelly and Connell 1978:44).

Following the retreat of the glaciers northward, the process of plant succession eventually resulted in the familiar closed spruce forest or taiga.<sup>1</sup> In the midst of this plant and animal reoccupation, J. V. Wright (1970:44) indicates that northern Plano-Shield Archaic hunters expanded into the area from the northern Plains region. These big game hunters were eventually either forced out of the area, or forced to change their cultural adaptation as the relatively game-scarce climax closed

Map 1: Study Area -- Physical



spruce forest developed in The Pas area by 8,000 BP (L. Pettipas 1976:24-26; 1970:11).

Interestingly, W. Mayer-Oakes (1970:372) argues that influences from the Plains appeared in the taiga through the mechanism of "seasonal environmental adaptation versatility", just as Arthur J. Ray (1971) asserts that seasonal utilisation of the Parklands ecotone was the key to later Woodland peoples' adaptation to the Plains in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries while moving in the opposite direction.

Wright (1981:87-8) argues that Palaeo Indian people who migrated to this area developed the next major archaeological tradition in the taiga biome--The Shield Archaic--which was the first distinctive culture to evolve in the area. Dated 5,000-3,000 BP, it developed from a late Plano base culture in the Kewatin District with additional influences from the Plains. At this time as well, the bow and arrow began to make their appearance (Hlady 1970:120ff.).

Although many archaeologists caution against making historical connections between ethnographic cultures and ancestral archaeological cultures (Kelly and Kelly 1980: 135, 138), Wright (1972:4, 87) suggests that these Shield Archaic peoples were probably Algonquian speakers. However, Hanna (1980:85) is critical of Wrights' assignation and maintains that "...we cannot automatically assume that one archaeological assemblage equals one culture or language." This is supported by the ethnohistorical work of Sharrock (1974) dealing with the Cree/Assiniboine for

example.

Wright (1981:89-90) also argues that there is a direct developmental relationship between the Shield Archaic cultures and a later Woodland tradition referred to as Laurel. The latter has been tentatively identified as early Cree by Hlady (1964:25). According to Wright (1972:4) Laurel peoples merely grafted the new element of pottery onto a essentially unchanged Archaic tool kit to begin what archaeologists refer to as the Initial Woodland period, commencing about 3,000 BP.

A late Woodland Tradition which is widely represented in The Pas area [and which replaces the Manitoba Phase by the fourteenth century (MacNeish 1958:82)] has been designated the Selkirk Phase in the Grand Rapids sites. Mayer-Oakes has dated Selkirk materials from AD 1000 to 1800.<sup>2</sup> At The Pas, Tamplin (1977:137) indicates carbon 14 dates for Selkirk at AD 1480 and AD 1390-1460. Most scholars argue that Selkirk people were in fact identifiably Cree (Wright 1971:23; Dickson 1977:27; Tamplin 1977:2; MacNeish 1958:53).

In analysing the sites in the Grand Rapids area Mayer-Oakes (1970:347:352), in concert with MacNeish (1958:73), suggests that Selkirk Phase materials may represent a distinct and competing culture with origins in the northwest. Kelly and Connell (1978:47-9) also note that Laurel and Selkirk occur in contemporary, but discrete, concentrations in sites on The Pas Moraine. However, they note that, despite the stylistic differences, both are adapted to ex-

exploiting similar forest and aquatic resources. Mayer-Oakes (1967:370) in fact notes a close similarity of Selkirk subsistence patterns to modern ones in the area with fish assuming great importance (cf. Wright 1971:21).

Associated with the Selkirk Phase is the Clearwater Lake Phase, dated between 1425 and 1685 (Wright 1981:92), which Hlady (1971:64) and Meyer (1978:31, 39) postulate is Woodland Cree. The two are similar in many facets except ceramics. Also associated with Selkirk is the Grass River Phase (Wright 1981:92) which Hlady (1970:96, 120) attributes to a later Swampy Cree occupation which was manifest by 1790.

Mayer-Oakes (1970:378) has developed a probable occupation sequence for the Grand Rapids sites. Tamplin (1977:56) has also developed a schematic diagram summarising the cultural sequence and directions of influence in The Pas--Grand Rapids area represented in Figure 1.

At the time of contact with Europeans, Mayer-Oakes (1967:353) asserts the Manitoba Phase people (whom he identifies as Assiniboine) were resident at Grand Rapids. At The Pas Hlady (1971) indicates that the Europeans encountered Woods Cree who were later replaced by the Swampy Cree by 1790.

What then can the archaeology of the region tell us about the culture of the Indians in the area as they were encountering European traders? J. V. Wright (1981:87) maintains that:

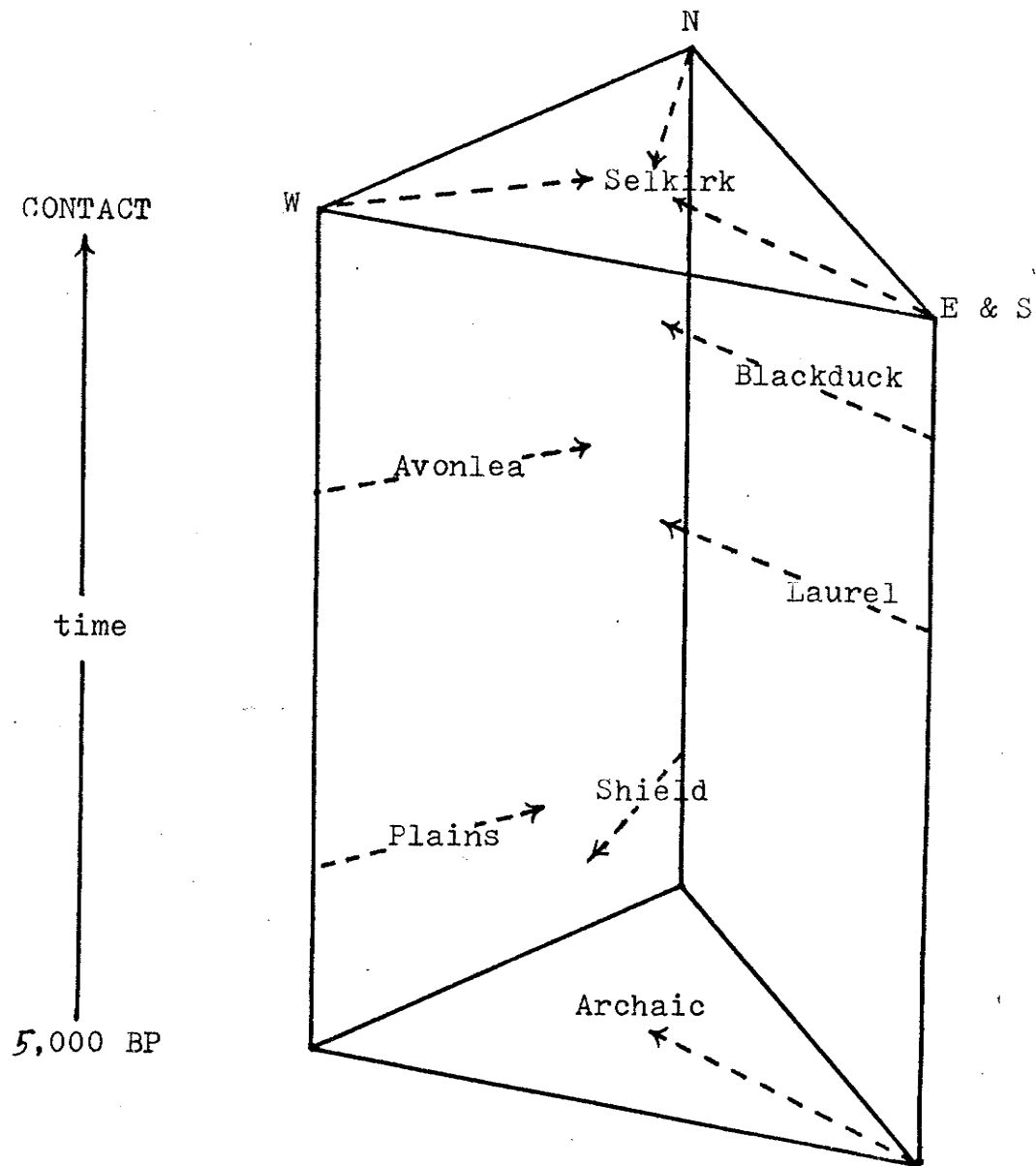


Figure 1: Generalised Time Framework for The Pas and Grand Rapids  
(Tamplin 1977:56)

The available evidence strongly suggests that the northern Algonkians at the time of initial contact with Europeans followed a way of life that had not changed significantly for more than 7,000 years.

Although this is obviously an overstatement given the shift in emphasis from large game in Archaic times to a more varied resource base in Woodland times, certain generalisations can be made.

Most archaeologists have concluded that the basic mode of social organisation was the nomadic kin-based co-residential group or "local band" which would seasonally congregate into a "macro-band" (Mayer-Oakes 1967:570). In general, exogamous patrilocal [?] bands with relatively low population densities are assumed to be the rule (Wright 1971:23).

The majority of sites located other than at The Pas. Clearwater Lake and Grand Rapids have been found to be small and occupied by one or two family hunting groups (Hlady 1970:96). The vast majority represent semi-sedentary seasonal occupations of riverine and lakeside habitats (Kelly and Connell 1978:47).

Tamplin (1977) and Mayer-Oakes (1967) present a picture of exploitation of the lower Saskatchewan River which saw alternating seasonal exploitation of The Pas and Grand Rapids sites. From the evidence of faunal remains, of which 83 per cent are sturgeon bones, the Tailrace Bay site at Grand Rapids was probably occupied by the largest number of people in the spring to take advantage of the sturgeon



run in April and May. Fall and winter occupation of this site by a relatively small group (if at all) can only be speculated upon (Mayer-Oakes 1970:319-21). On the other hand, excavations at The Pas have discovered that different species of fish were being exploited and three times the amount of mammal bones (bison, beaver, moose, muskrat, etc.) are present, especially in Archaic times (Tamplin 1977: 169, 173; Mayer-Oakes 1970:316). According to Mayer-Oakes (1970:353) this bipolar adaptation with maximum densities at The Pas and Grand Rapids probably developed by at least Laurel Phase times, i.e. 500 BC to AD 700.

Thus, what generally emerges is the typical pattern of flexible band organisation exploiting seasonally varying resources through a strategy of migration which was governed by the principles of "least effort" and maximisation of return of effort (cf. Preston 1975; Jochim 1976; Feit 1973). This is also the pattern identified for much of the Subarctic culture area during historic times.

The above archaeological outline tends to contradict some long-held ideas about Cree occupation of the central Subarctic. Many such as Diamond Jenness (1963:284), whose Indians of Canada is often relied upon as a basic source, argue for a recent westward movement of the Cree under contact or immediate precontact stimulus in the seventeenth century. Such an interpretation is supported by the "oral history" reported by the Afro-American cum Cheyenne cum Blackfoot impersonator Buffalo Child Long Lance (1924:27). The archaeological perspective, however, ties Cree occupa-

tion in western regions much earlier than originally supposed. For example, Wright (1971:21) argues that the Cree developed in the Southern Indian Lake area between AD 800 and the early 1200s. MacNeish (1958:82-3) indicates that Cree westward movement had in fact already begun by the fourteenth century. Hlady (1965:32) postulates that the Clearwater Lake Phase, dated 1425--1685, is Woodland Cree. In his recent summary of the archaeology of the region J. V. Wright (1981:92) asserts that in fact the Cree had a very long period of development in the region and were not at all recent immigrants in the vanguard of the fur trade movement into the area as has been argued by some scholars.

As stated at the outset, however, any such conclusions reached are as yet extremely tentative pending further excavation and analysis of an area which is archaeologically difficult and so far relatively neglected.

### Cree Ethnography

The Cree people located inland from Hudson and James Bays have rarely been the subject of ethnographic study (Smith 1981:270). Even Arthur J. Ray (1971; 1974), who deals extensively with the geographic region inhabited by the Cree, spends most of his effort documenting the Assiniboine. The West Main Swampy Cree (or "Coast Cree") of the Attawapiskat and Winisk areas who have been studied by anthropologists J. J. Honigmann (1953; 1956; 1958), A. B. Skinner (1911) and J. Trudeau (1967) during this century are by far the best known. Other than Mason's (1967)

brief account, no other major ethnographic study seems to have been attempted among the inland or Western Woods Cree until the recent work of Heye Museum ethnologist J. G. E. Smith (1975) among the Rocky Cree of the Brochet--Reindeer lake area.

In most cases, therefore, it must be assumed that the sociocultural organisation of the inland Swampy Cree paralleled that described for the West Main Swampy Cree and that of band societies in general (Smith 1981:259).

#### i) Band Organisation

The term "band" has been defined in various and conflicting ways (Rogers 1969:24). Terms used include the "local--regional" and "micro--macro" dichotomies as well as the "task" or "hunting group". Some scholars such as Elman Service (1962: 1966) and Marshal Sahlin (1968) focus on the social aspects emerging from small scale face-to-face interaction, while Milton Freid (1967:52, 164) stresses the political aspects of societies lacking ranking and stratification. Still others such as Frank Speck have focussed on territoriality (Rogers 1969:23) or community and settlement pattern (Helm 1969:213).

Edward S. Rogers (1969:46) presents the following definition. A "Band" is a local named group of approximately 75 to 125 people organised on the basis of loosely structured bilateral descent who inhabit a drainage basin with other such groups and who at certain times coalesce into a temporary group referred to as the "regional" or "macro--"

band.

The key characteristics of bands are said to be:

1) their nomadic adaptation (Service 1966:7; Steward 1969:187); 2) flexibility in social and economic organisation (Jochim 1976:48; Leacock 1969:14); 3) familistic as opposed to communistic organisation (Service 1966:7-8); 4) unspecialised (except for age and sex) division of labour (Service 1966:8, 83); 5) egalitarianism in economic and social relations (Fried 1967:28-35); and 6) lack of exclusive property or resource ownership (Slobodin 1969:193; Lee and Devore 1968:9).

M. H. Fried (1967:83) characterises band leadership as being: 1) based on authority rather than power per se., and 2) transferable from person to person depending on the individual and the task at hand. Service (1966:54) stresses the tenuous, advisory, and competence-dependent nature of band society leadership. In his article "Leadership Among the Indians of Eastern Subarctic Canada", Rogers (1965:268) generally confirms this pattern of leadership adding the important attributes of eloquence and supernatural power which are subsumed in the "competence" category.

Economically, "undifferentiated communal access to resources" is the norm in band societies (Fried 1967:61). "Complete" (vs. reciprocal) sharing is the central organising principle of subsistence strategies which distinguishes band economic organisation from western norms. Importantly for the analysis of fur trade relations, exchange in band society is organised on grounds which are more social than

economic (Service 1966:14-20; Leacock 1969:12).

In opposition to the Hobbesian view of life, Sahlins (1972:1-2) has coined the term "the original affluent society" to describe a hunting and gathering world view which approaches the task of making a living through the strategy of the "Zen solution to scarcity"--i.e. the limitation of expectations. In anthropologist M. A. Jochim's (1976) model, the concept of "minimisation of effort" is central to resource exploitation decisions which in turn determine other important aspects of life. Cultural ecologists such as Lee and De Vore (1968:6) have determined that the subsistence base, and the ability of hunters and gatherers to plan and adapt to it, are much more substantial than has previously been recognised. Nevertheless, a caveat is placed on this idea in that this idea may not apply as widely to groups in northern latitudes who are said to live "under constant ecological pressure" and where gathering plays a much smaller role than hunting (Paine 1973:306; Lee and De Vore 1968:6; Damas 1969: ).

According to Service (1966:78, 83) band social organisation is based on "the conception of kinship extended by marriage alliances". The family becomes the primary, if not the only, institution, and interband reciprocal exogamy becomes the key to the whole structure (Service 1962:75). The consensus seems to be that Service's (1962: 66-68) original hypothesis of the predication of band society on patri-virilocality and patrilineality cannot be supported (Leacock 1969:4-5; Slobodin 1969:194; Lee and



De Vore 1968:7-8).

## ii) Cree Social Organisation

If such is band society" in general, how do the Western Woods Cree fit in? Although little of the available ethnography refers to what are supposed to be aboriginal conditions, the information (much of it in fact ethnohistorical) which is extant paints a picture quite similar to the above outline. An immediate difficulty presented by the lack of ethnography focussing directly on the Western Woods Cree of the Central Subarctic is the applicability over time and space of the more abundant data on the other Cree peoples of the Eastern Subarctic culture area. With the limitations of the culture area concept in mind (Spencer and Jennings 1977:xviii-xix), we have to rely on the opinion of Preston (1976:491n), La Rusic (1970:B-1) and Smith (1981:259) that it is indeed applicable over time and space.

In the recent work J. G. E. Smith (1981), Swampy Cree and Rocky Cree, who now border on each other at Cumberland House, are subsumed under the rubric of Western Woods Cree since there appears to be no significant differences other than dialect.

As Hymes (1968) and others have pointed out, clear socio-cultural boundaries cannot be assumed to parallel dialectical differences. However, anthropologists have indicated that the Swampy Cree (in modern The Pas, Cumberland House and Grand Rapids) speak in the (n) [or (th) (Russell 1975:424)] dialect of the Central Algonquian lang-

uage family, whereas the Rocky Cree speak the (ə) dialect and the Strong Woods Cree the (y) dialect as do the Plains Cree (Smith 1976:418). Although all are mutually intelligible, these same distinctions are in fact made by the Cree themselves (Smith 1975:174).

Population estimates at contact [all of which must be regarded with skepticism (McArthur 1970)] range between 2,200 and 4,600 in the 1700s (Ray 1971:148). The widely scattered nature of small groups results in estimates of population densities close to only one person per 50--70 square miles (Rogers and Smith 1981:141).

Most recent scholarship on the question indicates that Cree occupation of their historic taiga biome territory was not a result of fur trade stimulus, arms superiority and expansionism as has been assumed by those such as Jenness (1963:284), Mandelbaum (1979:20), Ray (1971:34, 118) and Bishop (1981:160) (cf. contrary views of Gillespie 1980?:9-10; Smith 1976:418). In fact, archaeological (Wright 1971:1, 3), linguistic (Hlady 1964:24), and historic (Smith 1976:417-18, 425) data support the conclusion that the Cree had been occupying the territories in which they were contacted since prehistoric times. Indeed, Smith (1976:415) indicates that it was in fact only the European term "Cree" which spread west as traders came into contact with new, yet similar, groups. The Swampy Cree did in fact move westward into the Cumberland House area in the late eighteenth century, but the Rocky Cree had been long established in the area (Smith

1981:257-8).

As fundamentally a big game-focussed hunting people, the Western Woods Cree's migration patterns revolved around the seasonal fluctuations in the availability of food resources. Early contact documents report that the Cree were exploiting an important ecotone, moving back and forth between the taiga and the parklands zone, wintering in the parklands and congregating each spring at fishing spots (Ray 1971:66; 1972:114; Mandelbaum 1979:289). This pattern is most likely the aboriginal one as well (K. Pettipas 1980:174). Seasonal availability and cyclical game population fluctuation must have put a premium on flexibility and mobility in Cree subsistence strategies as it did among the Ojibwa to the south (cf. Rogers and Black 1976:2, 38).

Although hunting was relied upon most and was more highly valued than fishing by the men (Honigmann 1956:39, Jenness 1963:54; Trudeau 1967:17), E. S. Rogers (1969:86) indicates that fish were more important in the western regions than in the eastern areas of the Subarctic. Skinner (1911:24-5) and Jenness (1963:285) also note the importance of hares to Cree subsistence. Since it is estimated that between 4,500 and 5,000 calories per person per day (i.e. 4 lb. of flesh) is necessary for winter survival (Rogers and Smith 1981:135), and since flesh foods are the only significant form of sustenance in the area (Gillespie 1981:15), hunting obviously assumed primary importance to the Cree.

In the past, Cree subsistence and that of the Sub-



arctic in general has been interpreted by many such Flannery (1946:265) and Cooper (1946:286) in terms of "continuing scarcity" and "constant fear of starvation" (cf. Skinner 1911:68; Leechman 1952:27; Knight 1974:354). However, the work of E. S. Rogers (1963a:72) counteracts the idea of chronic recurrent food scarcity crises among Subarctic hunters.

H. A. Feit (1973:115) maintains that, contrary to the widely held belief that hunters lived precariously and somewhat helplessly on the edge of starvation, Cree hunters controlled their situation by manipulating population densities through group fission, redistribution of goods and by regulating not only the man/nature relation but human acquisitive desires as well. He argues further that their religious "ethno-ecosystem model" incorporating the need for respect to animals, although different from the modern scientific view, was generally "isomorphic with ecological principles" and led to sustained yield management practices (Feit 1973:117-118). Although criticised by Knight (1973:352) for what is basically thought to be naivety, Feit (1973:120) also states that the Cree have "...very substantial knowledge of the environment in which they live and this knowledge makes plausible their claims for the reliability, efficiency and affluence of their subsistence system; their expertise also suggests that it is possible to choose when <sup>to</sup> use resources" (cf. Jenness 1963:54-5). Feit's latter point ties in with Jochims's (1976:17) paradigm in which resources are utilised in light of long range planning

at times when chances of success are highest, following the "principle of least effort" (cf. Paine 1973:303).

The process of hunting involved a good deal of ceremonial preparation, divination, deferential respect behaviour toward the animal carcass, and ritual disposal of the remains. Although Jochim (1976) leaves this ideological aspect out of his model, there was a very close relation between religious practice and all economic production as noted by Tanner (1979:7) among the Mistassini Cree. Mason (1967:59) reports a firm conviction that all animals were endowed with spiritual personalities which had to be placated by deferential treatment. R. J. Preston (1975:ii) has found from his work among the Rupert House Cree that this relationship between man and animal is perceived as one of love.

Aboriginally, the Cree hunted caribou collectively until participation in the fur trade changed their subsistence focus (Smith 1981:260, 266). Hunting territories were a post contact phenomenon (Rossignol 1939:65-6; Hallowell 1949:35; Knight 1965:40). In agreeing with this assessment, with reference to the Mistassini and the Cree in general, Rogers (1963a:54, 83; 1961:266), presents the concept of the pre-hunting territory "hunting group" as the basic unit of exploitation and of maximal political, social and religious organisation for the greatest part of the year.

Others refer to this as the "local" or "micro-" band which was an independent self-sufficient mobile unit centred

on, and drawing its name from, a drainage basin (Honigmann 1958:57-8; Mason 1967:1). Smith (1975:183-4) reports that among the Rocky Cree such a cooperating group is referred to as ntot inuik, that is "the group of relatives (kin and affines) who cooperate with one another over a long period of time". During the summer several of these hunting groups or "local bands" congregated at fishing sites to form the "regional band" (Smith 1981:259) for the purpose of feasting, religious activities and discussion of the year's events (Rossignol 1939:63).

The leadership of these hunting groups--referred to by the Cree as okima'w (Smith 1981:259)--was a relatively temporary, situational position of *primus inter pares*. Maintaining a following depended upon such attributes as general competence [naš ebstat (Preston 1976:468)] especially in hunting (Flannery 1946:268), generosity (Mason 1967:39), age, speaking ability, and religious power (Rogers and Smith 1981:144; Rossignol 1939:64). As Rogers (1965:268; 1963:25) describes it, such a position lacked any form of legal power. Indeed excessive power was feared and "principle men" or "chiefs" wielded little real power beyond their extended family. The main role of the Cree okima'w was to articulate consensus (Rogers 1965:270).

Murdock (1965:26), Honigmann (1953:810) and Rogers (1965:274) report preferential cross-cousin marriage aboriginally, and Smith (1975:183) cites the value of paired marriages (i.e. siblings marrying another pair of siblings).

According to June Helm and Eleanor Leacock (1971:366)

local ecological conditions resulted in a variety of residence rules in the Subarctic. Among the Western Woods Cree households were comprised of an extended family which was sometimes polygynous (Smith 1981:259). This extended family was organised on bilateral lines (Smith 1975:182), since this was the best way of ensuring the flexibility necessitated by the cyclical, seasonal nature of the eco-system. Contradicting Service's (1962:66-8) ideas concerning aboriginal virilocality, Bishop (1974: ) and Smith (1975:61) report that in northwestern Ontario the Cree put emphasis on matrilineal residence (cf. Tyrrell 1931:229-30), while Murdock (1965) indicates ambilocality to be the norm.

Although the varying nature of the requirements exacted by the seasonal and fluctuating nature of the resources the environment forced an adaptation based on disoluble group ties, social cohesion and control was accomplished through the basic need for co-operation, enculturation of a value system with an emphasis on sharing, as well as gossip and religious sanctions (Rogers and Smith 1981:144).

As mentioned previously, animism, the belief that all animals were endowed with a spirit which must be placated (Mason 1967:59; Skinner 1911:68), was a central motif of their world view. Therefore, the religious life of the Western Woods Cree centred around hunting ritual, and its concomitants: divination, sympathetic magic and conjuring. Ideally, at puberty a boy would engage in a vision quest to receive a guardian spirit [pawaganak (Rossignol 1938:67)] who would promise him protection and good luck in hunting

(Mason 1967:48). Tanner (1979) and Preston (1975) delve into the close ties in Cree culture between religion and hunting.

Shamanism and fear of withcraft were prominent aspects of Cree culture (Trudeau 1967:25; Leechman 1952:27; Mandelbaum 1979:164; Smith 1981:262). Rogers (1963b:64) indicates that probably each hunting group had a shaman (usually one of the older men) to deal with the supernatural and offenses against society, thereby helping to hold the group together.

In terms of the interests of this study, a key feature of Cree culture dealt with in the available ethnographies is how such a society dealt with strangers; in other words how they handled "cross-cultural relations" prior to contact with Europeans. There is evidence to suggest conflict with bordering peoples such as the Chipewyan (Gillespie 1980?:9), Eskimo and Sioux (Smith 1981:260).

Beyond the realm of antagonistic relationships with those regarded, and deliberately sought out, as enemies, however, the Cree rarely had contacts which could not be included under the blanket of relations with kinsmen (Honigmann 1956:58). Smith (1975:176) indicates that even contact between Rocky and Swampy Cree was limited. Ecological conditions favouring small dispersed groups meant that the seasonal congregation in regional bands, most or all of whose members were related in some fashion with one another, must have often been the extent of interpersonal contacts beyond primary face-to-face relationships with people in the hunting group or local band (Honigmann 1956:

58; Wright 1931:86). Therefore, the vast majority of social interactions within Cree society were primary relations prescribed by kinship obligations.

Preston (1976:451) believes that the typical strategy of "reticence" was employed by the Cree in the face of threat from strangers. This strategy encompasses understated emotion in manifest behaviour, shyness toward the stranger, and deliberate non-committal or unexpressive facial demeanor (Preston 1976:452-6). Although some scholars such as Honigmann would deny it, Preston (1976:490-1; 491n.), who finds support in I. A. Hallowell's psychological work, believes that there is a "substantial persistence over time for this aspect of Eastern Cree mental culture", and he cites supporting historic cases in the documentary literature.

If such an approach to "strangers" (i.e. non-kinsmen) is also operating among the Western Woods Cree as so many other aspects of general Cree culture do, it will have an important effect on the initial European contact in particular.

Any further significant ethnographic information other than the above must be gleaned from the ethnohistorical sources.

A description of the Europeans with whom the Cree came into contact will be examined next.

### European Ethnography

If in nothing else, it is clear that much of the recent scholarship on the fur trade is in agreement that

traders must not be treated as an homogenous group as earlier work (e.g. Saum 1965) has tended to do. Nicks (1980:105) maintains that is just as important to avoid the "easy stereotypes" about Europeans as it is to eschew those concerning Indians (cf. Walker 1971). Social historians such as Jennifer Brown (1980:47), Sylvia Van Kirk (1980b:3), and Carol Judd (1980a:127) have recently begun to make use of the distinctions among European groups in their work on the familial and social organisation of the fur trade. The varieties of social backgrounds as well as the differences in the policies and structures of the various companies all had effects on relations with Indian groups.

Prior to this new thrust in the scholarship, relatively little attention has been paid to what might be referred to as ethnography of the Europeans. Most of the earlier research had been carried out in commercial terms centring on the criteria for recruitment and selection, levels of staffing, and wages, as opposed to the origins, cultures and psychology of the men themselves (Goldring 1979:129). Although biography of the fur trade elite makes up a significant proportion of the literature (Rich 1966:1), there is a dearth of empirical data on the ordinary European servants in the trade. Most of the description has in fact been merely repetition as factual information of contemporaneous opinion on the particular qualities and suitability of various ethnic groups for their work in the trade. This lack of empirical, social and quantitative study is now being

remedied by the work of those such as Parks Canada historian Philip Goldring (1979, 1980), on the Hudson's Bay Company labour system, and University of Alberta professor Gatien Allaire (1981) on the Quebec engagés.

It must also be remembered, as Brown (1980:xvi) points out, that these European commercial immigrants did not simply mirror their Old World antecedents as many such as Harold Innis (1956:383), dean of the fur trade historians, would have us think. Historian Cornelius Jaenen (1978:93) introduces the concept of "fragment cultures" into the analysis. According to Louis Hartz (1970:107-10, 117), the originator of the concept, the limited size and incomplete nature of the society which migrates to a new area tends to foster an increased consensus among the migrants not found in their European homeland, as well as to heighten a nascent nationalism. This new and special sense of community arising from the migrants' sense of "contracted social substance" often heightens conflict among the different migrant groups, and indeed creates new conflicts not found in Europe. This analysis helps to explain the conflict among the European trades in North America beyond a reliance on the simple transfer of European antagonisms, economic and otherwise. These were in fact emerging societies, indeed new nations, significantly different in composition and in primary interests from their European progenitors.

Although many dialectical materialists would deny it (e.g. Schermerhorn 1970:7; Berry 1965:296-9), several researchers in the field believe that prior psychological



states, beliefs and images held by Europeans are key to understanding their relations with North American natives (Nash 1972:797; Surtees 1977:112; Sheehan 1980:8; Berkhofer 1978:13; 71; Jaenen 1978:94-5). In accord with the analysis of O. Mannoni (1956) in Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization, historian R. F. Berkhofer (1978: 196) states

To the extent that the way different ethnic groups see each other is not purely a function of the power relationships prevailing among them, then the conceptual and ideological screens of their own cultures must still interpose between the observer and the observed to color the "reality" of mutual perceptions.

In sum, we must include attitudes of the various European groups as well as those of the Indians as part of the analysis of relations between them (cf. Jaenen 1974: 261). Although many scholars have argued that British and French approaches were distinctive, Jaenen (1978:93) has asserted that both arrived with similar sets of ideas derived from a common European experience.

#### i) The French

The fur trade literature itself deals hardly at all with the Old World origins of the French as a factor in the developing relations with Indians. Perhaps rightly so, most attention has been focussed on the emerging society of the French-Canadians.

Nevertheless, an important characteristic of seventeenth century France was the emergence of a strong counter-reformation movement (Dickason 1976:126-7). This "spirit of religious enthusiasm" was transposed to New France and played a leading role in shaping Indian/French-Canadian relations. As Jaenen (1972:64) asserts, religion was so intimately bound up with the French culture that it cannot be excluded from consideration in the analysis of Franco-Indian relations. A student of Jaenen's, O. P. Dickason (1976:130) maintains that French values of the time were based on commercial individualism, competitiveness and "palatial absolutism" which were in many ways in direct contrast to those of the Indians. According to Marcel Giraud (1945:299), author of the massive Le M tis Canadien, Champlain and Colbert had instituted selection criteria for new habitants which stressed religiosity and hard work. The majority of the new immigrants were artisans and rural peasants, however some were from the bourgeois class as well.

Much is made of the French "genius" for dealing with Indians. This reputation [an interpretation which has continued to the present, cf. Pointing and Gibbins 1980:89-80] portrays the French as being particularly adept at adapting to Indian culture, although, as Rich (1967:18) asserts, this was often a virtue of necessity.

It has been widely assumed by authors such as Saum (1965:67), W. L. Morton (1967:34), Rotstein (1967:73), and Wade (1969:68) that the French were successful in developing intimate relations with their Indian allies because of

their lack of "racial feeling". However, A. S. Morton (1973:253) compares them to disadvantage with the British who are interpreted as avoiding the ensuing entanglements under which the French laboured. Beyond this, Jaenen (1974:263) maintains that the French never truly understood Indian thought or behaviour any more clearly than the other European groups did (cf. Surtees 1977:113). Jaenen (1976:9) has successfully argued that Francis Parkman's bromide asserting, in comparison to the Spanish and the English, that the French "cherished" the Indian is essentially a myth. This is despite the fact that more modern scholars such as Mason Wade (1969:61, 79) continue to promote this romanticism. Data presented in later chapters of this study also helps to debunk this myth.

In reality, the conceptual framework of all the Europeans in contact with the North American Indian was essentially the same; encompassing and emerging from a Europocentric view of history and civilisation (Jaenen 1974:264). Jaenen (1980:69-70) has recently asserted that there was in fact no unified theme of French perception; rather a wide range of different images and philosophical biases.

The literature reveals that French attitudes toward Indians were essentially ambivalent. They were convinced of their own superiority (Dickason 1976:10; Upton 1979:16), yet the French were also aware that Indians hardly concurred (Jaenen 1974:290). On the other hand, French intellectuals employed Indian society as a "rhetorical figure with which to reproach the wayward European" and his degen-

erating society (Jaenen 1972:133).

Indian society became so attractive to many Frenchmen that acculturation of even the Jesuits themselves became a concern to many such as Gabriel Sagard and Marie de l'Incarnation (Saunders 1939:25; Dickason 1976:23, 29, 41).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Mason Wade points out the real advantages to the French of quickly adopting Indian technology and certain Indian life ways. The fact that such assimilation was occurring and that, as opposed to the English, the French operated their relationship with Indians from their colonial base (Brown 1980:1), makes the French-Canadian social type of prime interest. In fact, Carolyn Livermore (1976:19) asserts that the French-Canadians were the most influential group of Europeans in contact with Indians.

In several papers Cornelius Jaenen (1974:264) has argued that acculturation of the French-Canadians to Indian manners and customs was continuous and significant. R. M. Saunders (1939:25) in his paper "The Emergence of the Coureur de Bois as a Social Type" argues that it is important to distinguish among the early truchements, or interpreters, who were sent to live among the Indians by Champlain and Pontgrave; the coureurs de bois, those troublesome illegal traders; and the later emergence of a voyageur, or canoeman class.

