



WAHPETON DAKOTA NATION

THE STORY
OF THE DAKOTA
OYATE IN CANADA



Portrait of Wahpeton Dakota Nation British King George III War of 1812
Pre-Confederation Treaty Medal

The Dakota Oyate of Saskatchewan

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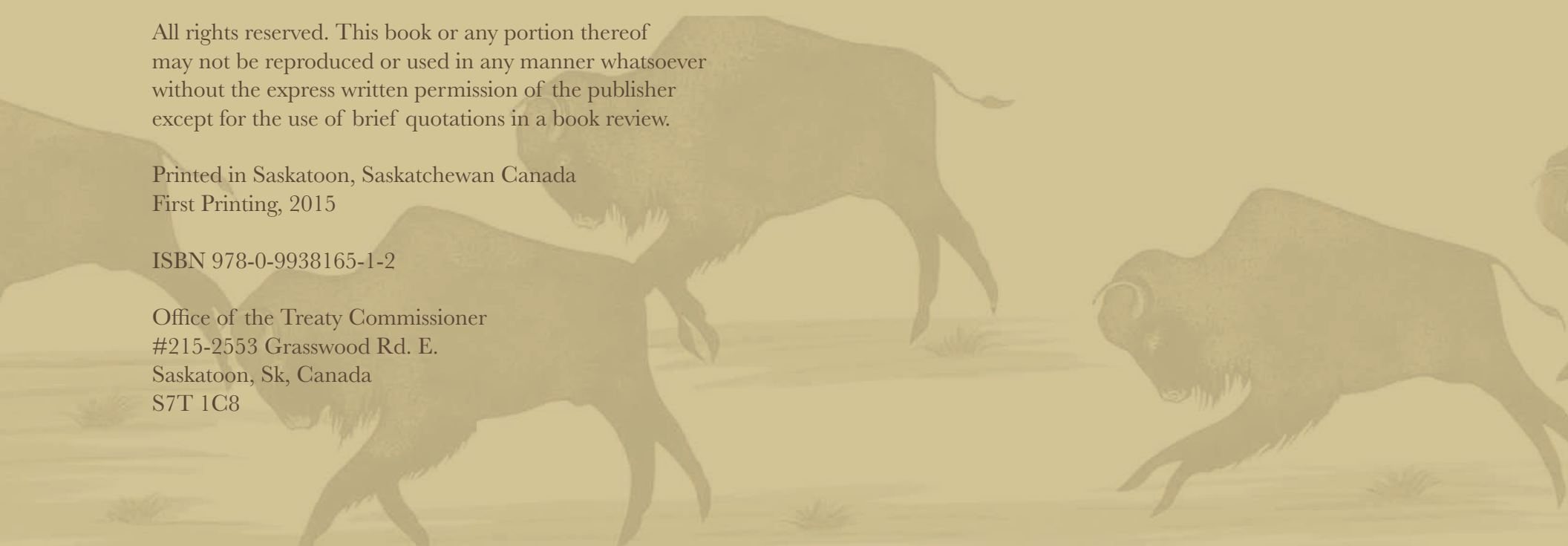


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Preface

This book tells the story of the people of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation. It is written for students so they will understand and appreciate the history and contributions of the Wahpeton people. It briefly summarizes the early history of the Wahpeton people and draws extensively from the work of Dr. Leo Omani, Chief of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation, in his Doctoral Dissertation, 2010, and the Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community History Report, 2012.

This book is not an academic or original research document. The purpose of this book was to take the information and stories told to Dr. Leo Omani by the Dakota Elders for his Doctoral Dissertation and compile it with the information contained in the Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community History 2012, including that gained from the Dakota Oversight Council group discussion in January 2012, so that students and teachers of Saskatchewan would have a resource to support their understanding of the contributions of First Nations people to Saskatchewan and Canada. It accompanies the Teacher's Guide and supplies students with accessible resources.

Thank you for taking the time to read this material and learn more about the history and people of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation.

Dedication

Dakota Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, and the Chief of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation have guided the work in this book. This book is dedicated to these Knowledge Keepers, past and present. It is through these Knowledge Keepers that the Oral Tradition of the Dakota has survived through the generations. We are thankful that they shared their knowledge and their recollections of the stories contained within this book. It is the wisdom of the Knowledge Keepers that the community members hope will be passed on to future generations.

Special Acknowledgement to the many Elders and Knowledge Keepers, community members and leaders, researchers and writers for their contribution to the development of this book. Some share the Oral Tradition, others provided edited for accuracy purposes, others provided pictures contained within the document and others provided research, writing and editing services – to all those who made this project a truly authentic story of the Dakota people of Wahpeton for the voice of the Dakota – we thank you.

Elders:

Velma Buffalo

Sam Buffalo

Lorne Waditaka

Kenneth Crowe

Linda Buffalo

John Waditaka

Senator Bernice Waditaka

Other contributors: Dr Mary Marino, Dr Clint Wheeler, Dr Doug Elias, Dan Beveridge, Chief Dr Leo J. Omani, and Bev Waditaka.

Acknowledgements

Leo. J. Omani. (2010). Perspectives of Saskatchewan Dakota/Lakota Elders on the Treaty Process within Canada. Retrieved Jan. 26, 2015.

<http://www.wahpetondakotadev.com/storage/LeoOmaniDissertation2010.pdf>

Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community History, 2012. Retrieved Jan. 26, 2015.

http://www.wahpetondakotadev.com/storage/wahpeton-links/WDN-community-history-report_optimised.pdf

The Wahpeton Dakota Nation – A Strong History, A Thriving Future

The Dakota are *tiyospaye*, distinct family of First Nations people who are part of the original seven bloodlines of O@eti Baúowiñ.

This history will give more information about the people that make up the Wahpeton Dakota Nation. It may also show how history was interpreted through the eyes of the Wa'si'cu or Whiteman. Stories are told in the narratives and the faces and the actions of the people.

You, the reader, can decide the effects that this interpretation has had on the people of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation and the history of Saskatchewan.

The Wahpeton Dakota Nation traditional territory includes what is now known today as north-central Saskatchewan, in particular within the geographical area that now overlaps the Saskatchewan plains or farmland and the forest. The Dakota people of Wahpeton had been living in and around this area for hundreds of years. Point of historical interest, upon European settle of what has come to be known as the city of Prince Albert, the campsites of the Dakota people of Wahpeton could be found on both sides of the North Saskatchewan River of where the city of Prince Albert is now located, corresponding to the following locations: Little Red River Park (94B), Peter Pond Trading Post, Cooke Municipal Golf Course, Carlton High School, Miller's Hill and a few other places,

as supported by the following Elder's quote:

"It was also said by our older Dakota relatives that our ancestors of Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye had once made their main campsite on a plateau above that now known as the Cosmo Lodge in the Little Red River Park, which is located across the North Saskatchewan River from that now known as the city of Prince Albert. Further, our older Dakota relatives also said the French had built a trading post called Fort-a-la-Corne not too far down river just passed Wakpa-O-Ze-Te, that's where the North Saskatchewan River and the South Saskatchewan River meet."

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 174, 2010).

The Wahpeton Dakota Nation is the farthest north of the three Dakota bands in Saskatchewan (Standing Buffalo, Whitecap, and Wahpeton) and is a member of the Prince Albert Grand Council.



Figure 1

Left to right, back row: Goodshield, Henry Crowe, John Waditaka, Jim Black, Herb Buffalo, unknown, unknown, Ernest Goodvoice, Willie Gunn.
Front row: Children – Unidentified. ca. 1909



Figure 2 (above)
Tatankamaza – Iron Buffalo

A member of the Wahpeton "Sioux"(sic) Band poses for a portrait in Theodore Charmbury's studio in Prince Albert ca. 1905.

Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Department PH. 90-82-1

Figure 3 (right)
John Blue Shield





Figure 4
Wahpeton Community
Members Today
Little Warrior Charka Omani
and Chief Leo J. Omani
War of 1812 – Bicentennial
Commemorative Pow Wow
July 27, 28, 29, 2012.

Wahpetonwan – Dwellers Among Leaves – Member of the Seven Council Fires

Originally, the people were called the **Wahpetonwan**, which translates to “Dwellers Among Leaves”. This name marks a piece of history that shows where the Wahpeton people originally lived.



Figure 5
Ho Waste (Goodvoice)
Also known as John Goodvoice, Hecan hde ska,
Hoop Horn, and Big John.

Connected to the Land

The words below relate the stories that were told to the Wahpeton people to remind them of their relationship and responsibility to the land and the importance of respecting that relationship.

“I think (the land has) always been important, because of our spirituality. Our parents taught us that we are connected to the earth, that it’s our responsibility to take care of the earth, that the earth – we call it the “Maka” – is not owned. Nobody owns the land; we are only here to take care of it, to take what’s necessary from the land, and to protect the land. Always protect the land. This is what my grandpa said. This is your job. When you grow up, you have to take care of the land. This is what I was told by my grandparents. Spiritually, with our ceremonies, it’s always land. It’s always land and animals. It’s birds. All of our prayers are that way. All of our prayers have to do with the land, animals, birds, and every living creature. That’s instilled in us as Dakota people.”

