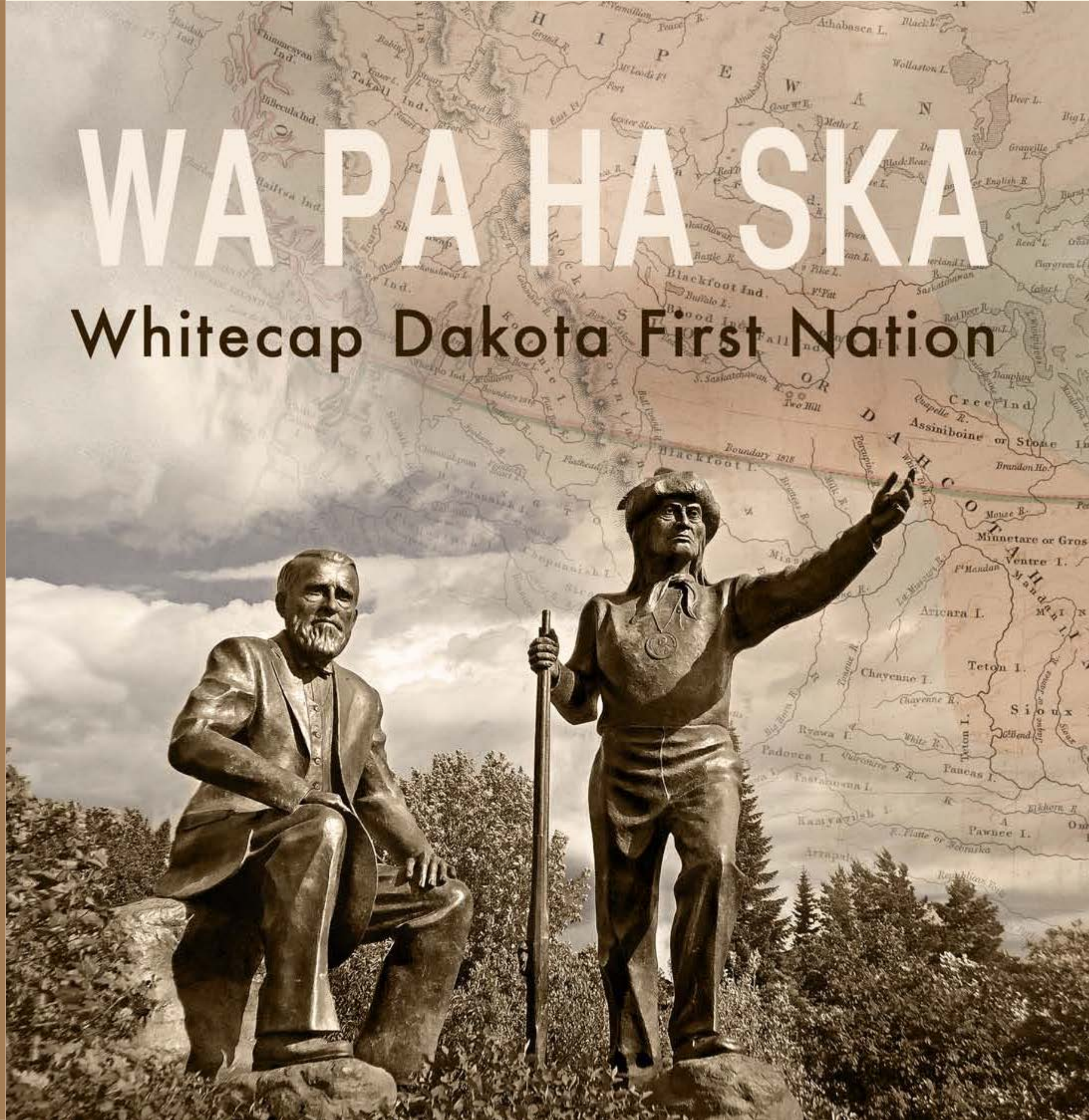




WA PA HA SKA

Whitecap Dakota First Nation



Spirit of Alliance



As we move toward the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, it is important to look back on and remember the humble beginnings of our nation. Canada did not just appear in 1867. Centuries of partnerships between First Nations and non-First Nations helped lay the foundation for our beautiful multicultural nation. This booklet tells the story of Whitecap Dakota First Nation and highlights the role of the Dakota in Canadian history.

Throughout history, the Dakota have valued their partnerships and used them as a method of nation building. Our long-standing alliance with the British Crown reflects our ancestors' past principles of community building. Beginning in the 1760s, the Dakota affirmed their allegiance to the British through wampum ceremonies and a Peace and Friendship Treaty signed at Michilimackinac in 1787. The Dakota fought side by side with the British in the Pontiac Wars, the American Revolution, and the War of 1812. As well, in 1882, Dakota Chief Whitecap led John Lake to the site of the future City of Saskatoon and both men are formally recognized as the co-founders of the city.

Today, we honour the values of our ancestors and continue to build partnerships with surrounding businesses, governments, First Nations, and non-First Nations organizations. We move forward by taking valuable lessons from our ancestors, who were hard-working and resilient people. This "Spirit of Alliance" continues to enrich the quality of life for the citizens of Whitecap Dakota First Nation, for our province, and for our nation.

As these opportunities develop within our nation, our community can grow to sustain and provide for our next generation. As we foster new relationships, we find the means to promote and advance our history, culture, language, and education programs. Investing in areas depleted over time through colonization, we ultimately invest back in our people.

Our shared history proves that a Spirit of Alliance built this country. Likewise, many people came together to ensure the completion of this project. On behalf of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation Chief and Council, I would like to recognize the role that our fellow Dakota Nations played in this project as part of the advisory council and by sharing their stories. As well, I would like to thank our Elders, community members, and the many other people who came together in the Spirit of Alliance to complete this project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Bear', with a large, sweeping flourish above it.

Chief Darcy Bear

COVER PHOTO

The "Founders
Statue"

PHOTO LEFT

Chief Darcy Bear

Preface

This booklet is intended to inform and educate the students and teachers in the Saskatoon region on the history and culture of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation. This First Nation has been a leader, both provincially and nationally, in its alliances with public and private interests in areas of community development. As a result, this progressive First Nation plays a key leadership role in the evolving relationship between Canada and First Nations.

The inspiration for this document arose from the commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812. The Dakota and other First Nations played an important role in the War of 1812 as British allies. Canadian history has not properly acknowledged the magnitude of this support.

However, it would be impossible to understand the Whitecap Dakota First Nation today without knowledge of their past history. For that reason, this is more than a booklet about the War of 1812; this booklet outlines some key moments of the history of the Dakota Oyate (Nation).

This is not meant to be a comprehensive research document; rather, it is a compilation of academic and community-based research based on the guidance of Dakota Oyate Elders and Knowledge Keepers from the three Dakota First Nations of Saskatchewan: Standing Buffalo Dakota Nation, Wahpeton Dakota Nation, and Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

Dedication

The contents of this book were informed and guided by Dakota Knowledge Keepers. Some of the Knowledge Keepers who shared their stories and Dakota ways have since passed on to the next world. We are thankful that their knowledge will be preserved for future generations.

Acknowledgements

The following Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community members, and leaders contributed their stories and memories to this booklet:

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SECTION ONE

The Dakota Oyate

Who are the Dakota?

The Dakota are a nation of Indigenous peoples whose traditional territories span modern-day United States and Canada. Historically, the Dakota Oyate—translated as “Dakota Nation”—occupied a territory that included modern-day Wisconsin through Minnesota, and north to Ontario through the Prairie Provinces. This booklet describes some aspects of the history of the Dakota Oyate, and concludes with significant moments of the history of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

The Dakota Nation relied on the tatanka—or buffalo. The tatanka provided many of the elements that the Dakota needed to survive: food, shelter, clothing, tools and weapons. The tatanka also holds great cultural significance for the Dakota, as demonstrated through their teachings. The “Legend of the White Buffalo” (provided in Appendix I) provides an example of the significance of the tatanka and sets out a number of related Dakota teachings and cultural values.

The Dakota moved across their vast territory in order to secure the resources needed to sustain their communities. Canoes, and later horses, enabled them to travel these long distances to hunt, trade, and visit with relatives. Dakota camps and trading areas were often situated along major waterways.

As the Dakota moved throughout their traditional territory, they gave places names in the Dakota language. In Saskatchewan, these include Wakpa Min Te (North Saskatchewan River), Mini duz (South Saskatchewan River), and Wakpa O Ze Te, which translates as “lower forks on the river,” and refers to where the North Saskatchewan River and South Saskatchewan River meet. Dakota place names can be found as far north as the Deschambeault Lake area. There are also rivers and village sites in this area that have Cree names that refer to the presence of the Dakota.

The Dakota way of life includes respect for others and for their environment. Cultural ceremonies are an important part of this way of life. Everyday life depends on interconnections made through extended family networks, and respect for family and kinship ties are of the utmost importance. The Dakota believe that peace and harmony are essential elements for relationships to living creatures, and all of creation.

In the past the Dakota lived in large village encampments in the spring and summer, and moved to various sites in smaller groups in the fall and winter. However, not all Dakota were village dwellers. Some Dakota groups also made seasonal rounds, dwelling in various encampments throughout their large geographic territory throughout the year. Villages and encampments were independent from one another, but communities came together to hunt and to protect each other from common enemies.

In traditional Dakota culture, leadership was based on consensus. Those who upheld the Dakota values and had proven leadership abilities were chosen as leaders. Historically, each community leader sought out and expressed the opinion of the majority.

A Nation Defined by Alliance

Alliances were created and maintained through the cultural practice of sharing and gift exchange. They were a way to honour your family and friends, and certain ceremonies accompanied these practices. These practices were central to the economic, political, and social systems of the Dakota. They renewed the bonds of kinship—a deep cultural value of the Dakota Nation.

The Dakota are a cultural group within a much larger Indigenous cultural family known as the Seven Council Fires or the Oceti Sakowin (Oh-CHAY-tee SHAW-ko-ween). This was an alliance of seven Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota groups, who all shared a similar language, history, and culture. (See *figure 1.1—Names of seven council fires.*)

As Figure 1.1 shows, each member of the Oceti Sakowin had a separate fire, which was symbolically lit from sacred coals taken from ancient traditional sites. The seven fires represented the autonomy of each of the seven groups. The name of each council refers to the land base in which the cultural group lived. The Dakota worldview placed great value upon all that the earth provided to the people of the Oceti Sakowin.

The nations who formed the Oceti Sakowin were collectively referred to as “Siouan” by European

newcomers, who grouped these nations together because of their linguistic similarities. However, the term “Sioux” should be avoided, as it was derived from a derogatory term. Instead, these groups should be referred to by the names they called themselves: Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota.

The word “Dakota” means “friend” or “ally.” The Dakota Nation has a long history of relationship building. Examples of the formation of strategic alliances by the Dakota, both with other Indigenous nations and with European newcomers, are prolific throughout history.