The truchements, who were the first French to have any extended contact with the Indians, returned to the settlements having quickly assimilated many of the Indian traits, if only by making a virtue of necessity (Lafleur

1973:30; Saunders 1939:22). Rich (1966:10) somewhat ethnocentrically maintains that the likes of De Vignau and Brulé, who were sent among the Indians by Champlain, "went native with a vengeance". By 1623-4 Sagard reports that these interpreters were "everywhere" in their attempt to learn the important Indian languages (Saunders 1939:23).

As the French fur trade developed, the ranks of the emerging coureurs de bois group were swelled by the younger sons of habitants. These men had supposedly acquired a liking for the freedom and adventure of a trading life among the Indians (Saunders 1939:25; Davidson 1967:2). Dugas (1924:13) speaks of this desire for freedom.

La seule explication possible de ce goût étrange qui faisait abandonner si gaïement la vie civilisée pour la vie sauvage, était l'amour d'une liberté sans contrôle.

By 1668 it is reported that few bands in the Lake Superior region had no French coureurs among them (Gibbon 1936:68), while by 1688 independent coureurs had reached the Rainy Lake district (Rich 1966:19), and by 1728 they had penetrated beyond the la Vérendryes into the hinterland of York Factory (Rich 1967:87).

Some of these coureurs were disbanded soldiers (Gibbon 1936:68, 73), while many others were habitants put out of work by an agricultural labour surplus in the 1680s as much as they were being attracted to the life by any unbridled desire for "freedom". There were also the sons of seigneurs--most often the younger siblings who were

left without roles to play in the society of New France (Lafleur 1973:60; Giraud 1945:318). These men had the reputation of being proud, boastful, even haughty individuals (Gibbon 1936:74, 78) who often tended to overlook their religious training (Saunders 1939:25) and to adopt more superstitious outlooks while in the pays d'en haut (Giraud 1945:339). In a nutshell, these were men who "n'avaient jamais vu de petits loups"; that is to say whatever they encountered in their lives was always extraordinary, if only in the telling (Dugas 1924:25).

As a result of their isolation from the society and control of New France, these coureurs developed what Giraud (1945:303-7) describes as "un caractère naturellement indocile", "un esprit étrangère à la subordination", "un indépendance presque sauvage", and "un insouciance du lendemain". Indeed this resistance to the idea of control approached very closely the character of "l'indigen" and departed significantly from the rural peasant mentality in France (Giraud 1945:312). Giraud (1945:341) also suggests that, as a result, the bourgeois/engagé relation came to approximate the Indian model of leadership wherein prestige, respect and confidence meant much more than authority.

Although the voyageur volatility, prodigality, and debauchery are legendary (cf. Gibbon 1936:61), Grace Nutte (1967:11) has deliberately attempted to portray a more sympathetic view of the voyageur as men who were patient, humble and heroic.

Such men were no longer "French" as such, but had committed themselves to the New World and adjusted themselves to it (Saunders 1939:27, 33). After the Conquest these coureurs stayed in the new English colony and continued to develop a distinct North American French culture (Lafleur 1973:41-2).

According to Allaire (1981), after 1760 the independent voyageur per se became a less significant element in New France. As a group, the voyageur characteristically became less of a professional independent trader and more of a seasonal labourer--a family man tied to the basic habitant social base who was attempting to boost a farm income. The majority of them engaged in canoe work from parishes along the north shore between Trois Rivières and Montréal, with Isle Montréal supplying the greatest numbers in the period between 1701 and 1745 (Allaire 1981). Significantly, by 1745 nearly fifty per cent of the engagés gave their occupation as "habitant" as recorded on their engagements.

After the Conquest, W. L. Morton (1957:15)[although he neglects the factor of differential access to capital] asserts that these French-Canadians were "too independent" to be able to effectively compete with the influx of Yankees and Scots. As a result they were absorbed into the growing trade system, usually only in the lower echelons as canoe men. This interpretation is disputed by Livermore (1976:19) who maintains [contrary to others such as Rich (1966:63)] that, for a generation after the Conquest, it

was in fact French money which financed the trade.

Having earlier served the interests of the Northwest Company and to a certain extent the Hudson's Bay Company, after the merger of the two Companies in 1821 the French Canadian voyageurs are said to have remained the favourites of Company officers (Judd 1980a:136; Merk 1931:xlirii). This interpretation is contradicted by William Walker's comment identifying an overt prejudice against the French-Canadians among officers and Orcadians (Nicks 1976:38), as well as by William Auld's negative comparison of them vis-a-vis the Scots in 1811 (Brown 1980:47). Indeed Van Kirk (1980b:12) reports that, despite their near total reliance on the voyageurs, even Nor'westers such as Daniel Harmon in 1804 were also critical of what they felt were the "devil-may-care attitude to life, their ignorant, spendthrift ways and their love of a good carouse". Such attitudes, however, are typical of the distancing mechanisms operating in any class system.

By 1830, late in the period under consideration, the French-Canadians seem to have priced themselves out of the labour market (Goldring 1979:153), while good economic conditions in Lower Canada at the time made the arduous life in the pays d'en haut relatively less attractive (Judd 1980a:137). Goldring (1980:182) also claims that their dislike of the cumbersome york boat also led to a reduction in the numbers of French-Canadians in the Hudson's Bay Company's evolving transportation system.

From the preceding, therefore, it is clear that the



interpretations of some historians implying that the category of "French-Canadian" is a homogenous unit, cannot be supported. The social type, as well as the extent of common interest, varied over time from the early military truchement, to the independent coureur de bois, to the later habitant--voyageur. Their respective relations with Indians must therefore be interpreted with these differences in mind.

## ii) The English

Although, as W. R. Jacobs (1969:82) asserts, Anglo-Indian relations varied widely according to the colonial and religious context in which they occurred, there are a number of generalisations that have been made about Elizabethan and seventeenth century Englishmen who first began to come into contact with North American Indians.

Major motifs of Elizabethan England were an increasing social mobility (Campbell 1959:65); a mercantile cast to motivations (Nash 1972:205); a self-sufficient aspect of English identity (Gorer 1975:156); a confidence in their own superiority (Jacobs 1969:84); all coupled with a certain "seige mentality", paranoia, and corresponding pugnacity (Sheehan 1980:144n.; 151). The late sixteenth century was also characterised by a magical attitude and the search for earthly paradise (Trevelyan 1954:44). This outlook on America underwent a change during Puritan times to one which preferred the image of a "perilous wilderness" (Sheehan 1980:10, 17).

The Restoration of 1660 did not completely erase the

effects of ascetic Puritan rule, and, although somewhat attenuated, biblical and sabbatarian influences survived the beginnings of "the new rationalism" (Trevelyan 1954: 48-50, 286-9; Peake 1972:73; Gorer 1975:52). Indeed, the great majority of British citizens at this time were "literal Christian believers, all of the time" (Laslett 1965:71).

Peter Laslett (1965), a British social historian, has produced a fascinating view of pre-industrial English social structure. The following description is derived from his book The World We Have Lost which has also influenced the interpretations of Van Kirk (1980b), Brown (1980) and Foster (1975, 1977).

During this time England was essentially a rural, small scale society organised as an "association of patriarches". There was no "mass situation" or class solidarity as such, since each "family cell" (including attached servants) existed as an independent entity subsumed by the father/master. These families had few horizontal links to other such "cells". Until the industrial revolution, the scene of labour was at home among the "family" members. The relatively youthful population profile, the stress on obedience in socialisation, and the circumscribed nature of non-familial ties all combined to make patriarchal authoritarian control the norm [cf. Allport's (1979:395 ff) analysis of the authoritarian personality]. Only by the nineteenth century, and nearing the end of the period under consideration, did the Victorian motifs of "progress", the

protestant work ethic, humanitarianism, social reform, and evangelicalism make inroads into the English social consciousness (Brown 1980:148; Peake 1972:73).

Ever since the earliest contacts with Native peoples, Englishmen perceived Indians as "crafty", "brutal", "loathsome", "cannibalistic", "half-men" (more often as beasts per se.) (Nash 1972:200; Sheehan 1980:5, 173; Drinnon 1980:49-50). Colour descriptors "white" and "black" had already taken on their respective evaluative connotations which overflowed into the concept of "race" (Jordan 1965:7) although it was manifested more as a fear of competition than modern racialism (Bloom 1971:86).

London itself is an important element of British society to examine since, during its first ten years of its existence, the Hudson's Bay Company almost exclusively sent Londoners to North America (Judd 1980a:129). As a group, these men came to be characterised as an obstreperous, licentious, demoralised, and debauched lot (Nicks 1980:102; Mitchell 1976:28). Very early in their history the Hudson's Bay Company officers, such as governor John Nixon in 1682, complained of a chaotic labour system characterised by poor morale and discipline among servants of city origin. They were evaluated as of "distinctly uneven quality" and he maintained instead the need for "young country lads" and Scots (Brown 1980:24; Van Kirk 1980b:10). However, despite such negative evaluations of Londoners and the preference for other ethnic groups, sober and hardworking Londoners such as Thomas Bunn (Bayley 1969)

continued to hire on and gain advancement in the Company.

In response to this labour problem the Hudson's Bay Company began a system of apprenticeship. Boys as young as fourteen, who were considered to be more adaptable to conditions in North America, were apprenticed for seven year terms. Many of these youths were in fact charity wards, or "parish boys", bound by their church wardens to the Company (Brown 1980:25). Beginning in 1684 suitable apprentices were drawn from charity orphan schools such as Christ's Hospital and the Royal Foundation of Queen Ann--the Blue Coat and Grey Coat schools respectively (Brown 1980:26; Ruggles 1977:6-7). Queen's University geographer R. I. Ruggles (1977) describe the: "Hospital Boys of the Bay", most of whom originated from the mean streets of London, as having been inculcated with religion and the work ethic along with the mathematics and rudiments of reading and writing which were on the curriculum.

As a result of their apprenticeship policy the Hudson's Bay Company developed strong vertical ties within its structure since many of the young apprentices who had no family ties in England looked to Company officers as father figures (Brown 1980:26) and as a result, "asymmetrical bonds of patronage" developed (Brown 1975:212). This social structure of the Company has been described by Brown (1980:11) as one of "military monasticism".

Having given up on men from London's competitive labour market, the Hudson's Bay Company turned primarily to Scotland for its servants (Brown 1980:25).

### iii) The Scots

By 1682 The Hudson's Bay Company had begun opting for Scottish servants upon the recommendations of those such as Governor Nixon (Judd 1980a:129; Van Kirk 1980b:11). These men have been portrayed in the literature as the typically "shrewd, energetic and ambitious Scott" who displayed a "genius for organization and hard work" (cf. Mitchell 1976: 39). However, important social differences are said to have existed among the Highlanders, Lowlanders and Orcadians (cf. Graham 1956:3). The Hudson's Bay Company for one took for granted that what was referred to as "race" [i.e. ethnicity] was an important distinguishing characteristic among its employee (Judd 1980:305).

A. G. Price (1950), indicates that members of the Lowland Scot merchant class were much more like their English counterparts than the Highlanders in that both the former groups had had experience "subduing unruly peoples" in their dealings with "native groups" (such as the Highlanders and the Irish) before moving to North America. Most of the Scots who became connected with the early Hudson's Bay Company originated from the industrialising Lowland areas of Scotland ever since the first contingent of Edinburgh tradesmen had signed on in 1683 (Brown 1980: 28; Graham 1956:6).

Highlanders on the other hand, after suffering poverty and persecution after Cullodin, and later in the nineteenth century undergoing the disruptive "clearances", immigrated largely on their own to the American colonies (Graham 1956:

42-47; Mitchell 1976:31-32). Military duty and clan ties drew more and more Highlanders to the New World and eventually they found their way to Montreal and connections with the Northwest Company after the upheavals of 1760 and 1776.

These Scots were soon establishing close ties with the French through employing and intermarrying with them (Campbell 1956:42-47; Mitchell 1976:31-2). Indeed the two got along so well with the French-Canadians--both groups being somewhat anti-English--that they soon dominated the Montreal trade (Mitchell 1976:32; Myers 1972:69).

The Highlanders in North America continued to evidence the primacy of "clannish instinct" (Mitchell 1976:32) and, as a consequence, horizontal personal and familial connections developed among the Scotts of the Northwest Company. Anderson and Frideres (1981:102), refer to a romantic tradition imported from Scotland concerning the conditions of an "anacronistic feudal system" which was transferred to North America. The effects of Highland clan ties on this company's relations with Indians as opposed to the verticle "monastic militarism" of the Hudson's Bay Company are examined by Van Kirk (1980b) and Brown (1980).

Again, often without empirical data to back it up, contemporaneous opinion, now often reported as fact, portrays the Highlanders as stubborn, short-tempered, quarrelsome, excessively proud, easily offended, and often conceited (Mitchell 1976:32, 39). A. S. Morton (1973:519) blames their brutally violent behaviour during competition

with the XY Company and later with the Hudson's Bay Company on their so-called "primitive highland background".

After the merger of the two Companies in 1821 the importance of horizontal familial ties continued in the Nor'wester tradition despite Governor George Simpson's claims to the contrary. In fact, the new system of nepotism centred on Simpson himself (Brown 1980:115-16).

#### iv) The Orcadians

More than any other ethnic group, except perhaps the French-Canadians, the Orcadians have been singled out for comment in the fur trade literature. This can be explained by the fact that by the end of the eighteenth century close to eighty percent of Hudson's Bay Company employees were recruited in the Orkney Islands (Nicks 1980:102).

The first Orcadians were beginning to sign on as early as 1702 since, until the late nineteenth century, Company supply ships made the Islands their last stop on the way to Hudson Bay (Clouston 1937a:93). However, by the end of the period under consideration in this study, Orcadians were beginning to decline in proportion as the Company diversified its recruiting practices and Islanders themselves became more reluctant to sign on (Judd 1980a:134).

More Norse than Scottish (Mitchell 1976:28-9), Orkneymen were primarily subsistence farmers and as such, although using primitive methods, they had developed a high standard of self respect and independence (Clouston

1937a:39). One gains a rather bleak picture of their situation on the Islands from sources such as P. Bailey's Orkney. However, according to Galbraith (1957:21n) and Nicks (1980:123) it was the very same harsh, poverty-stricken conditions on the Orkneys and the lack of economic opportunity which made employment far off in the wilds of North America with the Hudson's Bay Company so attractive. On the other side of the coin, Orkney historian J. Clouston (1936:4) and others indicate that Orcadians were valued by the Company because they were believed to be more sober and tractable and, most importantly from the Company's viewpoint, because they worked more cheaply than the English or the Irish.

The Orcadians were strongly influenced by Calvinism, having had parish churches since the Reformation (Goldring 1979:181; P. Bailey 1971:106), yet it is reported by Clouston (1936:8) that beliefs in witches and fairies were still current in the 1790s. Some had sound educations and very importantly, in the Company's view most had never even seen London (D. MacKay 1966:231).

Edward Umphreville (1954:109), sometime employee of both major companies, gives this often quoted opinion on the Orcadians: "they are a close, prudent, quiet people, strictly faithful to their employers, and sordidly avaricious".

Most of those entering the fur trade were from families with little land or influence from the lower ranks of Island society (Nicks 1980:122). Goldring (1979:178) continues by



citing a Simpson memo from 1849 describing the typical Orkney recruit as:

lads of 18 or 20 years of age, who are unacquainted with any trade, and who in their native country would find it difficult to procure £8 or £10 wages.

Orcadian servants tended to be young (median age 20)--even younger than their French Canadian counterparts (median age 22) (Nicks 1980:112).

The Orcadians were often negatively compared to the French as "generally less enterprising and aggressive" than their opponents (Mitchell 1976:29-30). They were said to be shy, cautious and docile [although most ethnic groups would appear so when compared to the image of the French Canadians in the literature]. Nevertheless a tendency toward "cabals", "combinations" and a certain "cliquish nature" made them difficult to deal with as groups on occasion (Mitchell 1976:30; Brown 1980:31). Judd (1980b:306) reports that the first collective action by Orcadians in 1805 was an attempt to force wages up.

Sylvia Van Kirk (1980b:11) asserts that, beyond this penchant for cliquish behaviour, the Orcadians were seldom criticised by the Company. As a result, they also seem to have been highly praised in the fur trade literature, yet Philip Goldring (1979:171) maintains that "the desirability of the Orkneymen is regularly assumed rather than demonstrated". In fact, they earlier on revealed a distinct reluctance to follow orders to leave the relative comfort and safety of the posts on the Bay (Mitchell 1976:

29). However, in his discussion of the difficulties encountered by the Hudson's Bay Company in penetrating the West, R. J. Glover (1948:245) indicates that economic factors--i.e. the lack of extra danger pay--may have played as great a role in this reluctance of the Orcadians as any supposedly characteristic timidity. At any rate, Glover indicates that by the 1790s many brigades were in fact manned by Europeans, many of whom would have been Orcadians.

In terms of their relations with the Indians en d  rouine,<sup>5</sup> Umphreville (1954:109-10) contrasts them to advantage with the Canadian traders who, he asserts, had become "obnoxious to the Indians". This comparison is confirmed by documentation in following chapters.

Again, how much of this contemporaneous opinion concerning the Orcadians can be substantiated through research of scholars such as Nicks and Goldring remains to be seen.

### Summary Discussion

Despite the questionable validity of the concept of "national character" discussed above, this background in the ethnography of the European ethnic groups coming into contact with Indians is just as important for an understanding of the relationship as is a knowledge of the Cree culture they encountered. Using ethnohistorical methodology it should now be possible to interpret the documentation available on the relations between Indians and traders with much more precision. Chapter III will begin this examination.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY CONTACT

#### Introduction

One of the major conceptual tools used by historians is that of periodisation (Carr 1961:60-61). This study will employ a scheme similar to those established by Leacock (1971) and Bishop and Ray (1976), but it will be refined further using the insights of sociologists such as Van den Berghe (1981), Cohen (1978) and Banton (1967).

Many schemes which have been put forth to date are strictly commercial sequences. Since all trade originally began as an interethnic transaction (Rotstein 1967:22-23), we must also pay attention to the theory of interethnic contact such as is suggested by Van de Berghe (1981:41). He introduced the concepts of "symbiosis" and "parasitism". The former refers to a state of relations where trade partners are organised in non-hierarchical ecological interdependence, each having its specialised ecological niche. Banton (1967:88) indicates that a power balance is necessary for such symbiotic relations. "Parasitism" [or "domination" in Banton's (1967:70) terms] is characterised by economically exploitative relations in a hierarchically organised system.

Imposing this interethnic scheme on Bishop and Ray's outline (Figure 2) we can make a further distinction at the beginning of the Trading Post Dependency Era. Previous to

Figure 2: Chronology of Contact -- Western Woods Cree (Cumberland House/The Pas)

PERIOD	ERA	DATE	TYPE OF RELATIONS	
HISTORIC	Fur Trade Dependency	post 1840	-Indian reliance on trapping for subsistence -unequal relations -"Stratified" (Cohen) -"Domination" (Banton)	"Parasitism" (Van den Berghe) -European <sup>socio</sup> political domination hierarchy -economically exploitative relations
	Competitive	1774 (Cumberland House)	-face-to-face exchanges at numerous competing trade centres -"Balanced" power relations (Cohen)	"Symbiosis" (Van den Berghe) -non-hierarchical -ecological interdependence -separate political organisation -exchange relations between separate ethnic groups
	Early Fur Trade	1710 (La France) 1690 (Kelsey)	-first direct contacts in Cree territory -"Balanced" power relations (Cohen)	
PROTOHISTORIC	Middleman	1684 (York Factory)	-systematic or "Institutionalized" contact through a broker, but not yet face-to-face relations -"Fragmented" relations (Cohen), i.e. equalitarian yet isolated	
	Indirect	1668 (English) 1640 (Jesuits)	-indirect relations -first sporadic influx of European goods and other influences (eg. disease) -"Fragmented" relations (Cohen), i.e. equalitarian yet isolated	
PRE-HISTORIC	Woodland Archaic Paleo	3,000 BP 5,000 BP 8,000 BP	-no contact	

this point of change in Indian subsistence patterns to a reliance on trapping more than hunting, the relations are "symbiotic" [cf. Leacock's (1971:11) "Phase II"]. Thereafter they are "parasitic" [Leacock's (1971:11) "Phase III"].

The "Prehistoric Period", which has already been dealt with in Chapter II, ends with the influx of trade goods and other European influences. Bishop and Ray's (1976:124-5; 134) "Protohistoric Period" centres on that span of time characterised by indirect contact and is divided into two eras. The first is the "Indirect Trade Era" when influences are diffused sporadically and relations are "fragmented"--i.e. equalitarian, yet relatively isolated (Cohen 1978:389-90). Second is the "Middleman Era" in which systematic contact, but not including direct face-to-face relations were established. This latter phase marks the beginning of what Banton (1967:67) refers to as "institutionalized contact". Prior to this time contact was primarily on an ad hoc individual basis. In terms of Cohen's categories, relations continue to be "fragmented".

The "Historic Period" is composed of three eras. First is the "Early Fur Trade Era" which, according to Bishop and Ray, sees the first direct face-to-face contacts being made. Second is the "Competitive Trade Era" in which the actual face-to-face exchanges begin to be made in the Indians' own territory. A continuing balance of power relations places this era into Cohen's (1978:309) "balanced" category of interethnic relations in which symbiosis is a major characteristic (Van den Berghe 1981:41). The third

phase of the Historic Period is the "Trading Post Dependency Era" in which trapping becomes the primary subsistence pattern. This latter period marks the growth of unequal ties, or what Banton (1967:70) refers to as the "Domination" order of race relations. Van den Berghe (1981:41) calls this "parasitism" and Cohen (1978:391) terms it "stratified" relations. At this time differential power to control resources develops.

Of course, the periods in this outline are far from sharply delimited in practice, and they overlap considerably, depending upon the group and the region in question. For example, there is a considerable difference in the dates assigned to the different eras between the West Main and the Western Woods Cree in this scheme.

#### Protohistoric Contact: 1600-1668

The evidence for indirect contact in the Protohistoric Period in the study area is slight and circumstantial indeed. However, Arthur J. Ray (1978:26) asserts that this period has been seriously underestimated in archaeological analysis west of Hudson Bay.

One example of possible evidence indicating protohistoric influence is J. V. Wright's (1971:21) position that a new style of plain surfaced ceramics was influenced by European metal containers.

Further, as E. S. Rogers and J. G. E. Smith (1981:130) assert, perhaps the most significant effect of the beginnings of contact was the change in the Indian's perception

of the environment as a consequence of new technology and economic inducements which were beginning to diffuse into Cree territory in the early 1600s. This relates to G. D. Berreman's (1978:53) assertion that increased "scale" of social interaction expands the possibilities for innovation.

Evidence of the Middleman Trade Era is also slight. It is not until the 1640s that the Jesuit Relations begin to make brief references to second hand knowledge of the Cree living between Lake Superior and the Northern Sea (i.e. James Bay) (Thwaites 1959:I:32, XVIII:29, XXI:125). This information came to the Jesuits through the Nipissings who in fact were obstructing direct contact between the French and Cree in order to protect their middleman position (Rich 1967:14).

Keeping in mind Ray's caution about underestimating the importance of the Protohistoric Period, the Historic Period will now be examined.

### Historic Contact

#### i) Early Fur Trade Era, 1611-1694

Although many sources such as Mandelbaum (1979:15) and Smith (1976:420) indicate that the first mention of the Cree in European documents comes from the Jesuit Relations of 1640-1641 (cited above), there exists an instructive account of direct contact as early as 1611 when the ill-fated Henry Hudson had a brief encounter with the Cree.

It is doubtful whether any Cree actually witnessed

the reefing of Hudson's sails or heard the keel of his English jolly boat grate on the beach in James Bay in the fall of 1610. Nevertheless, the claims of Rogers (1967:83) and Bishop (1981:159) that the Hudson Bay Lowland was not occupied by the Cree prior to the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), are contradicted. A Cree hunter did happen upon Hudson's quarters in the spring of 1611.

As reported by expedition survivor Abacuck Pricket (Purchas 1965:XII:391), the hunter who happened upon Hudson's camp found himself the centre of much attention. Upon being given a knife, a looking-glass and a handful of buttons, the hunter left, making signs that he would return. Showing himself to be no stranger to the process of trade, he later brought back two deer and two beaver skins. Pricket reports the following transaction.

He had a scrip under his arme, out of which hee drew those things which the Master had given him. Hee tooke the Knife and laid it upon one of the Beaver skinnes and his Glasses and Buttons upon the other, and so gave them to the Master, who received them, and the Savage took those things which the Master had given him, and put them up into his scrip againe.

Now the bargaining began in earnest.

Then the Master shewed him an Hatchet, for which hee would have given the Master one of his Deere skinnes, but our Master would have them both, and so hee had, although not willingly (Purchas 1965:XXI:391).

Over one hundred and thirty years later the HBC factor at



Severn River, Andrew Graham (1969:204), reports that the Oupeeshepaw Nation of Cree still related a tradition of this first encounter with Europeans on the Bay. Contrary to the assumptions of Oldmixon (Tyrrell 1931:375) and Orr (1924:9) that, once set adrift, Hudson was probably "massacred" by the Cree [as he might have been by the Eskimo encountered by the mutineers (cf. Purchas 1965:XIII: 404-6)], nature, and not the James Bay Natives, more likely ended Hudson's life. This is confirmed when in 1670 Radisson and Bayley report finding what they assumed to be Hudson's last camp on the Moose-cebee (or Moose) River without signs of violence (Nutte 1977:291).

This first episode of direct contact with Europeans is instructive because it reveals that the Cree were already well versed in the concept and process of inter-ethnic trade. There was no "rip off" of furs for beads and trinkets as the current popular view [and even some not-so popular (cf. Myers 1972:3)] would have it. Such an interpretation demeans the intelligence and real power of the Cree in this situation. The Cree hunter had realised immediately that a return for the European goods was in order and, contrary to Myers, he had little difficulty in establishing an understanding about the value of these items. The haggling that occurred indicates that both sides perceived their position as one of strength (cf. Sahlins 1972:201).

In addition, those such as E. F. Frazier (1957:92) who posit that initial contact relations are "subsocial",

since the parties do not regard or treat each other as human, seems to be incorrect in this instance. The Cree hunter obviously had little difficulty in placing Hudson in a category which allowed fruitful transactions with him. Nor was the meeting characterised by the super-caution of "silent trade" said to be common in initial contact (cf. Frazier 1957:42-43; Blalock 1967:77; Banton 1967:68). In short, face-to-face exchange for mutual benefit (i.e. "symbiosis") was the character of this first direct contact between the Europeans and the Cree of James Bay. From the beginning, therefore, trade relations between the Cree and the English tended to be "symbiotic".

Other maritime explorers who made their way into Hudson Bay in subsequent years<sup>1</sup> were not discovered by the Cree. If they were, the Cree chose not to reveal themselves to the Europeans. The only contact came indirectly through the Cree's salvaging the leavings of these ill-fated parties (Mason 1967:6).

The Cree made their face-to-face contacts, not with Englishmen on the shores of Hudson Bay, but with French coureurs de bois groping their way westward, along the Great Lakes watershed.

In 1656 the Jesuit Relations (Twaites 1959:XLII:14) report that two unnamed young men had returned from exploration and trade among the Kiristinon (or Cree). In fact, one of these men was Medard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, an ex-Jesuit donné (i.e. servant) turned trader. He had been sent in 1654 to the west as far as Green Bay where

he met some Cree. It is uncertain whether Radisson accompanied him on this trip. The Indians encountered by des Grosseilliers informed him of the North Sea where European ships arrived directly from Europe (Rich 1967:19). Here, in Indian supplied intelligence, we see the germ of an idea which eventually led to the establishment of one of the longest-lasting contact institutions encountered by the Cree--the Hudson's Bay Company.

Before the formation of that company however, the French continued their probing into Cree territory. Although there is well-founded suspicion that the reported journey of Radisson and des Grosseilliers to the Cree of the James Bay area in 1659--1660 is nothing but a myth (cf. Nutte 1977:65; Adams 1961:lxiii, 146), we must assume that these two coureurs were not alone. They were merely the most famous of those wandering in the pays d'en haut during this time.

The Cree, however, were also making their own trading forays to Sault St. Marie (Michilimakinac) and by 1670 were extending their reach as far as Montreal (Innis 1956:45; Thwaites 1959:LXVI:107). Indeed, by 1659-1660 the Cree had already sent an envoy to the Jesuits requesting missionary visits in order to establish an alliance with the French (Thwaites 1959:XLVI:71). The next year Dablon and Druillettes complied with the request (Thwaites 1959:XLI:257) and by 1666 Allouez reports that missionaries and Cree understood each other well enough for religious instruction to be attempted (Thwaites 1959:LI:59).

The Cree encountered the two most famous coureurs again when they returned to the country south of Lake Superior in 1661. At this time, a pattern which became familiar later on began to develop. Gifts were distributed by the traders, and on their part, the Indians supplied more provisions than could be consumed (Adams 1961:124, 127). Radisson somewhat grandiloquently asserts that these gifts

...gave us authority among the Whole nation...Amongst such a rawish kind of people a gift is much, and bestowed, and liberality much esteemed...(Adams 1961:129).

W. R. Jacobs (1950) has examined the significance of presents in relations with Indians. Indeed gift exchange was the primary method of achieving peaceful relations in band society (Sahlins 1972:169).

Their supply of trade goods and secure fort gave the coureurs a sense of power over their hosts. Radisson and des Grosseilliers reportedly saw themselves as unopposed "Caesars", even "gods of the earth", claiming for themselves supernatural powers over life and death. In their own eyes (unfortunately there exists no other evidence), these self-confessed "demi-gods" believed the local Indians were suitably impressed and cowed by their greatness. Little matter that these Europeans could still not avoid the ravages of famine that winter had they not received food from the Indians (Adams 1961:130-1, 135). It is quite possible that this inability to secure their own food somewhat undermined their powerful image among the Indians.

More Cree met Radisson and des Grosseilliers as the Frenchmen moved north of Lake Superior in the spring of 1662. The "Christinos" (Cree) encountered there were in the habit of wintering inland but they returned to the lake to fish each spring. This time it was the Indians who brought gifts to the coureurs in order to persuade them to allow them to accompany the expedition back to Montreal. However, after later encountering a small party of Iroquois, the Cree refused to go further despite entreaties by Radisson and des Grosseilliers (Adams 1961:149:50). In this action we see that the Cree had a mind of their own regarding relations with Europeans and were quite able to resist the persuasions of traders when their own interests lay in other directions.

The numbers of coureurs travelling among the Cree increased substantially over the next two decades. By 1668 the Sovereign Council reported that "there was hardly a band of Indians [in the Lake Superior area] that did not have some French coureurs de bois among them" (Gibbon 1936: 68). By 1680 Harold Innis (1956:42) reports that the French had crossed the height of land to trade in the Kaministiquia watershed. In that year at least eight hundred coureurs are said to have been in Indian country (Brown 1980: 5). Under de Noyon, the French began to penetrate into Cree territory as far west as Lake Nipigon by 1678 (Innis 1956:49) and to Rainy Lake by 1688 (Ray 1974:12). By 1689 Lake of the Woods area was occupied by the French (W. L. Morton 1957:14).

In the early decades of the eighteenth century the Cree had successfully entangled the French in their alliance system. The French traders became so caught up in their relations with the Cree that la Vérendrye, much against his better judgement, was persuaded to allow his eldest son (who was subsequently killed) to join a Cree war party against the Sioux in 1734 (Rich 1967:88). Two years later another of la Vérendrye's sons was sent to live with the Cree at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg (Rich 1967:88-89).

The la Vérendryes had extended the French presence among the Cree as far as Cedar Lake by 1741, and in the next year had gone all the way to the forks of the Saskatchewan (Burpee 1927:25-26). Burpee (1907:312) reports that by 1748 la Vérendrye's son le Chevalier had built the first fort Basquea at the mouth of the Pasquia River in present day The Pas.<sup>2</sup> However, even earlier than the officially sanctioned thrusts of la Vérendrye, independent coureurs were already reported in the Saskatchewan-Nelson drainage system between 1727 and 1732 (Rich 1967:87; A. S. Morton 1973:178).

Although the direct contact between the Cree and the French was becoming more common during this period, many so-called "trading posts" were nothing more than seasonally or irregularly occupied shacks (Rich 1960a:I:516). For example, la Vérendrye (Burpee 1927:486) reports that Fort Poskoyac itself was abandoned during the winter for lack of sufficient provisions.

> Thus, the French presence confronting the Cree in the

study area, until the mid-eighteenth century, was actually a sporadic and therefore limited one. However, it must also be kept in mind that with up to eight hundred coureurs in the pays d'en haut much more contact was occurring than merely that occasioned by the officially sanctioned Compagnie du Nord of de Noyon and la Vérendrye.

Meanwhile to all this activity on the part of the French, the Cree's northern flank of Hudson Bay had remained relatively undisturbed until 1668 when, under the impetus of the two disaffected Frenchmen, Radisson and des Grosseilliers, British vessels again made their appearance on the Bay. Contrary to many who are misinformed (e.g. Morantz 1980b: 35), Radisson did not reach James Bay in 1668 (D. MacKay 1966:24). The Cree met only des Grosseilliers and those Englishmen on the Nonsuch. Again, the Cree provided indispensable help in finding a secure berth for the Nonsuch in the Rupert River and in establishing Charles Fort (Rich 1967:26). Despite Gillam's complaints of petty thievery (Nutte 1977:118), a contemporaneous account of the expedition indicated that "They report the natives bee civill and Beaver is very plenty" (quoted in A. S. Morton 1973:51).

During the next decade of contact on the Bay the pattern of relations found typical much later began to develop. In his Charles Fort journal of 1670 Thomas Gorst (cited in Nutte 1977:287) reports that the Cree quickly congregated nearby showing themselves eager to trade. They supplied the English not only with pelteries

but with much needed food. Governor Bayley also was soon complaining that he had been forced to pay higher prices for furs than he had originally planned (Rich 1967:37). Already the Cree were exploiting the competitive situation with the French who were established inland.