*Wakanya Najin (Cy Standing) pg. 14,
Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community History, 2012.*

Cy Standing is one of the original family members of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation. Find other family members.



Figure 6
Wahpeton Ancestors

The story of the Dakota community of Wahpeton begins well before the creation of the twelve square mile reserve in 1894. The people of Wahpeton have a rich history as Dakota people, and as members of the Seven Council Fires. The oral history of how they came into this world as Dakota people is still passed on in families today. As we have seen, the Dakota's original territory extended far beyond the confines of the small reserves as we know them today, following Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyosape.

Given the size of the Dakota original traditional territory which is now overlapped by the countries that have come to be known as Canada and the USA, many Dakota people who since came and intermarried with Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyosape also recalled their older relatives telling stories of having traveled, hunted, and making their campsites in what is now known today as Manitoba, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Alberta, and Washington.

Ancestors of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation have lived in the area of Prince Albert since before the formation of Canada and documentation shows that "ancestors of the Wahpeton people were recorded as early as the 1730's by French explorers and traders."

"Regarding Chief Hupa Yakta and his tiyospaye being Wahpetonwan (Dwellers Among the Leaves), Stonechild (2003) drawing from Morrison (2001, pp. 35-39; p. 53) commented that the "ancestors of the Wahpeton people, were recorded as early the 1730s by French explorers and traders" (p. 62), in "historic

sightings in and around the areas of the Lake of the Woods, Pembina River, Assiniboine River, Souris and the Red River, including ... as far North as Stanley Mission and the Churchill River" (p. 64).

(as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 112, 2010).

Traditional Territory of the Dakota Oyate

Prior to the smallpox epidemic of 1781 and 1782 that "devastated the North-West's indigenous people [in western Canada] who lacked immunity to it" (Marchildon & Robinson, 2002, p.396), map which shows the hunting, fishing, and gathering territory that was shared by the Dakota Oyate with other Aboriginal groups in western Canada based on intermarriage, which allowed for peace, friendship and trade with different tiyospayes (extended family groups) of the seven original bloodlines of the Dakota Oyate.

Thus, the following cites the actual ancient original translation of each campfire of the Dakota **Oyate**: (1) **Ihanktonwanna** (Camping at the Very End, Nakota/Stoney/Sioux), (2) **Wahpetonwan** (Camping Among the Leaves, Dakota/Sioux), (3) **Sisitonwan** (Camping Among Swamps, Dakota/Sioux), (4) **Wahpekute** (Shooters Amongst the Leaves, Dakota/Sioux), (5) **Ihanktonwan** (Camping at the End, Nakota/Assiniboine/Sioux), (6) **Titonwan** (Camping Amongst the Prairie, Lakota/Sioux), and (7) **Mdewakantonwan** (Camping Amonst a Sacred Lake, Dakota/Sioux).



Ihanktonwanna

Wahpetonwan
Sisitonwan
Wahpekute

Ihanktonwan
Titonwan

Mdewakantonwan

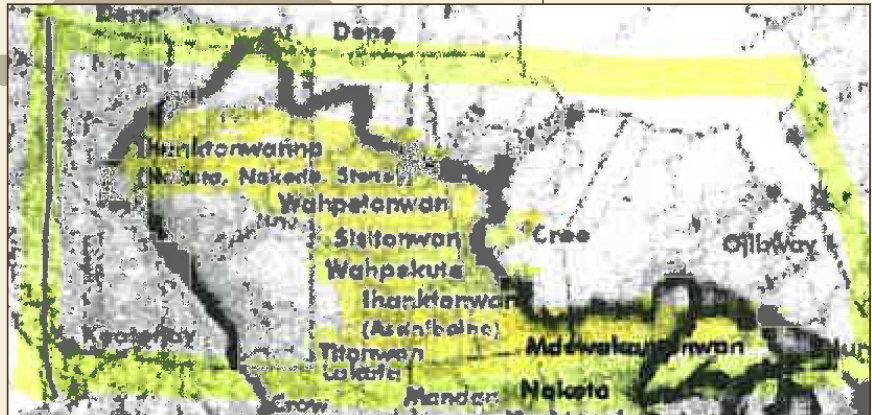


Figure 7 (above)
This map shows the original territory where the Dakota Oyate traveled in search of buffalo. The Europeans first met the Dakota Oyate in the 1600's but it is important to understand that the Dakota people lived and traveled on these lands long before the Europeans. History written by the Wa'si'cu does not often take this long time relationship between the Dakota and the land into account and so the Dakota people are not always recognized as having lived on these lands.

*Reproduced from Omani, 2009:23
Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community
History, 2012*

Figure 8 (left)
The map which shows the area where each of the seven original bloodlines of the Dakota Oyate connected to the land before the small-pox epidemic of 1781-1782, this within the country now called Canada.

The map noted above as cited by Leo J. Omani was developed in cooperation with Craig Blacksmith and James Ritchie of Manitoba (as cited in Leo J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 307, 2010).



Figure 9
The map shows the area where each Member of the Council Fire was connected to the land.

Until 1600's
Dakota Oyate Territory
as designated in map on pg. 10



1600

1600
Dakota people
first encounter
European
travelers.

1650

1658-1750
Dakota Oyate and
French Crown sign
six treaties.

1700

1753
First fort at what would
become Fort à la Corne
Forest built by Monsieur
de la Corne.

1750

1763-1817
Dakota Oyate and British Crown
sign seven treaties,
for which the Canadian federal
government is now responsible for
all British Pre-Confederation
Treaties made before 1867
(Isaac, Aboriginal Law: Commentary, Case
and Materials (3rd ed.), pg. 72, 2004).

Manitoba's Treaty Commissioner, Wemyss Simpson, pronounces all Dakota "American Indians" and therefore not eligible to sign treaty with the government. The position taken by Treaty Commissioner Simpson in 1871 has to this day been used as a stalling tactic by the Canadian federal government to come to terms pertaining to Treaty with the Wahpeton Dakota Nation, whose ancestries under Chief Flying Thunder, followed by his son Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye hunting, fishing and gathering traditional territory has always been within the "Missouri Coteau", which French Fur Trader and Explorer La Verendrye in 1738 and 1739 noted as "Sioux Country", for which the "Missouri Coteau" became formally known as Rupert's Land after 1763 and today this area lies within the Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

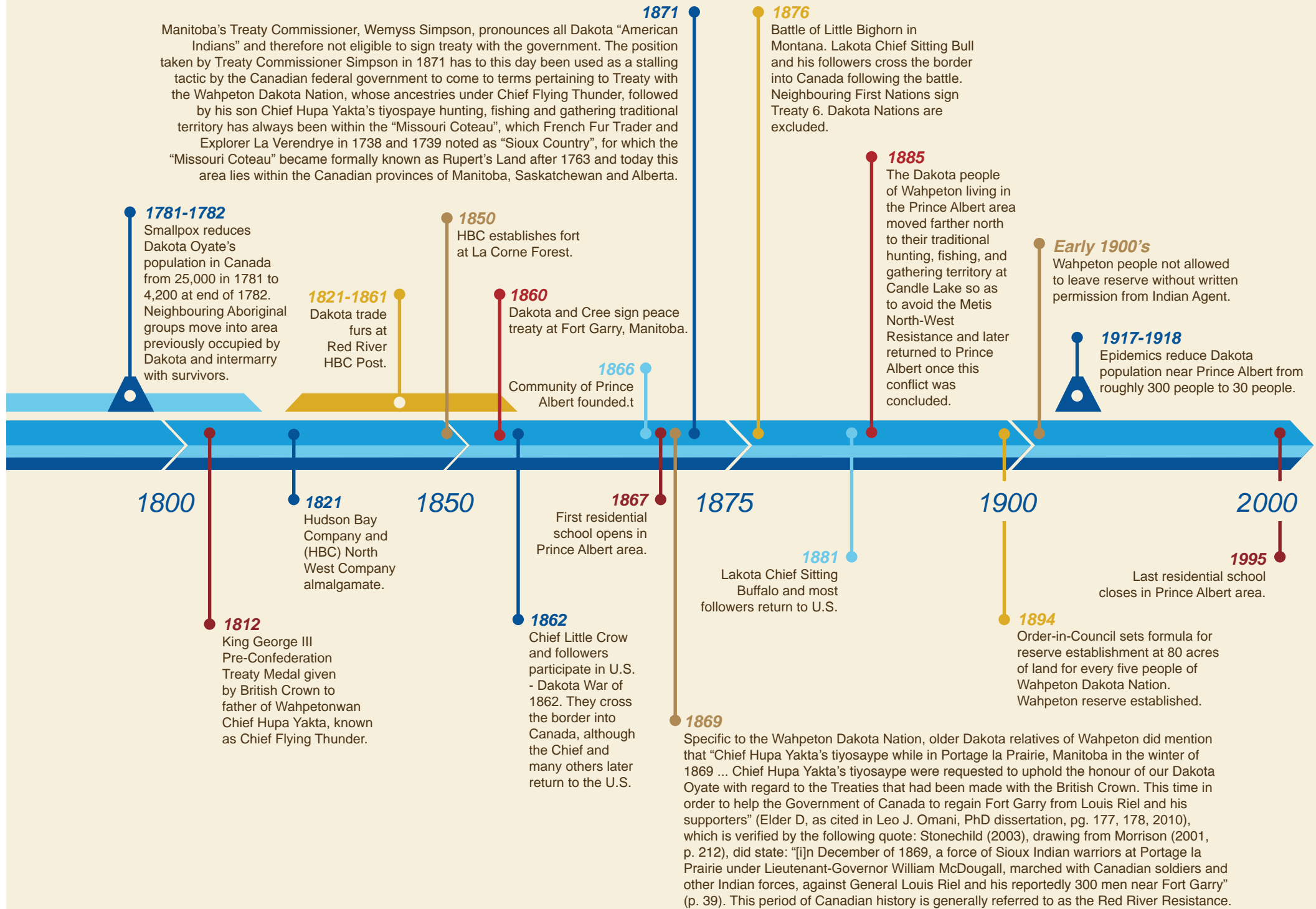




Figure 10 (above)
John Waditaka,
Maggie Flying Buffalo,
Baby Eva Waditaka

Hint: Watch for Eva, she shows up later in some pictures but she is all grown up. She has been a constant influence on the Wahpeton community.