The creation and maintenance of alliances was important to the Dakota Nation. Negotiating space with other Indigenous peoples, and later with European powers and settler populations, was integral to the continued success and prosperity of the Dakota. Intermarriage with other nations enabled the Dakota to strengthen their alliances and make peace with their neighbours. From these personal family bonds came powerful relationships and alliances between nations: these relationships also encouraged trade and collaboration. This practice continued with the arrival of Europeans into Dakota territory.

Today, there are three Dakota communities in Saskatchewan; Standing Buffalo, Wahpeton, and Whitecap First Nations. The communities of Standing Buffalo, Wahpeton, and Whitecap are descendants of the Oceti Sakowin.

Figure 1.1

Dakota

Mdewakanton
Campers at the Sacred Lake

Sisseton
Camping Among Swamps

Wahpeton
Camping Among Leaves

Wahpekute
Shooters Among Leaves

Lakota

Yankton
Camping at the End

Yanktonais
Camping at the Very End

Nakota

Teton
Camping on the Prairie





This map shows the traditional pre-contact territory of the Dakota Oyate, and is meant to show the broad territory through which the Dakota travelled. In the Dakota language, the term "Dakota" means "friend" or "ally." Dakota is an ancient term that came from Dakota stories about creation and the interconnectedness of all things that were made by our Creator.

SECTION TWO

A People United through Alliance and Self-Reliance

Interactions among Nations

The Dakota Nation built alliances as a means to establish peace and prosperity for their people. Interaction with other First Nations was common, especially because the Dakota travelled vast distances through their territories. Alliances with these Indigenous nations were formed on nation-to-nation levels, as well as between individuals. The Dakota built relationships through trading and hunting together, and through intermarriage and adoption. The Dakota also had protocols for making treaty agreements with other First Nations, which included pipe ceremonies (also called the calumet) and gift exchange.

The Dakota form of governance influenced how they interacted with other nations. Dakota communities were defined by their oral laws and traditions, and connected through their cultural beliefs. Their mobility and interconnectedness helped them to respond to change in ways that did not disrupt their social and political networks.

Interactions with Newcomers

The Dakota formed a variety of connections with European newcomers, which included political alliances and familial relationships. The first European newcomers to arrive in Western North America were French explorers, fur traders, and missionaries in the mid-seventeenth century.

Some of these men dwelt among the Dakota in areas around the Lake of the Woods, Mille Lacs, and Lake Winnipeg, to name a few. These newcomers were not numerous and did not greatly impact the lives of the Dakota people. The Dakota shared their knowledge of the land and the skill needed to survive on the land while also acquiring knowledge, skills, and technologies from newcomers.

The Dakota Nation did not sit idly by while Europeans entered their territory. They were very careful to only interact with people who would bring positive contributions to their nation. At times, there was conflict with certain newcomers who did not have the best interest of the Dakota people in mind.

When large numbers of French fur traders began to arrive in Dakota territory in the eighteenth century, little changed in the social and political circumstances of the Dakota Nation. At times, the Dakota also traded with the Spanish to the south. The fur trade did shift some economic conditions, as the Dakota traded furs for European goods, such as blankets, cooking utensils, and guns. While this altered some of the everyday aspects of the Dakota lifestyle, it did not alter their culture, beliefs, and traditions.

Just as they had relationships with other First Nation leaders, they also formed alliances with the French colonial and military leaders of the time. These French leaders promised to protect Dakota interests in exchange for trade and access to Dakota territory for both passage and settlement. These promises were formalized at meetings like the great council held at Montreal in 1742, where Governor Beauharnois pledged his support to several First Nations, including the Dakota.

The Dakota negotiated at least six Friendship treaties with the French Crown.

The Dakota belief in the importance of maintaining social networks remained central to interactions with the traders. Fur traders began to understand the benefits of marrying into a Dakota family, and Dakota families understood the benefit of having a fur trader as a son-in-law or husband. The traders had access to supplies such as guns, dry goods, and cooking utensils. Marrying into a Dakota family was not an easy task. Traders followed Dakota cultural protocols in order to do so, and many of these European traders ultimately adapted to the Dakota culture.

Unfortunately, these newcomers introduced new diseases to which the Dakota had no natural resistance. Epidemics like smallpox had catastrophic results, and many Dakota people died from exposure to these diseases.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, there was growing conflict between the French and British powers. In their quest to establish their authority in North America, both sought to form critical strategic alliances with the First Nations. This conflict eventually erupted into an armed struggle known as the Seven Years War (1756-1763), which was fought in both North America and in Europe. The French surrendered in 1763, and Britain gained much of the lands over which the French had claimed authority.

Exchange of Promises through Nation-To-Nation Agreements

British representatives and military leaders understood that the support of First Nations was crucial to their efforts

to control the vast lands of North America. In particular, it was critical to win the support of the Indigenous allies of the French. Accordingly, the British were keen to enter into military alliances with the Dakota. To that end, the British representatives made promises to protect the sovereignty that First Nations people had over their territory.

In the summer of 1762, a representative of the British Crown named Lieutenant James Gorrell visited the Dakota, at which time he delivered two wampum belts. Gorell, on behalf of the British Crown, exchanged promises of peace, trade and military alliance with the Dakota.

Wampum belts were shared between First Nations prior to contact with European newcomers. These newcomers adopted the use of wampum belts among their First Nations allies. Wampum belts are made from beads arranged in a symbolic pattern. Each pattern represents a person, a nation, a particular event, an invitation, or an agreement. The symbols help people to remember their history and communicate complex ideas through imagery.

In 1763, King George III issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763 to establish a basis of government administration in North American territories. Under the Royal Proclamation, King George III protected all traditional First Nations land east of the Mississippi River and west of the Appalachian Mountains. It reserved the exclusive right of purchase of these lands for the Crown, and set out procedures for the purchase of these lands with the consent of the First Nations. The British authorities considered this important because First Nations were becoming increasingly wary of British incursion and settlement in or near their territory.

After the Royal Proclamation became British Law, King George III sent Sir William Johnson to hold council with the First Nations west of the Mississippi. In the summer of 1764, twenty-four nations—including Ojibway, Sauk and Fox, Shawnee, Menominee, Huron, and others—affirmed their alliance with the British with the Twenty-Four Nation Wampum Belt at Fort Niagara. This became known as the Council of Niagara or the Treaty of Niagara, at which the Dakota were represented by their allies, the Sauk.

The Treaty at Fort Niagara was not meant to usurp or supplant the Dakota leadership or authority over First Nations people. It was a nation-to-nation agreement in which the interests of both sides would be maintained.

Meanwhile, many of the settlers in the thirteen American colonies were becoming increasingly frustrated with the British attempts to control the colonies and collect taxes. The American colonies also thought that they should be able to expand their colonies whenever and however they liked, contrary to the provisions of the Royal Proclamation. For these reasons, the American colonists rebelled against the British and the American Revolution began in 1776.

As part of their alliance with the British Crown, the Dakota Nation had promised to provide military aid to the British when needed. The British came to the Dakota Nation and requested their help, bringing gifts, flags, and medals as part of their agreement of alliance. In fulfillment of their promises, the Dakota people aided the British in battle against the American revolutionaries.

The British commissioned certain Dakota warriors as officers within their army in recognition of their contribution to the conflict. In 1776, Dakota Chief Wabasha was made a

General in the British Army. Chief Wabasha was integral in establishing trade and military ties among the Dakota and the British, and brought 1,000 warriors to fight on the side of the British during the revolution. Even though the British eventually lost the war against the Americans in 1783, Wabasha and other Dakota leaders did not transfer their allegiance to the Americans, remaining loyal to the British Crown following their defeat.

Following the American Revolution, the British renewed their military alliance and trade relations among the Dakota through gift exchanges and peace councils. At Prairie du Chien in 1783, the British brought together leaders to outline agreements on peace and friendship, law and order, trade, and military alliance between the Dakota and the Crown.

A number of important trade routes and trading posts were in the traditional territory of the Dakota. These trade routes include those located along major river systems such as Lake Winnipeg and the Assiniboine, Missouri, Mississippi, Saskatchewan, and Red Rivers. Major trading posts included those at Michilimackinac, La Baye, Lake Traverse, and Prairie du Chien.

“In 1787, the Dakota signed a written treaty with the Crown at Michilimackinac. The use of the calumet, wampum, and gift giving guaranteed this alliance in the eyes of the Dakota. Representatives of the Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Teton, Yankton, and Yanktonais were present. Signatories included Wabasha and Tatanka Mani. As part of the agreement, the Crown promised the Dakota would gain the “protection of the Great King.”

Articles of Peace at Michilimackinac, 12 July 1787, RG 10, Vol. 16, 157-60, Reel C-1224, Library and Archives Canada.

The Dakota pledged their allegiance to the British and, in terms written by the British, promised “*always to acknowledge next to the Great Spirit, the Great King of England their Father.*”

Articles of Peace at Michilimackinac, 12 July 1787, RG 10, Vol. 16, 157-60, Reel C-1224, Library and Archives Canada *ibid*

At this time, the British presented many gifts, including three hundred guns, fifty blankets, chiefs’ jackets, and many smaller presents. This renewal of the bond between the Dakota and the British government was the first written treaty to be signed between the Dakota Nation and the British Crown. Once again, this treaty was another nation-to-nation agreement, and did not extinguish Aboriginal title to their traditional land.

Building Kinship Relationships

While the political and economic ties to the British were important, the social and family bonds created through these relationships were equally important and influential for the Dakota Nation. By the nineteenth century, kinship and friendship ties between the European traders and Dakota were extensive and overlapping.

One prominent Dakota woman, Ista Totowin, married a trader in her territory. Ista Totowin was sister to Wahpeton leader Red Thunder. In 1797, she married Robert Dickson, a prominent trader in the area. It took many years before Dickson finally received permission to marry Totowin. Of Scottish origin, Dickson was distinguished by his fiery red hair and beard; the Dakota called him “Red Head.” Many fur traders like Dickson who operated in regions west of the Mississippi River were employed by British North American trade companies.

The Americans east of the Mississippi River grew increasingly disturbed by the presence of these traders in American territory, and they began to place restrictions on trade and the movement of goods. This restricted the Dakota to trading for inferior trade goods with American Companies.

With the transfer of lands through the Louisiana Purchase in 1805, it became illegal for Dickson, as a British trader, to remain in the newly American-controlled territory. However, Dickson remained with the Dakota, helping them when he could. Dickson did not take his responsibilities to his Dakota family lightly.

Dickson illegally brought supplies to a Dakota winter camp along the Mississippi numerous times. In 1811, he smuggled goods out of Queenston, Ontario, down the Ohio River to the Mississippi and Prairie du Chien, with the intention of trading these goods for profit. Arriving among the Dakota, he found many were starving. Dickson enlisted fellow traders to set up a trading post on Pike Island and issued all of his supplies as gifts. The traders were regarded as heroes among the Dakota for the life-saving British goods.