Incredibly, E. E. Rich (1967:38) maintains that the Cree were already beginning to "depend" on the regular arrival of English ships as early as the 1670s. This assertion is difficult to comprehend after such a short time of involvement in direct trade. As with many other scholars who claim early Indian "dependence", however, Rich fails to define what exactly is meant by the term "dependence".<sup>3</sup> Neither does he cite evidence, much less quantify his assertion. This interpretation will be examined more closely below, but at this stage it must be regarded as highly suspect.

Very quickly the Cree found that the English Company and their French mentors<sup>4</sup> were expanding their operations to the major river mouths on the west coast of the Bay. They also began to visit the Cree inland in order to persuade them to come down to the newly established posts.

The Cree of the Moose River were contacted by Radisson and Bayley in 1670. On this expedition the two traders also reached as far as the mouth of the Nelson River (during this time referred to as Port Nelson), but again the Cree made themselves known only through the remains of their recently occupied habitation sites. However, the next year some Cree met with des Grosseilliers for trade,



although the Frenchman stayed only the summer season (W. L. Morton 1957:12).

In 1682 Radisson returned to Port Nelson, this time under French colours, and travelled eight days up the Hayes River in search of Indians. Meeting nine canoes of Cree, Radisson called on his past experience and attempted to impress them with accounts of his exploits and by distributing the all-important presents (cf. Jacobs 1950). He reported on the meeting that the Cree, seeming to be suitably impressed, reciprocated with their own gifts and formally adopted him. On this occasion Radisson reports that an elder made the following speech:

Young men, be not afraid. The sun is favourable to us. Our enemies shall fear us, for this is the man we have wished for ever since the days of our fathers (Adams 1961:170).

This eagerness and their later pledge of support against the English and New Englanders at Port Nelson (Adams 1961:176) supports Abraham Rotstein's (1967:1) contention that alliance was a key aspect of Indian/trader relationships [although not necessarily the most important one (cf. Ray and Freeman 1978:232-7)].

Now commencing an important phase in the Cree/traders relationship, the Cree accepted Radisson's nephew, Jean Baptiste Chouart, and another unnamed Frenchman as guests to live with them on their travels to their winter hunting grounds (Adams 1961:169, 176). These Cree were most likely more than eager to conduct the Europeans inland since, by

so doing, they could solidify their own relationship to the traders through providing the indispensable services of guides, translators, defenders, and women as marriage partners. The Cree had very quickly apprehended the advantages of serving as middleman and broker to the new groups of Indians encountered. The sun would indeed look favourably on them if they could establish binding ties with the European traders who lived and travelled with them.

The attempt on the part of the Cree to solidify an alliance with the French was so determined that it was with difficulty that Radisson restrained those accompanying Chouart down to Port Nelson in 1683 from attacking his competitors' posts (Adams 1961:191). Already the Cree were bringing complaints against the English trading at the Bottom of the Bay and wished to retaliate against them at Port Nelson (Adams 1961:191). There appears, therefore, to have been a quite effective communication system between Indian groups at the Bottom of the Bay and those in the hinterland of Port Nelson. The Cree also began to pressure Radisson and des Grosseilliers to match the higher fur prices given by the English at the HBC posts on James Bay. In refusing to do so, the coureur sparked the following rebuke from the Cree leader who happened to be Radisson's adopted father.

You men that pretend to give us our  
lives, will not not you let us live?  
You know what beaver is worth, and the  
pains we take to get it. You style  
yourselves our brethern, and yet you  
will not give us what those who are

not our brethern will give. Accept  
our presents, or we will come see  
you no more, but will go unto others  
(Adams 1961:197).

This threat to trade elsewhere became a common gambit of Cree traders throughout the period when competition obtained.

If he is to be believed, Radisson, who wrote his account long after the fact in order to impress Charles II, maintains that he manhandled and threatened his adopted father for speaking in such a manner. He reports that he dared the Cree to go to the English. Radisson states further:

There was a necessity I should speak  
after this rate in this juncture, or  
else our trade had been ruined for  
ever. Submit once unto the savages  
and they are never to be recalled  
(Adams 1961:197).

According to Radisson, his rough actions and words were effective in impressing the Cree sufficiently to maintain their connection with the French.

Contrary to the commonly held view that the French experienced particularly good relation with the Indians (cf. Patterson 1972:59; Price 1950:64; Wade 1969:68), such as highlanded approach seemed to be more common than not. In fact, Saum (1965:76) asserts:

Little overt evidence exists in fur-trade literature to show that men of one cultural background excelled those of another in dealing with Indians.

Marcel Giraud (1945:318) explains that the French often came into conflict with Indians because they did not always understand the social controls which were operating in Indian society. The French also attempted to manipulate the Cree by threats of violence and promises to aid the Sioux against them (Ray and Freeman 1978:44, 179).

Although the English received Cree reports of the French "forcing" them to trade by threats to aid their enemies the Sioux (Isham 1949:xxv; Ray and Freeman 1978: 44, 181-2, 179, 189), we have to consider the probability that these reports were merely rationalisations. The Cree would have used this explanation in order to maintain their connection with the English Company while at the same time trading at their convenience with the French who were established inland.

Nevertheless, French threats seemed to be taken seriously in some cases. For example, Isham (1949:xxvi) states that even the "mere rumour" of the French coureurs' presence among their enemies caused obvious panic among the Cree. In the Jesuit Relations of 1670-1671 Father Allouez (Thwaites 1959:LIV:197) cites further examples of poor relations between the Cree and the French. The Cree became "highly incensed against the French" for plundering their furs and subjecting them to "unbearable insolence and indignity".

Carolyn Gilman (1982:3) has recently asserted that the supposed facility of the French in their dealings with Indians is essentially a myth. As will be documented below,

the continuing relations with the French under the organisation of the Northwest Company (NWC) deteriorated even further in the late eighteenth century than in the 1670s.

Despite their sometimes difficult relations with the French, the Cree had adopted young Chouart when he was left by Radisson at Port Nelson in 1683 to continue the trade (Adams 1961:207, 214). Upon his return in 1684, Radisson, (now again in the English interest) heard of Chouart's problems with one Cree trapper said to have been incited by a leading Indian attached to the English at the Bottom of the Bay. The Cree hunter had demanded presents in return for allowing the French to occupy the area. Chouart's adopted brother-in-law revenged a slight wound received in the ensuing argument by killing the Cree in question (Adams 1961:223-4). It becomes clear from references to such incidents that the Cree took their alliance with Europeans quite seriously. Chouart's injury was revenged as any attack on a kinsman would have been. Europeans were obviously being tightly and deliberately integrated into the Cree sociopolitical system.

Cree relations with the French element of the HBC were cemented even more closely when Chouart was persuaded by his uncle to joining the English Company. Radisson and Chouart's adoption was renewed in the Cree fashion by further gift exchanges, and the young Frenchman was again sent inland to travel with his adopted relatives (Adams 1961:230-1).

Close relations with the Company's English servants

also began to develop during this period. Perhaps the most famous of the group of "Indianised Englishmen" which emerged is Henry Kelsey. A. S. Morton (1973:110) asserts that Kelsey worked along with Radisson and Chouart, learning how to adapt to living with Indians and becoming "well beloved" by them. In 1752, Joseph Robson, a critic of the HBC, reported that Kelsey was "a very active Lad, delighting much in Indians Company, being never better pleased than when he was travelling amongst them" (quoted in Brown 1980: 52).

A group of Assiniboine took Kelsey inland with them in 1690 to the area of The Pas and beyond. There is some question as to whether Kelsey went under Company orders or on his own initiative. However, there was already a well-established pattern of sending servants such as Chouart and Grimard inland to "encourage" inland Indians to come to York Factory to trade (A. S. Morton 1973:111). In fact, it became a standard HBC policy to farm out their men to subsist with Indian groups during the slack winter season when there was nothing for them to do within the stockades (Nicks 1976:22).

Doubtless, many of the Cree of "Derrings Point" (somewhere in The Pas--Cedar Lake region) were encountering their first European as Kelsey was guided inland in 1690. (Kelsey 1929:2). They would have met a slight youth, apprenticed only in 1684 at the age of fourteen, who had been swept up from the mean streets of London (Rich 1960a: I:296). He would have been carrying few if any trade

goods, but he was travelling under the aegis of an Assiniboine trading captain. Therefore, in Indian eyes, Kelsey likely did not cut much of a heroic figure--the dominating European--as is often the interpretation given in the popular account and in illustrations (cf. Ewers 1967).

In his own estimation, Kelsey got along well with his travelling partners except that they continually ignored his requests to refrain from preparing for war in order to trap beaver instead. He had serious difficulty with this request since the Nayhaythaways (Western Woods Cree) were attacking those who were attempting to move through their territory on the way to York Factory (Kelsey 1929:15-18). Of course this is to be expected from anyone trying to protect a middleman position as the Cree were (cf. B. Cox 1981).

When the Indians returned Kelsey to York Factory in 1692, he was accompanied by a "bedfellow"--a Cree woman whom he called his wife. He demanded that she should be allowed to enter the fort against the Company policy (Van Kirk 1980b:64). Although the evidence for liaison with Indian women was often excised from the official journals in order to make a show at least of complying with Company policy, Cree women had become the keystone in social, political and economic relations with European traders.

This crucial relationship need not be discussed in detail here since historians Jennifer Brown (1980) and Sylvia Van Kirk (1980b) have produced excellent studies

on the subject. The developing relations with Indian women will be commented upon in the following chapters as the traders become more willing to write about their Indian wives and families in the official records examined for this study.

Beginning with those such as Radisson's adopted father, some Cree attached themselves more or less permanently to the Company's interests in the vicinity of York Factory. This group soon came to be known as the "Home Indians" or "Home Guard Cree" (cf. Morantz 1983; 1980a; 1980b; Foster 1977). Henry Kelsey (1929:52, 55) reports from York Factory in the winter of 1694 that the local Cree were providing provisions. These Cree, who had probably never remained at the mouth of the Hayes and Nelson Rivers during the winter, were now staying the entire year and were resorting to the post when food was scarce (Kelsey 1929:57-9). It is also clear that the Cree began at this time to treat the Company men as part of a reciprocal food sharing exchange system. The Cree supplied provisions to the Europeans when plentiful, and called on them for aid when their own hunts failed (Kelsey 1929:62, 67).

It is a one-sided view of this reciprocal food sharing process which has helped to spawn the widespread interpretation that the Indians soon became "totally dependent" on the Europeans for survival (cf. Graham 1969: 19). However, it must be remembered that this food sharing which is often interpreted as "dependence" involves



only a relatively small number of Cree. Since these "Home Guard" had established themselves more or less permanently around York Factory, more is known about this group than any other. Therefore, care must be taken in generalising from this small group. Arthur J. Ray (1974:80-81, 85) has cited statistics which indicate that the Home Guard Cree were indeed larger consumers of guns and textiles as compared to the inland Cree. The Ecology of the Hudson Bay Lowland made it difficult, if not impossible, to subsist during the winter along the coast without support of some kind. However, it must be remembered that the majority of Cree continued to move well inland for the winter (Robson 1965:53) and subsisted quite well enough on their own.

Having been at York Factory since 1732, James Isham (1949:81) wrote of the Indians that "Keeps by the Sea side":

...are often starved and in want of food but upland Indians are Seldom put to these shifts, --having plentier of Beast of all sortts, then what is to be Gott by the Sea shore," (cf. Robson 1965:6).

It is the Home Guard Cree group which altered its seasonal round in order to incorporate hunting provisions for the HBC post, thus precluding the traditional fall move inland (Ray and Freeman 1978:41). It is they, and not the Inland Cree who become relatively "dependent" and what one contemporaneous observer believed to be "...mostly a

debauch'd corrupted People..." (Dragge 1748:183).

If only on the basis of intensity of contact, we must be careful to distinguish between the Home Guard Cree and the Western Woods Cree in terms of Assumed level of culture change (cf. Morantz 1980a:50; Foster 1977:51). For example, HBC critic Joseph Robson (1965: 49-50, 54) reports in 1746 that the coastal Indians were very different from those inland--in burial practices for instance. Traditional burial patterns which had been dropped by the Home Indians by 1746 were still being followed by the Inland Cree.

ii) The French Interlude; 1694--1714

Upon their arrival at York Factory in 1695 the Cree were surprised to find the English gone and in their place French traders who, under d'Iberville, had captured the post the year previous. Nicholas Jeremie (1926), a Quebec-born trader gives a brief report on the French tenure of Fort Bourbon (York Factory under the French) for the next twenty years.

According to Jeremie (1926:40) the Cree were already becoming "dependent" on the French by this time. He records that during a period when the traders had not enough goods to provide their basic needs:

As a result, many of them died of hunger [infanticide and homicide also reported], for they had lost their skill with the bow since Europeans had supplied them with fire-arms. They have no other resource to live on except the game they kill with guns, for they know nothing about cultivating the land and raising

vegetables. Always wanderers they  
never stay a week in the same place.

This explanation is difficult to credit since as late as 1755 Anthony Henday (Burpee 1907:343) reports that, when low on powder, the Cree easily enough reverted back to using the bow and arrow for moose hunting. This explanation and the assertion that the Cree were "dependent" will be discussed more fully below.

Evidently early Franco-Cree relations at Fort Bourbon were cordial enough. Jeremie (1926:32) gave the following evaluation of the Cree. Although "slanderous", they exhibited "humanity and courtesy", honesty, and they lacked the vice of "oaths and swearing". As we might expect from an official report, Jeremie also indicated the Indian's preference for the French over the "deceitful" English.

The Cree did not find their relationship with the French to be totally smooth however. Jeremie (1926:39) recounts how, in July--August 1712, the Cree killed five members of his small contingent who were on a hunting trip. The precipitating factor in this violence was the reluctance of the French to trade for powder and to share the good fortunes of their hunt with the Cree. Jeremie (1926:39) gives the following account:

Unfortunately they camped near a party of natives who were starving and who had no powder, as I did not want to trade it, but wished to keep it as a safeguard for my own life and the lives of my men. These natives, considering themselves dared by the reckless way my men were shooting every kind of game,

and feasting before their eyes without sharing anything, made a plot to kill them, and seize what they had.

Seven of Jeremie's men were killed, leaving only nine men, a chaplain and a boy to hold their position. This caused great concern among the French about their strategic position, as Jeremie continues:

We spent all the winter in the fort, not daring to go out, without food and without powder, and expecting we would all die of hunger and misery, while all the time we were in dread of seeing these murderous wretches at our gate, but they have not since appeared.

The meaning of this attack becomes clear in light of anthropological theory on "reciprocity". As Dalton (1961: 20) asserts, in band societies, trade automatically encompasses social relationships and obligations. Having failed to carry out their social obligation to share their food surplus, the French forfeited the socio-political protection against "negative reciprocity". Negative reciprocity is defined by Sahlins (1972:195-6) as an exchange in which social ties are non-existent and attempts are made to maximise gains at the partner's expense through such exigencies as sharp dealing, subterfuge and theft regardless of any "moral" constraint. Since exchange in band societies is a social, not merely an economic process (Sahlins 1972:186-7), the flow of food in particular serves as an important barometer of social relations. Food is withheld only from potential enemies.

Therefore, by not comprehending, or ignoring, the obligation to share available food with their starving trading partners, the French defaulted on crucial social obligations in the trade. They in fact removed themselves from the category of "trading partner" with whom one shares food and placed themselves in the category of "enemy" with whom one does not share food, thus laying themselves open to plunder and murder. The morality of exchange within band society is "sectorally structured" (Sahlins 1972:198-200). Therefore, one need not treat an enemy in a "moral" fashion, especially when he has reneged on important social obligations. Since kinship (a primary organisational structure of band society) was not involved here, the cross-cultural exchange itself was the only link existing between the two groups to assure peaceful relationships. The disruption of exchange resulted in the rupturing of the social relationship inherent in trade.

This incident also serves to point out that the Cree, as late as the first decades of the eighteenth century, continued to hold the upper hand in strategic power relations. It is clear that the Cree could attack Europeans with impunity whenever they wished.

The Hudson's Bay Company had also been well aware of its tenuous strategic position vis-a-vis the Cree at this time and recognised the need to placate the Indians. London Committee instructions to York Factory governor Nixon in 1682 state:

You must allways bee carefull of your Selfe, and bee upon your Guard for your own Safety & preservation, yt Experience teaches that mild and Gentle Usage doth more obtaine upon the most Savage Natures then to much severity. (Rich and Johnson 1948:39);

and to Henry Sergeant in 1687:

...care is to be taken when they come downe in considerable Numbers to Trade wth. us that you put it not into their power to surprize our forts or doe us prejudice (Rich and Johnson 1948:79).

Indeed, company fear of Indian attack on York Factory persisted at least through 1759 (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, York Fort Journal B.239/a/46:37;<sup>5</sup> cf. Rich and Johnson 1957: 7), and the Cree used threats of attack as late as 1773 as part of their trading strategy (B.239/a/68:43).

iii) Contact Re-established With The English, 1714-1756

The Cree were not altogether happy with James Knight's assumption of control at York Factory in 1714. Writing to the London Committee on 19 September, Knight states:

One of the Indians came to me when I hoisted the Union flag: he told me he did not love to see that, he loved to see the white one, so there is many of the Indians has great friendship for the French here (Davies and Johnson 1965:37).

Again we might speculate here that the Cree was using a form of trade rhetoric in order to pressure the returning traders to be more generous iwth their gifts and less stringent with

the "factor's standard" [which always exceeded the "official standard" to a greater or lesser extent (Ray 1974:63-65)].

Upon their return, however, the HBC traders were able to maintain relatively smooth relations with the Cree for the next forty years at York Factory.

Although criticised by contemporaries for "hibernating by the edge of the frozen sea" (Robson 1965:6), there were serious transportation and labour obstacles facing the Company's expansion inland (cf. Glover 1948). Although Bruce Cox (1981) disagrees, the Cree's desire to maintain their middleman position also had a role to play here (Ray 1974:61ff.). It was originally much more advantageous to both Cree and trader to have the Indians absorb the transportation costs of shipping their furs Bayside. For the Cree it meant being able to exact high markups on goods traded to those Indians who deferred or were prevented by the Cree) from making the arduous journey to York Factory (cf. Ray 1974:61). Eventually, however, the increasing diversion of Cree furs to the French who were establishing themselves in the York Factory hinterland by the mid-eighteenth century forced the Company's hand. Forgetting Radisson, Chouart and Henry Kelsey's travels inland, Andrew Graham, Chief at York Factory, wrote that Anthony Henday's inland excursion in 1754-1755 with his Cree guides was the first undertaken by the HBC (E.2/4:35; Burpee 1907:307)<sup>6</sup>.

It is in Henday's inland journal that we begin to get our first glimpses of the Cree as individuals. Attick-ashish (or Little Deer), the leader of Henday's travelling

companions, was in Graham's opinion a very capable man in complete control of his own destiny (E.2/4:36).

When the French who were established at Fort Paskoyac made noises about wanting to detain Henday as his group passed through on 22 July 1754, Henday (E.2/4:38) reports:

...at night I went to my tent and told  
my leader that had the charge of me,  
who only laughed and said they dar'd  
not;

Obviously Attickashish paid little heed to the French perceptions of exactly who controlled movement along the Saskatchewan!

Attickashish and the other Cree leaders with whom Henday travelled provided key services to the Europeans. He searched out new groups of Indians (E.2/4:46); made most of his initial contacts with groups such as the Eagle Indians and the awe-inspiring Blackfoot; and they most certainly handled all of his translation work in these encounters. Attickashish continued his valuable relationship with the HBC for some time to come (cf.B.239/a/59:114).

Henday also met the important French trading captain, Wappenessew, who reportedly held great sway among Indians and French alike. Wappenessew finally agreed with Henday that it was in his best interests to go to York Factory in the spring (E.2/4:53). Thereafter, according to Graham, Wappenessew was responsible for conducting twenty canoes a year to York Factory (E.2/4:54; cf.Davies and Johnson 1965:xxix).



Years later in a letter to the Governor and Committee on 26 August 1772, Andrew Graham indicates that the European competitors continued to vie for his support. Wappennesew was well able to look out for his own best interests as the following account attests.

...the Canadians who have great need of his Assistance to promote their Trade & protect their Persons, tried every means to attach him to their Service, & they have succeeded. He lives in their House all the Winter, dines at Table with the Masters, & his family ar clothed with Cloth & no favor is refused. In return he induces the Indians to resort thither, he Convoys the large Canoes up & down to Michilimakinac & in great Measure prevents the numerous tribes through which they are obliged to pass, from molesting them (Wallace 1968:40).

Here is a prime example of the importance afforded to the Cree Okima'w and of how the Europeans attempted to reinforce traditional Indian leadership patterns, thus creating new avenues for the ambitions of certain influential Cree (cf. Ray 1975a; Morantz 1977; 1980b; 1983).

While inland among the Cree and Assiniboine in 1754 and 1755, Henday found it more difficult to persuade other local Indians to make the arduous journey to York Factory. From the Cree standpoint, they were much conveniently supplied by the French at Basquiau and as a result they were able to convince Henday that they were "strongly attached to the French Interest" (Burpee 1907:327; e.2/4:39). Of course, playing one European group against the other in this manner was a primary tactic in the Cree arsenal of

trading strategies.

The Cree guiding Henday onto the plains eventually became exasperated with his constant harping at them to trap. It was obvious to them that he really did not comprehend that these Cree made their living as middlemen--not as trappers. Henday's companions did make an effort to kill a few beaver but, to his disappointment, this was only to supply themselves with winter clothing and meat for beaver feasting.<sup>7</sup> (Burpee 1907:336, 340; E.2/4:45, 49).

Henday's "bedfellow" eventually informed him that his Cree guides were tired of his constant harping about "happing" and it was finally made clear to him that they made their livelihood as middlemen and not as trappers:

...my tent-mates were angry with me last night for speaking so much concerning Happing, & advised me to say no more about it, for they would get more Wolves, Beaver &c. from the Archithinue Natives in the spring than they can carry (E.2/4:52).

Indeed, according to Henday's account, rather than scrambling and scraping for a living in an hostile environment, the Cree spent much of their time during that winter smoking, feasting, drumming, dancing, and conjuring.

In the spring of 1755 the Cree demonstrated to Henday that they were totally committed to preserving their own middleman position. In trying to persuade the leaders of one hundred and twenty-seven tents of Blackfoot to travel down to York Factory, Henday found Attickashish and his other Cree mentors less than helpful. He reports:

...altho the Indians promised the Chief Factor at York Fort to talk to them strongly on that Subject, they never opened their mouths, and I have great reason to believe that they are a stop-page: for if they could be brought down to trade, the others would be obliged to trap their own furs; which at present two thirds of them do not (Burpee 1907: 351; E.2/4:56-57).

The convoy of Indians on their way back to York Factory with Henday in May 1755 was waylaid at both French establishments on the Saskatchewan, Forts la Corne and Basquea.<sup>8</sup> Here the Cree traded many of their prime furs. Despite all his efforts, Henday could not prevent the Cree from dallying for three days at Basquea and he lamented the French influence over the Indians (E.2/4:58). Nevertheless, it seems as if it was the Cree's own interests, if not whimsy, as much as the influence of the French (or Henday's lack of it) which resulted in the ensuing "debauch"<sup>9</sup> described by Henday.

Despite Henday's perception of this untrustworthiness on the part of the Cree, the competitive situation was such that servants were sent inland on an almost yearly basis from then on. A. S. Morton (1973:274) indicates that there were fifty-four such journeys between 1763 and 1774. This calculation is not to mention the return of Henday inland in 1756, 1758 and 1759, nor the early expeditions of Joseph Waggonner, Joseph Smith and Isacc Batt between 1756 and 1763. (Rich 1967:127, 129; A. S. Morton 1973:252).

Henday's journey thus began an era in which the inland Cree began to experience yearly contact from the English and

and it ushered in a new phase in the trade relationship characterised by continuous direct face-to-face contact in Cree territory.

iv) Direct Contact Inland, 1756-1774

Although E. E. Rich (1967:138) claims that the men who were sent inland by the HBC after Henday were "illiterate", what are purported to be their journals do survive in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Unfortunately these records are extremely vague (although by no means "illiterate" in the normal sense of that word) and it is difficult to trace exactly where they were being conducted by their Indian guides. Yet there are some significant statements about Indian/trader relations in these accounts.

Beside sending his own men inland, York Chief James Isham in August 1756 reports that he also engaged Home Guard leaders to persuade the "Sturgeon Indians" (probably those Cree living northwest of Cumberland Lake along the Sturgeon Wier River) who had not been down for some time to come to York Factory (B.239/a/42:3). Seeming to lack confidence in his first choice, ten days later Isham sent Joseph Waggoner and Joseph Smith in search of the same Sturgeon Indians. These two Company servants spent the winter with the Cree in the Lake Winnipeg--Porcupine Hills area. In June of 1757 they returned to York Factory with more than twenty-three canoes--(B.239/a/43:6, 9, 10).

Competition for Cree business between the French and English inland now began to become more intense. A pattern

familiar over the remainder of the period soon developed. A French trader shadowed Smith and Waggoner's party so as not to allow them to gain too much favour with the Indians. He even threatened the English envoys with death. However, the Cree continued to show that they held the situation well in hand as Smith reports on 9 February 1757:

...the french Man that was in our  
Company all winter always told us  
he would Certainly kill us but the  
Ind<sup>s</sup> Said if they did or offered to  
do any harm to us they would kill  
them all (B.239/a/43:13).

Indeed, a report soon reached them that two Frenchmen had recently been killed by the Indians. Just as it had been demonstrated to Henday, French threats and presumptions of authority carried little if any weight with the Cree (cf. A. S. Morton 1973:236). It is obvious that Europeans did not have the power to carry them out. The French continued to receive a rough ride from the Cree as Fort Bourbon on Cedar Lake was plundered in 1758 (A. S. Morton 1973:253).

The laconic entries in Joseph Smith's next inland journal of 1757--1758 (B.239/a/45), consisting mainly of vague generalities such as "this day moved and want west", or "lea by and smocked with the indens", tell us little about his relations with his Cree guides.

The next inland journal to surface is that of Isaac Batt and George Potts who visited the Sturgeon Indians west of Cumberland Lake in 1759 (B.239/a/46:37). By this date the Basquiau Cree were finding themselves already

almost in a backwash of the trade as le Chevalier de la Vérendrye had passed a closed Fort Paskoyac to attend the Cree rendezvous at the forks of the Saskatchewan (A. S. Morton 1973:241, 254). The next year witnessed the final withdrawal from all the French establishments. Only a very few voyageurs remained inland as a reminder of the French presence (W. L. Morton 1957:37). Although the common historical interpretation is that the Conquest ended penetration from Canada until the mid-1760s, Harold Innes (1956:188) indicates that as early as 1761 there were French--this time in English-financed canoes--as far west as Rainy Lake (cf. McGillivray 1928:59). The Cree, however, had coped with the withdrawal of the French once before. When the former were in control of York Factory between 1694 to 1713, they had abandoned most of their inland posts (Birks 1982:118).

By the mid-1760s, however, the inland Cree were again beginning to experience a significant increase in the pace of contact. Andrew Graham (1969:333) contends that he began to send more men inland than his predecessors at York Factory. As well, contact from Montreal was renewed as Thomas Corry, with French labour and English backing, began his trading career in the Northwest (A. S. Morton 1973:268).

Graham reports that the "trustworthy leaders" Attickashish, Mousinnikifsack, Capouch and Kanapulapoetuck returned inland from York Factory in 1766 each with a Company man in tow (B.239/a/59:114). These groups spent the winter in the parklands and on the plains west of Basquiau.

In one interesting aside, in 1766 Grahma recounts the first journey of one "Archithinnee" (Blackfoot) Indian to York Factory. The plainsman was genuinely surprised at how much the Cree were receiving in return for their furs, and he began to comprehend the huge markup passed on by the middlemen (cf. Ray and Freeman 1978:241; Innis 1956:153). Despite this realisation, he maintained to Graham that his confreres would still not make the journey because of not knowing how to paddle (B.239/a/59:114).

The Cree had very early assumed the middleman role. As John Nixon reported in 1682 the Cree "...would be the only brokers between all strange Indians and us, and by all means kep both them an us in ignorance" (quoted in Ray and Freeman 1978:44). This tactic seemed to be successful throughout the period under consideration. William Tomison on his inland journey of 1769-1770 reveals that the Cree were still receiving inflated prices for their "half-wore" guns of 25-30 made beaver (MB) (B.239/a/64:13), which new at York Factory cost them only 10 MB (Ray 1974:144).

The Cree expressed their control of the inland situation in other ways. In 1767 on his way to York through Basquiau where the French post had been abandoned for the last seven years, William Pink heard from the local Indians that Canadians were on their way to re-establish a post there (B.239/a/56:24). This occurrence matched the Cree's earlier expectations, as they had deliberately prevented the French from burning their buildings as they left during the Conquest crisis leading up to 1760 (Graham 1969:261).

They acted under the expectation that other traders could eventually be more easily attracted to the area if the buildings remained.

During this time close social relations must have been developing between the Cree and the Hudson's Bay Company inland travellers. The Company's inland envoys were spending at most one or two weeks per year in the company of their own countrymen. For example William Pink spent only eight days at York Factory in July 1767 before he again moved inland with what he referred to as "my Indians" (B.239/a/58:2). In fact, these men were spending so much time with the Indians that the Company began to express concerns about the loyalties of this group. Andrew Graham (1969:262-3) had begun to have reservations about the financial viability of the system of inland envoys, as well as about the character and the motives of the men themselves. He also gives a new perspective on the men's relations with Indians away from the post, writing:

All the natives look on private servants as slaves, and on the other hand look on the Factors as very knowing and great men...and the natives having not the least idea or knowledge of subordination look upon all inferior servants with the same eye as they do on their own slaves (Graham 1969:263).

In July 1768 Ferdinand Jacobs accused his inland men of complicity with the Canadian Pedlars and of private trading with the Indians. He suggested a large group of servants be sent inland on future expeditions in an attempt to curb the abuses he recognised. (B.239/a/87:41).



Despite Company regulations against the ordinary servants' relations with Indians, the Indian life had become attractive enough for two men, Isbister and John Patterson who deserted to the Indians in 1765, just as news of two Frenchmen, Louis Primeau and Jean Baptiste Larlee who had been living with the Indians since 1760, had arrived (A. S. Morton 1973:267). The switch to Cree culture was made so completely that one such English "renegade" was even recognised as a "trading captain" at Albany (Rich 1960a:II:1). Of course, ex-voyageurs had been living permanently with Indians for many years (Graham 1969:291).

After 1768 the Cree began to experience even more contact via Montreal for it was at this time that the Imperial government deregulated the trade in the Northwest, allowing a much greater influx of traders into the territory. A Canadian house was established at Basquiau in 1767 and Francois le Blanc and twelve men built a post farther up the Saskatchewan River in the next year (Rich 1967:36-38). As well, in 1769-1770 the HBC had a total of six men inland (A. S. Morton 1973:280).

A typical pattern of the Company's inland contact with the Cree occurred as follows. The Cree traders whose families spent the summer at la Corne (the "Upper French House") returned for them in early August 1968 and brought William Pink (who had also been inland the year before) with them. Pink reports that fifty tents awaited them on one shore while on the opposite side forty more attended the return of their traders who were also coming up with

Company men (B.239/a/61:4). This and Basquiau were both important rendezvous for the Cree middlemen.

Moving westward onto the Plains the Cree had split up into hunting groups of two or three tents by mid-October and began to trap wolves. Pink's Cree group spent the winter south of the Saskatchewan River and he also describes their use of fire and pounds to hunt the buffalo (B.239/a/61: 9, 9, 17, 20).

On their move eastward toward York Factory in the spring of 1769 they found that Basquiau was now again occupied by the Canadian trader James Finlay in charge of twelve voyageurs and three canoes of goods. Two of his men were to stay the winter (B.239/a/61:21). However, these Canadian houses were not continually occupied as Pinks' party on its way to York Factory in May of 1770 had found la Corne abandoned by the Canadians (B.239/a/63:24).

The Cree manipulated the traders so that they were the main beneficiaries of the increased level of competition with the Canadians as Pink laments in March of 1770:

Continly a Sending of Tabacco to  
Indianes for Encouradgment for them  
to Carry thare Furs Down to Yorke  
Forte and Not for to give them to  
the people that comes from Mountreale  
(B.239/a/63:19).

In 1772 Graham reports that the competition allowed the Indians to bring to the Factory only those first rejected by the Canadians. As a result, we find Graham "streachting every nerve to break their connection with them" (B.239/a/66:53).

Ferdinand Jacobs, Chief at York Factory in June 1769, also bemoans the effects of the competition on the Indians coming to York Factory: "...they are very Troublesom & Covetous the Effects of having Pedlers in the Country" (B.239/a/60:40A). The term "troublesome" crops up again and again in Company journals. What is really meant of course is that the Indians were merely continuing their prerogative to act in their own interests, which were not necessarily those of the Company.

Despite the benefits accruing to the Cree from the competition sponsored by the Canadians, they did not receive consistent service and supply from the Montreal traders. In late May 1770 Pink reports that for la Corne had been abandoned. In addition, the Canadian Master at Basquiau, William Bruce, had been stranded with no trade goods that year. The brigade appointed to supply the post had been halted by the onset of winter far short of its destination. Even so, many of the goods shipped had been plundered by Indians along the route from Grand Portage (B.239/a/63: 24-25).

At this time the Cree made their first contacts with a Hudson's Bay Company servant with whom they were to have a long association, The dour Orcadian, William Tomison. Tomison, a particularly long-serving employee, has been portrayed in the sterling stereotype commonly attributed to the Orcadians in the Company service. It is asserted that his relations with Indians were of the best (cf. Rich and Johnson 1951:xxx, livn.). A labourer who signed on

in South Ronaldshay in 1760, Tomison eventually worked his way up to the position of Chief Inland. He was however, according to J. B. Tyrrell (1934:518), tactless--earning the enmity of his fellow officers--and late in his career was "universally hated" by the Indians.

The Cree travelling with Tomison on his first inland journey from Severn House in 1767 must have noted this peevish side to his character. On a later trip to the "Muscoutte Country" in 1769-1770, he was not able to conceal his impatience at the frequent feasting, smoking, dancing, and conjuring of his hosts who were living in the Lake Winnipeg area in late August and September. This would have been especially galling to him as these Cree were in fact waiting for the Canadians' arrival (B.239/a/64:4-5, 7). Indeed Tomison himself spent a good deal of time smoking with the Indians, as much or even more so than a modern diplomat would at cocktail parties. This was in fact the only way traders could deal effectively with the Cree. Even then, Tomison failed in his urgings for them to de-camp and go trapping beaver. On 1 November 1769 he reports the following:

...they made no answer for some time but at last they told me it were a long winter and that they would See the Asinepoites Indians in the Spring and that they would trade furr with them, these Indians for the most part ar very indolent and delight in nothing but gaming and Smoaking (B.239/a/64:9).