Figure 11 (left)
Flying Buffalo Sisters
Left to right: Salome –
married Cook Ironside,
Ida Flying Buffalo,
Maggie Flying Buffalo

Pay careful attention to the names of the people in the pictures. They are some of the original people of Wahpeton Dakota Nation and their relatives continue to tell their stories.

Wahpeton Dakota Nation – Location and History

Wahpeton was established and recognized as a Reserve or First Nations Community in 1894. Present day Wahpeton Dakota Nation is located 15 km northwest of Prince Albert. There are two reserves that make up the Wahpeton Dakota Nation. The main community reserve is Indian Reserve (IR) #94A. The band also holds another, smaller reserve, IR #94B. Together, these reserves are about 15 square kilometers in size. (See map on pg. 14) This land represents a small fraction of the land on which the Wahpetonwan originally traveled and lived.

“Today, our Dakota people now live about 12 miles northwest of Prince Albert at Wahpeton Reserve, #94 – A and our population is just over 400 hundred. This is because a lot of our Dakota people at Wahpeton Reserve #94 – B, which we knew before as the Little Red River Reserve, the one located just past our original Dakota campsite near Prince Albert, in 1917 and 1918 had died from tuberculosis and the Spanish flu, with a lot of our old Dakota relatives also mentioning having been infected by smallpox. It is hard to say this, but these Wa’si’cu diseases had reduced our population in 1917 and 1918 from over 300 to less than 30.

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 178, 179 2010).

Velma Buffalo speaks of one incident saying,

“One of the stories that I heard happened around the

airport and Little Red. When our great-grandparents were living in that area there were stories about flu or some illness in the community. Prior to that there is a story where these people were coming in a boat and the old people were saying don’t take anything from them, ‘If they give you these gifts, don’t accept it.’ Some people went, and brought some items back. It wasn’t long after that the illness went through the camp. Every day. Back then they used to practice, the women would practice the death wail. When someone would pass away there is a wail the women would do and my mom was saying when she heard this story from her grandmother there would be someone in one of the homes and she would wail, then someone would sound another one. They would take them and wrap them up and take them to the mass graves. Apparently there were quite a few of our people. After that some homes were vacant, everyone had passed,”

(V. Buffalo, 2012).

There is a mass grave at Little Red. A memorial feast is held to this day to honour those who lost in the early epidemics. However, the area of the mass grave site is not marked with a plaque, but instead, is marked on the hearts of the people of Wahpeton, who continue to pray for their ancestors who passed away from illness.

Now, why did we call Wahpeton Reserve #94 – B, as the Little Red River Reserve? We knew the small river that flows passed that reserve as the Little Red River.

That’s the one now called the Spruce River that flows

into the North Saskatchewan River. It was said by our older Dakota relatives, ehanna (long ago) this is where our ancestors of Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye being Wahpetonwan had first had a big fight with those they called Zu'zu'he'ce'dan, those now known as Gros Ventre. They said, the Zu'zu'he'ce'dan (Gros Ventre) had attacked our campsite early in the morning, the one that was located on the plateau above that now known as the Cosmo Lodge in the Little Red River Park, that's the area across the river from the city of Prince Albert. They said, while our ancestors of Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye pushed the Zu'zu'he'ce'dan (Gros Ventre) back towards the North Saskatchewan River, that's where the Gros Ventre had left their canoes, but many died on both sides. This is why our older Dakota relatives of Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye had said, the river was named Wakpa Sa Ci'stin'na which means Little Red River, now called the Spruce River."

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 178, 179 2010).

Hearing the stories of the elders and learning the history of the Wahpeton people is critical to the survival of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation history and to develop an accurate understanding of the history of Saskatchewan. Archeological findings such as tipi rings, medicine wheels, and rock paintings in the traditional territory of the Wahpeton Dakota people show that Indigenous people lived in this area long before the presence of the French and British explorers.

Fort a la Corne History

In support of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation Elder oral testimony, is a story from the elders that tells when Fort La Corne was established:

Fort La Corne which was established in 1751 just past where the North Saskatchewan River and South Saskatchewan River meet

(Ray, 1998, p. 56; as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 107, 2010)

Therefore, it was actually the French (not the Hudson Bay Company) who first traded with the Dakota Oyate in what is now known as western Canada.

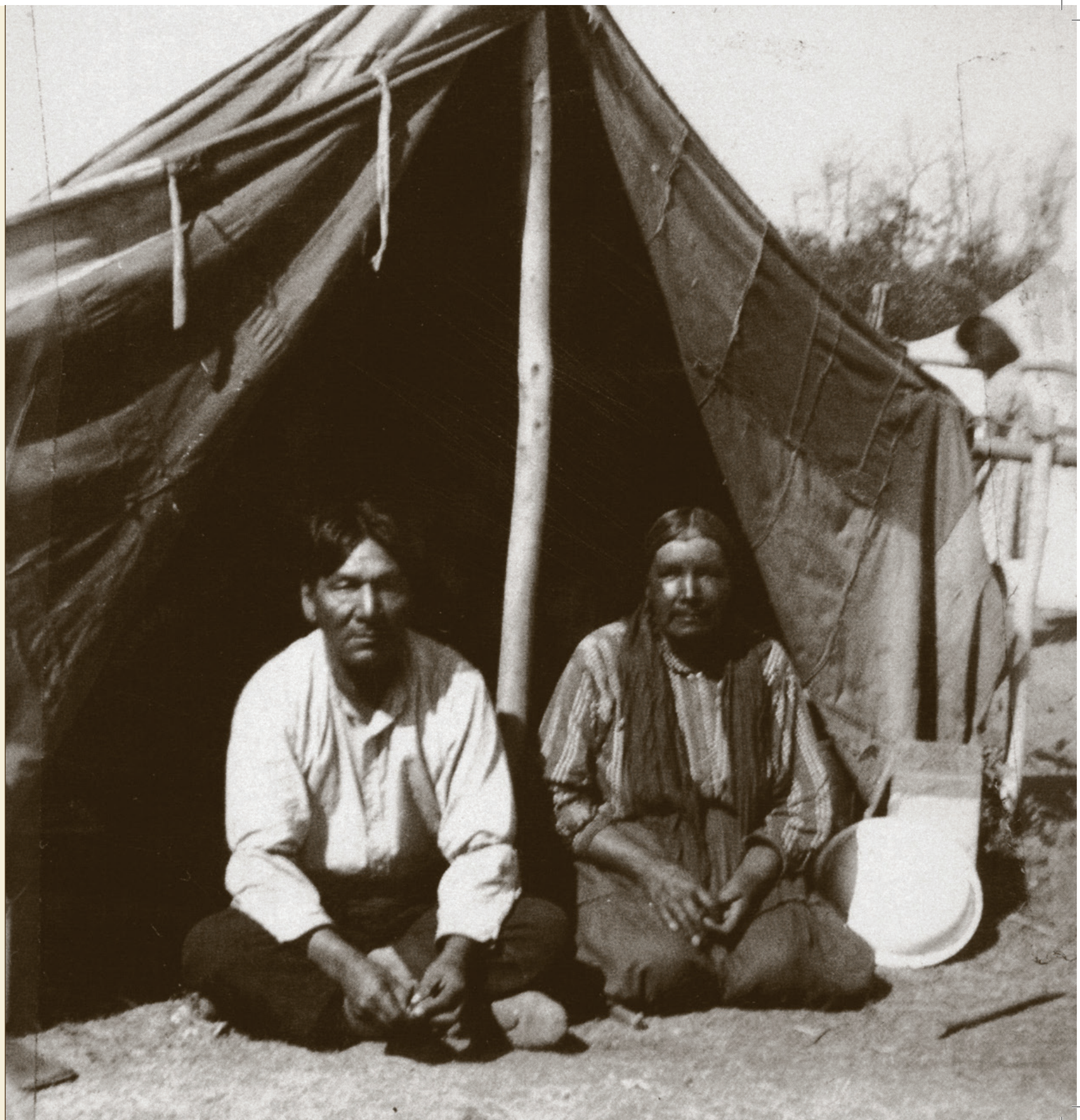
(as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 294, 2010).