American Expansionism

Through to the early nineteenth century, the Western First Nations—like the Dakota, Fox, Sauk, Menominee, and Winnebago—had lived without much interference in their territories. When French and British traders entered Dakota territory, they found ways to live alongside each other in relative peace.

The Dakota had been promised by the British Crown that their lands would be protected and their land rights would be maintained.

As one example, the Americans and the British negotiated the Jay Treaty in 1795. Article III of the Jay Treaty declared the right of “Indians” to trade and travel between the United States and British North America (and later, Canada). This treaty demonstrated that both the British and American governments recognized that the rights and titles of First Nations people transcended the imposed geopolitical borders. Today, however, the American government continues to honour this treaty, while Canada denies that it is binding.

The Americans built forts and trading posts along important waterways, and every year the settlements by the new American pioneer families got closer and closer to First Nations lands. The new American settlements now existed all the way to the Dakota Nation territory. The settlers believed they had the right to the land.

This concept of “manifest destiny”—the belief that it was the destiny of America to expand and control North American lands—was growing amongst the American colonists. The Americans began to look northward, wishing to expand their territory into British-held lands.

The Dakota and the War of 1812

By 1812, American anger grew as the British Navy intercepted American ships trading with their European enemy Napoleon Bonaparte. The British confiscated goods and impressed American sailors to serve in the Royal Navy. These factors reinforced the American desire to

annex the Canadian colonies. With the British engaged in a long and costly conflict with Napoleon’s forces in Europe at this time, the Americans found an opportune moment to strike in North America. The British did not have the financial and military resources to fight a second war in North America. President Madison, spurred by Thomas Jefferson’s assessment that the invasion of Lower Canada would be “a matter of mere marching,” thought it would be a quick defeat. The population of the United States was around 7.5 million, while Canada’s was only approximately 600,000. However, the British engaged over 10,000 First Nations warriors to help them defend British North America.

Alerted to the fact that an impending war with the Americans was on the horizon, British Colonial officials inquired with Robert Dickson if “his friends” could be counted on for military support. Oral histories of the Dakota refer to the War of 1812 as *Pahin sha sha waçin uḡyanpi*, or “When the Red Head Begged for Our Help.”

Dickson facilitated communication between the Western First Nations (like the Dakota) and British forces, which was important. He related and renewed the land and peace promises of the British, and fought hard to make sure that the Dakota and other Western First Nations were receiving steady supplies throughout the war.

The expansion of American settlement had ushered in an era of harsh and often brutal takeovers of First Nations territory. Clearly, the original inhabitants of this territory had at least as much at stake in the rising conflict with the Americans. On June 18, 1812, the Americans officially declared war on the British.

This military offensive would later become known as the War of 1812, and was described by an American government representative of the time as a “land grab”—meaning that the Americans were looking to expand their territory into Canada.

British officers made explicit promises to the Dakota and other Western First Nations: fight alongside us, and we will ensure that your lands will be protected. This was repeated on many occasions, including by British Officer McDouall:

... the fertile countries which they have usurped only increase their appetite for fresh encroachment & you will gradually be driven beyond the setting sun. My children you possess the warlike spirit of your fathers—you can only avoid this horrible fate by joining hand in hand with my warriors in first driving the [Americans] from the Island.

Speech delivered by Lt. Colonel McDouall to the Indian Chiefs and Warriors at Michilmackinac, 5 June 1814, RG 8, C Series, Vol. 1219, 238-241, Reel C-3526, Library and Archives Canada.

As previously noted, many Americans thought the war would last only a few weeks, but it continued for two and a half years. Bloody battles and destructive invasions were fought on the Atlantic coast, along the Great Lakes and the Saint Lawrence River, and on the northwestern frontier in the territory of the Dakota Nation.

Protecting Their Nation through Alliance

The Dakota and other Western First Nations were key to the British military success. Dakota warriors played a significant role in the defense of traditional territory and the lands near the Mississippi River. Specifically, their support was integral for Michilimackinac above Lake Huron to Green Bay, and down the Mississippi Basin to Prairie du

Chien. This area includes parts of the province of Ontario and the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. Certainly, the Dakota fulfilled their promises as friends and allies of the British.

For the Dakota, the decision to fight for the British was not simply driven by their political alliance: it was also necessary for the protection of their families and territory.

As the war continued, the British promised that they would not sacrifice the Dakota’s interests in order to make peace with the Americans. At a gathering on January 18, 1813, Dickson proclaimed:

My Children, listen not to the Songs of wild birds who may tell you that the English will make Peace with the Enemy when it suits their own convenience without consulting your interest. My words are pledged to you that this will never happen.

Dickson, “Speech of Robert Dickson,” 223.

On July 18, 1812, the eve of the official commencement of the war, a force made mostly of First Nations warriors—totaling 400 of the total 550 men—crept into the American camp at Fort Michilimackinac under the cover of darkness. This included 100 Dakota men accompanied by Robert Dickson and other British, French, and Métis fur traders. At dawn, British allied forces demanded the Americans surrender. The Americans capitulated to the British force almost immediately, and the first battle was a success without spilling a drop of blood.

One month later, in August 1812, approximately 100 Dakota warriors joined the British forces in laying siege to Fort Detroit.

The force of approximately 1,300 included over 500 First Nations warriors. The Americans quickly surrendered, partially due to their fear of the large First Nations forces.

The Dakota continued to fight alongside the British throughout the duration of the war to protect their interests in their traditional territories. In July of 1814, the inhabitants of Prairie du Chien accompanied the British forces in the attempt to reclaim the fort at Prairie du Chien from the Americans. The settlement was mostly comprised of British and French Canadians, Métis, and First Nations, including many Dakota. Backed by the inhabitants, the British forces quickly recaptured the area. The fort was renamed Fort McKay, in honor of their commander Colonel McKay. The fort would remain under British control until the end of the war.

Contribution of Women and Children

Following the defeat of the Americans at Prairie du Chien, Chief Little Crow spoke to British officials at Michilimackinac about the heavy toll the war had on the Dakota people:

I have sent the Americans from La Prairie du Chien, and then I came here to drive them away. ... my Father, of my deeds, know that I and my Young Warriors have devoted our bodies to our Father the Red Head [Robert Dickson]... One half of our Nation have died of hunger with shreds of skin in their mouths.

Speech of Chetan Wakan mani or Little Crow, Chief of the Mdewkanton Sioux, June 1814, as an enclosure in Sir George Prevost to Lord Bathurst, 18 July 1814, Volume 157, Folio 12, Colonial Office 42, National Library and Archives of Canada.

As Little Crow demonstrates, Dakota women and children were not immune to the war. Women stayed in their communities to protect and provide for their families, and thus contributed to the war effort in their own way. Although they stayed behind from battle, these women hunted, fished, farmed, and gathered food. These activities could be dangerous, as American forces often destroyed their crops and raided their camps. Women therefore had the added responsibility of defending the home front.

As one example, on July 21, 1814, six American barges were found camped near Prairie du Chien, with the intent to launch a counter-attack. The inhabitants of Prairie du Chien attacked these Americans and many women jumped on the ships, beating back the Americans with hoes and setting fire to the decks.

Renewal of Commitments

As a representative of the British Crown, Robert Dickson held a series of councils with leaders of the Dakota, Ojibway, Saux, Fox, Shawnee, Huron, and Winnebago on January 18, 1813. Dickson was charged with distributing flags and medals to the First Nation allies. These medals acted as a symbol of the promises made by the British Crown to recognize First Nation contributions to the military campaign.

To ensure the First Nations allies of the commitments of the British Crown, Dickson spoke on behalf of the British King. He said:

My children with this Belt [of wampum] I call upon you to rouse up your young warriors and to join my troops with the Red coats and our ancient brethren the Canadians, who are also my Children, in order to defend your and our country... They must be told in a voice of thunder that the object of war is to secure to the Indian Nations the boundaries of their territories...

Dickson, "Speech of Robert Dickson," 223

First Nation leaders and warriors were frequently presented with medals by various representatives of the British Crown, at times following major conflicts, and other times at larger official medal ceremonies.

In 1814, the British ordered three different sizes of medals to be struck in silver to officially recognize the various First Nations contributions to the War of 1812. One side of the medal portrays the face of King George III. These King George III Indian Peace Medals were presented to First Nations leaders and principle warriors allied to the Crown.

These medals and the promises that accompanied them remain of great importance to the Dakota Nation following the War of 1812. For example, in the mid-nineteenth century, an American painter named George Catlin found Dakota Chiefs wearing medals that they received from their involvement in the War of 1812. Although some of these chiefs live several hundred miles south of the Canadian border, they still value their historical connection to the British Crown. One chief, who wore a highly polished medal, told Catlin: *Tell my great mother "Queen Victoria" that you saw our great father "King George III", and that they keep his face bright.*

Elder Robert Goodvoice of Wahpeton further demonstrates the importance of these stories:

The Dakotas, they have these medals. And these medals were made in England. And a man came from England, across the sea they said, across the big waters and brought them, brought the medals and the councilor's badges and these pledges and give it to the Dakotas. They were not made in Canada; the medal was made in England. So this is the only proof that they have that they are the people that fought side by side with Robert Dickson and his army but there is no record of it. And these stories used to be something, you know, people used to tell these stories as I am telling it now. I have heard it many times, different, by different people.

Interview with Robert Goodvoice, 15 June – 15 October 1977, Tape #IH-104/105, Transcript Disc 10, Transcript pages 1 to 5, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

The promises made by the British to the Dakota and other Western First Nations were growing increasingly difficult to fulfill. Robert Dickson remained in Prairie du Chien throughout the winter of 1814-15, trying to secure supplies for the Dakota from the British. In the end, Dickson's ties to his First Nations relatives overshadowed his relationship to the British. In his effort to feed hungry First Nation women and children with army supplies, he was accused of attempting to usurp the authority of the British military. He was tried and acquitted, but this ended his ties with the British military.

Unfulfilled Promises—Treaty of Ghent, 1814

To negotiate peace, British and American representatives met in modern-day Belgium on Christmas Eve, 1814. Here, they signed the Treaty of Ghent

which signified the end of the War of 1812. It was signed far from the First Nation representatives who had played such a significant part in the conflict itself.

In spite of the promises made and gifts presented to the Dakota and other First Nations on behalf of the British Crown, when it came time to negotiate peace, the First Nations did not participate. The American and the British governments decided on a land base for themselves—but the promise of the protection of the Dakota and First Nations homeland was forgotten by those in Europe.

Per Article 9 of the Treaty of Ghent of 1814, restoration of the sovereign position of the Dakota and other First Nations as had existed prior to the war was to be guaranteed. British officers expressed concern that the American government would not live up to these terms.