Thus the Cree were still very much the middlemen they had

demonstrated themselves to be to Henday a decade and a half earlier. Whether trading at York Factory, or with the Canadians, Tomison reports that "few of these Indians ever trap their owne furs" (8.239/a/64;15).

Of course, the Cree found it much more convenient to trade as much as possible with the Canadians inland despite the fact that the prices of goods were generally higher (cf. Ray & Freeman 1978:197). By doing so they were able to reduce their own transportation costs (i.e. time and energy). This strategy closely relates to Jochim's (1976:67) concept of the "principle of least effort" among hunting and gathering peoples discussed above in Chapter II.

Thomas Corry's post on Cedar Lake which was established in 1770 drew much of the Cree business away from York Factory. He had even succeeded in persuading Wapennesew to abandon the English interest and serve as a "leading Indian" for his brigade to Grand Portage (cf. Wallace 1968:40). Corry writes from River De Paw on 2 June 1772 that Wapennesew sent his regrets for not going to York Factory that spring but instead to Grand Portage.

...he hopes you will not Be angre with him as he has Drank So much Brandy this winter he cannot Com But must Com with me to the Grand Portage to drink two or three C[asks?] (A.11/115:148).

Here again, the importance of the gift (especially of alcohol) in trade relations with the Cree is manifested. Apparently Corry had such a supply of liquor that the community was in an uproar.

I ask your Pardon for writing to you  
 in Such a maner But you must think in  
 what Confusion I am in with two hundred  
 Drunken Villians about (A.11/115:148).

Of course this particular situation must be seen in its wider context. Europeans themselves had their own problems with alcohol (e.g. B.239/a/46:4). In fact, the Indian practice with alcohol was not significantly different from the European one at the time (Foster 1977:54).

One of the last Company men set inland during this period to encourage the Cree to come down to York Factory was Matthew Cocking. Happily, Cocking's journal for 1772-73 is a much fuller account than those of his precursors. Unfortunately however, the version which is most widely available (Burpee 1908) has been bowlderized by Graham (Rich 1967:144-5).

The Cree in Cocking's original journal appear, far from demonstrating a "surprisingly warm side" to the Canadian traders, as Graham would have his readers believe (Burpee 1908:119). In fact, the Cree were plundering them constantly (eg. B.239/a/69:12, 36, 46).

The Cree did trade with the Pedlers, while sending to York Factory only for those goods not available inland (B.239/a/69:43). Cocking professes to be at a loss as how to explain why the Cree continued to trade with the Canadians other than the standard idea about "Liquor being above all perswasion with them". In fact, he had received this same rationalisation from the Cree themselves (B.239/a/69:42, 47).

However, this interpretation ignores the significant

advantage to the Cree of being supplied in their own territory. The difficulties in time and effort required for the long journey to York Factory outweighed the disadvantages of lower fur prices and limited selection at the Canadians' establishments. In a later appendix to his journal, Cocking adds that the Cree also explained their relatively disadvantageous trade with the Canadians by the fact that they were then able to leave supplies and ammunition obtained from the Nor'westers with their families while away on the arduous and lengthy trip to York Factory. Indeed the Cree had been pressing Cocking for the HBC to establish an inland post of their own (B.239/a/69:52). Although to Cocking the Cree again spoke much of Corry and other Pedler's generous gifts and the cheap price of their goods, this appears simply to be a bargaining tactic.

The Cree obviously held the upper hand in the trade at this time as Cocking reports the Basquiau Cree's relationship of negative reciprocity relationship with Corry. Foreshadowing a later show of force, the Basquiau Cree are reported to have said:

...that Correy at first denied having any liquor telling them it was all expended, but they threatening to take his goods and Furrs from him by force he was obliged to relent, letting them see him take it from below the ground to satisfy them that he gave them all; three Runlets by the Natives description about fifteen gallons each.--The Indians also inform me that the Basquio Natives often take by force any thing the Pedlers are unwilling to give them; they likewise mention innumerable hardships which the Pedlers suffer from

several Nations of Indians through whom they pass in coming up from the grand carrying Place--(B.239/a/69:12).

Although we might suspect that this is more fur trade hyperbole, later events discussed in Chapter IV give an aura of authenticity to this account.

The Cree also expressed their dissatisfaction with other Canadian traders. At Franceway's post on a shallow lake west of Basquiau (Saskeram Lake?) more trouble arose. Even after sending their "puckitanafsowin" (a preliminary gift), the Cree had received much less ammunition than they expected from the trader. Cocking reports on 27 March 1773:

The Natives even threaten to take Franceway's Furs &c. from him by force if he refuses to comply with their Demands when the [y] Paddle. This I find was the case with the Pedler Finley, who lately resided at the House where Franceway now is: He not knowing how to humour the tempers of the Natives, they took all his Furs from him by force and intended to kill him; had not a leader (the Indian I am with) interposed, when they returned Finley his Furs; he appeasing them by making considerable Presents. Franceway also I find is obliged some years to give even Furs to the most troublesome to go down with the Company's Forts. also little supplies of Ammunition" (B.239/a/69:36).

Trader William Bruce was also plundered by the Cree and "obliged to be content with his Lofs" (B.239/a/69:36). From the above accounts it is clear that the Cree found it easy enough to exploit the Canadians by engaging in negative reciprocity. They also charged them particularly high



prices for their supplies of country produce (B.239/a/69:53).

Another group of Indians to encounter Cocking reported that they too had plundered a Canadian trader near Basquiau: (B.239/a/69:44). It is more than obvious, therefore, that the Canadians, much less the more isolated Hudson's Bay Company inland travellers, did not wield a significant amount of real power in Cree territory. They remained in business at the pleasure of the Indians during the mid- to late eighteenth century.

With the influx of the Canadian traders into the hinterland of York Factory, the Basquiau Cree in particular had been won away from the English interest. It is reported that Thomas Corry received the majority of furs from Basquiau (B.239/a/69:12). Cocking was also informed "that but few of the Basquio Natives have been at the Companys Forts for some Years serving the Pedlers as home Indians by providing Provisions, and trapping for them in the Winter" (B.239/a/69:48; 52).

The Cree held the upper hand not only in the trade itself, but in the important concomitant transportation system as well. Cocking's Indian companions on his way inland in 1772 complained about the delays he caused them by stopping to make observations and journal entries about their progress. Indeed, on his return trip in 1773 he was prevented from doing so (B.239/a/69:5, 48). Once in their own territory however, the Cree evoked Cocking's displeasure at being "very dilatory in proceeding; their whole delight being in indolently sitting Smoaking or Feasting. Yesterday I re-

ceived invitation to no less than ten of their Feasts  
...(B.239/a/69:11).

Cocking also made a number of observations on the relationship between the HBC servants travelling inland and the Cree. These statements spark a re-evaluation of Morton's (1973:xxv) assertion that the Company's men enjoyed exemplary relations with the Indians. The Cree hosting Louis Primeau in the Basquiau Hill area for instance were said to be ready to kill him in 1772. This occurred after their leader had died, since: "...when any one of them dies they suppose some Person to be the cause" (B.239/a/69:9). In fact Primeau was reluctant to go inland again in 1773 and had stated that "he was afraid they would kill [him], many of them dislike him" (B.239/a/69:9, 46). Even though there was a possibility that Primeau would desert to the opposition, Cocking was not overly concerned about the potential harm to the Company's interests. "...according to the little Esteem he seems to be in with the Natives at present" (B.239/a/69:47).

Part of the difficulty in these relationships seems to have stemmed from different perceptions of the role to be assumed by the inland servants. The Cree felt that these servants should be trading on the spot, while the Company had other ideas. Cocking asserts:

I find the Natives consider an Englishman's going with them, as a Person sent to Collect Furrs, and not as an encouragement to them to trap &c from the Company's Servants who came with them Inland trading the chief part of the Goods

they were furnished with at the Forts;  
and notwithstanding all I can say to the  
contrary, will hardly believe but I shall  
also collect furs in their Season.  
(B.239/a/69:11).

Cocking later summarised his thoughts on the trade system as it was being prosecuted by the HBC in the early 1770s. He recommended that inland expeditions by Company servants be discontinued and an inland post be established. In his opinion these inland travellers were only trying to avoid unpleasant duties at York Factory. In addition,

...they were most of them disliked; as they never endeavoured to gain the Affections of the Natives, and converted the Goods they were furnished with to the Purpose of collecting Furs for their own Emolument (B.239/a/69:53).

It is therefore clear that the relationship between the Cree and HBC travellers was not always as positive as it has been portrayed to be in the past. They viewed lower order servants as nothing more than slaves, exerted their own conditions and cultural standards on the relationship, and engaged in negative reciprocity against the Canadians.

Even within the relatively secure confines of York Factory, the Englishmen were confronted by obstreperous, self-confident Indians who, returning with Cocking in tow in 1773, demanded "in the most insolent manner" that brandy be given as well as traded. When refused, they threatened to attack the Factory (B.239/a/68:43). The Chief at York had also been subject to what was claimed to be un-

provoked attacks on his life in June of 1771 (B.239/a/65: 41). These incidents clearly indicate dominance in their relationship with the Cree traders.

Cockings' visit inland 1773--1774 was the last such temporary foray the Cree were to experience from the Hudson's Bay Company. The Cree's requests for an inland establishment, combined with their strategy of playing up the competitive situation in the hinterland finally forced the HBC to establish a permanent base inland. Now, Cumberland House was to be established as the Company's first post situated inland from York Factory. This ushered in a new phase of Cree/trader relations--the "Competitive Trade Era".

### Summary Discussion

#### i) Contact

Up to 1773, Cree contact with British traders had been relatively circumscribed. First, only a small proportion of the Cree travelled down to York Factory each year, and most of those who did experienced little face-to-face contact with the English. Kelsey (1929:192-3) reminds us that only a very small number of the Cree voyaged to York Factory to engage in direct contact, since many sent furs with relatives or acquaintances, or depended on middlemen to undertake the arduous trip. Thomas McCleish writes on 23 August 1723 from York Factory that many Indians in fact came down to trade only once every two or three years (Davies and Johnson 1965:98). Those Cree who did make it

Bayside often had communication only through the trading window (Graham 1969:318-19). At York Factory only the "principal men", or trading captains, were allowed into the factory and the trading room itself. In addition, strict Company orders at least attempted to avoid contact between the Indians and its lower order servants (Van Kirk 1980b:14). Thus, the critical amount of direct face-to-face contact was in fact a relatively limited one.

Second, the Company sent only a relatively small number of servants inland, and this became a regular policy only after 1754. Usually no more than half a dozen men were sent among the Indians in any given year (A. S. Morton 1973:280). Neither were these men accompanied by a large number of French-Canadian voyageurs as were their Compagnie du Nord and later Northwest Company counterparts. We must remember that the demographic ratio and the intensity of contact are key variables in the process of acculturation (cf. Broom et al. 1954:980; Linton 1963:495).

On the other hand, it is evident for example that those servants sent inland ever since Kelsey and Henday were themselves acculturating a good deal through such institutions as à la façon du pays marital relations with Cree women. Contrary to those scholars such as Sheehan (1980:96),<sup>11</sup> there was as much, if not more, acculturation by HBC men to Indian lifeways as in the opposite direction.

As P. Holder (1967:131) explains in his article "The Fur Trade as Seen From the Indian Point of View", Indians were confronted with European traders who were not only

marrying their women after the Indian custom (cf. VanKirk 1980b:36, Foster 1977:61), but were wearing their clothing (cf. Graham 1969:297), speaking their languages, living, working, trading, and travelling in their manner (cf. Nicks 1976:23). Also significant is the fact that the Europeans had adopted Indian "trade habits" and the fur trade system was founded on principles derived from the Indians own social, political and economic experience (cf. Rich 1960; Rotstein 1969; Ray 1974). The entire trade process was predicated on Indian-inspired ceremony and the central importance of presents. Grahm (1969:315ff) and Isham (1949:49ff) give us a detailed description of the formalised ceremony accompanying the trade which involved calumet ritual, oratory, and gift exchange--all central elements of Native practice.

The Europeans were adopting Indian customs even in the medical realm. For instance, Andrew Graham (1-69:163) allowed Indians to perform a phlebotomy on him in order to successfully relieve a headache and dizziness. Dragge (1848:236-7) reports the success of a shamanistic sucking cure, and McLean (1968:315) asserts as late as the mid-1830s that "...we are, in fact, more frequently indebted to them, than they to us, for medical advice" (cf. Robson 1965:49).

In this same vein of European acculturation, A. J. Ray (1980:268) makes the interesting observation that the consumer-oriented demands made by the Indians concerning the type and quality of trade goods was a source of European

technological and commercial innovation. Indian desires influenced the production, and/or offshore acquisition, of the desired trade goods (cf. Innis 1956:391).

## ii) Culture Change

A close examination of the documents dealing with this initial stage of contact between the Cree and the European traders also leads to a re-evaluation of a number of previous interpretations. The first is the widespread assumption that contact soon resulted in massive and rapid soci-cultural change in all facets of Indian culture. (e.g.

A. G. Bailey 1938:264; Innis 1956:83; Goosen 1974:11).

Although according to Van den Berghe (1981:18) contact is a necessary condition for acculturation to occur, it is not by itself a sufficient condition. The key he asserts is the individual advantage to undergoing change. At this stage in Cree/trader contact there existed no real advantage for the Cree to alter central organisational structures, beliefs or values.

Ralph Linton (1963:495) also recognises that contact per se is an important stimulus to change. However, he stresses the variables of "closeness", "duration" and "continuity". As noted above, the Cree contact with European traders during the Early Fur Trade Era was decidedly distant, brief and sporadic. Given the added significance of the relative demographic ratio in the contact situation (Broom et al. 1954:980), which was heavily tipped in favour of the Cree, it is not surprising that less significant

change would occur among the Cree than among the traders who were living among them.

Toby Morantz (1980b:39), G. D. Berreman (1978:54-55) and Arthur J. Ray (1978:32) agree with Edward S. Rogers (1964:38) who maintains that upon early contact in the fur trade, the Central Canadian Indians made only minimal adjustments to their basic social organisation. With specific reference to the Cree in The Pas area, K. Pettipas (1982:95) indicates that little change in social organisation occurred as a result of the early fur trade. This is explained in theoretical terms by Kaplan and Manners' (1972:48) assertion that unless change occurs in a culture's core institutions, no significant adjustment occurs.

For example, in examining crucial factors in the core culture identified by the Keesings (1971:354), it becomes clear that the Western Woods Crees' participation in the early fur trade left many of these central elements virtually intact. The European mercantile system had little or no effect on early cultural conditioning, organic maintenance, communication,<sup>12</sup> primary group relations, high prestige status, territorial security, or ideological security. On the other hand, change had occurred in the areas of instrumental techniques (e.g. addition of new materials and technologies to traditional production), elements of taste and self-expression (e.g. new clothing and personal decoration styles), secondary group relations (the trade relation itself), and low status positions. Nevertheless, as the Keesings predict, such changes had little effect on



the central institutions and culture of the Cree.

Even though it is recognised that material change occurs quickly in initial stages of contact (Quimby 1951: 146; Linton 1963:485), it did not occur in wholesale fashion among the Cree as is sometimes asserted. Morantz (1980a:45-6) indicates that the new technology did not replace already well-adapted tools and strategies such as snowshoes and trapping techniques. Traditional materials were also still preferred for important tools. For instance, Kelsey (1969:188) reports that bone hide scrapers were greatly preferred to iron ones. Smith (1981:263) also notes retention of aboriginal equipment such as bone scrapers, fish spears and fishhooks (cf. Gilman 1982:8, 38).

Furthermore, Townsend (1975:26) has demonstrated that the amount of trade goods present cannot automatically be taken as a valid indication of the extent of acculturation (cf. Ray 1978). In addition, many innovations adopted by Indians were modified to fit the existing social system, such as those material goods which were employed in Indian culture for purposes other than those for which they were produced in Europe.<sup>13</sup>

Ray (1971:117) notes the considerable influx of European goods and asserts that between 1675 and 1765 there was a correspondingly strong impact on Indian lifeways in the interior. However, Ray fails to take into consideration the nature of that change in light of Lurie's (1968) scheme of "Type I" and "Type II" change. In reality, most of these newly adopted elements of technology were inte-

grated into already existing structures of Cree society, and most were transferred devoid of their European ideological content.

As Lurie (1968:299-300) points out, many innovations are modified to fit the existing social system. For example, several of the newly acquired items were employed for purposes other than those originally intended by Europeans (Gilman 1982: , Washburn 1967:51-52).

From the Indian point of view, therefore, the changes which were manifest in their culture were not as radical as they might appear on the surface. Indians invested new elements with meanings which they themselves supplied. In addition, new tools were often used for traditional tasks and were distributed within traditional social frameworks (Hickerson 1973:23). Therefore, in Lurie's terms the results of contact may be mostly Type I changes (i.e. those new elements which are integrated into the existing system) rather than the Type II changes which demand significant alteration in the culture in order to function.

Despite the blanket assumption of rapid change, we must also make rather fine distinctions among Indian groups, and among the Cree themselves. For example, in contrast to the Home Guard Cree, Upland Cree adapted only to superficial aspects of a new technology, spending usually no more than a week every one or two years at York Factory. They remained essentially subsistence hunters organised in flexible hunting groups, not full

time trappers or provision hunters (cf. Morantz 1980a:49-51; Ray 1974:81-85). In terms of specific culture changes, Joseph Robson (1965:49-50) who was a HBC employee in the mid 1700s, reports that the coastal Indians (i.e. the Home Guard) were very different from those inland. For example burial practices which had been dropped by the Home Indians were still being followed by the inland Cree. Care must be taken in generalising about the acculturation of the Cree groups as a whole since much more is known about the Home Guards it is often applied incorrectly to the inland Cree.

From his field work in 1938 and 1940, Mason (1967: 70-71) asserted that the "fleeting and intermittent" contact with the Europeans over 200 years had left the aboriginal pattern of the Swampy Cree largely intact except in the material realm, much of which was incompletely integrated into the culture. This interpretation is, however, disputed by Bishop and Ray (1976:117). Nevertheless, the Western Woods Crees' borrowings were basically pragmatic ones. Trudeau (1967: 129) speaks of "incorporative integration" of European elements into an existing sociocultural matrix. Following the theories of Linton concerning selection, Morantz (1980a:56) has found that, for the East Main Cree of James Bay, new incorporations consisted only of those aspects of European culture which they themselves valued and desired.

One of the ideas that often accompanies the assump-

tion of rapid culture change is that the original culture was eroded and quickly forgotten. For example, Foster (1977:49), Innis (1956:18), Murphy and Steward (1956:337), and Rothney (1975:173) all maintain that the Indians' traditional survival skills were quickly lost. The contrary is argued by Morantz (1980a:45-46), Gilman (1982:8) and Helm, Rogers and Smith (1981:157). The more recent interpretation seems to be the more accurate one in the case of the Cree in the Study area. Indeed, Townsend (1975:26), Dunning (1959:5) and La Russic (1970:B-I, B-2) argue that integration of European tools and technology actually acted to intensify traditional Indian cultural patterns and the hunting ecological adaptation.

The former interpretation seems to stem from the comments of traders such as Jeremie (1929:40) (cited above) who in the early eighteenth century asserted that the Cree had "lost their skill with the bow" as a result of the availability of guns. In the traders' view it was this assumed deficit which caused the Indians to be in a very bad way in terms of hunger and lack of furs to trade. It must be asked, however, how did the traders get this idea? Was it from observation alone, or did it come from conversations with Indians in bargaining situations?

Ray (1974:19-21) uncritically repeats Knight's statement from the York Factory journals of 1715--1716 that the Indians reported to him that they had lost the use of their bows and arrows as a result of having fire

arms. First, we must consider the probability that it was the Home Guard, and not the Inland Cree who were being discussed. Secondly, we must determine the context of these statements.

It appears as if these ideas are often derived from Indian statements made while trading. Seldom have historians bothered to examine the significance of this context or the motivation behind these Indian statements. Assuming that they are reported accurately, such statements must be viewed in light of the common Indian trading strategy of attempting to evoke the traders' pity. (cf. Saum 1965:149; Ray and Freeman 1978:67-68). If successful, the Indian trader could expect that the trader would be more lenient with the "factor's" or "double" standard of trade (and/or exact less "overplus"), give "full measure" and so on.

Radisson (Adams 1961:218) very early identified the invocation of pity as a major Cree trading strategy in 1684 at Port Nelson. In Isham's (1949:52) description of the trade process in the mid 1700s the Indian spokesmen typically stated "you are hard you will not pittty me, I will not come any more." Tales of privation, starvation, warfare, difficult passages, as well as claims that the new technology was now absolutely necessary for their survival were commonly part of Indian trade speeches. If traders did not automatically accept these accounts at face value, many historians have. This quest for the trader's pity

was combined with such other tactics as threats to take their furs to the competition and exaggerations of the quality of goods, quantity of gifts and high prices given for furs by the competition. We must therefore, take all such statements about the inability of Indians to survive without the new technology and the hardships of their lives with a large grain of salt. This is particularly necessary in the absence of any corroborative evidence.

In the example of Ray's dependence on Knight's account of the Company's re-establishing trade relations at York Factory after 1714, there is the distinct possibility that the Cree were attempting to force him into being as generous as possible. Quite possibly they were stretching the truth to make a point--to arouse the trader's pity.

Returning to the specific question of guns replacing traditional skills with the bow and arrow, Swampy Cree ethnographer Leonard Mason (1967:19) supports this interpretation in the following statement.

At one stroke the acquisition of firearms eased the Indian's constant anxiety over an adequate food supply, and the primitive bow and arrow were quickly forgotten.

E. E. Rich (1967:102) also makes the following unsupported assertion concerning the mid-1700s:

The bow and arrow went out of use, and the Indian starved if he did not own a serviceable gun, powder and shot.

In his earlier work (Rich 1960a:I:494), this interpretation

is obviously derived from Indian trading rhetoric that they would starve if not given ammunition.

Although an argument might be made in the case of the Home Guard, the Inland Cree, especially those exploiting the parkland zone, found traditional weapons more to their liking for all but warfare (Ray 1974:75, 78). As in other facets of the trade, neither the supply nor the demand for guns was unlimited (cf. Bishop 1974:190), contrary to the opinion of those such as Innis (1956:17, 338), and A. G. Bailey (1969:10). In fact, demand for guns at York Factory actually declined after 1691 (Ray 1974:73). Ray (1974:13-14) cites trade figures which show a ratio of only one gun for every four to seven individuals in the late seventeenth century.

Indeed, the early gun was not necessarily a more efficient weapon for hunting (Hickerson 1973:23; K. Pettipas 1980:192). It was noisy when stealth was an asset, and it was often not sturdy enough to withstand the rigours of a taiga winter. Repair on the trail was difficult if not impossible, and as Morantz (1980b:71) maintains, it would be next to impossible for Indians to transport enough powder and shot to last for a full year.

Samuel Hearne (1958:207) writing about the situation in the early 1770s contrasts the Cree ability with their bows to that of the Chipewyan.

The Southern Indians, though they have been much longer used to fire-arms, are far more expert with the bow and arrow, their original weapons.

Although Anthony Henday (Burpee 1907:343) in 1755 claims that his Cree guides were "dependent" on him for powder and shot, he also reports that they were still able to kill moose with bows and arrows easily enough.

As late in the period under consideration as 1772, Matthew Cocking very clearly established that the Inland Cree were "hoarding" their ammunition for use against their enemies and using the bows and arrows for hunting (B.239/a/69:20).

By the time that Franklin's party visited the Cree in 1819--1820 it is still perhaps no mere romantic anachronism that we find in the background of Lieutenant Hood's painting of the interior of a Cree tent in the Basquiau Hill a bow as well as a gun (Franklin 1823:169). Indeed the Cree continued to use their bows and arrows right up to the termination date of this study (B.49/a/42:41; B.49/a/43:49).

As noted above, Linton (1963:480) has indicated that even if a novelty is accepted, the element it replaces remains "latent" in the culture for generations.

Therefore, it is quite clear that, as Linton would predict, the Cree did not in fact lose their traditional hunting skills as many have claimed. Such an erroneous concept is the result of uncritical acceptance of Indian trading hyperbole at face value, while ignoring the quantitative data and simple logistics of the situation.



### iii) Directed Culture Change?

If the Cree were not affected as much by participation in the early fur trade as has been assumed previously, it was not through lack of effort on the traders' part. Another well-worn assumption in the literature is that the fur trader was not interested in altering the Indian's culture through what anthropologists refer to as "directed culture change".

Despite the contentions of Morantz (1980a:56), Van Kirk (1980b:9), Goosen (1974:24),<sup>14</sup> and Brown (1980:xii) that no drastic efforts were made by fur traders to alter the Cree lifestyle, there were a number of areas in Cree life which the Europeans set out deliberately to change.

First and foremost, the traders had attempted to alter the Cree's basic ecological adaptation. E. S. Rogers (1963a:78) asserts that from an early date traders were constantly trying to persuade Indians to alter their subsistence patterns in order to produce more fur. The big game focussed subsistence pattern of the Cree was not the best one for trapping furs (Rogers 1965:270). The traders consistently harped at the Indians to trap more and more furs. These efforts became apparent west of Hudson Bay beginning with Kelsey's (1929:16) admonitions in 1690 through Henday's in 1755 (E.2/4:56) and Tomison's in the 1770s (B.239/a/64:9). In his reconstruction of the typical formalised trading speeches, Isham (1949:54) in 1743 reports the common exhortation to the Indians: "You have not Brought many martins do not be lassy, keep close to trapping in the winter".

During this period, however, it is also clear that, having made fine promises to the Governor at York Factory, the Cree continued their quests for big game and ignored requests to trap fur bearers more intensively. As noted below, the Cree demand for trade goods was quite limited at about 100 MB a year, 70 for "necessaries", the remainder for luxuries (Ray and Freeman 1978:162). In fact, the Cree began trapping even less as they became more and more involved as middlemen (cf. E.2/4:52; B.239/a/64:15). The European traders found themselves unable to direct this aspect of Cree adjustment to the trade situation.

The HBC traders also attempted to alter leadership patterns in Cree society. In the discussion of Cree leadership in Chapter II its major characteristics were outlined as being temporary, task-oriented, and prestige- rather than authority-based. Such a flexible system met the needs of a hunting and gathering people, but not necessarily those of the trading companies. The trader therefore had to work at establishing a role in Indian society which would allow more formal economic organisation than was usual in Cree society.

The position of "trading captain" was first mentioned by the Jesuits in 1672 and by the English in 1683 (Morantz 1977:78). In 1752 Robinson (1965:53) indicated that the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory was creating "titular officers" among the Indians of certain rivers by making sumptuary presentations of European clothing (cf. Hood 1974:82). He asserts that these leaders were selected on the

basis of their hunting skill, bravery in war and respect from the members of their band. Ray (1975:590) adds knowledge of routes, oratorical skill and the ability to deliver on promises to this fellows as necessary qualifications (cf. Mason 1967:40).

Contrary to Ray's (1974:140) assertion that the HBC failed to establish a new type of political authority among band leaders, Toby Morantz (1977:81; 1980a:377) indicates that a new type of leadership was in fact introduced among the Cree by the HBC system (cf. Rogers 1965:38). The role of "trading captain" was usually held throughout the lifetime of the incumbent. Although limited to the single task of trading (as was the traditional pattern), Morantz asserts that this continuity over time was significantly different than the temporary, non-formalised leadership roles in other fields. Despite this assertion, however, she gives no evidence on the duration of traditional leadership roles.

Nevertheless, Ferdinand Jacobs, supported by Hearne's analysis (quoted in Helm and Leacock 1971:367), reports from York Factory in 1770 that, despite their promises (e.g. B.239/a/68:43), these leaders still had little authority over their followers. They

...Frankly Confessed they Could not  
Prevent their young men from Trading  
with the Pedlers it being So ready  
a supply brought to their tents  
(B.239/a/60:45).

Even much later, Hood's (1974:195) description of Cree leader-

ship in 1820 still approximated the traditional model. Even important Cree leaders such as Wappenessew and Atticashish appear to have held positions which lacked formal power and authority as was typical of the traditional pattern, despite Morantz' findings east of James Bay.

Warfare was another target of the traders efforts to direct culture change among the Cree. The European traders did not understand the role of warfare in Cree society and they attempted, again largely unsuccessfully, to divert the Cree from this time-honoured pursuit to that of trapping. As did Cocking (Burpee 1908:102) in 1772, in 1691 Kelsey (1969:17) argued with the Cree against their going to war:

I told y<sup>m</sup> y<sup>t</sup> they must not go to wars for it will not be liked by y<sup>e</sup> governor neither would he trade with y<sup>m</sup> if they did not cease from warring (Kelsey 1969:15).

Despite these threats, the Indians went to war regardless of Kelsey's admonitions.

Such efforts at peacemaking were clearly supported by Company policy. Ironically in terms of the European conception of the differences between "savage" and "civilised" war (cf. Jennings 1979:146ff.), after just finishing a discussion of the near constant warfare in Europe at the time, the London Committee writes to Governor Geyer and Council at York Factory 17 June 1693: that he should vigorously attempt to dissuade the Indians from war:

Telling them what advantages they may make that the more furs they bring the more goods they will be

able to purchase of us; which will enable them to live more comfortably and keep them from want in time of scarcity, & that you inclucate into them better morales than they yet understand (Rich and Johnson 1957: 187).

In the late 1740s la Vérendrye (Burpee 1927:381) also lamented over his inability to dissuade the Cree from warfare. He envisioned great losses to the trade, as they were carrying "more slaves than packages" (of fur). Indeed it is reported that one of the main motivations for going to war was the capture of women and slaves. In 1771 Samuel Hearne (1958:171) reports that Cree women were pressuing their husbands to go to war against the Northern (Chipewyan) Indians and capture a slave in order that "they may have the pleasure of killing it". Indeed, Hearne himself reinforced this motivation by requesting the Cree capture a slave to be raised as his domestic.

Andrew Graham is skeptical of the seriousness of warfare among the Indians and insists that it consisted of nothing more than

...strolling about amongst the Archithinnees and will not look after Furrs to come down with, This and this alone they call going to Warr (B.239/a/59:114).

Nevertheless, in the early 1700s McCleish and Isham report the serious disruption of the trade through warfare and the attendant loss of important Indian leaders (Davies and Johnson 1965:135, 259).

As late in the period under consideration as 1770,

William Tomison found that he was still unable to dissuade the Indians from warring (B.239/a/64:14, 20). It is Tomison's analysis of the situation that it was the presence of trading houses in the interior which encouraged warring among the Indians. Presumably the less time spent on travel to York Factory, the more available for raiding (B.239/a/64:18). However, William Pink on his inland journey with the Cree in 1767 and 1768 more closely identifies the Indian motivation in terms of the typical pattern of revenge for a death and the blood feud (B.239/a/58:12, 12, 31).

In the end, Company efforts at peacemaking were largely unsuccessful since they were not about to apply the ultimate sanction threatened by Kelsey--i.e. the withdrawal of trade. They had no other power over the Cree and it is clear that the Indians could have easily traded with the competition. As Edward Umfreville (1954:91) wrote in 1790,

It is no more in the power of the traders to hinder them from going to war than it is of the Governor of Michilimacina, who does all in his power annually to prevent it.

Although a brave front was put on, it is also clear that the Europeans harboured fears about the Indians as a result of the weak strategic position in which they found themselves. The 1688 instructions to Governor Geyer at Port Nelson show that "extreme caution" was the Company policy (Rich and Johnson 1957:7). As late as June--July 1759, Henry Marten was expressing fear of an Indian attack on York Factory (B.239/a/46:37).

Despite the contentions of those such as A. G. Bailey (1969:10), Innis (1956:17, 338), Spicer (1971:526) and Murphey and Steward (1956:344) that the Indian consumer demand was "persistent", "cumulative, and even "insatiable", scholars such as Ray and Freeman (1978:129, 162), Ray (1978:350) and Rich (1960b:49) disagree. Although the trading companies worked hard to market their goods in an attempt to alter or develop new consumer tastes among the Indians, this strategy met with little success. Although Innis (1956:388) focusses on the so-called "limited cultural background: of the Indians which supposedly led to an "insatiable demand" for the manufactured products of Europe, the evidence is quite clear that Indian demand was in fact relatively inelastic. Even Rich (1960b:157) ignores the limitations of Indian demand for European goods. In fact Indian demand remained relatively constant at one hundred MB per year (Graham 1969:275-6; Ray 1978:350). Experiments in the late 1600s with the introduction of such items as toys (Rich 1945:121) and the Company's desire to stimulate a demand for European made clothing (Rich and Johnson 1957: 61, 234) were met with little success (Ray 1978:350).

Improvements in European felting technology in the 1680s had resulted in the sharp reduction in demand for the Indian worn "coat beaver". The Company implored its traders at Port Nelson in 1689 that:

...by your Method & standard of Trade  
you must let them See that Wee very  
much preferr Parchmt. Beavor before  
Coate Beavor, that soe they may bee

forced to produce you lesse Coate  
Beavor and more Parchmt (Rich and  
Johnson 1957:61).

It is also quite clear from the reports of Knight in 1716 (Davies and Johnson 1965:62) and Cocking in 1772 (B.239/a/69:12) that the Cree remained resistant to altering their approach to trapping and fur preparation. In fact, the Company received far too much coat beaver well into the 1700s (Ray 1978:350). Altering the mix of furs brought in by the Cree was not an easy task as James Knight reported in 1716 (Davies and Johnson 1965:38).

In concert with the above there is much evidence (cf. Rich 1960b:43; Bishop 1974:291; Morantz 1977:84) to suggest that, contrary to opinion that the Cree were soon dominated and exploited by the Europeans (cf. Hickerson 1973:24, 28; Gates 1965:3), the Cree remained in control in the realms of trade, transportation, provisioning and strategic concerns. Noel (1968:158) and Lieberman (1961:905) assert that, theoretically, contact can in fact occur without migrant domination. In terms of the operation of trade, it is clear from the descriptions of the trade ceremonies (Isham 1949:84ff; Graham 1969:315ff.) that the Indians had formalised much of the system so that it fit into their own cultural perceptions of trade--not as purely economic, but as alliance and social exchange (cf. Rich 1960b; Rotstein 1967).