Preserving the History by Telling the Stories

Passing on and preserving this type of cultural and historical knowledge is important to Wahpeton people. They want to ensure that people know the story of their territory, their long relationship with the place from which they came, and how they secured their land. Their stories also show a people who were very resilient and hardy and able to adapt despite many hardships.

Much of this history is known because since the 1960's Wahpeton people have worked formally with several researchers and academics to make sure their history is well documented. Some of the researchers that have worked with the community include Dr. Mary Marino, Dr. Clint Wheeler, Dr. Doug Elias, Dr. Dan Beveridge, as well as Chief Dr. Leo J. Omani of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation.

Figure 12
John Waditaka and
Maggie Flying Buffalo at
a tent pitched for the
berry-picking season,
ca. 1941.



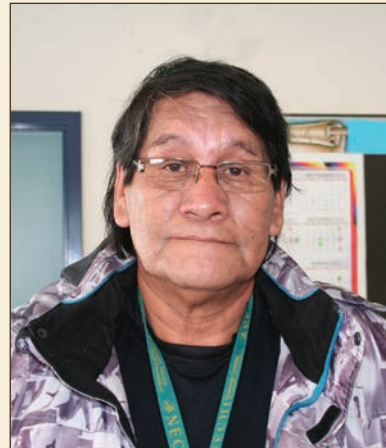


Figure 13
Chief, Dr. Leo J. Omani wearing the 1812
King George III British Pre-Confederation Treaty Medal,
Wahpeton Dakota Nation

Figure 14
Elder Velma Buffalo

Figure 15
Elder Kenneth Crow

Want to read more about the history?
Check out the Wahpeton Dakota
Nation Community History Book.

You will read about this history through the stories of the Elders and through “written history” which is what many Wa’si’cu value. Scholars have found that much of the oral history, as told by the Elders, has been documented in the written history of the Wa’si’cu.

When asked how the people of Wahpeton lived before the reserve came into being, Kenneth Crow shared this description:

“1851 there was tribes that stayed, camped around the Red River. There was a lot of them. They had chiefs, and sub-chiefs. I’m talking Dakota not the English language sub-chiefs. Aúí@ípa. Aúí@ípa was misinterpreted by White historians where I come from “Aúí” means an area, “@ípa” to look after. That’s aúí@ípa. From the old school that is where that is from. Now today means something else. It is almost more like a soldier or a cop now. A little different,”
(K. Crow, 2012).

The area that the Dakota had original responsibility for was very large, and the twelve square miles that the reserve currently sits on is a mere sliver of their former territory. The vastness of Dakota lands is something that is still taught by grandparents to their grandchildren. It is very important that this history is understood, passed on, and remembered. Velma Buffalo remembers her own grandfather teaching her this lesson before she was aware of just how far their territory stretched. Velma remembers:

“My uncle used to make me sit and listen. He said our people would live at a certain time down around the Mississippi River. To me, I had no idea how far the Mississippi River was. He said they used to come into Manitoba, far north and come around and go back home,” (V. Buffalo, 2012).

The Wahpeton people followed and hunted the buffalo but they also hunted elk, moose, and deer.

“Our older Dakota relatives said that our ancestors of

Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye had once hunted elk, moose, and deer, as well as buffalo in the Candle Lake region. Now, there are no longer buffalo in the Candle Lake region, but our Dakota people from Wahpeton still travel to the Candle Lake region to hunt elk, moose, and deer."

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 178,179, 2010).

Not only did they eat meat but also the elders' stories show that depending on the time of year and the location of their campsites, they also used the vegetables, fruit, and herbs from the land to add to their diet.

"They also fished and gathered wild herbs for medicines, including wild berries, such as blueberries, cranberries, chokecherries, saskatoon berries, as well as ti'psinna (a wild turnip) and bdo (a wild potato) to live on. They even knew how to harvest maple sugar and wild rice.

I also heard before the horse arrived, when on the move besides using that what the Wa'si'cu came to call as dog travois, our Dakota Oyate used the canoe. Some of the canoes that our Dakota Oyate used were made out of logs and birch-bark, while others mainly in the prairie were made from willows that were shaped in a half circle, like a bowl with the top half open, with buffalo hide that was used which allowed it to float, these were the ones the Wa'si'cu called bullboats".

(Elder H, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 146, 2010).

"Now, for us here on Wahpeton Reserve near Prince

Albert, our older Dakota relatives that belonged to Chief Hupa Yakta's Wahpetonwan tiyospaye (extended family) did talk about the different areas that our ancestors mainly use to travel by canoe and made their campsites, meaning where they once hunted, fished, trapped, as well as gathered berries and herbs for medicines not only on the Churchill River which flows east from northern Saskatchewan into northern Manitoba, but also along Lake Winnipeg which we knew as Bde Wakan (Sacred Lake), including the Lake of the Woods which now overlaps the lower part of eastern Manitoba, Ontario, and Minnesota in the United States. It's true, our older Dakota relatives told us, long ago our Dakota people were very good at making dugout canoes from logs, as well as birch-bark canoes to travel with and that our Dakota Oyate once knew over 400 medicines which were used to trade with other groups."

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 168,169, 2010).

These stories from the Elders show the movement of the Dakota people and their connection to the land. They were very much connected to the land, as it was essential for their survival. It would be wrong though for the Wa'si'cu' to think that the Dakota people did not have an awareness of the political activities of other nations like the British and the French on their lives. The following stories show that the leaders were very much aware of their total environment.

It was also mentioned by our older Dakota relatives of Wahpeton, Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye while in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba in the winter of 1869...



TWO BEAR
PA. SASK



MRS. TWO BEAR
PA. SASK

Figure 16
Two Bear
Prince Albert, Sk / 1930s
William J. James
Saskatchewan Archives
Board R-A 1649-1

Figure 17
Mrs. Two Bear
Prince Albert, Sk / 1930s
William J. James
Saskatchewan Archives
Board R-A 1649-2

Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye were requested to uphold the honour of our Dakota Oyate with regard to the Treaties that had been made with the British Crown. This time in order to help the Government of Canada regain Fort Garry from Louis Riel and his supporters.

Now, again my Wa'si'cu friend has told me he's read in a book that this is when the Government of Canada had purchased what was known as Rupert's Land from the Hudson Bay Fur Trade Company. My Wa'si'cu friend also said what Louis Riel and his supporters did is called the Red River Resistance, but older Dakota relatives of Wahpeton used the word "Fort Garry."

It was after this, that Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye returned to Prince Albert in northern Saskatchewan to once again reside at our ancestors' original Dakota Campsite;¹ the one on a plateau above the Cosmo Lodge in the Little Red River Park, which is across the North Saskatchewan River from where the city of Prince Albert is now located. In time, some Wahpekute, including some Sisitonwan from Chief Whitecap's tiyospaye also joined Chief Hupa Yakta's tiyospaye in Prince Albert.

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 177,178, 2010).

Governance – Oceti Sakowin

Although the Wa'si'cu' may not have understood it, the Dakota Oyate people had a system of governance that served the members of the Seven Council Fires for many, many years.

Oceti Sakowin is the name for the governmental structure or organization, which the Dakota Oyate belonged to and participated in. Oceti Sakowin is also referred to as the Seven Council Fires. Again that name reminds us of the seven original bloodlines of the Dakota Oyate and is a name that captures part of history.

Long before the Europeans came to this area, the Dakota Oyate would meet yearly in an area around the Cypress Hills to join with other tiyospaye of the Dakota to talk about the experiences of the year. It was like a large family meeting where family members could find out what had been happening to their relatives during the year and what their plans were for the future. They learned about where the tiyospaye had traveled during the year, where the hunting was best, and with whom they had traded. At that time, decisions were made and any problems were solved.

"Our older Dakota relatives of Wahpeton also said, it was at these areas that our Dakota Oyate through our own government structure, the Oceti Sakowin, had also met long ago from time to time to talk about things such as, what happen to their tiyospayes in the past year, who they traded with and where, and why they would be wintering in a certain area in the coming year, as well as when they should meet again

¹ Stonechild (2003), drawing from Morrison (2001, p. 212), did state: "[i]n December of 1869, a force of Sioux Indian warriors at Portage la Prairie under Lieutenant-Governor William McDougall, marched with Canadian soldiers and other Indian forces, against General Louis Riel and his reportedly 300 men near Fort Garry" (p. 39).

the following year. Yep, the spokes of what are now called medicine wheels actually point to a certain star constellation in the sky and served as a calendar for our Dakota Oyate.”

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 181, 2010).

The Dakota Oyate also used a process of consensus to arrive at decisions. Consensus is when everyone agrees with the decision. It differs from having a majority where most people agree but many do not. Reaching a consensus requires a great deal of listening and trying to understand what the speaker is saying and what the speaker needs to have their problems solved. It also means that sometimes a person will change their thinking and accept another solution because it is best for the whole group.