Lieutenant-Colonel McDonall, who helped secure Dakota allegiance to the British cause, expressed outrage and shame that the terms of the peace treaty did not live up to his repeated assurances to the First Nations. He wrote:

Instead of the flattering promises, which I was so lately instructed to make to them, being realized, the Whole Country is given up. A breach of faith is with them an utter abomination, and never forgotten.

McDonall, "Restitution of Posts," 104.

The British government tried to recognize the Dakota's contribution through the distribution of gifts at a gathering at Drummond Island in 1816. Here, the First Nations leaders voiced their anger that the British had failed to protect their traditional territories. The Dakota were insulted. They had risked their lives in fighting for the

British and had lost warriors and family members. They had not been at home to protect their families during this war period. After all of this, the British would not keep their promises - the very promises that prompted the Dakota to support them. Dakota Chief Little Crow stated that the Americans had spoken to the Dakota "*with a sword in their left hand, and a switch in their right, signifying that they would deprive us of our English traders and build Forts on our land, with or without our permission.*"

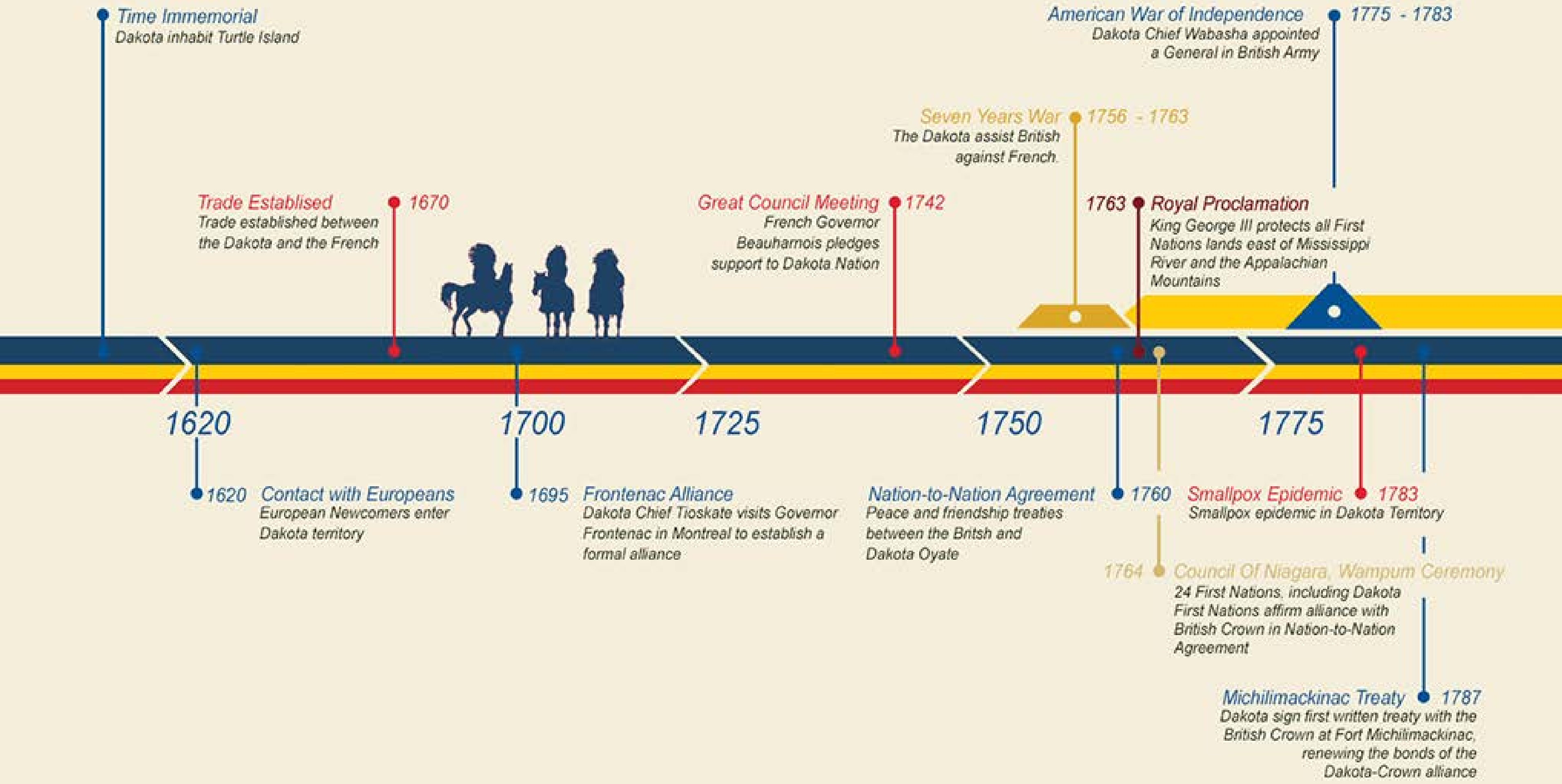
McKay, "Indian Council," 482.

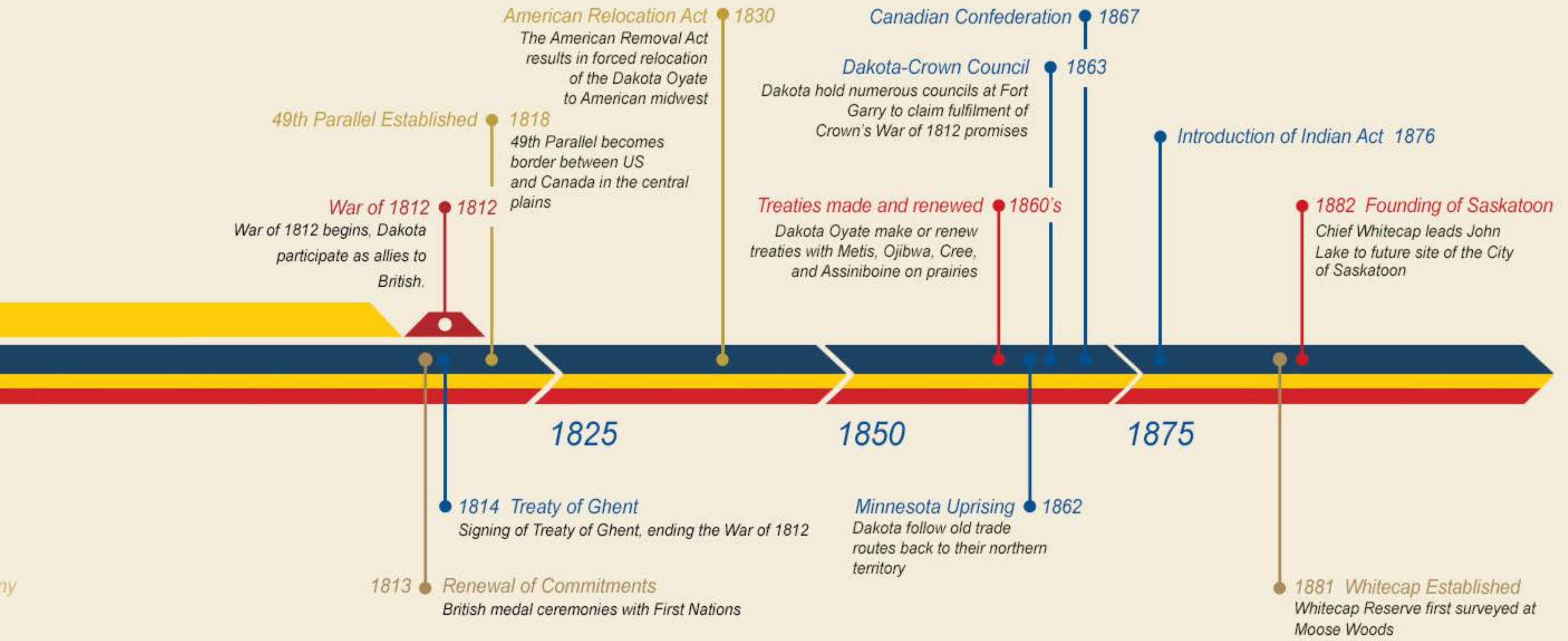
In 1818, a treaty signed between the United States and the British Crown, known as the Anglo-American Convention of 1818, officially established the border between the two nations along the 49th parallel from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. This agreement split the traditional Dakota territory between two imposed political boundaries.

Having revoked their promises, the British left the Dakota territory south of the 49th parallel, taking their traders and trade goods with them. The Dakota had neglected their harvests and hunts in fulfilment of their alliance to the British. Now they could not obtain the ammunition or goods that they had relied on to provide for their families.

Restrictions and Resistance

Following the end of the War of 1812, the American government began to enforce restrictive policies on the Dakota, which included the forced settlement onto reserve lands in order to free up the land for settlement. Particularly, American officials sought to stop First Nations from travelling north of the Medicine Line. The movement of the Dakota was becoming increasingly restricted.





In spite of these restrictions, many Dakota continued to follow their northern traditional trade and hunting routes throughout the seasons. This included travel into their traditional territory in present-day Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Dakota continued to trade with British traders and visit the Hudson Bay Company posts well into the 1840s.

Elder Velma Goodfeather from Standing Buffalo First Nation recalls stories told to her by her grandmother about this time: *“The Dakota moved in a cycle. They would come up north to Manitoba and go back down to Mississippi again.”*

Velma Goodfeather (Elder), Dakota Oversight Council meeting, January 12, 2012.

The Dakota continued to interact with the Métis and other First Nations in the British territories, building relationships and alliances with these Nations in order to maintain peace in their northern territories. An example of this is the Dakota-Métis peace treaty formulated in 1844 at Fort Garry. They also renewed the bonds of peace in a treaty with the Red River Saulteaux in 1860.

The map in Figure 2.3 is significant to the Dakota people, as it provides clear and unmistakable historical evidence that Dakota territory extends north of the 49th parallel. This map was produced for the British Parliament in 1857 and shows the geographic distribution of First Nations in North America. This map clearly delineates the “Sioux or Dahcotah” as occupying significant portions of land extending into what is now Western Canada. A letter accompanying the map describes their territory as follows:

Disregarding minor subdivisions, the remaining portion of the country included between the limits of the Algonquins

and the Rocky Mountains may be considered as in the occupancy of the Sioux, at the present day by far the most numerous and warlike native confederacy of North America. The Sioux are dominant over the vast prairie region watered by the Missouri and the upper waters of the Saskatchewan.

Fowler and Chesson, “Memorial to Mr. Labouchere,” 19-20.

Dakota Elders maintain that their entire traditional territory is actually much larger in size.