Far from being exploited, Graham (1969:153) asserts that the Indians themselves were "sly and crafty to a great degree and employ these qualities to cheat and cir-



cumvernt both themselves and the Europeans." The Cree became hard bargainers and militant consumers as they refused to accept substandard or inappropriate goods as McCleish reports in 1728 (Davies and Johnson 1965:136; cf. Ray 1980). Isham indicates that the Indians refused to allow the Company to set its own standards for deer skins and established their own at one MB per skin and refused to be budged (Davies and Johnson 1965:310, 314). Indeed, Rich (1960b:43) and Ray (1974:65) indicate that the Indians "held the whip hand" in the trade as long as competition obtained.

#### iv) Cree Dependence?

Perhaps the most important of the assumptions that needs to be critically re-examined is that the Cree easily and quickly became "dependent" on the fur trade for their livelihood. This generalisation about "dependence" is a dominant theme in fur trade literature (Morantz 1980a:39). This interpretation is propounded by several authors including Jenness (1963:254), Trudeau (1967:16), Luchak (1977:12), Rothney (1975:62, 77) and Murphy and Steward (1956:336). Goosen (1974:34) places "dependence" at the end of the eighteenth century. Mandelbaum (1979:29) asserts that the Cree had become "dependent" by 1740. Hickerson (1973:24) says "within a generation", while Rich (1967:38) says that this had happened by 1670!

Incredibly Rich (1967:103), in relying on trade reports, asserts that Indians trading into York Factory were "completely dependent" by 1743, and even more unbe-

lievably that this dependence stretched all the way to the Rockies by the mid-eighteenth century! The fur traders cited by Rich are obviously exaggerating their own importance here. Many authors such as Rich (1960b:35) make an error in logic here. The fact that Indians traded when goods were available does not automatically imply "dependence". Of course, such an argument is pure sophistry since traditional skills and technologies continued to be employed by the Cree throughout the period under consideration.

There are a number of other difficulties with this interpretation. First is the fact that it is most often an extremely broad generalisation made without supporting documentation. Second, none of the above scholars attempts to define or analyse "dependence"<sup>15</sup> in any qualitative, much less quantifiable, terms. Nor do they specify the critical point at which "dependence" develops from interdependence.

Morantz (1980b:40) asserts that the HBC records dealing with the Cree east of James Bay in fact refute the idea of "wholesale dependence" (cf. Gibson 1978). This finding is borne out in the documentation on the Western Woods Cree. It has also become clear from the work of historians such as Parker (1972:48) and Sloan (1979:282) that far from being "inextricably enmeshed" in the trade, Indian groups were able to withdraw from the fur trade (cf. Rich 1967:94) when it did not suit their purposes and were able to re-establish their prior subsistence

pattern. It will be demonstrated below in Chapter IV that some Cree merely intensified traditional big game hunting patterns in response to the trade and could therefore easily revert to more traditional adaptations. It is also clear that the Inland Cree were much less dependent than the Home Guard (Ray 1971:102) and that contemporaneous critics of the Company such as Dobbs overstated the case for Indian dependence (Ray 1974:87n. #10; 1971:102).

The key factors for dependence to develop are said to be the establishment of a post in the home region (Mandelbaum 1979:261) and depletion of big game (Rogers 1963b:37), neither of which were problems for the Cree during the era in question.

Rothney (1975:63) cites Innis as backing for his statement that "Rum, tobacco, firearms, and ammunition were the chief commodities traded to make them dependent on the Europeans." However, it is clear from the above discussion that none of these goods were in fact essential since the Cree still possessed traditional knowledge and skills. They were quite able to withdraw from the trade at will. Indeed the Europeans had no ability to force" the Cree to do anything as will be demonstrated below. Therefore, the so-called "dependence" existed only for luxuries, and not for basic subsistence, contrary to the impression given by many authors on this subject.

Also contrary to these assertions of early dependence is the comment of Anthony Henday in September of 1754 when he met seven tents of Aseenepoets.

I smoaked with them and have done all  
 in my power to get them to visit our  
 forts, but I am afraid to little purpose,  
 the living in this plentiful country,  
 and can well do without any European  
 support, but their chief objection is  
 the long distance

As the French were withdrawing from the Saskatchewan country in the late 1750s, Isham notes that few of the Sturgeon Indians had been coming to York Factory for some time (B.239/a/42:3). Obviously they were able to do without European goods.

Far from Indian dependence on trade, it was European dependence on Indians which characterised the early contact situation. The Europeans relied on the Cree not only for guidance, transportation and translation services inland, but for marriage partners, a supply of labour as well as food for the posts on the Bay (Gibson 1978:359; Innis 1956:143). Of course, it goes without saying that the Europeans' major dependence on the Indian was as the primary producers of fur and middlemen in the system (cf. Rothney 1975:114; Innis 1956:153).

It is unlikely that Chouart, Kelsey, Henday, Pink or any of the other HBC men sent inland could have been successful without their Cree "bedfellows: and leaders such as Attickashish and Wappenessew. As Parker (1972:44) points out, the trader (especially while inland) was typically isolated, outnumbered and often unknowledgeable about the country and its inhabitants. Cree support was clearly indispensable.

It was not only the knowledge, political skill and actual trailblasing which was important, but, as Dragge (1748:168) reports, the provision of the technology for travel--moccasins snowshoes, and canoes--was also essential. In addition, letters inland for 1688 show the Indians also served as a crucial communication link between York Factory and the Bottom of the Bay (Rich and Johnson 1957:12).

Provisioning the posts was another key aspect in the Cree/trader relationship. Isham's (1949:295) letter to the surgeon of the Dobbs Galley in 1747 makes it clear that, concerning the provision of country produce to the Company, "...you are sensible our whole Dependence is from them..." This dependence began in 1661 when Radisson and des Groseilliers accepted food, and continued in 1670 when Radisson received food from the Cree at Port Nelson and Charles Fort (Nutte 1977:137, 288). Contrary to the assertion of Anderson and Frideres (1981:221) that the English did not develop a symbiotic relationship with the Indians as did the French, Ray and Freeman (1978:41) indicate that the Company turned to Indians for much of their food since European servants were not skilled in the necessary hunting techniques (cf. Russell 1975:422). This provided the Home Guard who supplied the provisions with a certain degree of leverage within the relationship. Rich (1960a:I:493) states that as late as 1750 they were able to threaten to starve the posts by refusing to hunt.

Innis (1956:144) and Rich (1960a:I:496) point out the realisation of this dependence encouraged the Company

to support Indians in time of famine in order to maintain their loyalty in future provisioning. As early as December 1696 Kelsey (1929:59) reports Indians in a "starving condition" receiving food from the Company (cf. Graham 1969:153; Robson 1965:51). The long voyage to York Factory often was made only at the expense of hunger (Robson 1965:51) and the Indians required support while there if they were to be encouraged to return again. Food gifts such as bread and prunes became part of the symbolic pre-trade ceremonies (Graham 1969:319). The English it seems did not make Jeremie's mistake of refusing to share food with their trading partners.

Nevertheless, the traders did complain a good deal about the Indian's lack of "gratitude" for this support (cf. B.239/a/69:45; Burpee 1908:116). Graham (1969:153) states:

Gratitude is utterly unknown amongst them: they receive favours and by all this can, but never think themselves under obligation to the donor.

He continues "there is no end to their craving" (Graham 1969:322). James Isham (1949:49ff) also paints a picture of the insistently demanding nature of Indian trade rhetoric. Isham (1949:81) states further:

they are cunning and sly to the last Degree, the more you give, the more they Crave,--the generality of them are Loth to part with anything they have, if at any time they give they Expec't Double Satisfaction...

Radisson also noted what he perceived to be the demanding nature of the Indians (Adams 1961:220).

Although disputed by Bloom (1971:72-76), O. Mannoni (1964:42, 61-62) explains this perception in his examination of the psychology of contact. He asserts that the Europeans often misunderstood what they saw as importunate, ungrateful, behaviour of natives. He asserts that what is interpreted as dependency was really an attempt on the part of natives to establish a lasting relationship through material exchange. As Sahlins (1972:302) asserts, a measure of imbalance in the material flow of goods serves to sustain the partnership. The Cree were demanding in their relationship because they saw glimpses of what they perceived to be the untold wealth of the trader (cf. Holder 1967:134-5). As Sahlins (1972:211) asserts,

The greater the wealth gap, therefore,  
the greater the demonstrable assistance  
from rich to poor that is necessary just  
to maintain a given degree of sociability.

Mannoni's psychological view therefore reinforces the economic explanation of Sahlins.

Another way of looking at this situation is presented by Broom et al. (1954:981). The demanding approach of Indians can be viewed as acting out an assumed role.

Usually role playing mirrors one group's image of itself in relation to the other. Consequently, among other generalized components, it contains an assertion of intergroup status and a definition of intergroup power relationships.

In this view, therefore, the Cree were not demonstrating their dependence, but asserting their perception of who controlled the relationship by their demanding behaviour.

There has been a good deal written about the European's perception of the Indians (e.g. Nash 1972; Surtees 1977; Berkhofer 1978; Drinnon 1980; Sheehan 1980). However, much less is available on how Indians viewed Europeans. As Morantz (1980b:175) has indicated, there are few documentary records of how Indians perceived the traders. Jaenen (1974; 1976) has done important work on this subject in eastern Canada and it appears as if a similar pattern repeats itself west of Hudson Bay (cf. Foster 1977:60; Goldring 1980:37-8). Contrary to A. G. Bailey's (1969:190) assertion that Indians soon developed an inferiority complex in face of European technological superiority, Jaenen (1974) documents the Indian's continuing feelings of superiority over the Europeans. West of Hudson Bay, Robson (1965:49) [confirmed by Graham (1969:263) as quoted above] reports the Cree viewed Company servants as "slaves". Hearne (1958:9) confirms that both the Northern (i.e. Chipewyan) and Southern (i.e. Cree) Indians paid little attention to ordinary employees. Although Europeans such as Cocking perceived the Cree as "children" (B.239/a/69:42-43) [a common European sentiment (Cairns 1965:43)] the Cree held a similar view of Europeans not only in linguistic, but in social terms as well (cf. Janen 1974:271, 290).

In many ways the European view of Indians was an ambivalent one (cf. Jennings 1979:74). On the positive



side Indians were praised for their stoicism, "good sense", physical health and paradoxically for their honesty as well (Dragge 1748:183); Jeremie 1926:32; Tyrrell 1931:223, 233). Surprisingly often, fur traders demonstrated a cultural relativist approach (cf. Jaum 1965:176). As Andrew Graham (1969:320) wrote, "...it would be ingenuous to tax them with that [awkward table manners] as a fault which they never had an opportunity of mending".

One of the most common of the Europeans' negative perceptions about the Indians concerned their supposed "indolent" character (cf. Graham 1969:153; Isham 1949:92; B.239/a/69:11). Another perceived characteristic often connected with the above was "improvidence". Europeans consistently harped upon the Cree's lack of what has been referred to as the "protestant work ethic". Exasperation over the Cree's seeming indifference to the morrow and almost constant "smoking, feasting, drumming, and dancing" was never very far below the surface of the journals. Typical of these opinions is Cocking's statement that the Indians were "...naturally indolent, and havign food and raiment for the present never concern themselves for the future until all is expended" (Burpee 1907:120; cf. Robson 1965:29, 51).

Many historians, taking their cue directly from the fur traders, have stereotyped Indians as improvident, even "monumentally" so (cf. Rich 1960b:46; Martin 1978:3). Even anthropologists such as Mason (1967:12) have supported the opinion that the Cree were improvident. These commentators,

however, do not seem to comprehend the Cree approach to life. They followed what has been referred to by Sahlins (1972: 1-2) as the "Zen way to affluence". This simply means the limitation of desire so that very little material wealth is sufficient to produce the "original affluent society". Although he does not seem to realise that he has his finger on the answer, Graham (1969:152) states:

They are content with little, and seldom complain when in want, They are extremely patient under hunger, thirst or other misfortunes."

La Potherie (Tyrrell 1931:225) makes the same observation while at Fort Bourbon in 1697.

They only live to keep themselves from dying and, satisfying merely the bare necessities of nature, they find that a man can get along with very little (cf. Dragge 1748: 229).

Such a world view also goes a long way toward explaining the limited demand for trade goods displayed by the Cree.

A good deal of comment is also stimulated by the Cree's hunting practices which were disparaged as profligate. Echoing comments by Isham (1949:81), Henday (E.2/4: 45), Dragge (1748:216), and Ellis (1969:182-3), Graham (1969:154) states:

They kill animals out of wantonness, alleging the more they destroy the more plentiful they grow. Several score of deer I have known killed at one time, the natives only taking the tongues, heads, hearts and feet,

according as they choose; letting the carcasses go adrift in the river.

Again taking a relativist position, Graham attempts to explain this behaviour as follows.

But frugality and prudence in this respect are not amongst the virtues of these natives. Though to be impartial, it is just to mention that the reason of a conduct so unaccountable to Englishmen may proceed from the difficulty that would arise from conveying a stock of provisions from place to place in their migratory way of life. We ought therefore not to be rash in our censures.

As Sahlins (1972:11) asserts, for hunters, "wealth is a burden".

One additional explanation for this behaviour on the part of the Cree is that it may be the result of incomplete observation by the Europeans. For example it is doubtful whether Graham, Isham, or Dragge ever left the confines of the Bay side posts. In fact, it was common practice for Cree hunters to retrieve only a token of his kill so that he could send his women out to butcher and carry the meat home (cf. Tanner 1979). On another tack, a subsistence pattern which exploited game species as long as they lasted, and then adjusted to cope with the resulting scarcity was an effective strategy for many woodland peoples with low population densities and migratory lifestyles (cf. Kay 1979:413). Calvin Martin (1978) seems to reach the correct conclusion (although by the wrong route) that Indians should therefore not be considered the original

conservationist of some golden ecological age.

Contrary to Martin, Ray (1974:203, 1975:58, 68) reaches the conclusion that this behaviour was rooted on a world view which posited that if the spirits of the slain animals were properly propitiated, there would always be enough game for the future. He is supported in this explanation by Smith (1979:811). Martin's thesis as it relates to the Cree will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

In reality, the Cree's day-to-day and from-hand-to-mouth existence--an adaptation perceived as "improvidence" by the Europeans--was a manifestation of what Service (1972:29) and Lee and Devore (1968:6-7) term overweening "confidence" characteristic of hunters and gatherers. Hunters have supreme confidence that their knowledge of the habitat and animal behaviour, hunting skills, conjuring and divination ability, efficacy of their dreams and sympathetic magic, and above all their special spiritual relations with animals would inevitably bring success. If success was not immediate, then only the virtue of patience was necessary.

As is the case with most hunting peoples, the Cree were simply supremely confident of their future prospects at hunting. In consideration of the above, they therefore saw no need--in the absence of a scientific or ecological world view (even a naive and inconsistent one as was held by their European contemporaries)--to engage in conservation. Their migratory lifestyle combined with their rela-

tively sparse population density and animistic world view obviated the need for an ecological concept of conservation. Indeed their conceptions as described above had the same effect as an ecological approach in producing sustained yields from their habitat (cf. Feit 1973:117-118; Tanner 1979:104). Nevertheless, Isham (1949:155-6), in contrast to many contemporary observers, notes that the Indians used all parts of the cervines killed and, "throwing nothing away", they also dried meat and extracted the marrow from bones in other parts of his description.

#### v) Conclusion

On a number of counts therefore, it becomes obvious that we must re-evaluate the conclusions of many fur trade scholars concerning the initial stages of Indian/trader relations. Consideration of ethnographic data and anthropological theory along with scrutiny of the documents (i.e. the ethnohistorical method) have resulted in the serious questioning of long-held assumptions.

As Morantz has determined for the Cree east of James Bay, the Western Woods Cree were by no means "dependent" on the traders for their survival in the period up to 1774 as so many scholars have previously maintained. They were in fact in firm control of the relationship economically, politically, socially and strategically through the period just discussed. The results which have been emerging from this and other recent fur trade studies supports the interpretation that "dependence" was in fact a

mutual one or, if at all, it was the European, and not the Indian, who relied most heavily on the trading partner during the Early Fur trade Era.

The next period of Cree/trader relations begins with the establishing of the Hudson's Bay Company's Cumberland House in Cree territory. In terms of Bishop and Ray's scheme, the Competitive Fur Trade Era begins.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELATIONS IN THE COMPETITIVE TRADE ERA

#### Introduction

Cumberland House was not the first Hudson's Bay Company trading establishment constructed inland among the Cree. The original experiment with inland posts had turned out relatively unhappily some years earlier. Charles Bishop (1976) gives an instructive account of the unfortunate relationship which developed when in 1743 Henley House was constructed two hundred miles up-river from Fort Albany.

Here too the Cree had pressured the HBC for an inland post to serve them in their own territory and in order to stimulate direct competition between the Europeans. This request was reinforced by demonstrating an increased reluctance to travel to Albany with their furs (Bishop 1976:36-37). Deteriorating relations at both Albany and Henley House ended in the destruction of the latter in 1754 by the Cree. This action was precipitated by another breach of the reciprocal social obligations which had been established by the trade. The trade relationship was characterised by the availability of Cree women for marriage à la façon du pays in return for Indian access to post amenities. When free access to the post was denied them, the Cree attacked and dest-

royed Henley House. As Foster (1977:59-60) asserts, the Cree viewed such liaisons as true marriages and they expected to be treated like kinsmen as a result.

Bishop (1976:40) explains that the traders had not recognised the social obligations inherent in the trading relationship as being significant. As a result, their blindness to this crucial aspect of the trade cost them dearly in comparable fashion to Jeremie's miscalculation discussed in the previous chapter.

When rebuilt, Henley House was attacked again in 1759. Subsequently it was not re-established until 1766, mainly because HBC servants feared for their lives (Bishop 1976:41).

#### The Founding of Cumberland House, 1774--1775

Relations at the new post in the hinterland of York Factory, on the other hand, proceeded much more smoothly. This can be partially explained by referring to the different reactions of the traders in charge of the expedition to establish Cumberland House in 1774.

Samuel Hearne and Matthew Cocking were experienced inland travellers. They were therefore familiar with the need to adapt themselves to Cree culture and to work within the limitations set by Indian political, economic and strategic hegemony. For example, on his way inland in 1774 Hearne was careful to vet his plans for establishing a post with the Cree leaders in the region. He reconnoitered



the prospects for a building site in the Basquiau area, "...but did not Determine to build there till I had Consulted with the Indian Chiefs..." (Tyrrell 1968:99, 104-5, 111)

The Cree eventually persuaded Hearne to construct his post on Pine Island in Cumberland Lake (where he had been conducted originally). Hearne writes:

...it is the general opinion of those Indians that that Part will be more commodious both for Drawing the Indians to Trade as well as for Provisions then Basquiau, it laying in the middle between three Tribes (Tyrrell 1968:113).

However, this decision did not stop other Cree such as the "Grass Indians" from continuing to press Hearne to establish his post farther up the Saskatchewan, closer to their own country (Tyrrell 1969:117).

Hearne had been wise to consult the local Cree, not only because of his own lack of knowledge about the country thereabouts, but because of their obvious self-assured supremacy. The power of the Cree was amply demonstrated soon after the establishment of Cumberland House as it had been to the Canadian trader Corry in the early 1770s (see Chapter III).

Indeed, the fur traders occupied a very tenuous strategic position inland as the experience of Alexander Henry the Elder illustrates. On 8 October 1775, after joining with a large group of other Nor'westers (including such experienced traders as Pond, Cadotte and the

Frobishers--one hundred and thirty men all together), Henry's party was waylaid at Basquiau by Chatique (the Pelican), a headman of about thirty families of Cree (Henry 1969:254-61). Chatique "invited" the traders to his tent and then demanded stiff tribute in return for allowing the party to pass, saying:

...that we must be well aware of his power to prevent our going further; that if we passed now, he could put us all to death on our return; and that under these circumstances, he expected us to be exceedingly liberal in our presents; adding, that to avoid misunderstanding, he would inform us of what it was that he must have.... He went on to say that he had before now been acquainted with white men, and knew that they promised more than they performed; that with the number of men which he had, he could take the whole of our property, without our consent; and that therefore his demands ought to be regarded as very reasonable; that he was a peaceable man, and one that contented himself with moderate views, in order to avoid quarrels, --finally, that he desired us to signify our assent to his proposition, before we quitted our places (Henry 1969:260).

Henry's party decided that discretion was the better part of valour and acceded to Chatique's demands. As a final indignity, Chatique followed the departing traders in one canoe and, upon catching up to them, imperiously demanded one more keg of rum. This too was granted and Chatique left the Europeans to contemplate this object lesson in dominance. Here we have a prime example of what Sahlins (1972) refers to as "negative reciprocity" in

which coercion is used to extract maximum benefit from the exchange. This incident makes very clear who was in control of the relationship at this time.

It was not only the Canadians, but the HBC as well, who were aware of the Cree's upper hand in the strategic relations. To the London Committee in 1778 Humphry Marten (Rich and Johnson 1951:245n) admitted their weak position inland. Moreso at the Company's outposts upstream than at Cumberland House itself, at times the traders could not have their men go abroad for fear that the Indians would kill them (Rich and Johnson 1951:27).

In addition to exploiting their strategic advantage, the Cree also continued their long-standing strategy of playing the competing European groups against one another in order to maximise the benefits of competition. In consulting with a group of "principle men" thirty miles south of Cranberry Portage on his way inland, Hearn's journal for 1774 shows that the Cree continued to exaggerate the generosity of his competitors (cf. Ray and Freeman 1978:185),

...saying that the Pedlors by this time has to much influence, and that I ware to late in comeing. The Pedlors generosity is much talk'd of, and are said to give away great quanies of goods for nothing...--I cannot pretend to say anything to the Contrary at Present, but shall hereafter Endeavour to make myself better acquainted with the trooth of this very Extraordinary account (Tyrrell 1968:104-5).

In the end, Hearne found it impossible to get from the Cree what he believed to be reliable information on the

actual trading standards of the Canadians (Tyrrell 1934:160). The Cree also used the competitive situation to their own best advantage by holding back their furs from Hearne in early October 1774 to await the Canadians' arrival (Tyrrell 1934:119).

Once having persuaded the HBC to establish Cumberland House, the Cree assumed control over most facets of the trade. In the first place, Europeans did not have the knowledge, manpower or skill, much less a grasp of the necessary technology, in order to operate the crucial transportation system between inland and Bayside posts. Cree guidance, labour, and canoemanship, as well as their monopoly over the construction of the indispensable canoes themselves, were all essential to the prosecution of Company trading interests inland. For nearly one hundred years the Cree had been transporting their furs to York Factory. They had now become the key link in hauling trade goods in the opposite direction.

Hearne had encountered much difficulty in persuading Orcadians to accompany him inland in 1774. This may in part be explained by the experience at Henley House, although Glover (1948:245) attributes it to the lack of salary premiums for inland service. At any rate, Hearne depended on the leading Indian Me-sin-e-kish-ac and his followers to carry him inland in 1774. Me-sin-e-kish-ac was in no hurry to proceed, although we might expect that Hearne was anxious to reach his destination. In a scene repeated often in the future, Hearne was powerless to pre-

vent days which his trippers "Expended in Smoking & Drinking with their friends" (Tyrrell 1968:99, 106). In addition, even before the Cree had delivered Hearne to his destination, they began to go their respective ways, leaving him in the lurch and under the necessity of buying more canoes in order to continue (Tyrrell 1934:106).

Hearn's labour troubles were minor, however, compared to those experienced by Robert Flatt who was travelling with another group. He was "very crewilly" plundered of all his goods by the members of this party (Tyrrell 1968:120). The Cree who were ferrying Matthew Cocking in another support column conducted him well out of his way and he never did rendezvous with Hearne that year as originally planned (Tyrrell 1934:32).

Cocking's journal for his next inland journey in 1775 also records his frustration at the "very dilatory" progress made by his Indian tripmen. In order to get them to proceed he was forced to give them his own gun, and even this expedient failed to produce the desired results. Cocking pointed out the dependency of the Europeans on the Cree transport by saying "In this manner the Natives impose upon a European when they know he cannot do without them" (Rich and Johnson 1951:5-6).

It therefore becomes clear from the journals of Hearne and Cocking on their expeditions to establish Cumberland House that the Cree had assumed the upper hand in the key transportation element of the trade system right from the beginning. Indeed, in his summary observations on

the first year's activity at Cumberland House Hearne asserted that, with the original expence and the ensuing demand for "treats" the Cree had received much more to transport the goods than they were actually worth (Tyrrell 1934:160). Taken in conjunction with the waylaying of Flatt and Cocking, the Cree had demonstrated themselves to be in total control of the inland transportation situation.

This Indian control over the transportation of Europeans and their goods inland continued well into the following decades as Philip Turnor and Edward Umfreville (1954: 36) echo Cockings earlier assessment of European dependence (Tyrrell 1934:250; cf.B.49/a/3-5, 9).<sup>1</sup> The Cree continued to demand and receive high premiums for their efforts. Neither did they feel compunction about delaying or taking Company servants and goods well out of the way to suit their own purposes (cf.Tyrrell 1934:113; Rich and Johnson 1951: 65). They exerted control over their own working conditions, deciding where and when to stop en route (B.49/a/5:3), and in many cases they refused to carry all that was required of them--arbitrarily sending excess goods back to York Factory (e.g. Tyrrell 1934:112). As Hearne had discovered, they often deserted their employers whenever they wished. However, the really telling point is that Company officers had no other choice but to rehire the same prodigal paddlers without penalty soon afterwards, and they were relieved to be able to do so (cf.Tyrrell 1934:113, 170, 173; B.49/a/5, 10).

In control of the labour market inland, the Cree

placed a high value on their services. Establishing a pattern that was to repeat itself many times in the future, the Cree used their strong bargaining position and "press't very harde" to force the traders to provide "treats" of alcohol. In 1775 on his second trip inland, Hearne discovered that he had been forced into a no-win situation. If he failed to provide the treat of brandy demanded, the Indians would have refused to move, or indeed would have taken what they wanted by force (or by subterfuge as they had done in the past). When he did give in to their demands, Hearne chafed at the time wasted nursing the resulting hangovers (Tyrrell 1934:168-9, 171).

In 1776 Hearne had this reflection on Cree control,

The very great dependence we have on the Natives at Present for cannoes as well as their assistance in getting the Men and goods up, is not only attended with a very Extraordinary expence but Yearly exposes a large quantity of goods to the greatest danger of being totally lost, witness las Year... [200 gallons of Brandy were stolen] ...these losses together with their payment not only runs away with all the Profit, but renders the Company's Servants the make game and laughingstock of every trader from Canady (Tyrrell 1934:193).

It is clear from the above that the two parties had not yet established binding social relations, thus allowing the Cree to exert their power and to engage in "negative reciprocity".

As Hearne was aware, the actual construction of the vital canoes was a task for which the HBC also totally

depended on the Cree. Besides being too few in number, his own men had neither the knowledge nor the skill even to collect the birch bark necessary, let alone complete the complicated construction. His men were not at all cognisant of such important survival skills since, as Hearne stated, "...none of them ever having ben further from the Forts than a Wooding or hunting Tent" (Tyrrell 1934:118).

In the spring of 1775 the Cree had already begun the practice of congregating at Cumberland House and they promised Hearne that they would build canoes for him. Even after these promises, however, and despite Hearne's assertion "...tho I have been dayly giving them every thing they ask<sup>d</sup> for to Encourage them thereto," they refused to build larger models to his specifications. In fact, as soon as they had completed their own vessels, they set off for the Canadian establishment at Basquiau, leaving him only one of the half dozen canoes promised (Tyrrell 1934:145, 150, 152). Upon later reflection, Hearne identified this limitation of the supply of canoes to be the major impediment to the success of the Company's inland trade. He stated:

...the greatest obstical that is likely to Prevent the CompY from getting goods inland is the want of Proper Cannoes, to Procure which I am Much at a loss what measures to take, as I find that no Payment or Promouses can enduce the Natives to make a Sufficient Quantity; (Tyrrell 1934:157).

Despite the fact that Hudson's Bay Company men such as Robert Longmore were beginning to try their own hand at



canoe building by 1776 (Rich and Johnson 1951:lxvii-lxix), the Company continued to depend primarily on the Cree for this important article (cf. B.49/a/4:29; B.49/a/6:56; Rich and Johnson 1952:239). This continued to be the case until york boats were introduced into the transportation system beginning in 1787 and thereafter (Rich and Johnson 1952:xli-xlii; B.49/a/18:29). By May 1783 Company servant Magnus Twatt was reported to be building canoes while some men were repairing others and fetching bark (B.49/a/13:56, B.49/a/20:60). Nevertheless, Indians continued to be required to collect materials and to build canoes until late in the period under consideration (e.g. B.49/a/15:28, 60). In addition, the European efforts were not always serviceable (e.g. B.49/a/20:63). Tomison reports in 1789: "...the Canoes that was build at South Branch House are so ill constructed that I had some difficulty to get the men to take them" (Rich and Johnson 1952:98-99).

The establishment of Cumberland House, therefore, makes quite clear the Cree's political, economic and strategic control of the situation. They had persuaded the English to move inland by combining hyperbole concerning the Canadian standard of trade with a strategy of patronising the Canadians despite their actual higher prices. Having done this the Cree approved the location of the post, exploited their control of the strategic situation in the seller's market for labour, provisions [see below], and canoes. They also refused to submit to European control on trips and they were able to name the price for

their required goods and services.

Continued Development of European Dependence; 1775--1795

The Cumberland House journals reveal a continuing and increasing dependence of the HBC on Cree knowledge, skills, transportation labour, and especially "country produce" in the two decades following the establishment of the post. The near monopoly on the provision of country produce was a major area in which the Cree exerted their control over the trade relationship.

For the Europeans, the early years at Cumberland House were often characterised by serious food shortages which were relieved only by the Cree's hunting skills. In 1775 Cocking (Rich and Johnson 1951:39) reported that two tents of Indians had been hunting for the post all winter and this pattern continued throughout the period under consideration. This wage labour was in addition to the many Cree who traded provisions as well as fur.

Very early, on his trip inland in 1774, Samuel Hearne had revealed his dependence on Indian provisions, since large amounts of European food could not be transported inland. Upon his arrival at Cumberland Lake the Cree almost immediately brought fresh meat and extended an offer to hunt geese for the Europeans (Tyrrell 1934:97, 115, 116). The Indians promised to bring provisions "at all Convenient oportunities dureing the Winter" and a pattern of reciprocal food exchange was established. For example, on 4 November 1774 Hearne provided food to

a man's "starving"<sup>2</sup> family. On 2 December the same man returned to Cumberland House with four sled loads of moose meat (Tyrrell 1934:127, 130, 137-8). Indeed, the Cree began to utilise Cumberland House as a redistribution centre where they could in effect "bank" food for later use. From the journals it often seems as if meat, and not fur, was the primary commodity being exchanged. In fact, many Indians came to Cumberland House strictly to trade meat (cf. Tyrrell 1934:180, 183). By 1779 Tomison was beginning to realise that many of the Cree were not trapping fur bearers at all, because they could supply all their requirements simply by trading country produce (B.49/a/7:43). This type adaptation to the fur trade meant that some Indians, especially those living in the immediate vicinity of Cumberland House, were not forced to alter their basic subsistence pattern in order to engage in the trade system. They were able to utilise traditional exploitative patterns of big game hunting, and indeed intensify them, rather than undergo drastic cultural or ecological changes upon contact with the traders (cf. Rogers 1965:266; La Russic 1970:B-1; Dunning 1959:5, 76).

Even the Canadian traders, who traditionally have been assumed to have been much more adept than the HBC servants at the necessary survival skills, were often in great want of provisions (e.g. B.49/a/4:24). Hearne writes of Canadian traders starving to death and cannibalising each other in 1775. The Cree had imposed their own traditional sanctions on this deviant behaviour by killing

the Canadian involved (Tyrrell 1934:190). Such want was often the result of the Cree being absent from the area hunting elsewhere as was the case with the starvation of Canadian traders at Basquiau in 1778 (B.49/a/6:36).

The Cree were quick to capitalise on their advantage. The prices they demanded for their produce became "very dear" in the traders eyes. For example in April of 1775 Hearne reports that geese were selling at the rate of one made beaver each (Tyrrell 1934:147)(cf.B.239/a/69:53). Realising the Company's dependence on the Cree for food, York Chief Humphrey Marten warned Tomison in August 1776 against allowing Indians to know the real state of the Cumberland House larder lest "they find you in wants their demands are extravagant" (B.49/a/4:9).

The ability to procure country provisions remained crucial to the HBC operations inland well into the 1800s. In February 1794 the Cumberland House journal notes that an attempt by Malcolm Ross to establish an outpost upriver at Nipowin had failed. Magnus Twatt explains:

it seems the Undertaking is Proved  
Unsuccessful by some ill concerted  
Measures in the Beginning. he could  
not stay there for Want of a Hunter,  
or some other Method of Getting Where-  
with to subsist on. Which it seames  
was out of his power at this season  
of the Year to Procure (B.49/a/25a:  
25; cf. B.49/a/25b:6).

In January 1796 Cumberland House itself experienced one of the frequent poor years in its fishing efforts and the spectre of starvation loomed. As was typical however,

eventually Indian hunters brought in welcome news of moose kills (B.49/a/27a:9, 10, 18). Similar situations are described throughout the period covered by this study as reported by Fidler in 1798 (B.49/a/28:17), Kennedy in 1815 (B.49/e/1:3), and Isbister in 1827 (B.49/a/42:35) and 1832 (B.49/a/47:4).

The Cree used their control over the production of food to force the traders to provide alcohol and to make other demands the traders thought "extravagant" (B.49/a/29:8). In 1777 Matthew Cocking reported that he had run out of this crucial commodity at Cumberland House. He laments:

If it was not for the liquor and Tabacco  
We should not get a bit of Victuals to  
put in our mouths, but what we would  
have caught ourselves (B.49/a/4:6).