“This system, as was explained to me (Leo J. Omani) by my late mother Mahpeya Ku Win’yan (Edith Omani), was based on consensus, which began within one’s Ti’wa’he (immediate family). It then encompassed one’s tiyospaye (extended family) as this pertains to each of the seven original bloodlines of the Dakota Oyate. It finally extended to the Oceti Sakowin, the confederacy/governance structure of the Dakota Oyate, which also has been referred to the Seven Council Fires. Regarding these councils, one Saskatchewan Dakota Elder provided the following explanation:

‘These meetings were held not only for ceremonial reasons, such as sundances and vision requests, but also to discuss things of common concern for all of us, such as where certain tiyospayes (extended family groups) had traded with other groups such as

the Cree, Saulteaux, and the Wa’si’cu. They discussed which tiyospayes of our Dakota Oyate were getting along with these groups or not and for what reason, as well as the disputes certain tiyospayes of our own Dakota Oyate were having with each other, and how to resolve these disputes. Yeah, we also had our own internal disputes from time to time and still do. (See, pages 162 and 163).”

(as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 246, 2010).



Figure 18

Mrs. Marie Omani (nee Turner), and Mr. Joe Omani, grandparents of Leo J. Omani



Figure 19 (above)
Tom Standing and
Robert Goodvoice

Figure 20 (right)
Robert Goodvoice





Figure 21 (above)
Elder Bernice Waditaka

Figure 22 (above)
Lorne Waditaka

Figure 23 (top left)
Eva Waditaka, 1938.

Figure 24 (top right)
Left to right: Iona Crow, Nellie Seesequasis, Eva (Waditaka) Seesequasis, Jack Seesequasis, Ken Seesequasis, Maurice Seesequasis

Figure 25 (bottom left)
Archie Waditaka, ca. 1945 - dressed in his soldier's uniform, home on leave.

Figure 26 (bottom right)
Eva Waditaka.
Remember Eva as a baby?



Family Names Show the History and Culture of the Dakota Oyate

The people of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation are made up of a distinct tiyospaye, extended family, and can trace their roots back to specific names. The Dakota's kinship system is a key part of their governance system, in addition to shaping their everyday life.

It is said that there are seven family names in Wahpeton: **Goodvoice, Standing, Crow, Buffalo, Omani, Fourstar, Waditaka,** and **Ironside**. Although Ironside is still recognized as a Wahpeton family name, there is only one member of this family remaining.

While these specific names make up the Wahpeton community, unfortunately, since the names were translated into English, they have lost much of their original Dakota meaning. When talking about the origin of the Wahpeton family names, there are sometimes painful memories when remembering the struggles that their ancestors faced so that the next generations would continue on.

Lorne Waditaka explains his family name origin,

“One of the 38 men was our great, great grandpa. Our great, great, grandpa was only 8 or 9 years old. There was an old elderly man, who came up and said I have lived on this earth a long time, many years. I want you to set this man free. His life is just beginning. Let him see the future, let him see his life.

I will take his place. He said, 'I am going to give you the name Waditaka'. He said, 'you are going to live a long time'. If it wasn't for our uŋŋaŋ who gave his life for the people, our family, Waditaka family, wouldn't be here today. I honour the uŋŋaŋ who stepped up and freed our great-grandpa, Waditaka. That's who we are. That's why I say, I walk with my belief, the pride that I have. If there is any history that has got to be done, let it be from our own people because they carry the stories. This is what I want our future generation to learn and understand and keep close to their heart, to where they come from,”

(L. Waditaka, 2012).

Kenneth Crowe also speaks about his family's name;

“maüöiya wakaŋ wiŋyañ – was her name. My dad's mother. I have a picture of her. Her name, my dad's father was tak ye waßpe. It is a good looking raven kañđi waßpe., not crow. See the translation, how it goes? Good-looking-raven. Not crow. Again, “crow” is a Christian name and they just didn't take the time the translators of the day. It is easier for the Indian Agent “Ahh heck, his name is Good-looking-Raven, that's a lot of writing. We'll just name him 'Crow'. Good enough,”

(K. Crow, 2012).

One traditional practice that is still followed today is a naming ceremony and Dakota names are still common in Wahpeton. The Dakota names are valued because they are used in

ceremonial life. Kenneth Crow explains their importance,

“Most names that are given to the young ones when they are born. You take them on but you have to earn them. In order to earn them you have to do specific things according to Dakota customs. When you are a child you are given a name, then as you get older, more mature you get another one. When you are given this name that is the name you have; when you die that is the one you use to go to the other side,”

(K. Crow, 2012).

Traditions such as having a Dakota name still exist because Wahpeton community members have kept these ways alive, even after they attended residential school.

Worldview

Dakota means “friend” or “ally.” Dakota is an ancient word that came from Dakota stories about creation, and the interconnectedness of all things that were made by our Creator. The Dakota were taught to be a friend to all of creation (Omani, 2012, 236). You have been reading about how the Dakota gave support to the French and British governments while Canada and Saskatchewan was being settled. Their actions show that they tried to follow the teachings of the elders.

To fully understand what these teachings were, it is best to listen to the words of the elders. Captured below are stories from the elders about the things that the Dakota people were taught to believe. Stories from the elders were told to teach a lesson. Although the stories come from many different elders, the teachings about the worldview of the Dakota people are the same. The stories about the Dakota Nation show that they have tried to follow the beliefs of their ancestors.

Linda Buffalo tells of her family’s traditional teachings,

“We believe in one creator and he is the one that is in charge of all beings. This is what I learn from my elders. ...We are all related. We take that seriously in a spiritual manner. As we walk we are taught not to hurt anything.... All these teachings that we got was not from TV, tapes, radios it was from our parents, our grandparents, they taught them, then they taught us. I am very thankful because I started seeing sweetgrass in our home when we were young. ...That was a good life learning different

Figure 27
Left to right, back row:
Jack Seesequasis, Lucy
Standing, Mervin Standing,
Front row: Tony Okemaysim,
Norma Standing



things from our culture. ... We always used to have sweetgrass at home. Dad used to pick sweetgrass. He used to tell us "this is how you do it, this is how you braid it. That's okay you can make it big. He used to count out 48 sweetgrass for one braid. He taught us how to make feasts. The purpose of making feasts was to feed our relatives who went on before us. A lot of times they come into our dreams and say they are hungry because no one is feeding them,"
(L. Buffalo, 2012).

The Dakota's kinship system is a key part of their governance system, in addition to shaping their everyday life.

Dakota was actually pronounced as Da'ko'ta long ago and this meant we were to be a friend to all and to live in harmony with all that Wakantanka (the Creator) has created. Why? Our older Dakota people said everything that Wakantanka created, in what the Wa'si'cu (Whiteman) calls as this universe, has a spirit and we are to respect it, for it is part of Wakantanka. This means from our oldest relative In'yan (the Stone) being the first to be created. And from In'yan (the Stone), all others things within this universe were then created, the sun, the moon, the stars, wind, fire, water, all living beings in the water, including all living beings in and on the ground, all of the plant life, as well as Ina-Maka (Mother-Earth), for all have a spirit of their own and all in one way or another provide balance to us, the human being, who also have a spirit of our own, but were the last to be created by Wakantanka, the Creator.

This explains why, how the word Da'ko'ta, as we had pronounced long ago which really means "to be a friend

to all that Wakantanka has created" is actually connected to the word Mitakuye Oyasmin, which means "we are all related." For all we know of within this universe has been created by Wakantanka and we were to stay in balance with all.

(Elder H, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 161, 2010).

In contemporary times this word for the Dakota came from the nature of the nation since they are a group of people that would rather live in peace and harmony than in conflict with others.

John Waditaka of Wahpeton adds to this definition by sharing

"'Mitakoda' is a phrase that one man would say to another man meaning, 'He is my friend,'"

(John Waditaka, Dakota Oversight Council group discussion, January 23, 2012).

John continues saying,

"Koda is a sacred word that means brother for life," (January, 2012). The Dakota believe that peace and harmony are essential elements for relationships to living creatures, and all of creation. The Dakota continue to be allies in peace and friendship to many to this day. To be considered Dakota you are a person who is descended from one of the original seven bloodlines and follow the customs, cultures, and traditions of the Dakota Oyabe. In some texts you may see the term "Sioux," referring to Dakota peoples. Although historians, and the non-Indigenous community commonly loosely used this term to refer to a larger grouping of both Dakota, Nakota and Lakota peoples, it is not a word that came from the

people themselves. Dakota is a word that is rooted in the language, and culture of the Dakota peoples. Often the Dakota people will refer to themselves as the Tatañúa Oyape, or Buffalo Nation, which references the important relationship the Dakota have always had with the buffalo that has sustained them since they came out of the earth.

(Dakota Book, Version 3, pg.9).

Dr. Leo Omani shares a story from his mother Edith Omani:

“All of our stories have meaning, and are told to teach a lesson. When I was a teenager, being rambunctious my mother wanted to impress upon me the need to make a living. She told me this story.