This “Aboriginal Map of North America” has been referenced and relied upon in a number of cases before the Supreme Court of Canada. Most recently, the Report was referred to by the Federal Court in its decision in *Daniels v. Canada*, 2013, FC 6. Discussing the establishment of the committee report, the Court stated: *“The Select Committee Report has already played a significant role in Canadian constitution law.”*

Daniels v. Canada, 2013, at para 297.

In 1830, American legislation called the “Indian Removal Act” was passed to give the president power to remove First Nations from their traditional lands and resettle them in the west. Although it was supposed to be voluntary, removal became mandatory—at times in the form of brutal forced marches in the dead of winter—whenever the federal government felt it necessary.

Eventually, the Americans forced the Dakota to sign treaties and resettle to inferior land in the state of Minnesota. The American government continually changed the terms of their treaties, took half the reservation back, and forced them to accept the new terms. As part of the

treaty terms, the Dakota were offered annuities of money, food, and trade goods. For years, the American government did not provide the Dakota in Minnesota with the annuity payments they were promised. Settlers had hunted the buffalo to the point of extinction, and food was often scarce. Many Dakota died, and many others were near the point of starvation. In the summer of 1862, a trader named Andrew Myrick told the starving Dakota that the Dakota people could “eat grass or their own dung.”

The restrictions imposed by the American government, along with unfulfilled promises, led to armed conflict that began in August 1862 in Minnesota and is referred to as the “Minnesota Uprising” or the “Dakota - US War of 1862.”

Following this war, the Dakota were pursued ruthlessly by American soldiers. Regardless of whether or not they participated in the war, nearly two thousand Dakota were marched 150 miles down the Minnesota River. In towns along the way, settlers attacked them with rocks, clubs, and knives, and poured hot water on the women and children. They reached a prison camp at Fort Snelling where they were kept until the spring of 1863. From there, they were transported to a reservation at Crow Creek, South Dakota. Hundreds of Dakota died on the march or while in prison.

Over three hundred Dakota men were tried in a few weeks. Most trials lasted five minutes, and the Dakota were denied legal representation. Three hundred and three prisoners were sentenced to death, even though their participation in the conflict was often unproven. Alerted to the impending atrocity against the Dakota, President Lincoln stepped in and reviewed the trial records. Lincoln commuted the death sentences of all but thirty-eight Dakota men. These thirty-

eight men were hanged in Mankato, Minnesota on December 26, 1862. This remains the largest mass execution in US history.

However, not all the Dakota people went to war against the United States. Many Dakota people, particularly the Sissetons and Wahpetons, were opposed to the war and wanted no part of it. Many of these Sissetons and Wahpetons—totalling nearly 1000—travelled north along their old trade routes across the Medicine Line, led by Chief Whitecap and Chief Standing Buffalo. They were later joined by Chief Little Crow. At Fort Garry in the winter of 1863, the Dakota leaders presented the flags and medals gifted to them by the British and quoted promises made during the War of 1812.

At this time, Little Crow reminded the British authorities that the Crown had promised if they ever got into trouble with the Americans they should appeal to the British, and “*the folds of the red flag in the north would wrap them round and preserve them from their enemies.*”

Diedrich, *Dakota Oratory*, 84.



King George III medal offered to the Dakota during the War of 1812

Aboriginal Map of North America

Arrowsmith, John.

“Aboriginal Map of North America Denoting the Boundaries and the Locations of Various Indian Tribes,” Report From the Select Committee on the Hudson Bay Company; Together with the Proceeding of the Committees, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index. Great Britain: Henry Hansard Printer. 1857, n.p. From Library and Archives Canada.

Portion in orange depicts Sioux-Dakota Territory.



Colonial officials did not recall the promises made to their allies. Told they were American Indians, the Dakota were ordered back over the imaginary border they helped create, and back to an enemy they once shared with their British allies. But they refused to return.

The Dakota believed their return to their northern territory meant a return to their way of life amongst their old allies. And in some ways it did. They lived in small migratory back and forth over the Medicine Line.

Through to the late 1880s, the group led by Chief Whitecap travelled widely around the plains, and occupied areas in Saskatchewan that included the Moose Mountains, Cypress Hills, the Qu'Appelle Valley, and the North and South River valleys. Chief Standing Buffalo's community came to settle in the Qu'Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan, while Chief Whitecap's community settled along the South Saskatchewan River.

Dakota Excluded from Treaty

By the time Canada officially acquired Rupert's Land from the HBC in 1870, the Dakota were well-established in their territory north of the 49th parallel. Many Dakota had built homes and supported themselves by working as labourers and farmhands. They also continued to trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. Dakota leaders requested an official land base, on par with other treaty First Nations in the newly-formed Canadian nation.

In the early 1870s, when Treaties One and Two were being negotiated, the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories and other government officials met

with Dakota leaders. In December 1871, Lieutenant Governor Archibald reported:

When I asked their business with me, they declared that they and their forefathers had always been faithful to the Crown ... They then placed on the ground a British flag and piled medals on it, and went on to say that they came to ask for that protection and for a piece of land to live on and cultivate. They were willing to take it anywhere the Queen chose to give it, but they wished to settle and to till the soil for a livelihood.

Adams G. Archibald to Joseph Howe, Secretary of State for the Provinces, 27 December 1871, RG 10, Series A, Vol. 363, Reel C-9596, Library and Archives Canada.

Chief Whitecap and other Dakota leaders met with Canadian officials at the negotiations for Treaties One through Six, requesting a land base for their people. The Crown negotiated Treaties One and Two (1871), Treaty Four (1874), and Treaty Six (1876), but excluded the Dakota Nation from these treaty negotiations even though the Dakota had traditionally occupied these treaty areas. In 1874, Treaty Commissioner French raised concerns that the treaty negotiations did not recognize the hunting territory of the Sioux, stating: *"This country is the recognized hunting ground and war path of the Sioux, Assiniboines and Black-foot tribes."*

Alexander Morris, Lieutenant Governor of the North West Territories, to the Minister of the Interior, 25 February 1876, RG 10, Vol. 3623, File 5046, Reel C-10108, Library and Archives Canada.

In spite of Dakota claims to this territory, the long history of alliance with the British, and promises made to the Dakota, Canadian officials took the stance that the Dakota were "American" Indians and had no legal standing for treaty. Instead of entering into a treaty with the Dakota, the Canadian federal government took the position that

reserve lands offered to the Dakota were not a right, but were provided on a humanitarian basis.

To the Dakota, there is a bitter irony in this: the Dakota had joined forces with the British to help successfully repel the Americans, only to then have their land abandoned by the British and given to the Americans as part of the peace that followed. The Dakota only became “American Indians” against their will and as the result of their betrayal by the British Crown.

The pronouncement that the Dakota were “American Indians” is contradicted by the historical evidence, including evidence provided by representatives of the Canadian government. In 1870, Canada’s First Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, acknowledged the existence of Sioux “country” in eastern Manitoba. Speaking in 1870 during debates concerning the Manitoba Act, McDonald stated:

The line was fixed at 96 degrees because a large body of the Sioux Indians, who were friendly of the Canadian Government, but opposed to the Red River authorities, dwelt to the east of that line and to hand them over to the new Province would not tend to promote friendly feelings towards the Canadian Government or give a peaceful passage to the troops through their country. If those Indians were handed over without any treaty being made with them, or without consulting their rights or wishes, they might cut off or seriously interfere with, communication between the head of Lake Superior and For Garry. For that reason they fixed the eastern boundary at the 96th meridian.

“Extracts from the Debates on the Manitoba Bill,” 201-02.

In September 1874, Dakota Chiefs Whitecap, Standing Buffalo, and Little Crow met Canadian government officials at Fort Ellice. Here, they expressed their loyalty to the Queen and their concern for the future. At this time, Chief Standing Buffalo stated that he wished to “*die like my father in the English country.*”

Report of an Interview between the Indian Commissioners and Certain Sioux at Fort Ellice, 21 September 1874, RG 10, Vol. 3609, File 3289, Reel C-10106, Library and Archives Canada.

The Chiefs were informed that the Canadian Government would provide each family with 80 acres of land despite the fact that First Nations families of five under Treaty Six in Saskatchewan received 640 acres.

Although Canadian officials refused to formally acknowledge the Dakota claim to traditional territories on the Canadian prairies, the Dakota continue to assert that they have a claim to this territory. Elder Sam Buffalo from Wahpeton First Nation asserted that the British promises constituted a treaty between the Dakota and the Crown:

We are the survivors of the Dakota minority movement. We are the descendants of the eastern generation. We will be the ancestors of the new generation ... The Dakota who are now residing in Canada won this right in the Seven Fire treaty with the British government in 1812. And this is why there was no hesitation for some of the Dakota people to enter into Canada.

Samuel Buffalo, 20 September, 1977, Tape #IH-118, Transcript Disc 12, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

SECTION THREE

Whitecap Dakota First Nation: A Story of Alliance, Resilience, and Success

In 1879, Chief Whitecap and his people settled in their current location twenty-six kilometers south of present-day Saskatoon. As previously discussed, a reduced land base was provided to Chief Whitecap and his followers as a result of the Canadian government's policy and practice toward the Dakota.

In the past, this area was known as "Moose Woods," and for many years the reserve was referred to locally as "Moose Woods" as well. The location for the Whitecap Dakota First Nation was known to the Dakota and other First Nations due to its ready supply of water, wood, wildlife, and traditional plants.

Living on a newly-created reservation meant a dramatic change from the life the Dakota had known. Despite having to adjust to these dramatic changes, the Dakota people still contributed to the world around them, reshaping their own community at the same time.

The Whitecap Dakota people continued to build friendships and alliances as a key to their continued success. Personal, trade, and labour relationships connected the Whitecap Dakota to their nearby communities. The residents of Whitecap had close connections to the nearby Metis community of Round Prairie, as well as

relationships with local settlers and residents of Dundurn and Saskatoon. In August of 1882, Chief Whitecap counseled John Lake on the location for a new temperance colony that would become the City of Saskatoon. Today, Chief Whitecap is recognized as one of the founders of this city. Chief Whitecap built a significant friendship with one of Saskatoon's first citizens, Gerald Willoughby.

During the Riel Resistance of 1885, Chief Whitecap negotiated with some of the Métis who were on their way to Batoche and intent on rising against Saskatoon residents. He successfully convinced them to peacefully bypass the Saskatoon residents, and accompanied members of his community travelling with the Métis to Batoche. Although he went along to provide guidance and counsel, Whitecap was arrested and tried for treason on the false belief that he had joined the resistance. Chief Whitecap was acquitted, partially due to the testimony of his Saskatoon friend, Gerald Willoughby, who attested that Whitecap was truthful, honest, and loyal to the Crown.



June Eagle, pictured at the 1959 Exhibition.

-Photo courtesy of June Eagle.