Indians who arrived at the post in August 1776 with a supply of meat only to find no alcohol available traded some for tabacco and the remainder "feasted it all away" (B.49a/4:7; cf. Rich and Johnson 1952:112). This refusal to provide provisions for anything other than brandy continued well into the 1800s (e.g. B.49/a/20:22-23, 30; B.49/a/21:51; B.49/a/29:8).

Such behaviour on the part of the Cree again belies the interpretation that they were soon "dependent" on the trading post. The overwhelming popularity of the non-essential luxury trade in alcohol and tobacco clearly indicated their independence from the traders for subsistence. As one Indian told Cocking in no uncertain terms in May 1777, he wished to trade only for liquor:

He told me that he was not in want of any thing except that article, and if I refused to trade liquor for the whole He intended to keep them to Trade with the Pedlers as they came down (B.49/a/4:49).

Despite all Cocking's efforts this trapper did just that, and the trader was forced to relent on his earlier determination. Alcohol, an item of no use whatever for the task of making a living, was a commodity that was consumable on the spot had become nearly the sole area for expanding demand (Ray 1978:354).

#### i) The Basquiau Cree

The Basquiau Cree band played a significant role in this early period of trade at Cumberland House. The journals record their regular arrivals with provisions and furs as well as their role as the primary group of tripmen hauling furs to York Factory each spring (B.49/a/4:51; Rich and Johnson 1951:49, 53). In fact, Cumberland House became a rendezvous point for the Basquiau Cree as they waited for the return of their canoemen in the fall brigade (B.49/a/6-7). Even before he had built Cumberland House, Hearne was receiving provisions from the Basquiau Cree (Tyrrell 1934:108, 114). Alexander Henry's party in 1775 also employed two Basquiau Cree to hunt (Henry 1969:260) as did man of the Canadian traders later (e.g. Ray and Johnson 1952:81).

Despite their close ties to the HBC at Cumberland House, the Basquiau Cree also dealt freely with the Canadians

(Rich and Johnson 1951:34-35; B.49/a/4:19). To counter this tendency, in September of 1776 two HBC men, James Batt and Robert Davey, were sent with a supply of trade goods along with the Basquiau Cree in order to attempt to prevent them from trading with the Canadians. Another reason for sending these men with the Indians was to have them supported for the winter (B.49/a/4:11, 18, 19; cf. B.49/a/6:43). Since, as Cocking noted in 1775, the Cree groups were often "inclined to take a man with them to support until the spring" (Rich and Johnson 1951:18), this had very early become a HBC strategy to reduce the strain on the Cumberland House larder (cf. Nicks 1976:22). It was also to the advantage of the Cree themselves, since they were able to have a source of trade goods right in their camps and it allowed them the opportunity to develop useful marital/commercial relations with the traders. Van Kirk (1980b) and Brown (1980) detail this relation.

The Basquiau Cree were also masters at exploiting the European competition to the maximum. In 1777 they had two canoes of Canadians trading at their camp (B.49/a/6:17) and they used the presence of these Canadians as a bargaining lever. Joseph Hanson gives the following account of a ploy of one Cree in January 1778:

He informs me that the Indians he left, has furs amongst them, and are intending to carry them to the Canadian House at Bas,qui,a, it being the nighest; but to prevent them I have sent presents and given Him encouragement to induce them to trade at this place (B.49/a/6:39).

In reporting the trade activity of a Basquiau captain in January 1780 William Walker states:

...but they having so many houses to go to They like to be hear and there and every where[.] They also did promise That they should return about the middle of the Winter if not sooner, but there is no belief in what an Indian says (Rich and Johnson 1952: 29).<sup>3</sup>

Such an approach by the Cree forced the HBC to throw more and more presents their way as Tomison records in the Cumberland House journals for 1780--1781 (Rich and Johnson 1952:38, 46, 122, 133, 148).

The Basquiau leader, Catabobinow, was the recipient of many of these presents since he was suspected of leaning toward the Canadians (Rich and Johnson 1952:38; B.49/a/4:34). Presents had always been an important lubricant for the trade (cf. Jacobs 1950), but the Cumberland House master really had little choice but to comply with what amounted to Indian demands for presents to be sent out to their camps (Tyrrell 1934:143).

These presents apparently kept Catabobinow himself relatively loyal to the Company despite being similarly wooed by the Canadians with "flattering words and presents" (B.49/a/7:28). However, Tomison reports in May 1778 that no other Basquiau Cree than this leader had attended Cumberland House since the fall (B.49/a/6:64). It is therefore apparent that such Company-supported "trading captains" still had no more real authority over their followers than had the traditional leaders.



Noting that none of the Basquiau Cree were building canoes in the spring of 1778, Tomison dispensed gratuities of brandy, tabacco and other presents to persuade them to help transport furs to York Factory in the spring. Nevertheless he feared "...it will be to little purpose, as I am fully persuaded the Canadian traders makes them presents to prevent them from assisting us (B.49/a/6:67).

It becomes clear from such references that the Cree were getting the best of both worlds. Although a number of Basquiau Cree eventually did appear to engage in the carrying trade, even so, twenty-two bundles of furs had to be left behind. Joseph Hansom explained:

The Natives in general are not agreeable to go down as they can be supplied with their Necefsaries at home by the Canadian Traders (B.49/a/7:1).

Given this fact, it seems as if the Basquiau Cree who did serve as tripmen were opting for what amounted to wage labour as early as the mid-1770s. Since the long trip to York was not motivated by the need for goods, therefore, presents and payment [often in advance against the traders' preferences (e.g. Rich and Johnson 1952:54)] for hauling furs must be considered as their prime motivation.

During the late 1770s some of the Basquiau Cree were reported by Cocking to have spent the winter "in the plain Ground" (B.49/a/9:41), thus continuing a seasonal round apparent from the reports of Kelsey in 1691, Henday

in 1756 and Cocking in 1773. So adapted to the plains were they that at least as early as 1779 the Basquiau Cree were trading horses to the HBC to carry their own furs to Cumberland House, which they refused to do themselves (B.49/a;7:32). This tactic became a typical characteristic of Cree control of the trade relations.

Having established their control over the carriage trade to and from York Factory, by the 1780s the Cree also began to force the Europeans to bear the costs of transporting furs and provisions from their camps back to Cumberland House. The Basquiau and other local Cree typically arrived at Cumberland House during this period with only news of moose meat or furs available at their tents. Invariably the post master would send his own men out to fetch the produce (e.g. Rich and Johnson 1952:86; B.49/a/19:31-32; B.49/a/24:11, 19; B.49/a/25a:17, 25).

Indians coming from farther away would often send a messenger ahead to ask for help in bringing their burdens the rest of the way in to the post (e.g. B.49/a/22:46; B.49/a/23:11, 8). This too was a means of exploiting the competitive situation. As one Indian making this request stated to Magnus Twatt in August 1793, having the Europeans collect the provisions at his tent rather than bringing it himself was "in the way of the Canadian" (B.49/a/25a:7). Even as late as 1820, Lieutenant Hood (1974:85-86) of the Franklin expedition noted that the Cree seldom went to the trouble of bringing their furs into Cumberland House but desired the master to send his "slaves" for them.

ii) Smallpox Epidemic, 1781--1782

One significant aspect of the trade contact over which the Cree had very little control was the transmission of diseases. Although Edward Ellis (1748:188) determined from his investigations at York Factory in 1746--1747 that the Inland Indians had few health problems and suffered no contagious diseases, by 1772 Cocking reported that sickness and death among his travelling companions had delayed his expedition (B.239/a/69:6). Overlooking the latter reference, both Smith (1979:811) and Ray (1974:105) indicate that Hudson's Bay Company records make no mention of epidemic diseases among the Western Woods Cree until 1781.

For the Basquiau Cree this fortunate viral isolation came to an abrupt end in December 1781. The Cumberland House journal makes first mention of smallpox in the area on 1 December 1781. From the west came "Disagreeable News of many Indians Dying" (Rich and Johnson 1952:224). Tomison's suspicions that the disease had advanced from the Missouri country are confirmed by Ray (1974:105-7) who maps the route of the smallpox epidemic into the Cumberland House region.

On 2 January 1782 four Basquiau Indians arrived who did not yet know of "the disorder that is rageing amongst the Natives" (Rich and Johnson 1952:229). Despite precautions taken by Tomison to isolate them while they were at the post, by the end of January the Basquiau Cree had also contracted the disease and were dying in great numbers (Rich and Johnson 1952:234).

Many Indians came to Cumberland House for relief but, although attempts were made, the Europeans could do little or nothing to help them.<sup>4</sup> Tomison found the burden of sick Indians to be so great that he was unable to send men out after furs, stating on 1 February 1782 "Indeed it is hard labour to keep the House in fuel and bury the dead" (Rich and Johnson 1952:234). Tomison did, however, manage to make a trip to Basquiau to collect 78 MB in furs from the dying and dead Indians there "...which is all that was amongst them, Except a few coats which they had for clothing" (Rich and Johnson 1952:236). The Basquiau leader Catabobinow is reported to have succumbed to the disease at this time along with many of his followers. By mid-February only two men, two women and three children at Basquiau had escaped the disease and they were in a starving condition (Rich and Johnson 1952:236).

Determined to make the best of a deteriorating commercial situation, Tomison sent two men back to Basquiau in order to bury the dead, but first to exchange their beaver coats mentioned earlier for duffle shrouds (Rich and Johnson 1952:239, cf.231). Not only did the traders take the furs from their deceased Indian debtors, but they also took advantage of Cree sacrifices--"19 made Beaver in Cats, which had been thrown away to the good Spirrit, that they might live..." (Rich and Johnson 1952:242).

Fortunately, for some of the other Cree in the region

their isolation in small hunting groups during the winter saved them from the incredible death toll. Tomison records in March of 1782 that groups of Indians arriving at Cumberland House from the north and the south had seen no other Indians all winter. Consequently they knew nothing of the epidemic (Rich and Johnson 1952:240, 242, 249). Epidemic disease it seems advances most quickly along the well travelled trade routes.

In his book Keepers of the Game: Indian--Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade, Calvin Martin (1978) attributes major importance to such catastrophic epidemics with regard to cultural change. He asserts that disease is a crucial factor in changing the Indians' important core beliefs, particularly their religious relationships with animals. In discussing the Indians of Eastern Canada, but utilising data from the Western Woods Cree (and even the Koyukon of Alaska), Martin argues that Indians began to overhunt animals, not as a result of economic motivations occasioned by the fur trade, but in response to epidemic diseases. These diseases are said to have had the effect of corroding the Indian's perception of their spiritual relations with animals. By overhunting, he argues, Indians were attempting to revenge themselves on animals who were thought to be the cause of these diseases.

Martin's thesis does not, however, hold true in the case of the Cree in the study area. Martin's critics such as C. Heidenreich (1980), I. Spry (1979), C. Jaenen

(1979), and A. J. Ray (1979) believe among other faults that he has failed to establish a valid causal relationship between epidemic disease and overexploitation of animals. Charles Bishop (1979:915) in concert with several other critics argues that very often diseases did not become a factor until well after Indians had depleted their territories of fur bearing animals through intimate involvement in the fur trade.

In the case of the Western Woods Cree, despite the heavy death toll in 1781--1782, there is little or no evidence to indicate that they "apostatized" from their beliefs in spiritual kinship with animals as Martin predicts.

As early as 1767 William Pink reports the depletion of beaver stocks in at least some rivers in Cree territory, saying

Some Yeares a Gow heare was a great  
maney Beaver in this River, But now  
Verry few being hunted so often  
(B.239/a/58:8; cf.B.239/a/58:14).

Of course this was well before the smallpox epidemic of 1781--1782 could have stimulated to Cree's desire to decimate the beaver populations in revenge.

From his observations among the Western Woods Cree in 1786 David Thompson (1916:83, 85, 97, 103, 114) records a strong and continuing animism which required respectful behaviour toward the carcass and the "Manito" of the species--i.e. "the Keepers of the Game". The relationship

was not in the least "despiritualized" as Martin posits it would be so soon after a bout of epidemic disease.

Despite Martin's dependence on one quotation from Thompson, it is clear from the rest of the narrative that the Indians did not alter their spiritual ideology. In fact they maintained a spiritual rationalisation for the disappearance of animals from the Cumberland House area after the 1781--1782 epidemic (Thompson 1916:323). Early in 1790s depletion of fur resources did become a major issue in the Cumberland House journals penned by Magnus Twatt (B.49/a/24:13; B.49/a/26:33), yet there is no indication that this depletion was the result of any change in Cree attitudes toward animals.

Even much later in the period under study, explorer John Franklin (1823:53, 170-1) reports in November 1819 that after another bout of epidemic disease the Cumberland House Cree were indeed demoralised, yet there is no mention of them blaming animals for their misfortune. In fact, they continued to hold their spiritual ideology and there was concern among the traders that:

...it is generally feared that their spirits have been so much depressed by the loss of their children and relatives, that the season will be far advanced before they can be roused to any exertion in searching for animals beyond what may be necessary for their own support.

This observation is confirmed by Hood (1974:49).

Such a response is hardly in keeping with Martin's

revenge hypothesis. On the contrary, Cumberland House journals make many references to the Cree in fact abandoning the trapping of animals during periods of mourning the deaths of relatives (e.g. B.49/a/15:60; B.49/a/32b:11; B.49/a/41:31; B.49/a/42:41). As late as 1827 James Leith specifically reports the continuance of the Cree belief in the spiritual power of the beaver (B.49/a/43:11). Martin's correlation of disease, apostasy and depletion through "war on animals" does not hold among the Western Woods Cree.

Despite Tomison's assertion in February of 1782 that the Basquiau Cree all died in the smallpox epidemic (Rich and Johnson 1952:238), some did survive to continue frequenting the post with furs and provisions as well as to participate in the carriage trade to York Factory (B.49/a/19:29). Nevertheless the term "Basquiau Indians" drops out of the trader's vocabulary to be replaced by the more vague terms "Indians from the east" or "Indians from below". It is different to determine whether this shift in terminology is a result of the actual disappearance of the Basquiau Cree co-residential group or whether it is a function of a marked decrease in detail concerning Indian activities which becomes apparent in the journals in the 1780s.

### iii) Competition and Disruption, 1782--1796

By the close of the smallpox epidemic of 1781--1782, Cumberland House had become a common refuge for Cree who



were too old, ill, or incapacitated to keep up with their fellows on their seasonal round (cf. B.49/a/13:10, 52; B.49/a/16:29, 31; B.49/a/22:1). Although the traders attempted to discourage it, this pattern had begun almost as soon as the post was established as Cocking's Cumberland House journal for 1776 shows (B.49/a/4:15, 35). The traders tendered medical aid and comfort such as was available (e.g. B.49/a/21:38; B.49/a/25a:35). For example, Malchom Ross reports on 28 June 1788 that:

...at night an Indian man died being left on the plantation by his Country people, being formerly serviceable to this House, by order of Mr W<sup>m</sup>. Tomison we have taken care of him ever since and carried him out and in as he desired, he has not been able either to stand or Walk (B.49/a/20:6).

The Cree also utilised Cumberland House as a rendezvous where they left their families while the men were away on some task such as beaver hunting or bark collecting (e.g. B.49/a/20:53), or when on their journey to York Factory.

Despite the benefits of having a post established in their own territory, the Cree discovered that this was no guarantee of a constant supply of goods. Some items, especially brandy, were not always available. Responding to such shortages, the Cree showed their independence by holding on to their furs and provisions until the desired brandy again flowed (e.g. B.49/a/20:15; B.49/a/21:47; B.49/a/24:15).

A major disruption in the flow of trade goods occurred in October of 1782 when the news filtered inland that the French under la Perouse had captured and destroyed both York Factory and Fort Prince of Wales (B.49/a/13:23-24). Even more strain than usual was then placed on Cumberland House stores since Indians such as the "Mifsinneppee" Cree, who usually frequented Churchill, now began to arrive at Cumberland House to trade (B.49/a/13:62). The failure of a ship to arrive in 1783 placed the traders in an increasingly awkward position. Without a supply of goods the attraction of Cumberland House for the Cree decreased substantially and the social relationship which was founded on the continuance of exchange was in jeopardy. As Tomison reports at the end of December 1783 no Indians had been to the post during the previous two months and none arrived until mid-January 1784 (B.49/a/19, 20).

Despite their obvious predicament, Tomison in noting that the Cree were bringing in provisions but not furs, complains in his journal entry of 3 February 1784 that the Indians were "indolent in hunting Furs this year to what they used to be" (B.49/a/14:21). It seems that Europeans expected Indians to adopt an alien work ethic (cf. Axtell 1981:48) even when the rewards for their efforts were not available.

The behaviour of the Cree under conditions of trade good scarcity indicates that in 1784 they were not yet "completely dependent" on European manufactures and were easily able to readapt their subsistence activities (if

they had ever abandoned them) to more traditional pursuits (cf. Sloan 1979; Parker 1972).

When a Swampy River Cree, Wesepunum, brought 300 pounds of meat and only 20 MB in furs Tomison states on 9 March 1784:

...which is the least I ever see him  
bring of the latter, but without Brandy  
they will Kill no Furs, except what  
serves them for necefsaries (B.49/a/14:  
24).

Without the key trade commodity of brandy, therefore, the traders were able to exchange but very little with the Cree (cf. B.49/a/14:63).

Tomison also reports the arrival of a group of Bungee (or Ojibwa?)<sup>5</sup> who had been to York Factory in the summer of 1783 only to find the post destroyed. They reported to Tomison about throwing away their furs "...not thinking to outlive the Winter for want of Ammunition" (B.49/a/14:25). Here again we have an obvious example of rhetorical trade hyperbole since these Bungees had clearly survived the winter. In fact they had survived well enough to be able to collect another "good quantity of Furs to Trade" at Cumberland House. Their hard luck story was obviously calculated to evoke the trader's sympathy and encourage him to "take pity" and be more generous. It therefore cannot be considered as a statement of "dependence" on the European trader as it might be interpreted by some scholars of the fur trade.

The HBC traders eked out the year with trade goods

obtained from the Canadians (B.49/a/14:32) as some of their Indian customers (although by no means all) must have done. This is only one of the many examples of mutual aid (provisions, information, transportation, etc.) and common courtesies exchanged between the European rivals since the establishment of Cumberland House (cf. Tyrrell 1934:120-1, 131: B.49/a/4:29; B.49/a/6:16, 36, 41). Such "common humanity" of the Cumberland House traders toward fellow "Englishmen" [when the Nor'westers were usually referred to as "Frenchmen", "Canadians", "Pedlers", "Robbers", "Villains", or "Wolves"] was not always looked on with favour by their superiors (B.49/a/17:10), especially as the trade became more intense in the 1780s. However, this mutual aid and comfort continued throughout the Competitive Trade Era. (e.g. B.49/a/22:17; B.49/a/24:2; B.49/a/25b:6).

Despite these occasional acts of kindness and solidarity, however, the Cumberland House journals in the 1780s and 1790s are witness to an intensification of the competitive conflict between the English and Canadian traders. This competition often impacted negatively on the Cree in the study area. Taking into account the obvious bias in the HBC sources, the Canadian traders are portrayed in rather negative terms in their dealings with the Cree. As might be expected, the HBC traders blamed the Canadians for everything from causing an increase in the price of country produce to forcing the Company to provide credit in order to keep their customers loyal (B.49/a/25a:14). The Nor'westers were also accused of lying, cheating,

misusing alcohol, and theft of Indian property through subterfuge and violence (B.49/a/14:8; B.49/a/16:3, 9; B.49/a/20:28).

At the same time however, the HBC traders themselves were not averse to employing similar tactics. Alcohol was often used to lubricate the unwilling trader (B.49/a/20:46). Malcolm Ross reveals other incidents where the Company used its own forms of coercion. In Many of 1790 and Indian debtor finding no alcohol left at Cumberland House, slipped away with his furs. Ross embarked at 3 a.m. in order to overtake him and bring his furs back to Cumberland House (B.49/a/21:52).

When compared to their English competitors, however, it was the Canadians' actions which almost exclusively precipitated Indian retaliation. In contrast to the record of the HBC traders, several Nor'westers were killed by the Indians (e.g. Rich and Johnson 1951:1xxix; Tyrrell 1934:235-6; B.49/a/4:45; B.49/a/7:52-53).

In reporting the deaths of three Canadian traders at the hands of the Indians in 1777, Matthew Cocking states:

The reason given for the Indians committing these cruel deeds are, that the Pedlers have traded their goods at an exorbitant rate, particularly las Winter; The Natives having received little or nothing for their furs and some of them have been beaten and otherwise maltreated when at the pedlers Settlement (B.49/a/4:51).

The Nor'westers seemed only to be continuing the practices

of their French predecessors noted in Chapter III. On their part, the Cree were demonstrating their power to retaliate with force against the Canadians' attempts at negative reciprocity.

Nevertheless, despite the Canadians hard dealings with the Indians, George Hudson notes in April 1787 that the Cree continued to frequent the Canadian establishments, as we have seen above in a relationship of negative reciprocity on both sides:

...they inform me the Canadians have a good many Packs of Furrs, but that they deal very hard with the Natives, which makes them in general dislike them but being an Indolent sort of People, they will rather trade with those nighest to them (for lefs) than go to a greater Distance (B.49/a/17:25-6).

It is interesting to note that the English traders continued to interpret Indian self-interest in opposition to Company interests as "indolence". As Rich (1960b) and Ray (1974) have demonstrated, the economic motivation of Indians does not always fit in to Western concepts of maximisation. The Cree were so successful in exploiting this competitive situation that in the 1790s both HBC and NWC traders believed that the Indians traded their poorest furs with them and took their best to the competition (cf. Bishop 1974:229; B.239/a/66:53; Robson 1965:62).

It is therefore clear from the journals in the 1780s and 1790s that it was primarily alcohol and lavish presents rather than "economic dependence" that kept the Cree attached

to the European trade system. Indians who brought in as little as six pounds of meat were given "a small present of ammunition, Tobacco and Brandy and other small Articles as encouragement to come again" (B.49/a/24:12). Even those who brought nothing to the post were given brandy (B.49/a/25a:19). As Magnus Twatt writes on 18 December 1792,

...for ther is nothing to be got here  
now without giving a good deale away  
and but little then for this place is  
sherounded with Settlements upon  
every Quarter and their is no furr  
to be killed nie to this place now it  
being so long hunted about heare  
(B.49/a/24:13).

Traders in the 1790s therefore were constantly trying to win Cree trappers from the competition by giving presents "better then uifual as much as my small Stock would allow (B.49/a/24:16; cf. B.49/a/25a:20).

The Canadian strategy in the competition was to employ men "who are continually running about with Liquor &c Where they think anything is to be got" and the HBC men were forced to follow suit, since "nothing is to be got here otherways" (B.49/a/26:32-33). As late as the 1790s the Hudson's Bay Company was still at a disadvantage in this type of competition for want of men capable of handling en déroutine<sup>6</sup> contacts with Indians. From an out-post of Cumberland House on 4 May 1793 Malchholm Ross complained that he had only one man who could be sent among the Indians to collect furs as the Canadian did,

and even he knew little of the language (B.49/a/24:26). Tomison repeated this complaint in 1796 (B.49/a/27a:21).

Although a gentleman's agreement was struck between the competing companies in the fall of 1797 not to set out en dérrouine without notifying the other. (B.49/a/28:21), the competition became increasingly intense. It became a continuous cat and mouse game as each trader attempted to outwit his counterpart by such ruses as setting out en dérrouine in the middle of the night. The means of extracting furs from the Cree also became increasingly rough (B.49/a/32b:9; B.49/9/32a:10, 5).

While dealing with all this, the Cree were also confronted with additional stresses. The Cumberland House journals for the period from 1784 to 1795 show an increasing influx in Bungee Indians into the study region. In HBC parlance, the term "Bungee" (meaning begging or a little) is said to refer to Ojibwa Indians (Dunning 1959: 3) and not to the Cree as Orr (1924:13) and Ray (1971:208) assert.

The first mention of Bungees arriving at Cumberland House occurs in January 1778 (B.49/a/6:32). However, the traders considered this family to belong to York Factory and refused to give them an advance of supplies for the winter, "...telling them to get Credit where they deposited their Furs" (B.49/a/6:32). Bungees are mentioned but rarely thereafter, and only in connection with York Factory (B.49/a/14:24, 25, 65) until 1784. This of course post-



dates the smallpox epidemic of 1781--1782 which devastated much of the Cree population in the Cumberland House and Basquiau areas. It also occurred at the time when York Factory had been destroyed by the French, and perhaps the Bungee were looking for a more secure source of trade. Looking back in his Cumberland District Report of 1815, Alexander Kennedy asserts that the Bungees had been specifically brought into the region by the Canadians in order to hunt beaver (B.49/e/1:6).

By 1787 George Hudson's journal indicates that the Cumberland House traders were no longer resisting the movement of the Bungee unto the area. In fact, they were supplying credit in order to encourage them to winter about the post (B.49/a/19:14-15). Many of the Bungee had attached themselves to the Canadian interests and appeared even more often in the Cumberland House journals after the Northwest Company moved its depot from Basquiau to oppose the HBC on site at Cumberland House in 1793 (cf. Innis 1956:234). In 1794 the Bungees were also reported to be hunting provisions for Cumberland House itself (B.49/a/25b:14). By 1796 the journals also show that the Bungees had established themselves in the Basquiau and Cedar Lake areas (B.49/a/27b:7; B.49/a/29:6; B.49/a/31:4).

Although many of the Bungees had attached themselves closely to the Canadian interests, they also attempted to make the best of the competitive setting. In his 1794

journal Magnus Twatt perceived the Bungee to be more honourable in paying their debts (B.49/a/25a:34), yet "troublesome" in their own right. They also proved to be very demanding:

...they are very Troublesome for liquor but will nto give anything for it...they will not Trade anything for their Furr's but Cloth & Guns. as for all other articles they look for to be Given them... (B.49/a/25a:21).

Twatt later calculated that he had traded from one group of Bungee in May 1794 220 MB exclusively for brandy (B.49/a/25a:35).

In terms of trade, Cumberland House became almost a backwater by the 1780s (cf. Coues 1965:375; Christensen 1974?:14). In April of 1785 George Hudson complained that many of the goods in the previous fall's shipment had been taken upriver, leaving Cumberland House short of necessary trade items (B.49/a/15:24). Magnus Twatt made the same observation in 1792 (B.49/a/24:15; cf. B.49/a/21:66). Cumberland House master Peter Fidler comments on 14 October 1797 that "There is not an Ice chisel, file, hatchet or Knife here to supply an Indian" (B.49/a/28:3). The next October a similar situation obtained (B.49/a/29:10). Such shortages of trade goods caused many of the Cree to frequent other areas or to do without as they had done earlier during the interruption of the flow of goods between 1782 and 1784. By the mid- to late 1790s

many of the Cumberland House Cree were reported to be frequenting the country around Nipowin and Carlton House (B.49/a/28:19; B.49/a/26:29). Some of the Cumberland House Bungee even wintered as far west as Edmonton House in 1796--1797 (B.49/a/27b:7).

By 1800 much of the contact with the Cree appeared to be away from Cumberland House altogether as the Company sent traders en déroïne to collect furs and to be supported by the Indians while doing so (B.49/a/30:11, 12, 16). In addition, the Carrot River area developed into a busy location at this time as well after the Canadians established a post there in 1801 (B.49/a/31:12-13, 17, 19, 25, 27). The Moose Lake outpost established in 1806 and occupied intermittently thereafter also moved a good deal of the trade activity away from Cumberland House.

In fact, Tomison reports in May 1801 that there existed only ten families of Indians "belonging to" Cumberland House remaining in the area (B.49/a/31:22). Earlier he had reported that:

Cheag one of the best Indians belonging to this place died last summer he was the only real Cumberland House Indian that Survived the Small Pox in 1781 he has not his fellow behind for Killing Furs & provisions (B.49/a/30:2).

In June 1807 Bird reports news from upriver about the death of Old Brassy who "was the only old Indian belonging to this place--& much beloved by all the other Indians here--"

(B.49/a/32b:11). It is therefore clear that the original Cumberland House Cree population had been depleted or was shifting west to Nipowin and Carlton and east to Moose Lake during this time.

#### Intensified Competition, 1796--1821

Despite the apparent decline in the importance of the fur trade in the Cumberland House--Basquiau region in the late 1790s and early 1800s competition in the area had become increasingly frantic after the establishment of a "new Canadian Company" in 1796 (B.49/a/27a:1). This new competitor was to become the XY Company of Alexander Mackenzie in 1798 (Rich 1966:92).

The Basquiau area became a major battle ground. In the early 1800s the Cree became so infested with traders en déroutine that they were forced to take evasive action in order to escape the persistent traders (B.49/a/31:7). Tomison reports on 19 February 1802 that two of his men returned from Basquiau:

...but had nothing Except two skins  
they had from one, the old and new  
Associations are dragging the Indians  
where ever they go, so that they  
Cannot hunt, were they ever so  
Inclined as the Canadian rum is never  
out of their tents, I cannot think of  
throwing goods away for nothing as  
two fools in a place are enough to be  
laughed at by Indians (B.49/a/31;22).

Nevertheless, Tomison soon sent four men back to scour Basquiau for the few furs that remained.

Even though the HBC constantly had men en déroutine (e.g. B.49/a/35:40-41), they often failed to persuade the Cree "to hunt as they ought to do" since the Canadians were dispensing liquor in order to get them to hunt provisions for the NWC (B.49/a/31:24, 26). A severe drop in the hunt of the Cree in surrounding areas is noted as a result. The competitive situation became so disruptive that in May 1802 Tomison reports deteriorating relations among all Indian groups and trading companies as follows:

...no trade and the Country all over  
is in a ferment of Murder and robbery  
so that men were not in safety to  
stirr out (B.49/a/31:28).

The "running about" of the two companies after the furs of the Cree had become particularly desparate by 1820. One company would "interfere" with another's trappers and its competitor would then "retaliate" by trading with the Indians attached to its interests (e.g. B.49/a/35:52-53, 66).

Two additional elements in the trade relation also appeared at this time to further complicate the situation. First the "freemen", and later Mohawk trappers, were brought into the area by the Canadians. The term "Canadian Freeman" or "Free Frenchmen" begins to appear in the Cumberland House journals in December 1796 (B.49/a/27B:31; B.49/a/31:18). They frequented the HBC establishment at Cumberland House as well as re-engaging from time to time with the NWC (e.g. B.49/a/32b:4). In August 1801 Tomison

recorded the arrival of fifty or sixty Mohawk Indians who were brought in by the old Northwest Company (B.49/a/31:6). Although given credit by the HBC, the Mohawks were not entirely welcome. According to Tomison, these Iroquois

...have dispersed all over where ever  
a beaver was known to be which will  
finish the Destruction of the Country  
as they leave nothing wherever they  
come (B.49/a/31:31).

In 1815 Alexander Kennedy reports that out of the 10 families in the Cumberland House district, fully half were recent arrivals from the York Factory, North River (Churchill River) and "Rat Country" (B.49/e/1:4).

There is little documentary evidence concerning how the local Cree perceived these newcomers. However, the Cree remaining in the Basquiau area seem to have gotten along well with the freemen who established themselves there. Kennedy suggests in one aside that the Cree accepted these "interlopers":

They [the Cree] claim no exclusive  
right to any particular spot, Indians  
from any other quarter may come and  
settle amongst them [usurp?] their  
privileges and carry their hunts to  
whom they please without its being  
disrupted by them--(B.49/e/1:5).

By 1823 James Leith reported that the hunting grounds of the Cumberland House Indians were nearly all taken up by "interlopers from other districts" (Swan, Red Deer and Nelson Rivers)(B.49/e/2:1).

It is this increasing intensity in the level of competition both among the trading companies and among the fur producers themselves which eventually resulted in the weakening of Cree control over the trade relationship.

One important indicator of the Cree's weakening socio-political control over the trade relationship happened in June 1796. Peter Fidler's Cumberland House journal gives an account of the "Rough Justice" meted out by the Northwest Company to avenge the death of one of their men at Isle a la Cross. (B.49/a/27b:3-5). When two Swampy River Cree suspects arrived at Cumberland House to trade, the Nor'westers attempted to lay hold of them. One named Little Gut was shot in attempting to escape and the other, Charles' Brother (or Beardy) was captured.

Questioning the prisoner to no avail, the Nor'westers then attempted to frighten him into a confession by tying him up and throwing him down beside his compatriot's corpse. Failing in this gambit,

...they then made him confess everything with the rope about his Neck, which he did, and informed of every one who was accomplices with him--he said that he was the Sole cause of the Death of the Canadian, and seemed perfectly satisfied that he deserved this ignominious Death, ...

Without further ado, pausing only to allow Beardy to ask that the HBC care for his family, he was hung on the spot. To ensure that the Indians understood the message implicit in their actions, the Nor'westers dragged the bodies of the two executed men outside their stockade and

and left them there without burial. The next day it was left to HBC men to bury the two Indians.

Cumberland House master Peter Fidler seemed to support, even if he did not actively participate in, the actions of the Nor'westers. He reports that the Indians

...appeared very much terrified and shocked, never seeing a hearing of the like before[.] the above will be a means of deterring the future and prevent them from [illusing?] or [talling?] any this while to come--

Fidler then "Gave the Indians some Liquor to drown away melancholy". Such was the traders' solution to any and all difficulties.

The impugntiy with which the Canadians executed two Indians is a strong indication that the Cree were beginning to lose the power to enforce their own conditions on the relationship as they had been doing in the past decades. Such "Rough Justice" at the hands of the Canadians would not have been accepted a scarce decade earlier when swift retaliation by the relations of the slain men would have been the rule (e.g. B.49/a/7:52-53). Perhaps the families of these two Isle a la Cross Cree did in fact retaliate at some point and the revenge on the Canadians was not recorded, or failed to be connected with this particular incident. On the other hand, perhaps the Cree were indeed beginning to feel helpless in the face of European power and authority. Unfortunately, the Cumberland House journals do not answer this question.



Indeed, if not powerlessness, the Cree showed remarkable restraint in putting up with a continuing stream of affronts from the Canadians. The Nor'westers were constantly making off with Indian property whether it was canoes, fish, or furs (B.49/a/35a:5). For example, Tomison recounts in January 1802 the story of one Cree who had his canoe and entire winter's supplies stolen by a Canadian trader. After returning to Cumberland House to obtain a further debt, the Cree trapper encountered the same Nor'wester again. This time the latter was in distress himself, "having lost himself, and spoiled a part of his goods". Surprisingly, the Cree trapper took no revenge on the trader and, in fact, the two travelled together thereafter (B.49/a/31:20-21).