All of us lived within Inyañ Maka. We had no worries whatsoever. Other animals lived on or in mother earth as well. Uñúpomi the trickster convinced the young people to come through a hole and leave the inside of Uñ@i Maka. He said that the Tantañúa Oyape would provide for the Dakota nation and that they never had to worry about getting food. The older ones said don't listen to uñúpomi. But the young ones did not listen so they went through the hole and began living on top of the earth. It was very hard since everything was no longer provided for them they had to work to live above the earth. This is an important story because it shows us that we must listen to our elders and we will suffer if we do not provide for ourselves. We must have a job, and we must work hard,”

(Dakota Oversight Council group discussion, January 23, 2012).

(Dakota Book, Version 3, pg. 16).

The Dakota people tried to follow the teachings of their elders

by following the practices of their seven sacred ceremonies. One elder explained these ceremonies this way.

To truly understand the traditional concept of treaty, one needs to understand the seven sacred ceremonies of our Dakota Oyate, which the Wa'si'cu has also written about. But, based on what our older Dakota people have said, I hope that I can provide a better explanation for some of them.

First, the one I have already mentioned, the making of a relative, which was originally a peace ceremony, however today it is mainly conducted as an adoption ceremony. Second, the keeping of the soul for one year and its release in memory of a deceased relative, today this is known as the “wiping of the tears” ceremony by our Dakota Oyate in the United States and preformed as a “memorial feast” in Canada. The real meaning of this ceremony is to allow us to release our own emotions. In other words, to be able to cry and let out our own hurt emotions about a loved one that has passed on. For it is actually very good for one's health to cry. ... Third, the sweatlodge ceremony; fourth, the vision quest ceremony; fifth, the sundance ceremony; sixth, the young womanhood ceremony; and, seven, the sacred ball-throwing ceremony. This represented the passing on of knowledge, which today is the responsibility of our parents to make sure that their children get a good education.

Staying in balance with Wakantanka, the Creator, as well as his creation, the sun, moon, stars, wind, water, fire,



Figure 28

Left to right:
John Waditaka,
Eva Waditaka, Archie
Waditaka, Ruth Waditaka,
Maggie (Flying Buffalo)
Waditaka

Ina-Maka (Mother-Earth) and what she grows, as well as with the animals, the flyers, the crawlers, the swimmers, the two legged, the four legged, including each other as human beings. When one thinks about it, staying in balance is the traditional concept of treaty that our Dakota Oyate had and still has today, for it is held together by our sacred prayer pipe and our seven sacred ceremonies. It allows our Dakota Oyate, those of us now known as Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota that still continue to participate in our traditional cultural ways, to keep balance within our lives. Now, all of what I have mentioned is actually held together by the tobacco we use within our sacred prayer pipe and our seven sacred ceremonies, for every gain represents all that has been created by Wakantanka, the Creator.

(Elder L, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 164,165 2010).

The Dakota people have been taught that

“nobody owns the land, we are only here to take care of it, to take what’s necessary from the land, and to protect the land. Always protect the land. This is what my grandpa said. This is your job.”

*Wakanya Najin (Cy Standing),
Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community History, pg. 14, 2012.*

Now you have heard many different stories from many different elders. Living life in harmony with all that the creator has made and fulfilling your responsibility to look after the earth is not an easy task to be asked to do but it is a responsibility that has been instilled in Dakota people by the elders.

Overcoming Adversity Through Resilience and Strength

The Wahpeton Dakota Nation is one of the three Dakota Nations in Saskatchewan who have not signed a numbered treaty with the Canadian government. The history of the Dakota in Canada as described by non-Dakota scholars is very different from the oral history that is passed down by the Dakota Oyate people.

One of the primary areas of disagreement deals with territory and whether the traditional territory of the Dakota Oyate included part of Canada. The Canadian government considered the Dakota living in Canada to be “refugees” who came to Canada to escape persecution from the Americans in the 1860’s.

Lorne Waditaka explains the importance of rejecting federal and provincial claims that this is not the traditional land of the people of Wahpeton saying;

“Through the historians that were hired by the Dakota people starting back in the 60’s. We were looking for answers to let the government know that this was our land before 1867. Oral history says that we were here. This was our land. We have a great vast land that our ancestors lived on.... Through the development of all of our history, the anthropologists that things be taught right to our people and Canadian society of who we really are. I got some really disturbing letter from the government when I was a leader. We wrote to the government, and asked if we can sign adhesions to the treaty we belong to. The letter we got back was really,

a letter that stated that we were refugees. We were nomads, in our own country. If oral history was taught in the proper way the people that were writing the history of our Dakota history instead of talking about us in a negative sense, the wrongs that they have done as well to our people, to our buffalo. The animal that fed us and clothes us was taken away from us,”

(L. Waditaka, 2012).

There is historical evidence that Wahpeton's members have lived in this land for many generations, but their lives were not easy. In addition to war, disease also ravaged the people of Wahpeton. The disease that was most deadly to the Wahpeton people was brought through the Wa'si'cu and known as small pox.

“It was also said by our older Dakota relatives that we didn't lose the land in northern Saskatchewan and in northern Manitoba due to fighting with the Woodland Cree and the Swampy Cree. It was due to Wa'si'cu diseases such as smallpox that had killed most of our Dakota people in these areas, as well as in central and southern Saskatchewan, including the area now known as central and southern Manitoba. It is hard to say these things, but that is what our older Dakota relatives have said.”

(Elder D, as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 172, 2010).

“In 1781, the estimated Dakota population was 25,000. By the end of 1782, approximately 95 per cent of the Dakota population was decimated by smallpox, with a remaining Dakota population of 4,200”.

(as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 105, 2010).

“However, our older Dakota relatives also did say, because of Wa'si'cu diseases such as smallpox, it seems that they always mentioned smallpox, most of our Dakota Oyate were wiped out in the areas along the river routes that I have mentioned.”

(as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 144, 2010).

“Now that is a huge territory that our older Dakota people used to talk about. They also said, we shared the huge territory with other tribes, including the Wa'si'cu when he first arrived here. Our older Dakota people used to say when the Wa'si'cu had arrived our Dakota Oyate was one of the largest groups in what is now called North America. As for why we are so small today compared to the Wa'si'cu? Our older Dakota people mentioned when we first met the Wa'si'cu a long time ago, their diseases such as smallpox killed most of our people, that is why it hurts to talk about it even now, for as I have mentioned many of our older Dakota people would cry many times after they told such stories. For example, some of our older Dakota people had mentioned, long ago when our Dakota people first met with the Wa'si'cu east of the Mississippi River by the ocean, over fifty villages were wiped out because of Wa'si'cu diseases.”

(as cited in Leo. J. Omani, PhD dissertation, pg. 149, 2010).

Figure 29
Standing Brothers
Raymond Standing,
Mervin Standing, Cy Standing
Parents: Tom Standing and
Mary Goodshield



Education Has Many Faces

Residential School Stories

Like many reserves, the Wahpeton people were impacted by the residential school system. This was a project of the British and Canadian government from 1857 - 1996 that was meant to fulfill the education commitment of treaty but was also designed to assimilate First Nations children and remove their pride in their culture and understanding of their history.

“Indian Residential Schools tried to make Aboriginal children talk, dress, think and act like non-Aboriginal Canadians. At the time, the government and churches believed that this was the right thing to do. Today, we know it was not.”

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/>

Parents and children of those parents often went to the same schools so everyone knew what the schools were like, how the children were being treated, and how they were feeling. Today people wonder why parents would send their children to residential schools when the parents were so fearful of what would happen to them and missed their children so much. What people forget is that it was against the law not to send your child to residential school. Parents had no choice but to send their children away.

Since there was a residential school nearby in the city of Prince Albert, many Wahpeton community members were

forced to attend. Some of them went to school with their extended relatives from the community of Whitecap. But even being with their fellow Dakota relatives did not lessen the pain endured during this era.

Linda Buffalo reflects on the residential school era,

“We ended up at the residential school. There everything was different, so, so different. We couldn’t learn our culture. We couldn’t talk our language. Some of the girls got their hair cut, they couldn’t grow it anymore. I used to hear elders say don’t cut your hair unless you need to. I used to think about that at the residential school, about why they used to cut the students hair all the time but I guess it was part of their culture too but it wasn’t very nice.

...My dad used to make a meal, offer food to give thanks his children were back at home,”

(L. Buffalo, 2012).

Linda’s father would set up a feast upon her return from residential school in order to pray for her, and also to thank Wakañ Tañúa that she had been able to return home safely. Even today, the practice of holding feast is still alive and well and there are many types of feasts that are held at Wahpeton. Often these are for relatives, or for veterans, they could also be name-giving feasts, after-sweat feasts, and sundance feasts.

Wahpeton Elder Sam Buffalo relates his memories of residential school.



Figure 30 (above)
School House



Figure 31 (top right)
Wahpeton Dakota Students
– 1930's
(Photo provided by Leo J. Omani)

Figure 32 (bottom right)
Wahpeton Dakota Students
1920's –

Historic Photograph of
Wahpeton Dakota Nation
students attending the
Mission School on Wahpeton
Reserve #94A in the 1920's.

This was the same time
period where Wahpeton
Dakota people were not
allowed to freely come and
go from the reserve.