Elder June Eagle tells us about what daily life was like when she was a child:

"My dad and the boys were farming. We had horses. They used to help each other. Our mom used to stay up and cook and bake all night and take it out to the fields. Made mostly hay....For me it was easy because I was the youngest and I was spoiled. The boys had to work hard, When I first went to school my dad would make the boys saddle up the horses. He would drive me to school and make them walk. I guess he wanted to toughen them up.... We hardly went to town. My dad was the only one that ever went for groceries and that. We had two great big gardens when we grew up. I remember that very well because my sister and I would do the gardens. We had one just behind where the Band Office is. We had two gardens. We had real good meals."

Family and Social Life

Kinship and family bonds are greatly valued in Dakota culture and each family member contributed to daily life, ensuring the success and survival of the family and community. In the early days of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, this was essential, as there were many chores that needed to be done in order to make it through the year.

Most families grew their own food in community gardens and supplemented their income by raising cattle or making hay to sell to nearby farmers. Hunting, fishing, and gathering of traditional foods and medicines continued to be essential for survival. Raising cattle and horses was an early and longstanding industry for the Whitecap Dakota.

Everyone had a special way to contribute to the well-being of the community, whether it was through their hard work in the fields or in the home.

The cattle industry at Whitecap was thriving, with horses sold to the stock yards in nearby Saskatoon. The community maintained over 200 head of cattle from the late nineteenth century through to the 1930's, when the community lost access to their grazing lands with the transfer of these lands to the province.

The Whitecap community also maintained their traditions as horse people, raising horses and training them to ride and work. Families used horses daily for farming, travel, and for the Sunday rodeos held by the community each summer.

Elder Iona Starr grew up on Whitecap and describes the special role her grandmother had as a midwife in the community:

My grandmother was a midwife. I was delivered right at home. She used to be on call. I used to sleep with my grandmother all the time. In a big iron bed, nice and soft. I would go to sleep early and other people would be visiting with an oil lamp on. I would make shadows on the wall.

Iona Starr (Elder), Verna Buffalo, Ken Horsman & Jarita Greyeyes, April 25, 2012.

Although children may have entertained themselves by making shadow puppets in the days before television or the Internet, there were also many community gatherings. These community gatherings were an important part of life at the Whitecap Dakota First Nation.

Up to the mid-twentieth century, events that brought the community together included cultural ceremonies and community dances.



Ray and Roy Bear at Whitecap, 1951.

Elder Iona Starr recounts the dances that were held in Whitecap:

There were lots of dances. Every time there was going to be an event they would have a caller go from house to house and let everyone know. "Counting Pails"—kind of like a potluck—he would tell everyone what to bring. Not just a round dance, other dances that they danced—it was called Dakota one step, and two step, rabbit dance, round dance. Melvin Littlecrow used to be one of the callers and everyone would dance. They didn't have a hall so they would always dance at my kungsi's (grandmother's). We had a two room house, like a warehouse. All the beds would be taken out and benches brought in, and food brought in ... New Year's Eve dance all the same dances again, just before midnight, a man dressed up in raggedy clothes like a gunnysack or those things. He would have a sign on his back with the past year, and he would dance around. Then another man would come in with new clothes and he would dance around with a New Year's placard on his back, then they would have a scuffle and he would kick the old man out. Then they would go in a circle and everyone would shake hands. Then everyone would disperse and have lunch.

Iona Starr (Elder), Verna Buffalo, Ken Horsman & Jarita Greyeyes, April 25, 2012.

The dances were a time to visit with friends and family. These community events often took place during the holidays and were particularly special times for those whose children had gone to residential school. Holidays from school, when children were permitted to return home to see their parents and extended relatives, were rare.



Tom Bear, ca. 1950



William Littlecrow, Jimmie Littlecrow, and William Eagle building a log house. Through the mid-twentieth century, people of Whitecap Dakota First Nation built their own homes on the reserve, or would volunteer to build homes for those who could not build their own. They were made of logs that were filled with the combination of fine hay and plaster. They would re-plaster the houses every year.



Boys of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, August 1911. Photograph [LH-4070] courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library Local History Room.

Military Contribution

Over the decades that passed, the Whitecap Dakota maintained their alliance to the Crown. This was particularly evident during World War II when seven members of the small Whitecap community volunteered to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. The community also made regular donations to the war effort.



Harold Littlecrow
ca. 1940

One of these young volunteers in World War II never made it home. Harold Littlecrow was killed in battle in France after saving the life of his fellow soldier. The man he saved—D. Charles MacDougall—wrote to a local newspaper. Here is a portion of MacDougall's recollection:

I first met Sapper Harold Littlecrow early in September 1943 when I was posted to No 2 Platoon, 11th Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers. At that time the company was stationed in Storrington, south England. He introduced himself as Harold Littlecrow. ...I'll never forget his friendly smile which seemed to go well with his tan coloured face. ...

Our division landed in Normandy on July 7, 1944. The front was about 10 to 12 miles inland near Caen. It took the division two days to land and assemble. We then proceeded to the front. On the way we would stop for a brief rest and then continue on. The closer we got the more shells we encountered. ...

In late July we were well into the thick of things. The weather was extremely hot and dry, making our chemically treated battle dress very uncomfortable. The objective of the 2nd Division was to sweep down a valley and capture a village. British troops flanked our right which was high, wooded ground. The 3rd Canadian Division flanked our left which was similar terrain. The British had tough slugging. From the high ground to our right and left we were sitting ducks as mortars peppered the area constantly. ...Our section was ordered into the village which was in No Man's Land. We had to check for mines and booby traps. ... By 2pm enemy fire had increased with great intensity.

We could see that the village was being heavily shelled. So was the area separating the front line from the village. We decided, however, to go back and get our section out. We got in the truck and proceeded.

The shelling was unbelievable but we made it into the village with its narrow cobbled streets. ... We then drove back some distance and parked in an apple orchard. Everyone started digging in. Harold Littlecrow was digging his trench just behind the tailgate. I had been wearing the same socks for nineteen days so I took this moment to change. I was seated in the metal bench of the truck when heavy shelling started again. An 88-mm artillery shell struck the rear of the truck. I don't know if I was blown out of the truck or if I jumped. Anyway, I landed in Harold's slit trench. I was covered in blood. Blood was pouring down my hands and down my legs. I recall seeing two of our men dead (Arsenault and Cooke). I asked Harold if he was O.K. He said 'My stomach hurts a bit, but it isn't much'. He then proceeded to tie the bandages to slow the bleeding. I then passed out.

The next thing I knew I was on a stretcher jeep. I faintly remember Harold on a stretcher unconscious beside me. We arrived at a battlefield station and were placed in a field under the scorching sun. I remember an English doctor cutting a hole in my right ankle looking for a vein so I could receive blood. A Scottish padre gave me the last rites. I then fell unconscious.

I never saw my Indian friend again. I learned later that he had died of wounds that day. His stomach wound was worse than he had let on to me. He must have been in great pain when he tended me. He cared for me before he even thought of himself. If I had not received his attention, I would certainly have bled to death. I owe him my life.

But that was Harold's way. Thinking of others but never of himself. Like the people he sprang from, he had a courageous heart and gentle spirit. His love for life and fellow men beamed all over when he smiled. He had a face that you could read and draw courage from. Part of me was buried with him. I shall always remember him and pray for him.



Prince Edward greets WDFN Korean War Veteran Willis Royal at the unveiling of the Spirit of Alliance monument in Saskatoon. Sept 19, 2014

Going to Town—Saskatoon and Dundurn Connections

In the days before the car, trips to town were rare. The closest town to Whitecap was Dundurn, and this was the place where people would go for their mail or shopping. Some Whitecap Dakota members also did odd jobs there, or sold hay, fire wood, and fence posts.

On occasion, trips to Saskatoon also took place, with men taking their goods to sell in the city. They often completed the journey on horseback or wagon. Elder Melvin Littlecrow provides a snapshot of this time, along with other important details of life in the Whitecap community in the mid-twentieth century:



Photo courtesy of Melvin Littlecrow.

It took four and a half hours to get to town [Saskatoon], and then we would stay overnight over there and then come back again the next day. It took another four and a half hours to get home. We took loose hay—didn't have any bales in those days. We sold hay to the milk delivery and garbage pick-up—they used to use horses for delivery and pick-up in those days.

The hay was stacked in the haylands. We would make hay in the summertime using horse power. One pile would probably be eight or nine tonnes. A contraption called a stacker would lift up the hay. Horses would pull the load up and dump it, then they would back up and it would land on the ground. Another team of horses would push it onto the stacker. Then the horses would back up and the other guy would take off. Another guy would be on top of the haystack keeping it level.

We sold it to different barns. One was on Broadway Avenue. And another was downtown where there were livery stables—right where the River Landing is now, across from the Farmer's Market on 19th Street. You could board your horses there for however long you needed. And that's where you'd sell hay because the livery owner has to feed those horses. And there were boarding houses we would stay in in the same area.

In Dundurn we used to sell posts and willow pickets at the grocery store - they'd take posts in trade for groceries. So people would haul wood. Even the café itself had a wood burning stove.

There was no power in those days for electric stoves and all that—wood burning cook stoves was all they'd cook on.

We would sell wood to Dundurn and hay mostly to Saskatoon. We would get anywhere from \$15-18 for a load. A load was close to a tonne. Isn't much money today, but back in those days you could get by. In Saskatoon we would pick up groceries and whatever you need.

The reserve would have one mailbox in Dundurn for the whole reserve, and my Uncle Paul used to go get the mail once a week. He'd use a saddle horse, and bring it back to my grandpa's place (Harry Littlecrow). He was the Chief then. And people would come there and pick up their mail. The Chief would also distribute rations once a month. He would pick them up from Dundurn off the train. We would go there with a wagon and come back with a box full of tea, sugar, bacon, salt, flour. He would weigh it and divide it and distribute it monthly from his house.

He was responsible for the permit system too. You needed it to sell hay, posts, wood, or anything like that. They did away with that in the late 60's, early 70's. He recorded everything on paper, and you had to give a permit slip to the person you were selling to. He had to submit copies of everything to the Indian Agent. Even to sell horses or cattle you had to get a permit—for anything you sell. Even if you wanted to butcher your own cattle, you had to notify the Chief. He would count them all every month - horses too. I remember helping grandpa at one time counting horses on the reserve, and there was over 100 head - 110, I think it is. In those days, everyone had horses for horse power, travel, and work.

I remember one time too—I don't know if there was a shortage of horses—but they bought 50 head of horses from Hanley, the next town south of Dundurn. They would break and train them and use them for work.

Melvin Littlecrow (Elder), interview by Stephanie Danyluk, May 8, 2014.



Whitecap community participating in the Saskatoon Exhibition Parade. ca. 1940. Photo courtesy of Melvin Littlecrow (pictured second from right).

Another example of Whitecap's social interactions with the residents of Saskatoon occurred at Pion-Era, a multi-day festival put on by the Saskatoon Western Development Museum. The celebration was started in 1955 in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the province.