Further indications of declining Cree control of the situation occurred in September of 1802 when Tomison was also able to demonstrate his temporary independence from country produce. He told one hunter who wished to stay and hunt geese to leave the post because his services were too expensive (B.49/a/32a:9). Cumberland House by this time also had extensive gardens and barley fields, a busy fishery, and it also played the role of a pemmican distribution point. These factors allowed an increasing measure of independence from Cree country produce. In fact, the Cree themselves were increasingly faced with starvation as a result of big game depletion in the area.

Journal references to starving Indians became more and more common in the 1800s (e.g. B.49/a/30:10, 19;

B.49/a/32b:13, 14; cf. Coues 1957:476). From Cumberland House William Tomison writes to John McNab at York Factory on 10 February 1803 that

every Indian in this quarter are  
starving to death, four has already  
through mere want, no trade nor is  
there any prospect of any in the  
Spring should the Indians survive  
their present Misery (B.49/a/32a:42).

Food was regularly dispensed to the Indians during these hard times thus continuing the pattern of reciprocal exchange in that crucial commodity begun in 1774 (B.49/a/35:44; B.49/a/36:31).

Although precarious in the early 1800s (B.49/a/27a:9, 18; B.49/a/30:11; B.49/a/32a:6), when the threats of starvation and short rationning were common, Cumberland House itself was becoming more independent of the Cree's country produce. By 1819 the Franklin expedition reported the existence of a thriving farm at the post. Nevertheless, it was also reported that salted geese, fish, moose and buffalo were still regarded as crucial staples (Franklin 1823:56; Hood 1974:46).

Between 1803--1806 and 1807--1818 there are unfortunately wide gaps in the Cumberland House journals. Only glimpses of this period can be obtained from accounts by Nor'westers Daniel Harmon (1957)<sup>7</sup> and Alexander Henry the Younger (Coues 1965). There is also one HBC District Report extant for 1815 by Alexander Kennedy.

Harmon's (1957:53-54, 62, 64, 69) account indicates

that the Europeans were still significantly dependent upon Indians for the vital country produce. This is confirmed by Kennedy in 1815 (B.49/e/1:4). However, Harmon is unwilling to admit his dependence on Indian hunters. Rather he perceived it as "kind Providence" which supplies the food to deliver them from the previous dark days of hunger (Harmon 1957:53-54, 69). Harmon is among those traders who begin to enter the trade relationship with relatively strong religious beliefs typical of the evangelical movement in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

In the context of the continuing importance of presents in the trade, Kennedy asserts that in 1815 tobacco, alcohol and ammunition were all given away (B.49/e/1:6). The Cree continued to expect these presents as a central part of their trade relations with the Company.

Daniel Harmon makes the following interesting observation about the relationship at this time.

...as they have brought little with them to trade, I of course give them as little, for we are at too great distance from the Civilized World to make many Gratuities yet the Indians were of a different opinion, and made use of some unpleasant language. However we did not come to blows, but all are preparing to go to rest, and I am persuaded nearly as good friends as civilized People and Savages generally are for that friendship seldom goes farther than their fondness for our property and our eagerness to obtain their Furs--which is I am persuaded (with a few exceptions only) all the friendship that exists between the Traders and Savages of this Country (Harmon 1957:55).

The Indians it seems still maintained feelings of their superiority. Alexander Henry the Younger also makes the observation:

Let no white man be so vain as to believe that an Indian really esteems him or supposes him to be his equal. No--they dispise us in their hearts, and at their outward profession of respect and friendship proceed merely from the necessity under which they labour of having intercourse with us to procure their necessaries (Coues 1965:264)

That the Indians continued to be contemptuous of traders was also confirmed by Kennedy in 1815 (B.49/e/1:3). By the time Franklin (1823:66) was observing the situation in the Cumberland House region in 1819--1820, he also reported a negative evaluation of Europeans by the Indians. In 1804 Duncan Cameron expresses a similar assessment of the Nipigon area Cree's feelings of superiority, stating:

Notwithstanding these superstitious ideas, the Indians think themselves the wisest happiest and the most independent of men; the greatest compliment they can bestow on a white man is to compare him to an Indian, either in sense or in beauty. To disapprove their ideas, or argue with them on the absurdity of many of their tenets is only proving yourself a fool, for, if you had sense, you would allow them to be the first people on earth, both in wisdom and knowledge (Masson 1960:264).

Of course this is the same attitude of Indians maintaining feelings of superiority which Jaenen (1974; 1976) has

found in eastern Canada (cf. Masson 1960:325; Lurie 1959:39; Foster 1977:6).

In Henry's opinion the Indians were not yet dominated by the European traders in the early 1800s. He states:

No ties, former favors, or services rendered will induce them to give up their skins for one penny less than they can get elsewhere. Gratitude is a stranger to them. Grant them a favor to-day, and to-morrow they will suppose it their due (Coues 1965:452).

Taking the perspective of Broom et al. (1954:981) cited above in Chapter III, this approach indicates that the Cree continued to view themselves as the dominant partner in the relationship and they continued to manipulate the traders in order to maintain commercial and social dominance.

The younger Henry (Coues 1965:470) does, however, note that the smallpox epidemic of 1781--1782 greatly diminished the Basquiau Indian's "troublesome" control over the Saskatchewan trade route. He reports that the "Mashquegons" and a few "Saulteurs" (i.e. Ojibwa) at The Pas had attempted (but unsuccessfully) to prevent him from proceeding upriver to trade with their enemies. The Basquiau Indians had obviously lost the power that Chatique demonstrated to Henry's uncle in 1775.

One of the major changes which is immediately apparent upon the reopening of the Cumberland House journals in 1818 is the overwhelming importance of muskrats which had by far become the primary fur produced. Specific mention

of "musquash" or "rats" as a major trade commodity began only in 1802 (B.49/a/32a:12). By 1818 however, muskrats made up the vast majority of furs traded at Cumberland House (B.49/a/34:30; B.49/a/36:2). Beaver are scarcely mentioned as the following returns from the Moose Lake outpost between November 1820 and May 1821 reveal: 5,710 rats, 9 martin, 6 fox, and 4 otter (B.49/a/36:20, 36). This data reinforces the younger Henry's (Coues 1965:476) assertion that the Cumberland House area had in fact been denuded of beaver by the early 1800s.

When the extant Cumberland House journals again allow us to view more directly the changing Indian/trader relationship beginning in 1818, a good deal of Cree control over the system seems to have been eroded. In 1819 Doctor Richardson, another member of Franklin's expedition, asserted that the Cumberland House Cree were probably more dependent on the traders for their means of subsistence than any other group (Franklin 1823:51, 69).

The Canadians also continued to treat the Indians roughly with relative impunity. One Pelican Lake Cree, Chee ka pig, in June 1818, was "...laid hold of and put in irons & threatened to be murdered for having traded with Mr. Holmes last winter" (B.49/a/34:3). The Nor'westers carted him off to Grand Portage in chains, letting it be broadcast that they were going to hang him for deserting to the HBC interest. Chee ka pig was not executed, but he did not make it back into the Cumberland House region until September (B.49/a/34:3, 11). In March 1820 Holmes

cites another example of the Canadians' intimidation of a Cumberland House Indian named Buck's Head. The NWC had "...on a former occasion laid hold of him and treated him very ill for having traded with us" (B.49/a/35:69).

The Hudson's Bay Company traders were also beginning to exert more control over the situation, although in a more subtle fashion. The master of Cumberland House appeared to be much more effective in persuading the Cree to do his bidding. As early as 1798, Peter Fidler began directing Indians to trap beaver in specific locations (B.49/a/28:15). In the 1800s Cree trappers were in so many words ordered away from the post to trap in certain areas (B.49/a/35:53, 83; B.49/a/36:30-31), or were arbitrarily herded from place to place in order to avoid Canadian "interference" with the Cumberland House trappers (B.49/a/36:13-14). It is clear that there is a major change from the past when the Cree had demonstrated themselves disdainful of such direction attempted by Kelsey, Henday and Tomison (discussed in Chapter III).

On the other hand, it is also clear that the European control of the situation was not yet complete. The Cree were still required for such tasks as guiding, hunting, and seasonal labour (B.49/a/35:15, 19, 26, 28). The Cree still found it politically and economically possible to act against the interests of the Company through such maneuvers as destroying European improvements on portages (B.49/a/31:4) and by refusing the direction of the traders (B.48/a/36:30). They also continued to make militant

consumer demands for more acceptable goods and they refused to trade for substandard wares (B.49/a/30:13; B.49/a/32a; cf. Ray 1980).

As Franklin expedition member, Lieutenant Wood (1974:85-86) (cited above) had indicated, between 1796 and 1821, the local Cree still required the Europeans to fetch their furs and provisions from their tents (B.49/a/27a:18; B.49/a/36:29), even when meat supplies were relatively abundant in the area of Cumberland House. The Cree also still found it possible to manipulate the HBC traders and cause them to chase miles after very small amounts of fur (B.49/a/29:17). The Nor'westers were duped in similar fashion (B.49/a/35:73).

In June 1919 Holmes reports that the Cree were still able to force the distribution of liquor against the wishes of the traders "...which we will be obliged to comply with, although their returns are very trifling"(B.49/a/35:3).

In September 1820 Thomas Isbister notes that some Cumberland House Indians continued to feel confident enough of their control over the situation to resist the direction of middle-ranking Company servants such as himself. They had refused to follow his orders to depart and they forced him to distribute their fall debt before his superior arrived (B.49/a/36:11).

Perhaps the most important indications of the Cree's continuing independence from involvement in the fur trade are the many references to them ignoring trapping altogether. For example, upon the death of Brassy, one of



the oldest Cumberland House Indians in June 1807, Bird indicates that as custom dictated, the co-residential group would "do very little this winter". Even so, he asserts that this group of five hunters had trapped only a total of fifty MB prior to the death (B.49/a/32b:11).

In February 1807 Bird was also exasperated at the Pelican's lack of interest in trapping. Since the fall this group "had killed no furs--lazy rascals" (B.49/a/32b:12; cf. B.49/a/34:22). HBC men returned from the far side of Basquiau Hill in February 1819 with the information that the Cree there were "Doing little in the fur way" (B.49/a/34:22, 24). The traders' evaluation of the situation was that:

...they are too lazy to do anything,  
for if they were inclined to work,  
they might kill a good many Martins  
at this season, for they are certainly  
not scarce in the direction they have  
been (B.49/a/34:18; cf. B.49/e/2:3).

Complaints of game depletion to the contrary, it is clear that the Cree were not yet completely integrated or "locked" into the European trade system, nor were they "forced" to participate in order to make a living (cf. Rothney 1975:117; Hickerson 1973:24).

In the next two decades happenings well outside the Cree sphere of influence were to have important repercussions on their control over the trade relationship. In June of 1821 news reached Cumberland House that the two European trading companies had amalgamated to bring to a

close a competitive situation which, although beneficial to the Cree in many respects, had been disastrous for the profit margins of the HBC and NWC.

How the loss of their competitive lever affected Cree relations with the traders after 1821 is the subject of the next chapter.

### Summary Discussion

During the "Competitive Fur Trade Era" between 1774 and 1821 the Cree had been able to maintain a good deal of their control over the contact situation until after the turn of the century.

In strategic terms the overwhelming balance of power fell to the Cree as a consequence of their far superior numbers, coupled with the isolation of the European traders. The Canadian traders bore the brunt of most retaliatory violence by the Cree as a result of their own high handedness. Economic relations with the Cree were fundamentally also social relations. Any breach of this sociality removed the restraints on negative reciprocity and, the sectorally organised morality existing in Cree society allowed plunder and murder of those who were not socially integrated through trade ties.

Politically the Cree had exerted their influence over the establishment and location of Cumberland House as well as its various outposts. They had also manipulated the European "fragment" societies migrating into the area into competing for the fur and food resources which they pro-

vided with relative ease and without drastic cultural disruption.

In contrast to the common assertion that Indians soon became dependent on Europeans and their trade goods, it is clear from the Cumberland House records in the period under consideration that it was in fact the Europeans who depended on the Cree. The staples of Indian-controlled country produce were indispensable for basic day-to-day survival of the Europeans. It is evident, for example, from Hearne's journal of 1774--1775 that his men would never have survived without the hunting skills of two Home guard Cree, Nee-shue-wap-pay-athin and Pattecow-cow and the provisioning efforts of the Basquiau Cree (Tyrrell 1934:126-7, 137, 147). The Cree recognised, and pressed to the full, their advantage in this realm in order to command high prices and to demand payment in luxury goods such as tobacco and alcohol. These articles were not "necessaries". yet much of their surplus produce was expended on these commodities.

The Cree also took maximum advantage of their monopoly control over the key transportation system. The labour, knowledge and technology necessary for tripping were almost entirely under Indian control until the early nineteenth century.

The trade setting itself also continued to be founded on Indian principles. For example, the competitive struggle for Cree loyalty took place mainly in the realm of gifts. The trade was also characterised by Indian

consumerism.

As Lieberman (1961:905) has indicated, conditions of indigenous superordination result in relatively peaceful relations. Only when the Canadian traders attempted to assert their own dominance without the power to back it up did the Cree respond with violence. Relations with the HBC remained relatively symbiotic as mutual interests were served by a more stable exchange of furs and food in both directions.

Cree dominance in the relation began to erode however, beginning with the smallpox epidemic of 1781--1782. For example, the Basquiau Cree population was nearly totally decimated by the disease. One indication of how this helped to erode Cree power and authority in the area can be found in the younger Henry's passage through the area in 1808 despite the wishes of the Cree. This is in stark contrast to his uncle's experience in 1775.

The influx of Bungees, Iroquois and freemen into the Cumberland House area in subsequent years provided the competing companies with alternative sources of labour, provisions, protection, social ties, and fur. The intensified pressure on the environment around Cumberland House, depletion of game animals and starvation resulted in the Cree resorting to the traders' larder during periods of scarcity. From an Indian perspective, this was not viewed as being "forced to give up their independence" in favour of "increased reliance" on the Europeans as

many such as Hickerson (1973:29; 39) assert, but rather as a natural part of the sociality inherent in their concept of the trade relationship. Combined with the increasingly intense and disruptive competition among the Europeans, this allowed the traders to assume enough effective power to steal Indian property, deal harshly with those who traded with the competition, and even to employ capital punishment. Unfortunately significant gaps in the Cumberland House record during this time of adjustment in the first two decades of the nineteenth century make it difficult to determine the processes that were occurring.

Despite this problem, however, it is clear that European control was not complete. The Cree were in many cases still vital to European survival in strategic and logistic terms. In concert with Jaenen's (1974; 1976) findings in eastern Canada, the Cree continued to maintain convictions of their own superiority over the Europeans, and they resisted trader direction, withdrawing from the trade when it suited them. In addition, the vast majority of acculturation was occurring among the Europeans as traders were living among Indians and marrying Cree women à la façon du pays.

Cree relations with the HBC traders remained relatively stable since goals of the partners remained complementary. Therefore, a symbiotic relationship was characteristic during this period.

In short, it is clear that power, control and dependence were not one-sided during the "Competitive Trade Era"

as many scholars have previously maintained. The following chapter deals with Cree/trader relations during monopoly conditions after 1821.

## CHAPTER V

### RELATIONS UNDER MONOPOLY, 1821--1840

In the twenty year period between the establishment of the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 and the termination of this study in 1840 when the contact situation became more complex with the addition of missionary-directed change, the Cree experienced surprisingly little change in the actual Indian/trader social relationship. Therefore, this period will be treated in this study as a synchronic whole.

To a large degree, the relationship was still one of symbiosis and, contrary to much of the past interpretation the Cree in the study area were able to maintain conditions favourable to relative independence in their relationship with traders and the fur trade system.

One area of Cree control which had continued from their first contacts with Europeans was their provision of country produce. During these two decades the Cumberland House journals are much less concerned with references to Indians supplying meat than was the case previously. Indeed, in some cases Indians were ordered to stop hunting for provisions altogether (B.49/a/42:15). Nevertheless, references to Cree bringing meat to the post continued to be frequent right up to 1840 (e.g. B.49/a/40:15, 40; B.49/a/51:21).

One important reason for this lessened dependence on the Indian hunt was that by 1821 the gardens at Cumberland House had evolved into a full scale farming operation (McLean 1968:134; Franklin 1823:56; B.49/a/38:21, 67, 70). By 1824 even the outpost of Moose Lake had need of a plough and seeds (B.49/a/39:42; B.49/a/50:32). The relatively bucolic picture which emerges from the journals was at times however disrupted by crop failures (e.g. in 1832 and 1839). In addition, there were breakdowns in the traders' own system of providing pemmican to the post. Such disruptions in its food supply forced the Company to fall back on the country produce provided by the Cree (e.g. B.49/a/47:4, 12; B.49/a/49:9, 10). For example, in February 1827 James Leith reported that an earlier shortfall in the amount of pemmican sent from Carlton House the previous autumn had resulted in the need for more country produce to be purchased from the local Cree (B.49/a/42:35).

Another factor in the Company's lessened dependence on the Cree was the emergence of "country-born" or "mixed-descent" bands such as that headed by Mansack and Willock Twatt.<sup>1</sup> Having established themselves west of Cumberland House at Nipowin, this group in particular contributed significant amounts to the larder and fur returns of the post and they were highly regarded by the traders as a result (B.49/a/41:6).

Even though their market for country produce had



weakened considerably, the Cree continued to demonstrate their independence from this economic activity. In the Cumberland House Report of 1827, Leith makes it clear that, even when the demand increased, the Cree were not compelled by their economic circumstances to expand their efforts to supply the Company with provisions. Leith states in his report of 1826:

Both during the Winter and Spring I used every endeavour for to procure dried provifnsions, but as the Account will show, I am sorry to say with but little succefs, whch I cannot attribute to the want of Large animals, nor indeed does the natives do so themselves, but solely to their dislike to hard labour, they confefs so...(B.49/a/42:50).

Had the Cree actually been "completely dependent" on the Europeans, such an opportunity could not have been passed up, especially when big game animals were abundant. Clearly therefore, the Cree were not "dependent" on the Company in relation to its demand for provisions in order to obtain "necessary" trade goods.

In the late 1820s it is therefore obvious that the Cree were still following the traditional "Zen road to affluence" discussed in Chapter III. The description of the Cree by Alexander Kennedy, penned in 1815, obviously still applied.

With regard to the General condition of these Indians. They are happy and contented. void of ambition their wants are few, & in a Country like this easily supplied, They take no thought or feel no care for the future,

depending entirely on the chase for provisions, they live together in little parties, pitching or wandering about in the winter from one place to another in search of food seldom or never more than a fortnight in one place (E.49/e/1:5).

Of course, the above is a classic statement of the typical European perception of the "improvidence" seen to characterise band societies (cf. McLean 1968:195-6, 261). Evidently the Cree had still not accepted the European ideology valuing work for its own sake. They certainly were able to subsist as they had done in the past and to do so without the amenities available to them "if only they would have worked harder" (e.g. B.49/a/43:37).

As they had done at the beginning of the relationship however, the Cree still expected that the flow of food be a reciprocal one (i.e. Sahlin's "balanced reciprocity"). Food and the means to procure it (nets, ammunition, etc.) were consistently provided by the HBC to Indians requesting them (e.g. B.49/a/37:22; B.49/a/51:23). By 1826 HBC supplies of potatoes and fish were also commonly being given to the Cree in order to allow them to remain trapping longer than they would have otherwise (e.g. B.49/a/42:24, 25, 27; B.49/a/51:27, 29).

Only in the late 1820s, however, do references to Indians actually working for food and purchasing barley appear, in contrast to the normal pattern of receiving fish and potatoes free of charge (B.49/a/43:5, 41). The Indians were also allowed to glean potatoes and barley

(B.49/a/42:16; B.49/a/43:11), a practice which, along with experience of labour in the post gardens (e.g. B.49/a/43:14, 15; B.49/a/49:2), by 1827 had convinced some Cree, those at Nipowin and The Pas at least, to consider establishing their own gardens (B.49/a/43:28, 45). In 1829 a report is heard of one Catabagetine "making fields" at the Red Deers River (B.49/a/44:43) and in 1839 Papa ma gappo and Nuchy's Son were given "...a supply of Potatoes and Barley for seed has they have commenced farming a little above the Pas'" (B.49/a/50:34).

Cumberland House had always been utilised by the Cree as a resort against hunger. During the twenty year period under consideration however, Indian "starvation" became a more common reference in the journals. Despite these many references, Morantz' (1980b:80) caution about accepting the phraseology "starvation" at face value is well taken. Claims of starvation were sometimes used as bargaining tactics or as rationalisations for quitting the trapline for more amenable pursuits not approved of by the traders. For example in May of 1833 Thomas Isbister suspects that it was the desire to "feast on Wild Fowl"--not hunger as was claimed--that brought the Cree in from muskrat trapping to Cumberland House which is situated on a major migratory bird flyway (B.49/a/47:18).

The traders usually perceived Cree requests as "Begging for food" (B.49/a/43:42)3) and they often attempted to utilise food as a lever in order to control Indian move-

ments. However, it is clear that these requests for food were more than mere mendicant claims on trader largesse. On 25 November 1828 Isbister reports that the Indians sent up "a great call out as is customary for something to eat" (B.49/a/44:22a). Indeed, Cree demands for food often were referred to as "importunate" (B.49/a/53:1). In fact, the traders were being called upon to fulfil their social obligation to share food which, from the Cree standpoint, was automatically occasioned by the trade relationship itself. For example, the ritualistic pre-trade meal of prunes and bread provided in earlier times at York Factory (Graham 1969:319-20) had by the mid-1820s evolved at Cumberland House into a customary breakfast provided to the trappers before departing the post (B.49/a/42:22; B.49/a/43:38).

The Company made much of its providing sustenance to the Cree. Journal entries report food gifts "which tho' a very heavy tax upon our Store. they have always received" (B.49/a/49:12). Their largesse with food was also raised in their defence at the Parliamentary Inquiry into the affairs of the HBC in 1837 (E.18/3:54). Nevertheless, it is clear that the reciprocal exchange of food continued to be a central concomitant of the social relationship inherent in the trade system from the Cree standpoint. The demanding character of Cree requests for food reflects their perception of the social nature of trade ties rather than any "dependence".

Reports of hunger, therefore, were not necessarily always the result of game depletion. For instance, weather also played a significant role in the ability of the Cree to hunt moose (eg. B.49/a/37:25; B.49/a/41:38). In fact, reports of some Cree being relatively poor big game hunters were not uncommon (e.g. B.49/a/42:39; B.49/a/a3:11).

A key comment by postmaster James Lee Lewes in January 1824 identifies a fundamental variable in determining the participation of the Cree in the fur trade system. He states that "starvation" was "a general complaint amongst the greatest part of our Indians, and which greatly retards their exertions in the way of procuring Furs" (B.49/a/39:36). Indeed some of the most significant data on Cree life to emerge from the Cumberland House journals during this period concern the continuing conflict between trapping activities and hunting for subsistence. In most cases, it was only by making a trade-off on security of food supply that the Cree could continue to trap (e.g. B.49/a/40:48; B.49/a/41:7). As noted above, it was often only through calling on the traders obligation to share food that they would continue trapping. This became particularly true after the beaver (which were important food, as well as fur, resources) became depleted and muskrat production became the norm in the 1800s.

Nearly every decision made by the Cree in the realm of producing fur as a commodity was based on the fundamental question of the availability of sufficient food resources.

However, the latter always remained the primary consideration for the Cree. Very often it seemed as if trapping and subsistence activities were mutually exclusive. When hunting, the Cree collected few furs (B.49/a/43:37), and when they had many furs, hunger was often a concomitant (B.49/a/47:9). Shortages of provisions "greatly retards their exertions in the way of procuring furs" (B.49/a/39:36), and the traders often reported that the Cree gave hunger as what the company considered only an "excuse" for "doing little in the fur way" (B.49/a/43:44). The basic dilemma facing the Cree was often expressed by the traders in the journals in such words as the following comment on 19 November 1822:

most of the Indians are now leaving the Rat ground & pitching towards the strong woods as they say they cannot kill a sufficienccy of Rats to feed themselves (B.49/a/38:29; cf. B.49/a/40:2; B.49/a/41:20).

Often while "ratting" the Cree found that "their Children are always calling out for food" (B.49/a/43:21).

In response to this dilemma, subsistence activities such as moose and goose hunting and maple sugaring consistently took precedence over trapping (e.g. B.49/a/40:43; B.49/a/43:17; B.49/a/44:40). It is therefore clear that the Cree still considered hunting to be their primary occupation. Although the traders constantly attempted to direct the Indians away from subsistence hunting back to trapping, they rarely had success (e.g. B.49/a/42:15).

Isbister states in May 1826 "...there is no Pofsibility in making them Hunt furs, While the Game is Plenty" (B.49/a/41:44; cf. B.49/a/43:17; B.49/a/44:28).

In November 1827 Isbister reports the failure of his attempts to persuade Cree camping at the Basquiau Hill to trap muskrats.

Notwithstanding we have prefesd hard on them to consent to come and work at the rats in the Spring. but they will not agree to leaving the place where they are as it abounds with Large Animals. they Say (altho we beg to differ with them) that they will make equally good hunts in Martens, Swans, and a few rats. Where they are and not run the risk of their families Starving (B.49/a/42:38).

In the same vein, James Leith in March of 1825 makes a clear statement of the Cree's motivation.

In short the furs Amounts to Almost Nothing to what I expected from So many Indians, and they say plainly that they went where there were no furs, for to hunt Large Animals, Both on Account of finding alivelyhood, as well as on account of Clothing. (B.49/a/40:33).

If in the 1820s these Cree were in fact "dependent" on trapping for a living; if they had been "completely integrated" into the mercantilist system; how could they afford to "leave off ratting"? It is clear that their participation in the trade system continued to be voluntary and seasonal, while subsistence hunting remained their primary adaptation. On one hand, when "game was plenty", the Cree thought little

of trapping. Yet, in the opposite circumstance, they were prevented from trapping unless they called on the limited food supplies of Cumberland House. Therefore, relations, even as late as 1840, cannot be designated the "Fur Trade Dependency Era" in Bishop and Ray's (1976) scheme. The Cree simply did not engage in trapping as their primary subsistence pattern during this period.

Since the Cree were not "totally dependent" on trapping for making their livelihood, they were still able to maintain a relatively large measure of control over their own lives and to avoid trader "dominance".

During this period the Hudson's Bay Company traders did attempt to play an increasingly large role in directing the lives of the Cree. Although Indians in other areas of the Northwest were still exerting their strategic power over the HBC (e.g. B.49/a/39:44), an attempt by the Cree to use violence to force the Cumberland House traders to accede to their wishes was literally beaten back in June of 1823. The Cree had to be content with venting their frustration at this setback on a Company cow (B.49/a/39:2).

By 1828 the Company was also now able to resist Indian consumer demands by holding on to goods originally rejected and trading them when no others were available (B.49/a/47:10, 38, 49). When Opemaught and Escatty arrived from The Pas in November of 1827, Leith comments:

We find no Difficulty now in getting the Stroud and Blankets Sold to the Same Indians that refused it in the Autumn for its inferior quality. (It



is Nothing but the Scarcity of Goods,  
that Enables us to get Some of it off  
hand -- (B.49/a/43:22).

A similar situation obtained in the field of gifts. The  
Cumberland House Report for 1827--1828 states:

The Indians are now brought to the  
footing of neither asking or expect-  
ing any gratuities (excepting liquor)  
therefore, they complain bitterly of  
being to sparingly supplied with  
absolute necefsarys for their own  
famillys use...(B.49/a/43:49).

"Loitering on the plantation" was no longer tolerated  
by the traders and the Cree were often sent away from the  
post precipitously (B.49/a/39:69; B.49/a/42:22). It also  
became more common for the Cree to be directed to a speci-  
fic location in order to trap more muskrats before the  
trader would consent to give them their winter supplies  
(e.g. B.49/a/38:16; B.49/a/41:11). James Leith also records  
his sending men out to a Cree rendezvous in March 1825 in  
order to get them to split up "...as when So many  
of them together They never do think of Endeavouring for to  
kill a skin" B.49/a/40:36). Congregation for goose feasting  
and dancing were also actively discouraged (B.49/a/42:17;  
B.49/a/43:43). Some Cree trappers were even sent out of  
Cumberland House District altogether (to as far away as  
Norway House). However, the two men in question, Maske  
Ethinuies and The Eagle, later returned and refused to  
be sent away again (B.49/a/41:9).

In most cases, however, the Company attempted to dis-

courage movement from one place to another. To the European mind, being a migratory "wandering about" or so-called "Run about Indian" was a central characteristic of their lack of "civilization" (cf. Axtell 1981:48-49). Such migrants were refused credits and told in no uncertain terms to go back from where they had come<sup>2</sup> (B.49/a/41:15; B.49/a/43:12a, 14; B.49/a/51:2). The typical trader response to Cree migration was as follows: "They was told Never to Show themselves at this place again. that they would get Nothing" (B.49/a/41:24), or "he was Sharply Refused and ordered to go to Norway House where he belonged to" (B949/a/43:18). Only those with "tickets" (or documents describing their debt status) from the traders in their home district were supplied with goods (B.49/a/42:7; B.49/a/43:15).<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note, however, that those migrant Cree who were not given credits were still able to subsist without participating in the fur trade. For example, in September 1827 the two Cree families of Coweutum and Opemaught arrived at Cumberland House looking for credits after leaving the Split Lake country because of the depleted condition of the resources there. Although Leith attempted to send them back, as he said because of a lack of trading goods for his own trappers,

...they replied that they would not return for this Season at all events. that they would be able to Pafs the winter in fish-ing at the Paw (B.49/a/43:14).

Others were also quite able to get along during the winter

without being supplied an outfit in the fall (e.g. B.49/a/42:48). The ability to withdraw from the trading system in this manner again belies the interpretation that the Cree were "totally dependent" on the trade, even at this late date (cf. Parker 1972; Sloan 1979).

Despite the hard line ostensibly taken in the journals, the traders often relaxed their stringent positions and supplied credit to migrant Indians, especially since they were demonstrating their ability to do without (e.g. B.49/a/43:18, 30; B.49/a/48:21).

Another important part of the Company's attempt to direct Cree participation in the fur trade under monopoly conditions was the policy of beaver conservation. Arthur J. Ray (1975b) examines these conservation schemes of the HBC and indicates that the Indians generally resisted the new rules. The Cumberland House journals reveal that as late as 1832 the Cree continued to trap beaver despite the Company's attempts to deter them (e.g. B.49/a/47:3). This reaction to Company attempts at controlling the supply of fur went back as far as 1716 (Davies and Johnson 1965: 62).

Despite pointedly receiving summer beaver skins with "abuse" and minimal prices (B.49/a/43:7), the traders were largely unsuccessful in their efforts to promote their policy of conservation. This was so because the beaver continued to serve two important functions in Cree society beside being a profitable commodity. One was dietary and the other was religious. In a September 1826 journal entry

Thomas Isbister explains that:

...after giving them a Dram and Tabacco to Smoke Began and told them the impropriety of Hunting and Beavor at Present and that here after every Beavor killed in the Summer should only be a half Skin to them. told them that they Should now Hunt other furs Such as rats Martains &c and allow the Beaver to increase. Otherwise they would be rendering their children Pitiefull by Killing all the Beaver They replied very cooly that Beaver meat was too good to let Pafs when there was any chance of killing it. and by Sacrificing Such at particular times is the preservation of the Lives of Indians -- (B.49/a/42:14).

Similar explanations were provided to the traders by various Cree at other times (e.g. B.49/a/43:11).

Despite Ray's (1975b:58) assertion that there exists little or no evidence pointing to the practice of conservation efforts among Indians themselves (cf. Martin 1978:19), the Cree did make some attempt on their own to conserve muskrat populations for example. In June 1824 Petisk ke Ethinue, a Cree living in The Pas region, came to Cumberland House on his way to Basquiau Hill. The muskrat population was at a low ebb at the time and he informed Inkster

...that their is a few Rats Still, But they are resolved not to molest them during the Summer, in hopes of their being allowed to Bring up their young, Will enable them to make better Hunting Next Autumn, (B.49/a/40:3).

Such deliberate action to promote an increase in the muskrat population may have been a relatively new approach for the Cree since the traditional strategy of mobility triggered

by "the principle of least effort" had now been eroded by the influx of Bungee, freemen and Iroquois as well as HBC efforts to restrict trappers to their own districts.

Despite the Company's efforts to exert its monopoly control to the fullest, the Cumberland House Cree still resisted HBC domination and continued to wield their own power in certain key areas.

In November 1822 Donald Ross makes the following statement:

...a party of Swampys 7 in number arrived from the lower end of Basquia Hill, they inform us that they left about 8000 Musquash, gave them a little ammunition & told them that they must bring their Furs to the Fort themselves, as there would be no more men employed in hauling them to the Forts; (B.49/a/38:29).

A similar reception was provided by James Leith in November 1827 (B.49/a/43:23).

Despite these efforts to avoid earlier competitive practices, however, as Hood (1974:85-88) had indicated at the opening of this final period, the Company traders were still obliged to go out to the Indians' tents and collect the furs and provisions produced by the Cree. Even under monopoly conditions, and despite the statements of traders such as Ross above, [which he later reversed (B.49/a/38:42, 52. 55)], the pattern of Company men "fetching" Furs and provisions from the tents of the Cree continued from the early days of the new monopoly through to 1840 (e.g. B.49/a/37:21; B.49/a/39:25; B.49/a/51:26, 28).

The Company was also unable to abandon the practice of trading with the Cree en déroine. As soon after the establishment of monopoly control as February 1826, Thomas Isbister was sent out "again" to visit trappers' camps with goods and rum in order to "Scour the Whole of the Mountain du Pas," (B.49/a/41:27, 30). By 1827 Isbister was complaining about not having enough men to send out en déroine (B.49/a/42:29). This practice also continued into the 1840s (e.g. B.49/a/51:35).

In particular, according to Roderick McKenzie who was a newly appointed factor in the English River District, the "Indians" (including the Twatt band of mixed-descent) in the Nipowin area were customarily served by shipping trade goods out to their camps (B.49/b/3:2; cf. B.49/a/50:5-6). In 1837 John Lee Lewes attempted to stop this practice, however it seems to have continued at least until 1838 (B.49/a/49:8; B.49/a/50:5-6).