(Photo provided by Leo J. Omani)



“The home mission and school prohibited Dakota language on their premises. A student was punished for speaking their Dakota language. The children were told to avoid certain persons or families because they engage in Dakota traditional activities. These doings were called ‘evil doers practice.’ Food rations were issued to the old-age folks but if one was dedicated to the Dakota ceremonies, his needed rations will be reduced for punishment. This type of treatment, by favouring one group and neglecting the other one, has divided the people.”

(Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community History, 2012, pg. 11).

Educating Through Traditional Sharing of Knowledge

The way children learned at residential school was very different from the way that knowledge was passed down and shared among the Wahpeton people. Knowledge passed on from generation to generation was founded on mutual respect between teacher and student. Young children were taught to be very respectful when interacting with the community Knowledge Keepers. These lessons sometimes came by using sacred objects as part of the knowledge transfer. In Wahpeton, there were people who had talking sticks and used them as a method of teaching.

Velma Buffalo shows us how the knowledge of the teaching stick was passed on in her home,

“It was dated, possibly seasons, this is what is done.

Let’s say this is what happened on this date- it was all on this stick. It was history. The one that put them together or made it would know what everything meant or their family would know. ...[She continues about her grandfather and the talking sticks] He must have had one [a talking stick] a lot of the items were kept in the attic. We never had access to them. As grandchildren we always had that respect for our grandparents and we never entered the attic unless we were instructed to do so. And when we were he used to direct us to the exact spot that he wanted us to go. Cause like I said there was a lot of things up there. He never went up there. He never went up to the attic that I can recall and yet he could tell us.He was a medicine man. He would store whatever he needed up there. If someone came to him for help he would direct us to go to specific place and tell us to get whatever it was,”

(V. Buffalo, 2012).

When Velma’s grandfather passed away, some of the knowledge that he kept was unfortunately lost to the community, since part of his knowledge was from gifts that could not be passed on to the next generation. There are strict protocols that surround the use and handling of sacred objects. These are still followed by the people of Wahpeton today.

When asked if Velma had some of the objects that were kept by her grandfather, she replied; “That house is long gone. After our grandpa passed away we didn’t enter his house

because as a medicine man, he had things in there that we had no right to touch, so then we just stayed out. The ones that could did look after his stuff the way they were supposed to.”

After the residential school era was finally over, it caused the people of Wahpeton to reflect upon the type of education that they wanted their children to have. They felt that the education system needed to reflect their Dakota values and beliefs to be effective for their own children.

Lorne says of education,

“We have been brought up in the Western style of teachings from grades one to grade twelve. Some of the university programs have brought in our understanding of who we are as nations. Whether it be Cree, Dakota, Saulteaux, or Dene. This should continue. We know we have to live in a modern world today and how to survive now today as opposed to when our first people first got here. As long as our people don’t forget who they are, and get lost in that world of today. We gotta live with the negative and the positive and try and teach ourselves how to balance that life,”

(L. Waditaka, 2012).

Walking in both worlds means that Wahpeton children do not have to give up being Dakota in order to be successful people. Incorporating Dakota teachings into the curriculum ensures that all children have a solid educational and cultural foundation. Practically, this means that Dakota skills

and values will be a part of every Dakota child’s educational experience.

Linda Buffalo thinks that basket-making, or making bows and arrows is an important part of every child’s development.

“It will give children pride. If they too can accomplish things like that. If they can make a basket. It is an art that takes a lot of time. To begin with you have to go out, you have to harvest it, you have to know the season. There are a lot of educational things that take place. It doesn’t happen in one day. They learn respect for the environment, and how we relate to things around us. Mīpaúuye owasiñ, All my relations,”

(L. Buffalo, 2012).

Changing the way children are educated in the community takes every one’s involvement, as each community member has a valuable skill or perspective to share with the young people. Sharing knowledge and coming together to provide for one another, are values and a way of living and reflects the worldview that Wahpeton people have maintained throughout their history. The wellbeing of the entire community is very important.

This is best illustrated by a story that Velma Buffalo shared.

“There was that sharing and caring that used to go on. Chief Tamah for example he learned how to knit. Did you hear about that? He learned how

to knit so that he would go and cut wood and take his loads into PA and sell it and he would buy his wool or get wool from wherever. He would come back and he would do his knitting. He would make a hat to wear and mitts for some of the men. Then he would go and pass them out to the men in the community. They in turn, they used to put hide over and regular mitts. They would go out and be able to work in the bush and get the wood. Basically back then it was more firewood that they would gather. And that's how they would buy their staples, whatever they needed. They had already been involved in gardening. They would look after each other. Sharing, it was almost like a cooperative. Chief Tamah learned something that was of benefit to his community and he went out and provided. Then we had the hunters who would go out and do the hunting and provide the people with what they needed,"

(V. Buffalo, 2012).

This story shows the lengths that people were prepared to go to find ways to fill the needs of people within the community. All gifts, all contributions were appreciated.

Early Commerce and Connecting with the Surrounding Community

Strength of Community - Working Together to Overcome Hardships

Despite the many losses that the community faced, the Wahpeton people found a way to adapt and begin a new way of life. Like the people of Standing Buffalo and Whitecap, they had to adjust to non-transitory life and most significantly, a life without the buffalo, which was their main source of nutrition. They had to engage in a wage-based economy in order to support their growing families.

Kenneth Crow speaks of these adjustments,

"Mostly there were cutting wood. Prince Albert was in the early stages of becoming a town site and they needed wood for the houses. They did a lot of lumber work. They also cut a lot of hay for the horses. There were no cars. Steam boats and what not were coming up and down the river. We're talking about 1884. Talking about that time in that area, give or take. There was a lot of berries, game, traditional roots, and herbs. That's how we survived. The food basket was in the bush, in the forest- that's how they survived. Well even the Europeans, they didn't come here with any hamburger they had to eat what was here. They did that for a few hundred years,"

(K. Crow, 2012).



Figure 33 (above)

Tom Standing with
his saxophone.

*Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community
History, pg. 18, 2012*

Figure 34 (right)

Note the caption for this
photograph –

“Two Indians in traditional
costume at the Saskatoon
Exhibition” 1930’s.

The men have names.
They are Herbert Buffalo
(left) and Cook Ironside
(right). Herbert Buffalo was
one of the hereditary chiefs
of Wahpeton Dakota Nation.



People continue to hunt game, pick roots, berries, and wild vegetables. They keep this practice alive by staying committed to honoring life, and never taking more than what they need. Velma Buffalo says,

“Everyone just looked after the area, like you never went and stripped it clean because year after year they grew in the same,”

(V, Buffalo, 2012).

Taking care of the land is very important to the Dakota people, and those from Wahpeton. This is one of many traditional teachings of the Dakota.

The Wahpeton Dakota people have shown that they have been able to adapt to changing situations. As the use of their traditional land changed, the families of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation found the lands that once supported their traditional practices were increasingly taken up by urban and agricultural development. These changes meant that they had to begin to depend on wage labour through jobs for more of their survival. Jobs for the Wahpeton Dakota have come mainly from Prince Albert, the nearest city to their reserves.

The practice of leaving the reserve and going to the city for work has been going on for many years and sometimes work was hard to find. Though many Dakota traveled to Prince Albert to live and try to find work in the 1800s, this was difficult to do for Prince Albert’s economy was depressed, and opportunities for jobs in the city were scarce. Wahpeton men also tried to fill the needs of some of the people in

Prince Albert as an additional way of providing for their families. It was common for Wahpeton men to cut firewood and sell it to people in Prince Albert or to sell game. One Wahpeton Dakota person recalls that his father would “always carry a rifle with him, in case he ran into game” while cutting firewood to sell to the townspeople of Prince Albert.

It was not only the men who found work to support their families. During the 20th Century Wahpeton women were often hired as housekeepers in the town of Prince Albert.

More jobs became available when the Penitentiaries opened in the early 20th century. The Prince Albert Pulp Mill was also another place where Wahpeton people found work.

As the traditional use of the land changes, Wahpeton people have had to become more dependent on wage labour to survive as the life of following the buffalo, fishing, hunting, and gathering berries that they once knew is gone.

Wahpeton Community Today

As of 2012, the Wahpeton Nation population included about 500 men, women, and children that mostly belonged to seven major extended families. The majority of Wahpeton Dakota people live on the main reserve (about 300), while the remainder lives elsewhere.

Today, the Wahpeton Dakota Nation follows the trend of many other Canadian Aboriginal communities who experience a high birth rate and have many young people. They also experience similar issues as other Aboriginal communities in trying to maintain their language. Many Wahpeton Dakota people speak the Dakota language and some Cree is also spoken in the community; however, English is the main language of business and education. 2006 Census Statistics Canada showed that 26.8% of Wahpeton Dakota people had knowledge of Aboriginal languages.

As the people of Wahpeton go forward, they do so as proud Dakota people with a long history of working together to get things done. Despite their small reserve land base, Wahpeton has developed many successful business partnerships, such as PA First Nation Business Development LP, the Men's Healing Lodge 94B, IMI Brokerage Company and Wahpeton Dakota Developments LP, (WDD LP), including the Tatanka Gas Bar & Store.