In the early days of the festival, many people from the Dakota communities would contribute to the festival by camping in a tipi village. Pion-Era included the participation of people from the First Nations surrounding the City of Saskatoon from 1956 to 1969. June Eagle says of the Pion-Era days:

Western Development Museum in Saskatoon put it on for a whole week. They showcased all the old machinery. People from Thunderchild [First Nation] would come too. Virginia and I used to sell pemmican. We had dances there. There was a tipi village.

June Eagle, Verna Buffalo, Ken Horsman & Jarita Greyeyes, April 25, 2012.

Pion-Era was a time when the Dakota people educated and interacted with their settler neighbours.

Education

Education is important to the people of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation. Traditionally, children were educated within their extended families. This changed forever with the introduction of a European-style education system.

In 1888, Whitecap members petitioned the federal government for an on-reserve day school. Whitecap has operated a school on its lands ever since the construction of this day school. Many Whitecap students have become teachers themselves. The first Whitecap member to teach on the reserve was Charles Red Hawk, who taught at the day school in the early 1900's.

However, many Whitecap students were also forced to attend residential schools, with some going to Regina, Duck Lake, Prince Albert, and Brandon, Manitoba.

Students in front of the day school at Whitecap Dakota First Nations, circa 1892.

Back row (left to right):

Charlie Eagle, Jackie Baker, Lucy Littlecrow, Dan Eagle, Masy Whitecap

Middle row (left to right):

Wabidoo Hawk, Joseph Chuncn, Beck Whitecap, Joe Hawk, Sam Buffalo, Emma Littlecrow, Lizzie Hawk

Front row (left to right):

Jim Whitecap, David Hawk, Nellie Whitecap, Eddie Whitecap, John Poordog

Photograph [LH-4080b-2] courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library – Local History Room.



The residential school system was designed to “take the Indian out of the child” by forcibly removing children from their home communities, and forbidding them to speak their language or otherwise express their culture in any way. Incidents of abuse at such institutions were common, and the intergenerational traumatic effects from residential schools can still be felt today.

Elder Willis Royal describes his experience:

The odd time I ran away. It was wrong of them to tell me my traditions were all evil, and shouldn't be following that. I talked English. You would get punished if you talked to another student in your own language.

Willis Royal (Elder), Jarita Greyeyes, May 10, 2012.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which concluded in 2015 after years of hearings and testimony from thousands of residential school survivors, explored the history and legacy of the residential school system. As the report says, reconciliation is not a “one-time event,” but is instead a “multi-generational journey that involves all Canadians” in schools and beyond.

Today, with a growing community and increased economic development, the role of education continues to be a high priority for the Whitecap Dakota First Nation. The current Whitecap Dakota Elementary School was built by the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in 1996. Dakota language and culture are infused into the curriculum at all levels of education.



Whitecap
Dakota
Elementary
School

Whitecap Dakota Leadership

Just as the education experience of Whitecap Dakota First Nation members has changed, so, too, has the process by which leadership is selected. It has only been recently that the leaders of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation have been elected. Previously, leaders were chosen based on their skills and abilities by a group of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and leaders remained in their positions for many years.

In 1979, Whitecap changed from a traditional leadership selection system to the Band Custom Elections Act Chief and Council election system. Today, Whitecap has one Chief and two council members who are elected by their fellow community members.

Elder Melvin Littlecrow explained:

My grandfather (Harry Littlecrow), he was Chief for twenty-eight years. He became Chief in the late 1940s. They weren't elections at that time, just recommended by Elders of the reserve.

Melvin Littlecrow (Elder), Jarita Greyeyes, May 10, 2012.

In 1959, Whitecap Dakota First Nation Chief Littlecrow granted Prime Minister John Diefenbaker the honorary name Tatanka Mani (Walking Buffalo) at the inauguration of the construction of the Gardner Dam near Outlook, Saskatchewan.



Crowd at Outlook, SK watches as Chief Littlecrow places headdress on Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker, naming him Chief Walking Buffalo, May, 1959.
University of Saskatchewan Diefenbaker Archival Collections, JGD3451

The inauguration of the dam was a big event, drawing hundreds of people. Members of the Whitecap community performed traditional dances as part of the ceremony. During his speech, Diefenbaker stated: *“The Sioux [Dakota] history has been one of honour to your race and great distinction to this country.”*

Transcript of an Address by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, at the Inaugural Construction of the South Saskatchewan Dam, Outlook, Saskatchewan, 27 May 1959, Diefenbaker Archival Collections, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Whitecap Dakota First Nation Today

The leadership of the Whitecap community and Chief and Council have led to many positive developments over the past few decades. Whitecap Dakota’s social and economic success is attributed to its commitment to the spirit of alliance, since many of their projects began with partnerships in the local business community and with public institutions.

The Whitecap Dakota people have a long tradition of being hardworking and self-sufficient. For almost 140 years, the federal government’s Indian Act created legislative obstacles to hinder success. This legislation affected their ability to continue this tradition of self-reliance, limiting their participation in the mainstream economy. However, through resourcefulness, creativity, and entrepreneurial vision, Whitecap now serves as a business development leader in Canada today.

At Whitecap, the focus is on what is possible. This “can-do” approach by the Whitecap Dakota people has been fostered by bringing forward the proud, hard-working history of the Dakota people and applying this today. For over two decades, the community has worked together to bring greater fiscal accountability, transparency,

sustainability, and good governance. The First Nation has experienced economic success, which has brought innovative community programs, increased employment opportunities, and continuous housing and business development.

Elder Willis Royal says of the changes:

A big difference right now from how we started. Now we have lots of housing, no more log cabins. It changed quite a bit. Now they got a casino. Not only that we even have the [health] clinic. There will be a dentist office, a doctor’s office.

Willis Royal (Elder), Jarita Greyeyes, May 10, 2012.

Key to the rise of Whitecap’s economy was the establishment of a land tenure system through the First Nation Land Management Act, which enabled Whitecap to self-govern its lands and eliminate 25% of the Indian Act. Through this self-governing legislation, Whitecap developed its own Land Code, enabling the First Nation to govern their lands and resources. Currently, Whitecap is negotiating a self-government agreement with the Government of Canada, which will help the community to further displace the Indian Act.

This legislative capacity, coupled with the investment in modern infrastructure, has opened the doors to economic activity and job creation on Whitecap lands. Another key taken from the past and brought forward to today has been the aforementioned ability to create alliances. In turn, Whitecap’s diversified economic development strategy emphasizes partnerships.

The Dakota Dunes Golf Links is a great example of one of these partnerships. Through economic alliance, the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, and the Lac La Ronge First Nation created the world-class golf course that opened in 2004 (Dakota Dunes Golf and Country Club was recently ranked fifteenth in Canada's public courses in Golf Digest Magazine's February 2013 issue).

This was followed by the 2007 opening of the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) Dakota Dunes Casino. This partnership benefits all 74 Saskatchewan First Nations since over a third of the profits from all SIGA casinos are split among these First Nations.

Their economic success has enabled Whitecap to invest millions in the following infrastructure: commercial water and sewer services, three-phase power, expanded natural gas capacity, a cell tower, high-speed fibre connectivity, telecommunications services, paved roads, and street lights.

In addition to infrastructure, Whitecap initiated many projects to improve the quality of life for community members. Projects include the construction of a new elementary school, a health centre, a fire hall, a RCMP sub-office, over 100 new housing units, a new public works facility, and a new convenience store.

Future economic activity includes continued resort development, business park development, the construction of a 160 room hotel, and a new club house. Other recreational and light industrial developments are included in the plans.

Whitecap has continued to build lasting relationships with surrounding communities through tourism partnerships and agreements with Saskatoon Fire Department, the Saskatoon Board of Education, Saskatoon Health Region and the Saskatoon Tribal Council, as well as Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Governments.

The results of this economic strategy are considerable economic benefits not only for the Whitecap community and its members, but for the entire region. To date, construction for economic ventures and infrastructure have created approximately \$100 million of capital investment and created over 600 jobs.

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation is putting economic vision into action. It is redefining the way business is done on First Nations lands and, as a result, a transformation of a people is underway. Today, the Whitecap Dakota First Nation is a meeting place for people of all backgrounds to acquire knowledge and share experiences in the twenty-first century.

The core lesson is that building economies is a cumulative enterprise. It is the product of time, hard work, partnership, risk, and leadership. Aware of the strength of its past, the Whitecap Dakota First Nation wishes to see the same qualities carried forward into a new era of prosperity.

The "Founders Statue" representing the meeting between Chief Whitecap and John Lake, located in downtown Saskatoon, SK.

Commissioned by WDFN in recognition of the 125th Anniversary of this historic meeting, the statue was erected in 2008.





Prince Edward participated in the unveiling of Whitecap Dakota First Nation's War of 1812 Monument "Spirit of Alliance" at Saskatoon River Landing on September 19, 2014.

The Crown Recognizes Their Dakota Allies

Although the Crown effectively betrayed and abandoned their Dakota allies following the War of 1812, the representatives of the Crown and Canada have recently recognized their alliance with the Dakota.

For their loyalty to the Crown and their contributions to laying the foundation for Canada, the Dakota were recently honoured at multiple national events alongside other Canadian Aboriginal groups with heritage links to the War of 1812. On May 22nd, 2012, Prince Charles presented a commemorative banner to the Whitecap Dakota First Nation at the Royal York Armoury.

On October 25, 2012, Chief Darcy Bear was presented a War of 1812 medal by the Government of Canada to commemorate the Dakota-British alliance.

Prince Edward unveiled the Whitecap Dakota First Nation's War of 1812 monument titled "Spirit of Alliance" at a public event at Saskatoon's River Landing on September 19, 2014. The Crown's recognition of the Dakota's contributions and commitment to their alliance is a significant step toward reconciliation.

As detailed on the following page, multiple places in the region commemorate the Dakota contribution to our local and regional history.

Conclusion

The Whitecap Dakota First Nation has flourished in spite of the many challenges faced over time. The physical infrastructure of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation is important, but the strong sense of community and kinship has been the real foundation for a thriving population.

The development and growth of the Whitecap community through resilience and alliance shows that the leaders of today are as committed to a vision for a new and improved life for the Dakota people as their ancestors were. This ensures the traditional cultural values of the Whitecap Dakota - such as respect, alliance, and resilience - will persist into the future. The people of the Whitecap Dakota First Nation of Saskatchewan have maintained a connection to their proud past and Dakota history.



CHIEF
WHITECAP TRAIL

The 71- kilometre span of Highway 219 between Saskatoon and Lake Diefenbaker was officially named Chief Whitecap Trail in 2009—the first in the province to be named after a First Nations leader.

A committed group of local rural municipalities came together with WDFN and the City of Saskatoon to partner with the Government of Saskatchewan for the construction and name designation of the highway. Chief Whitecap Trail was the result of many partners coming together in the spirit of reconciliation.