In part, the continuing necessity of dealing en déroine was a result of competition between the Company's own posts, a situation which the Cree exploited (B.49/a/39:25, 26; B.49/a/40:36). This internal competition allowed the Cree to continue using the threat of trading elsewhere in order to achieve their desires from the traders. For example in 1823 Cumberland House trader Heron found himself competing for Cree furs with the HBC post at Red Deers River and was forced to send a man en déroine (B.49/a/39:24). Thus the Cree were able to continue to play one trader against the other, at least to a limited extent, in the early

years of monopoly.

A continuing problem of a shortage of trade goods at the Moose Lake outpost in 1837 resulted in some Cree leaving the area for Swan River, Norway House and Red River where goods were thought to be more consistently available. Similar occurrences were reported by Leith in 1835 (B.49/a/a9:15; B.49/b/3:2). Differences of opinions between trapper and trader also resulted in the Cree picking up and moving to other posts (B.49/a/49:14-15, 36).

Concerning those Cree who stayed in the Moose Lake area, in 1838 it is reported by Lewes that:

I may safely state we have lost at least fifty Packs. the Indians knowing we were entirely out of Goods would not exert themselves as they otherwise would have done. for about a month in the very best hunting Season hardly killed a rat (B.49/a/49:37).

This is hardly the behaviour of dependent Indians under the total control of a monopoly.

Considering the above, besides internal competition and shortages of goods, another factor in the need for the HBC to continue to deal en déroïne was the Cree's own lack of "interest" in trapping which can only lead toward the interpretation of their independence from the fur trade system for survival.

Contrary to the Company field officers' perceptions (B.49/a/43:48) and the assertions made before the Parliamentary Inquiry of 1837 that the Indians were "dependent

on our fire arms, ammunition, Fishing Tackle, wollens and Iron works as necefsaries of life" (E.18/3:54), good fur returns were produced without supplies of ammunition or iron rat spears etc. as the Cree continued the use of the bow and arrow for subsistence hunting as well as fur production as late as 1828 (B.49/a/42:41; B.49/a/43:49).

Beyond their traditional hunting and trapping ability, Cree knowledge and skills also continued to be crucial to the success of the European trade enterprise. For example, Indian guides continued to be necessary for almost all but travel along the Saskatchewan River. For instance, the HBC strategy for collecting furs from the Indians in their camps depended entirely on the willingness of a knowledgeable Cree guide. The refusal of the Cree to serve in this capacity resulted in the failure of this Company strategy. As Isbister found in 1826, "they would not undertake it at any Price" and he had to return to Cumberland House, his mission a failure (B.49/a/41:37; cf.B.49/a/47:11).

Although freeman such as the Constants from The Pas were taking over some of the temporary seasonal wage work available, the Cree Indians also continued to play an important role in the HBC transportation system. Bark collecting for canoes was still a necessary task carried out by the Cree, and they sometimes refused to bring it all the way to Cumberland House (B.49/a/45:2). Canoes were still purchased from, and repaired by, Indians (B.49/a/41:6; B.49/a/44:6). Paddling express canoes and



the delivery of the regular "packets" as well as special dispatches also remained in Indian hands up to the end of this period and beyond (B.49/a/40:3, 30-31; B.49/a/42:35; B.49/a/51:19). As canoemen they continued to have a mind of their own as they had earlier demonstrated to Cocking and Tomison (Chapter III). When Cree guides decided they had gone far enough they continued to leave their European travellers stranded (B.49/a/45:7).

In fact, the Company's policy of reducing their own work force after 1821 (e.g. B.49/a/38:72) resulted in more Indians being hired, although (as always) on a seasonal basis. The summer compliment of servants at Cumberland House was often as low as two, three or four (B.49/a/39:4; B.49/a/42:1). Therefore, the HBC was forced to rely on local Cree for "great assistance" with such necessary tasks as lumbering, gardening, fishing, haying, and caring for the post's livestock (B.49/a/39:4; B.49/a/40:2, 5; B.49/a/43:4, 15; B.49/a/48:7; B.49/a/51:2, 6).

The Cree were also able to continue to force the HBC to deal in luxury goods such as alcohol against Company policy right up to 1840. The plan to reduce the trade in alcohol to the Indians evoked the following evaluation from Mansack Twatt, "the principal of our upper Indians", who led the Nipowin Band of mixed descent freemen:

I informed him of the stoppage of Rum  
for the Indians having been determined  
on consequently none was to be brought

here for the Current Outfit the information was any thing but pleasing to him, and he hesitated not in saying that the effects of this new law would be perceivable in the amount of our Return's by next June, meaning that the Indians would not exert themselves to procure Fur's.--that it will tend to bring forth all the sulkinefs of the Indian character and make them discontented there cannot be the least doubt, at least for the first Year or so, nothing lefs can be expected from Indians long accustomed has the Cumberland House one's have been to the use of spiritous Liquors, and who's fondnefs for the mad intoxicating beverage is notorious throughout the Country. finding themselves thus all at one debarred its further use and which by them is considered the only stimulus to exertion it may be supposed they will for a time become carelefs of all other matters and neglect their Fur hunts. Time however there is no doubt. will work its own cure and ultimately wean them from all thoughts of the [pernicious?] Article when they must again fall into their old habits of Industry and exert themselves to procure the needfull necefsaries they annually require for themselves and families. (B.49/a/51:1).

Although this statement might be viewed as mere trade rhetoric, Twatt's analysis must be considered since as a "freeman", he was exempted from the prohibition for Indians as other privileges given to the freeman were withheld from Indians (B.49/a/40:20-21).<sup>4</sup>

At any rate the Cree had demonstrated much earlier that their interest in the fur trade was stimulated to a large degree by trade in luxury items such as tabacco and alcohol as much, if not more, than by the trade in so-called "necessaries". As documented above, the Cree appeared to be able to get along quite well enough without

such "necessaries".

As manifested in earlier periods, a significant European perception was that the Cree were "Leasy Indolent fellows" (e.g. B.39/a/40:16, 27; B.49/a/42:50; B.49/a/47:2). As explained above, such a view was based on the European value on work for its own sake. This perception was reinforced by the Cree's obvious "lack of interest" in trapping. They cannot in fact be described as being completely integrated into the mercantilist system at this time. From the traders' standpoint this independence--i.e. the lack of the need to work at trapping--was judged as "laziness". From the Cree standpoint however, it is clear that right up to 1840 they were in many cases able to assert their independence from the fur trade.

The Cree still found it possible to resist attempts of the HBC traders to direct their activities (e.g. B.49/a/41:9; B.49/a/42:14). When their interests lay elsewhere than on the trap line, the traders were unable to prevent the Cree from proceeding as they themselves wished. As noted above, subsistence hunting for moose and geese, as well as activities such as maple sugaring and dancing continued to take precedence over the traders' desires for them to trap more and more (B.49/a/42:23; B.49/a/43:46). Continued participation in war parties (for example in 1825) resulted in "a certain kind of indifference of doing well that has seized the Natives offers but a gloomy appearance for a Speedy increase" (B.49/e/5:1; cf. B.49/a/40:43, 45, 47). This "certain kind of indifference of doing well" is con-

sistently manifested in the Cumberland House journals throughout the period from 1821 to 1840. References to the Cree "doing nothing in the fur way" are common (e.g. B.49/a/38:42, 63; B.49/a/42:36, 41; B.49/a/50:31). For example some Cree trapped nothing at all during the entire winter of 1825 (B.49/a/40:4). Even when a good stock of provisions was available--a prerequisite for being able to trap--the Cree often saw this as an unnecessary activity. As the two Cree trappers, Puticat and Kemathweoustquem, stated when they appeared at Cumberland House in March 1826 with no furs, "...as they say themselves, they have been doing little but eating Since last Autumn" (B.49/a/41:36). Many others had passed the winter in a similar fashion (B.49/a/41:36, 37). These are hardly the actions of trappers who were "inextricably enmeshed" or "totally dependent" on the fur trade.

In his Cumberland District Report of 1825 Chief Factor James Leith attributed the Cree's "lack of interest" in trapping to the Company's policy of abandoning "running about amongst them so much as usual, and Likewise from the great diminution of Spiritous Liquors," (B.49/a/40:49; cf.B.39/e/5:1; B.49/e/6:1). Leith continued:

I am convinced the country taken all in a block is richer in fur bearing animals than it was four or five years ago.--Indeed I have seen it proved in many different parts of the country beyond doubt, that when they are left entirely to their own exertions (such as is their natural bent in care and liberty) that they decrease in their

activity, loose all ambition for pleasing their traders and become even callous to their own wants (B.49/e/5:1; cf.B.49/a/40:49-50).

Thus the Cree had every opportunity, but no desire, much less need, to engage in trapping as a primary subsistence activity even though fur resources were abundant (cf.B.49/a/41:38; B.49/a/43:23).

It therefore becomes even more apparent than it was during the competitive period that the luxury trade and ease of access to trade goods were key motivators for Cree participation in the trade. Without the stimulus of a supply of goods and alcohol on their doorsteps, Cree "dependence on the fur trade", even in the decades after the merger of 1821, appears to be a dependence for non-essential luxury goods alone. The "Zen road to affluence" was still the guiding principle for the Cree and they clearly demonstrated themselves not yet "dependent" on the fur trade for subsistence.

### Summary Discussion

In the end analysis the relationship between Cree and traders basically remained one of symbiosis right up to 1840.

Cree country provisions, labour and knowledge were still in demand up to 1840. As a result, they were able to withhold their services, either because they had no need of the rewards offered, or in order to bargain luxury goods that traders were reluctant to traffic. Efforts of

the HBC to control various aspects of their lives, when, where and what they hunted were generally failures.

It is quite evident from the journals of this period that the Cree in the Cumberland House region were able to maintain a certain level of independence from the trading system. They were not in fact incorporated into the system so deeply as to have no choice as to whether they would trap, produce country provisions, or engage in wage labour. They continued to exercise free will regarding much of their involvement in the trade system and could not be forced against their will to act in the traders' interest. This finding is of course contrary to the interpretations of those such as E. E. Rich and R. Rothney who assert that Indian "dependence" on the fur trade occurred much earlier in the eighteenth century. The conclusions of this study however, do coincide with the findings of Morantz (1980b) concerning the participation of the East Main Cree in the fur trade.

The following chapter attempts to summarise the findings of the preceeding chapters.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

Barth and Noel (1972:345) and Axtell (1975:131) have asserted that little attention has been paid to the processes involved in the initial emergence of interethnic relations. This study has attempted to examine this question in the case of Western Woods Cree contact relations with traders in the Cumberland House--The Pas region up to 1840. The central historical problem identified at the outset dealt with how these relations began and developed over time.

The documents examined have show that first contacts between Cree and European traders were characterised by an almost immediate development of symbiotic relations based on a series of complimentary, if not shared, goals and values. In Larrabee's (1976:39) terms, these shared goals and values are referred to as "cultural themes". In contrast to the opposing "thematic complexes" characteristic of Indian conflict with "yeoman farmers" who migrated to the Atlantic slope [i.e. the conflict over land (Helm, Rogers and Smith (1981:46))], traders west of Hudson Bay were involved by the Cree in a mutually advantageous (or one might even say reciprocally exploitative) system of alliance and socially bounded exchange which was based on Indian, not European, precedent.

Many fur trade scholars have argued that initial relations were conflicting by the very fact of contact between two different cultures. In the case examined in this study, however, cultural differences played a relatively minor role to the complementary (not conflicting) goals of the two parties. The Cree benefitted substantially from the technological innovations, new economic, social, and political opportunities as middlemen and brokers between Europeans and other Indian groups. Although they worked hard to maintain a competitive setting between the European interests in their area, the interests of the Cree remained essentially complementary with those of the HBC traders right up to the end of the time span covered by this study.

The first question identified at the close of Chapter I concerned the characterisation of Cree/trader relations as "migrant" or "indigenous superordination". It is evident from the preceeding analysis that the initial power balance, if not equally distributed, certainly favoured Indian economic, social, and political control of the relationship. Beyond their central role as primary commodity producers, the Cree monopolised the key transportation system, manipulated the competing European interests to their own best advantage, exerted their strategic power at will, led the Europeans to accept Indian concepts of trade and social relations, and controlled the crucial provisioning of the Europeans' posts. In Lieberman's terms indigenous rather than migrant superordinate relations



developed. Since the relative power balance was tipped in favour of the Cree, the potential for conflict was reduced and Indian control was the norm. Europeans simply did not have the means to impose their own conditions on the relationship until late in the two hundred year period under study. Indeed, the conditions of stratified class relations which are proposed by some authors cannot be demonstrated during the period up to 1840, and certainly not before 1800.

The second question revolved around the concept of "dependence". Content analysis of the previous fur trade literature would show that the idea of Indian dependence on the European is a fundamental interpretation of many scholars. It becomes clear in the case of the Western Woods Cree, however, that the assumption of their dependence on the fur trade has been grossly overstated. Many fur trade historians have uncritically employed evidence to support this contention without paying attention to Indian motivations and the contexts of the statements presented as proof of such dependence. It is essential that Indian statements recorded by traders be analysed as formalised trade rhetoric and bargaining tactics. Any failure to recognise this fundamental characteristic of Indian dealings with traders leaves the interpretation in serious doubt.

For example, the Cumberland House journals reveal data which is cause for re-examining assumptions of depen-

dence. Right up to 1840 a great portion of Indian demand was in fact restricted to luxury goods such as alcohol and tobacco. When these items were not available, or were deliberately withheld by the traders, the Cree quickly withdrew from participation in trapping, tripping and provisioning activities. By so doing, they clearly demonstrated that they were not in fact "inextricably integrated" in, or "totally dependent" on, the European fur trade system for their subsistence.

When the Cree were involved in trapping for example, alcohol provided almost the only leverage the trader possessed in order to control his paddlers. Even when these luxury goods were available, the Cree consistently demonstrated their independence from the necessity of engaging in the fur trade, even when all conditions were favourable to their participation. It is clear that the "Zen road to affluence" was still a primary conceptual factor in Cree life.

There are other indications that the Cree were not dependent on the fur trade. One interpretation of the characteristic importunacy of Cree trading behaviour is that it mirrors the Indian perception of their own pre-eminent role in the relationship. Judging from their demanding (and, as the traders saw it, ungrateful) behaviour, the Cree obviously perceived themselves in a position of strength and they were able to capitalise on this in many ways.

A second important indicator of Cree control is found in the type of reciprocity engaged in. The Cree's power in the relationship allowed them to engage in "negative reciprocity" and to retaliate with force against those who attempted to do likewise to them well into the 1790s. The French, and especially the Canadians became targets for violence and plunder when they ignored the sociality inherent in the Cree view of the trade relationship. The prime examples are Jeremie's faux pas, the Henley House debacle, and the myriad retaliations against the Nor'-westers for their high-handed approach.

Only when the Cree's position had been weakened by the depredations of the smallpox epidemic in 1781--1782; the incursions of the Bungees, Mohawks and Freeman in the late 1780s and 1790s; combined with the intensified competitive situation after 1796; were the traders able to begin to impose "exchanges" on the Cree which could be successfully carried out in terms of negative reciprocity.

Despite the assertions of many scholars of the fur trade, however, in the 1800s and even after the union of 1821, European dominance was by no means complete. The Cree continued to exert their influence over their own working conditions, the trade circumstances and the rate and type of their productive efforts. They also demonstrated their independence from European technology in producing furs as well as their own food supply. In large measure, they were able to do so until the end of the period under consideration. They were also able to with-

draw from the trade at will. The Western Woods Cree had clearly not allowed themselves to be "inextricably enmeshed" or "completely integrated" into the mercantilist fur trade system.

As a consequence of the above analysis, we cannot apply Bishop and Ray's (1976) designation "Fur Trade Dependency Era" to any portion of the time period covered by this study. The Cree were simply not under the complete control of the Company (cf. Van Kirk 1980b:7, 9), nor were they under the necessity of trapping to make a living. The traditional approach of the "Zen road" to the "original affluent society" continued to be a central organisational principle in Cree ideology.

As Paine (1971:15) asserts, client dependency created by the patron is not demonstrated until the patron is able to impose stipulations which allow his manipulation of the relationship. It is clear from the documents consulted that Hudson's Bay Company traders were not able to impose stipulations on their relations with the Cree until much later than Rothney, Rich, Hickerson and many others maintain. European control over scarce resources valued by the Cree simply did not exist during the period under study.

In the ordinary sense of the word, therefore, the Cree were not in fact "dependent" on the fur trade for their subsistence. They were "dependent" only for supplies of non-essential luxury goods such as alcohol which had little or negative value for subsistence, and which they often did without.

The third question addressed by this study remains unanswered. The documents consulted up to 1840 have little to say concerning the processes by which Europeans eventually exerted dominance over the Western Woods Cree leading to the present "vertical mosaic" in Canadian social structure.

Granted, the smallpox epidemic 1781--1782, the influx of freemen, Mohawks and "Bungees" into the study area in the late 1780s and 1790s all weakened Cree control over their economic, political and social lives. Nevertheless, even after the establishment of HBC monopoly in 1821 the Cree clearly demonstrated that they continued to maintain enough independence to resist HBC efforts to control the system. They were quite able to withdraw from the trade system when it suited them in order to "do little in the fur way" (even when fur bearers and provisions were abundant), or to take a hard bargaining position in order to obtain luxury items such as alcohol which the HBC was becoming more reluctant to traffic.

Therefore, given the degree of independence shown by the Cree up to 1840, we must look to the following period, ending with the treaty negotiations and signing in 1875--1876, for evidence explaining the loss of Cree autonomy.

We might speculate that the deteriorating ecological situation, compounded by the tendency toward sedentarisation around the mission station at The Pas resulting in overexploitation of local fish resources, partially ex-

plains the tipping of the power balance in favour of the Europeans (cf. K. Pettipas 1972:118-19; 1980). In addition, such events as 1) the fragmentation of the community into Christian--heathen factions; 2) the assumption of leadership roles by missionaries; 3) the subsequent substitution of a Victorian value system through the mission school; 4) the appearance of alternative patterns to the traditional seasonal mobility subsistence strategy in the uncertainty of "parochial village" agriculture; all helped to disrupt the previous situation of Cree control. It is clear, however, that all of these factors came into play after 1840.

The fourth question to be addressed by this study concerned the applicability of the sociological generalisations of Barth, Noel and Lieberman to the historical development of Cree/trader relations. From the analysis in the preceeding chapters, it is clear that the key variables outlined by these scholars do in fact explain the type of relations which developed between Cree trappers and European traders.

It has been shown above that conflict between different cultures is not an inevitable result of contact between two groups of people. Although ethnocentrism was present on both sides, the initial power balance favouring Indians, as well as the benefits which accrued to both sides from the trade contact, were such that the relationship can only be described as "symbiotic" in Van de Berghe's (1981) terms. This outcome is in contrast

to the power relations characteristic of the conditions of European migrant superordination which developed on the Atlantic slope (cf. Jennings 1979; Sheehan 1980; Drinnon 1980). The types of attitudes characteristic of the traders west of Hudson Bay were identical to those held by their counterparts on the Atlantic slope. What differed in the relationship was first, the continuing numerical and strategic power balance favouring Indians, and second, the existence of complementary goals or, after Larrabee, "complimentary cultural themes".

This study also confirms the theory that relatively little conflict results under conditions of indigneous superordination. The English traders worked within the constraints of Cree dominance. The conflict which did occur with French and Canadian traders was a reaction of the more powerful partner in the relationship against the presumptions of the weaker attempting to exert authority over situations which were strategically and socially beyond their control.

The applicability of the theories of culture change have also been demonstrated in the above chapters. Much of Cree culture change can be explained by reference to the selective nature of the process. It is crucial to distinguish those new elements which are superficially integrated, in terms of the meanings and functions supplied to them by the Indian innovators, from those aspects which demand significant adjustment in the accepting culture in order to function. It seems evident that the vast

majority of innovations stimulated by the fur trade contact situation were in fact adjustments in aspects outside the core culture. In Lurie's (1968) terms, much of the culture change undergone by the Cree up to 1840 was "Type I" rather than "Type II". Type I change implies superficial adoption of traits into the culture through the provision of Indian functions and meanings to the new elements. The introduction of new technology and instrumental techniques had little significant effect on the core culture of the Cree because these innovations were employed largely to meet traditional goals and needs. In fact, participation in the fur trade often meant only an intensification of aboriginal subsistence patterns. It is clear for example that subsistence activities continued to take precedence over trapping activities throughout the period up to 1840. In addition, even the effects of epidemic diseases had less effect on Cree culture than those such as Martin (1978) would predict.

Further, although the HBC attempted directed culture change, in the realms of leadership, fur production, and warfare for example, they achieved few of their goals. For example, although those individuals who were designated as "trading captains" achieved a certain amount of deference and special treatment from the Europeans (thus providing avenues for the ambitious individual to augment traditional status), the real power accompanying these positions was minimal as it had been in traditional temporary, task-oriented leadership. Throughout the period



under consideration these Company-designated "principal men" consistently failed to be able to deliver on promises when their followers' interests lay in other directions. Although the status of such men was indeed augmented, this seemed only to marginalise them rather than invest them with any effective power among their peers.

The Company was similarly ineffective in altering the Cree participation in warfare, their conceptions of conservation, or in altering their production and preparation of furs to meet the vagaries of European markets. The assumption of rapid culture change among the Cree west of Hudson Bay must therefore be disputed (cf. Helm, Rogers and Smith 1981:148).

With regard to theories on ethnicity, from analysis of the data on Cree/trader relations it appears as if the concept of "interest group" proposed by Trigger (1975) (after Brecht) is a more useful unit of analysis than that of "ethnic group". Although ethnicity is a primary organisational feature of the Cree interest group, the boundary which turns out to have been as significant as culture was that of economic interest. This is obvious since European "renegades" and mixed-descent "freemen" who possessed non-Cree cultures were demonstrably members of the same interest group and acted in concert with the Cree. In other cases, Cree "trading captains", although they possessed the same culture, found themselves unable to maintain a following among their Cree confreres. This was so because the interests of their band members often lay elsewhere

than with those of the trader-supported "leaders". More attention should therefore be given to this concept in future analyses of Cree/trader relations.

What then can be said about the relationship of the findings of this study to the present socioeconomic problems in The Pas identified in the final question posed at the outset of this study? It is not altogether clear whether these findings have any direct relevance to present conditions other than as a setting for changes after 1840. The patterns of indigenous superordination and symbiotic relations which have been delineated above cannot explain the emergence of later conflict and stratification in the relationship. Barth and Noel suggest that the "Conflict Framework" would be more useful here. Therefore, although the pattern of Cree independence outlined above the relevance for such contemporary questions as self-government and hunting rights for example, it may have only peripheral significance to the primary problem of socioeconomic deprivation.

It seems clear that authors such as Loxley (1981), Rothney (1975) and Elias (1971) are indeed correct in saying that the Cree have been consistently underdeveloped by the mercantilist and later the industrial capitalist system into an exploited underclass. However, the effect of this continuing underdevelopment occurs much later than is indicated by any of the above authors. Cree/trader relations as late as 1840 are by no means identifiably class relations. The Cree continued to maintain a separate

and independent social, political and economic system. Access to resources and control over their own labour remained in Cree hands right up to the close of the period under study. The continued extraction of surplus value from the region had no immediate effects on the Cree--until hunting ceased to be a viable occupation; until they became in fact dependent on trapping for subsistence; and until the penetration of the industrial capitalist system marginalised them. At the close of the period examined this study the hunting means of subsistence, was demonstrably still able to provide self-sufficiency for the Western Woods Cree. The traders were not as successful as they had hoped to be in integrating the traditional Cree hunting economy into the mercantilist fur trade system. This integration of the Cree as an exploited underclass occurred only after the purview of this study.

Some questions which have been raised in this study remain unanswered. For one, it is not altogether clear who are being referred to under the rubric "Bungee". Most of the recent archaeological scholarship on the question indicates that during the 1790s the Cumberland House area was infiltrated by the Swampy Cree (Hlady 1970:96, 120). In The Cumberland House journals, however, the only new group beside the Iroquois and freemen to be mentioned are referred to as the "Bungee". The term Bungee, therefore, may indeed refer to Swampy Cree (cf. Ray 1971:208) and not to Ojibwa as has been the past interpretation. Although "Bungee" may indeed apply to Ojibwa elsewhere,

there is no real reason to believe that the traders were maintaining ethnographic consistency in their descriptions, especially since beginning in the early 1800s they also began to use the term "Saulteaux" when referring to the Ojibwa. Rogers (1963a:66) notes for example that the traders in northern Ontario also had difficulty in distinguishing Cree from Ojibwa. Nevertheless, this interpretation requires further investigation.

There is also the question of why relations between the Western Woods Cree and the HBC traders were so much more smooth than those with the Nor'westers? With the former the Cree developed a symbiotic contact characterised by a generally balanced reciprocity, while relations with the NWC were often of the negative reciprocity type. The explanation must go more deeply than a reliance on different personality types between employees of the two companies. More research along the lines followed by Van Kirk and Brown is required.

What, therefore, are the implications of this study for future research? Picking up first on the comments of the above paragraphs, it is necessary that the period after 1840 be examined in light of the theories of conflict and underdevelopment (cf. Loxley 1981; Rothney 1975).

Documentation for this period happily becomes much more diverse. Along with the continuing records of the Hudson's Bay Company, Church Missionary Society papers, scientific expedition reports such as that produced by Dawson and Hind, and after 1876 when the Swampy Cree in

the study area signed an adhesion to Treaty Number 5, Department of Indian Affairs records should provide a wealth of data.

Further research into the earlier contact period is also required in the papers of the French and Canadian fur traders such as those available in the Masson collection at McGill University. This is crucial in order to balance the more accessible data in the Hudson's Bay Company records. Research is also needed on the subject of the freemen and mixed-descent people in the area as a special group in their own right, as well as on their relations with the local Cree.

It is crucial, if it is to have significance beyond the period examined, that this study be continued right up to the present. It is strongly recommended that an oral history project be undertaken in the study area as soon as possible. Such a project should be supported with research in the documents cited above as well as in the records of The Pas Band and the Town of The Pas. Provincial records such as Manitoba Hydro documents as well as the local newspapers which begin in 1912 should also be consulted. The collection of the Sam Waller Little Northern Museum is another key source of data that should not be overlooked.

It is also important that research be completed on Indian and mixed-descent Native involvement in the developing industrialisation of the area. For example, many of the railway section gangs north of The Pas were composed

of Native workers, yet this area of Native history has been seriously neglected (Knight 1978).

This study has, therefore, obviously made only a modest beginning for important research which ideally should examine the entire sweep of Indian/non-Indian relations in the Cumberland House/The Pas region from first contact to the present.

It is abundantly clear that an eclectic approach to the explanation of interethnic relations over time such as has been employed in this study is a prerequisite for a true understanding of the dynamics of these relations. Only with such an approach will we be able to make fully informed conclusions about the origins, development, present state, and means of redress of the difficulties which pervade the modern socioeconomic situation. Hopefully, this present effort will help to stimulate such research.

## ENDNOTES

### CHAPTER I

1. In the words of Michelet, "He who would confine his thoughts to the present time will not understand present reality."
2. For brief accounts of these issues, consult the following articles: The Pas Herald, February 9, April 13, 1978; The Opasquia Times, April 5, 1978; February 9, 1983; Winnipeg Free Press, March 9, 1981; April 22, 1981; September 4, 1981; May 27, 1980; September 4 & 6, 1980; and Raby (1972).
3. After Smith (1981) the term Western Woods Cree as used here is inclusive of both the Rocky and Swampy Cree in the study area and correlates more or less with the vague term often used in the historical literature--the "Inland Cree" as opposed to the Coast or "Home Guard" Cree.
4. In this study "dependence" is defined as the condition of reliance upon something or someone else for maintenance and support, implying subjection to control or direction by another.
5. Keesing and Keesing (1971:345) define "congruence" as shared ideational systems characterised by common or synthesised premises, values and goals which allow the two groups in contact to acculturate.

### CHAPTER II

1. For a description of this habitat see Pruitt (1978), Pettipas (1980), Helm (1981), Gillespie (1981), Rogers and Smith (1981).
2. These dates are questioned by Ray (1978:32-33).
3. Service (1966:52) makes a further distinction between "authority" and mere "influence".
4. The English too were concerned with this acculturation and passed laws to restrict it (Jennings 1979; Axtell 1981).

5. Trading "en derouine" is defined as the process of carrying trade goods directly to the Indian camps rather than waiting for trappers to bring their furs to the trading posts.

### CHAPTER III

1. These explorers included Button in 1612, Munk in 1619, Fox in 1631 (W. L. Morton 1957:5-7), and James in 1632 (Dragge 1748:182).
2. Present day The Pas is referred to variously in the documents as Paskiac, Paskoyac, Pasquayah, Basquiau and so on. All are said to be corruptions of 1) the Cree word for Saskatchewan River (Burpee 1927:24-25), or 2) the word meaning narrow place between high banks (Tyrrell 1934:109).
3. See footnote #4, CHAPTER I.
4. Indeed the London Committee of the HBC fully supported Radisson and resolved to "cast our whole hopes of a great & Flourishing trade upon you & your contivance" (Nutte 1977:327).
5. Hereafter only document and folio numbers will be cited, York Factory journals as B.239/a and Cumberland House journals as B.49/a.
6. The copy in Graham's Observations (E.2/4) is more reliable than Burpee (1907) according to Williams (1978).
7. Beaver tail was an important source of necessary fat calories in the taiga biome and the animal also had ceremonial importance (Morantz 1980b:79).
8. Henday describes the French post at Basquiau as follows:  
This house is about 26 foot long, 12 foot wide, 9 foot high to the ridge, having a sloping roof, the walls log upon log, the top covered with birch rind, it is divided into three appartments, one for trading goods, and where the Master lives; one for the men; and one for the furs &c (E.2/4:58).
9. The contemporary meaning of the term "debauch" was to alienate, regardless of the means of accomplishing it (cf. B.49/a/35:12; Saum 1965:149).
10. Here again, Ewers (1967) has some important things to say regarding misconceptions which are perpetrated by illustrations such as the ubiquitous, but inaccurate, trading scene showing Indians crowding in front of a counter comparable to the modern retail setting which



is utilised by Gilman (1982:53).

11. Sheehan (1980:110) later contradicts himself.
12. Even the Home Guard Cree, who underwent much more intrusive contact than the inland Cree, were maintaining their own language (Kelsey 1969:191), a core element in all cultures.
13. For example, trade blankets were unravelled and the yarn used to weave bags (Gilman 1982:106) and utilitarian objects were often used as decorative items (Washburn 1967:51-52).
14. Goosen (1974:174) later contradicts herself.
15. See footnote #4, CHAPTER I.

#### CHAPTER IV

1. As Malchholm Ross stated during a trip from Churchill to Cumberland House in September 1786 after having been delayed, forced to provide alcohol, and after having been abandoned;  
     ...their demands was large on me, as all my Dependence was on them for a canoe and everything else, I was Obligated to put up with the most of their demands (B.49/a/18:10).
2. Morantz (1980b:80) notes that the term "starvation" cannot always be taken literally, as it referred to all degrees of hunger from the necessity of relying on non-favoured foods to a complete lack of sustenance over an extended period. For example, in 1776 Cocking uses the phrase "He pretends that they have been almost starved for want of food" (B.49/a/4:25). At other times traders suspected that starvation was only given as an excuse by the Indians for doing other than what the trader wished (e.g. B.49/a/47:18).
3. This latter comment typifies the often-repeated trader view of Indian honesty. It must be remembered, however, that Sahlins (1972:199-200) indicates that morality in band society is sectorally organized. Truthful relations were not obligatory with non-kinsmen.
4. This is in stark contrast to a later epidemic which was effectively controlled through a programme sponsored by the Company. Innoculations were carried out by the traders, and Indians and Metis were instructed in the technique of vaccination (cf. B.49/a/40:9-10; B.49/a/49:25-27, 35; Ray 1974:188-90).

5. This term may in fact refer to the Swampy Cree--see CHAPTER VI.
6. See footnote #5, CHAPTER II.
7. The Cumberland House Journals of 1806--1807 show Harmon to be a frequent dinner guest and card partner at the HBC post.

## CHAPTER V

1. "These two men were the sons of Orcadian servant Magnus Twatt. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this study to be able to deal extensively with the data provided in the Cumberland House journals on the "country-born" or Natives of "mixed-descent" in the area. Terms referring to this group in the journals include "freemen", "natives", "Indians" and "half-breeds". Such terms are used interchangeably, often in the same sentence.

Two settlements of these half-breeds centred at The Pas (B.49/a/37:20) and Nipowin. They had been developing since the arrival of the French-Canadian Freeman in the 1790s and, by the 1820s, had become relatively permanent habitations (B.49/a/27:31).

Mansack and Willock Twatt assumed the leadership of the Nipowin "band" and were highly regarded by the traders for their productivity and consistency in paying off their debts (B.49/a/42:1, 47).

At The Pas, Joseph Constant, a French-Canadian, assumed authority over a large family. The Constants were obviously very enterprising entrepreneurs having interests not only in trapping, but in such enterprises as tripping, guiding, farming, and salt production. Their horse trading activities, seed potato exchanges and livestock breeding operation formed only a part of their significant relationship with the HBC at Cumberland House (cf. McLean 1968:133ff.).

Late in the period under study, the Company began to suspect the Freeman at The Pas of engaging in their own trade with the Indians and this somewhat soured the relationship (e.g. B.49/b/3:17, 26).

More study needs to be done on this thriving community composed of such families as the Umpervilles, Laventures, Turners, McKays, Versailles, Gardipies, Desjarlais, Lavalles, Chaplettes, and Ballentines.

2. For example places such as Swan River, Carlton House, Lac La Ronge, Nelson House, Norway House, and Split Lake.
3. Such attempts at control foreshadowed the Canadian government's restrictions on Indian movement during the reserve period (cf. Ponting and Gibbins 1980).
4. In particular, the freemen were trusted with twice the level of credit (e.g. B.49/a/42:47). In 1828 for example, Mansack and Willock Twatt received 100 MB in credit while Indians typically received no more than 20 MB credit (B.49/a/44:10). Indeed, what Ponting and Gibbins (1980) refer to as "socio-fiscal control" over Indian people was not invented by the Canadian government; it existed under the HBC system.

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