Significantly, Wahpeton's economic success has happened without the treaty foundation that many other Saskatchewan

First Nations have based their own success on. Kenneth Crow feels that not having signed a numbered treaty has not hindered their achievements, saying;

"We don't have a treaty. I think our first step is to work towards that treaty. Now I have heard of people saying 'an adhesion to the treaty.' Now you think outside the box, what about a different treaty altogether. What's wrong with that? ... We would be nuts to step into Treaty Six. They get nothing. Why would we step into nothing?"

(K. Crow, 2012).

The Wahpeton Dakota Nation promotes continued socio-economic growth and development to create enhanced business and employment opportunities for the membership. They are working to ensure that their members have better access to education, health and justice services in order to meet the needs of their citizens and improve their quality of life.

Employment

Wahpeton Dakota Nation is the smallest First Nation within the Prince Albert Grand Council and has the highest employment rate per capita.

Wahpeton Dakota Nation, through its business arm, WDD LP, is working at exploring new business ventures. The bison operation has a ceremonial herd of 12 bison grazing the pastures on Wahpeton 94A. Tatanka Convenience Store continues to be a profitable enterprise, employing

a manager, four full time employees and a few casual workers. Other partnership revenues include PA First Nation Business Development LP, PAGC, Men's Healing Lodge 94B and IMI Brokerage Company.

Health

The Health Program operates with a Director and eight staff members, with two health professionals in the community from PAGC one or more days per week. There are many on-going programs throughout the year such as the Family Wellness Programs, Coffee Talk, Pre-Natal and Post-Natal, workshops on Mental Health and NNADAP services for the community members. The centre also has a comprehensive community/home care nursing program and environmental health services.

Education

Wahpeton Dakota Nation School offers a strong academic program consisting of the Saskatchewan Education curriculum, equivalent provincial programs and CTBS testing. Classes are offered for Nursery/Kindergarten to grade 9 with the grades 10-12 transported to Carlton Comprehensive High School in Prince Albert. We have a strong Dakota Cultural Language Program offered with half hour lessons on a daily schedule with adults invited to participate.

The Wahpeton people are working to fulfill their vision of education for their children within their community. They have a Day care/Headstart Program. The Day Care Program

provides five seats for children aged 0 to 5 years of age. The Aboriginal Headstart Program is running at full capacity with students attending in the morning and afternoon. Parents and community members volunteer within the classroom to support the learning of their children.

Achievements in education are celebrated by the entire community with annual community gatherings to acknowledge the accomplishments and achievements of students of all ages, from the Headstart Program to Post-Secondary graduates.

Youth Initiatives

The recreation program is open to youth between the ages of 6 – 17, six days a week. The program consists of the four categories: winter, summer, fall and spring activities. Within these categories they work with sports and cultural activities. The Dakota Oyate Dance Troupe is also a successfully operated program that brings together both the youth participants and adults from within the community.

Justice

Wahpeton has a quarter time Justice Worker, through PAGC, who is responsible for all areas of the Community Justice program. The Justice Committee meets once a month to deal with the issues that pertain to the community. There are ongoing workshops offered for adults and youth in the area of Justice.

Compiled from <http://www.pagc.sk.ca/pagc.asp?ID=12> - Retrieved Jan. 25, 2014

In the future, Wahpeton may or may not pursue an adherence to a treaty, but they will always be guided

by their ceremonies, which have sustained them since they were given to them by the Creator. Linda Buffalo believes that the answers to the community's issues and future will be found in the sweat lodge saying,

"A lot of them go in a sweat. They probably see things happen in there. Probably get their answers that they are searching for also. It is good to [have] children in a sweat because you know you are reaching them, teaching them. The relationship you have with them is not only physical but also spiritual. They sit beside you when you are lighting sweetgrass and getting ready to pray,"

(L. Buffalo, 2012).

The Wahpeton Dakota Nation community focus is to keep striving towards strengthening the self-determination and the sovereignty of our Dakota Nation. The Chief and Council are working with their membership to ensure the survival of the people by promoting pride in our culture, language, traditional and spiritual values.

Following the teachings of their elders, they work to foster respect, harmony, self-reliance and involvement, all of the positive attitudes that are so much a part of the history of the Wahpeton Dakota Nation.

Post Script

As of 2015, the Wahpeton Dakota Nation is now negotiating with the Federal Government of Canada at the Saskatchewan Office of the Treaty Commissioner Table located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This pertains to Adhesion to Treaty Six, and/or a new Modern Treaty Agreement. The Wahpeton Dakota Nation British King George III War of 1812 Pre-Confederation Treaty Medal acknowledges the terms of the British/Wahpeton Dakota Nation relationship. It assures recognition and protection of the Nation within Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution.

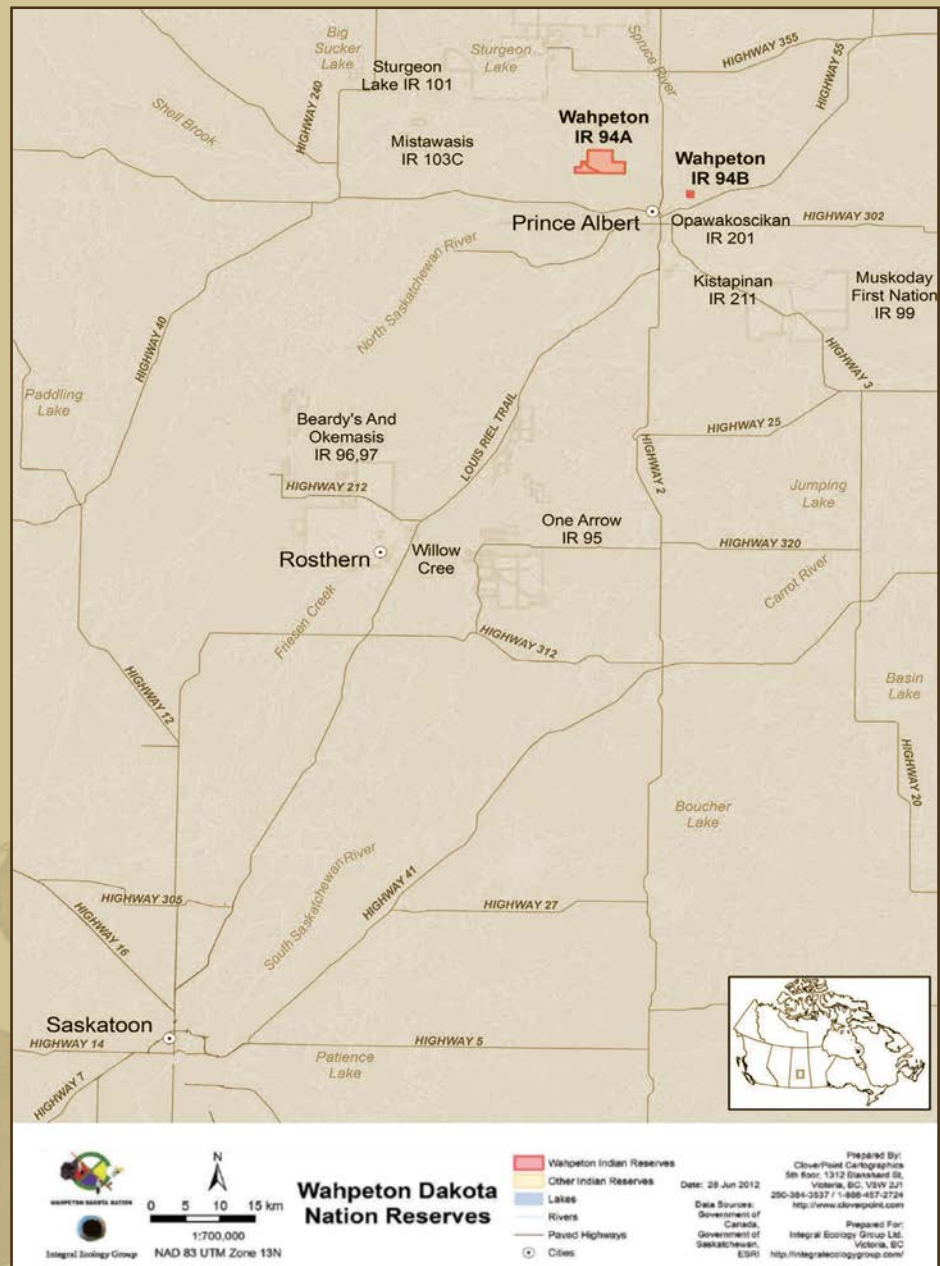


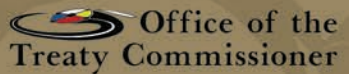
Figure 35
Little Warrior Chaska Omani
and Princesses Terena
McLeod Waditaka and Edith
Waditaka – Wahpeton Dakota
Nation – War of 1812 –
Bicentennial Celebration –
July 27-29, 2012

Figure 36
Wahpeton Dakota Nation
Reserve Lands

Students will note the very small area of land reserved for the Wahpeton Nation compared to the vast lands in which they had originally travelled. It is just one example of how much smaller the world of the Wahpeton members became.

Reproduced from Wahpeton Dakota Nation Community History, 2012





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Portrait of Wahpeton Dakota Nation British King George III War of 1812
Pre-Confederation Treaty Medal