CHIEF
WHITECAP
WATERWAY

In 2015, the portion of the South Saskatchewan River that extends between the Gardiner Dam and the City of Saskatoon was designated as Chief Whitecap Waterway. Chief Whitecap Waterway is a part of the Trans Canada Trail and spans over 100 kilometers of water trail.

The official Trans Canada Trail designation was the result of a partnership between WDFN, Tourism Saskatchewan, and Lake Diefenbaker Tourism.

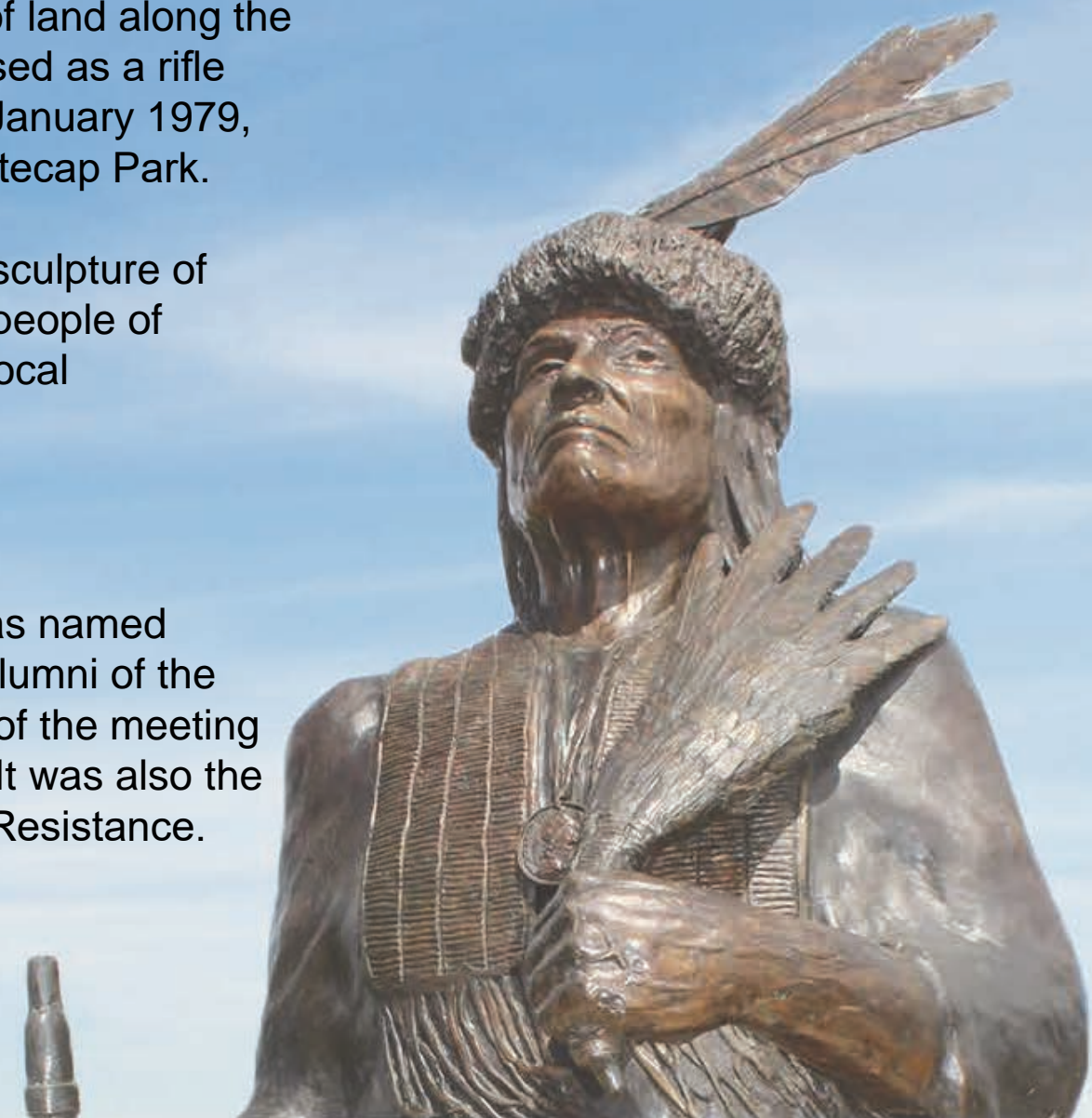
CHIEF
WHITECAP
PARK

In 1961, the City of Saskatoon bought 350 acres of land along the South Saskatchewan River. This land had been used as a rifle range by the Department of National Defense. In January 1979, Saskatoon City Council officially named Chief Whitecap Park.

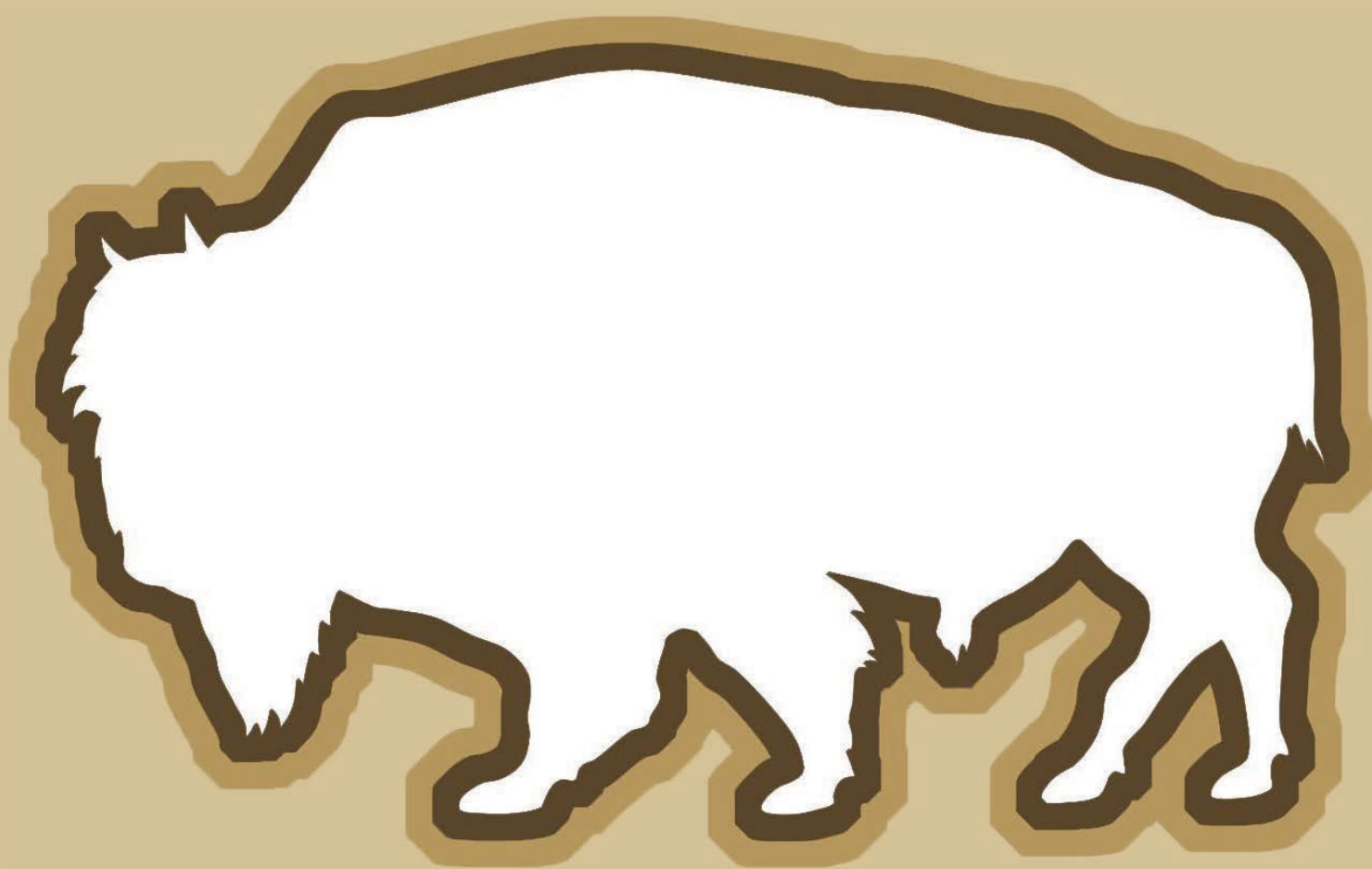
In 2005, Whitecap Dakota First Nation donated a sculpture of Chief Whitecap in recognition of the role that the people of Whitecap Dakota First Nation have played in our local history.

CHIEF
DARCY BEAR
PARK

The park near Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon was named Chief Darcy Bear park in 2015. Chief Bear is an alumni of the Nutana High school. The site is near the location of the meeting between John Lake and Chief Whitecap in 1882. It was also the site of a field hospital during the 1885 Northwest Resistance.



APPENDIX I



The Legend of the White Buffalo

One summer a long time ago, the seven sacred council fires came together and camped. The sun was strong and the people were starving for there was no game. Two young men went out to hunt. Along the way, the two men met a beautiful young woman dressed in white who floated as she walked. One man had bad desires for the woman and tried to touch her, but was consumed by a cloud and turned into a pile of bones.

The woman spoke to the second young man and said, "Return to your people and tell them I am coming." This holy woman brought a wrapped bundle to the people. She unwrapped the bundle, giving to the people a sacred pipe and teaching them how to use it to pray. "With this holy pipe, you will walk like a living prayer," she said. The holy woman told the Dakota/Lakota/Nakota about the value of the buffalo, the women and the children. "You are

from Mother Earth", she told the women. "What you are doing is as great as what the warriors do."

Before she left, she told the people she would return. As she walked away, she rolled over four times, turning into a white female buffalo calf. It is said after that day the Dakota/Lakota honoured their pipe, and buffalo were plentiful (from John Lame Deer's telling in 1967).

There are slight variations of this story in each community today. The belief is that the holy woman was sent from the Buffalo nation with the sacred pipe and instructions on how to care for it, to the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota people. She brought the seven sacred rites to our people. With these, she gave instructions to the men on how to dance the Sun Dance, how to fast for a vision quest, instructed them in the sweat bath (Inikagapi), the Taking of Relatives (Hunkapi) and reminded them to always treat women with respect.

She instructed the women on how to conduct the spirit-keeping ceremonies and told them to remember her in the coming of age ceremony (White Buffalo Calf Ceremony). She told women it was their job to take care of the dead, how to be good mothers and grandmothers.

The examples brought to our people are the essence of our Dakota people. The virtues that govern our conduct are bravery, generosity, patience or long suffering and moral integrity. Teachings were reinforced on industry, humility and proper parenting for the women.

Families First: Ehaŋna Dakota Hok in Ica yapi, 1999.

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