

PLACE AMONG THE DISPLACED: ENVISIONING PRESERVATION OF A MÉTIS
SETTLEMENT IN MONTANA

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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The focus of this study is on the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon Settlement, a previously unevaluated historic settlement associated with the history of the Métis in Montana. The site is located along the South Fork of the Teton River, approximately thirty miles west of Choteau, Montana, and was once occupied by Métis families fleeing persecution for alleged involvement in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. The study establishes precedent for the site's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and addresses the potential for the site's designation as a Traditional Cultural Property, despite the challenges inherent in such an approach. This study contributes to both existing documentation of the Métis narrative across the state of Montana and to the ongoing discussion among historic preservation professionals concerning the viability and possible revision of *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

People like to have one sure and certain loyalty. It is place. It may be as tiny as a burial ground where the bones of their forefathers rest; it may be half a continent whose landmarks bear the names their progenitors bestowed. Acre or empire, they will fight for it until the spirit is dead.

—Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire*

In the 1940s, Joseph Kinsey Howard conducted some of the most comprehensive research to-date concerning the Métis people of the United States and Canada, in particular those residing in Montana. Living along the South Fork of the Teton River west of Choteau, Montana, he became familiar with them and with their story.¹ In the opening of *Strange Empire*, Howard makes an assertion based on his experiences with this community, historically redefined by circumstance: “People like to have one sure and certain loyalty. It is place.”² The preservation of place begins with a story. The impulse to retain the story is culturally entrenched and results in conscious decisions to maintain, celebrate, or revitalize cultural traditions as they are imprinted on place. What people strive to protect from the forces of time, neglect, and decay, are manufactures of who they are and from where they came.³

¹ Tribune Staff, “125 Montana Newsmakers: Joseph Kinsey Howard,” *Great Falls Tribune*. <http://www.greatfallstribune.com/multimedia/125newsmakers2/howard.html> (Accessed 8/15/2013).

² Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire* (1952; reprint, St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994), 11.

³ Alan Jabbour, “Folklife, Intangible Heritage, and the Promise and Perils of Cultural Cooperation,” in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert E. Stipe (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 423-442.

The historic preservation movement has emerged in the twenty-first century with a broadened view of which types of places should be preserved and for whom.⁴ The interdisciplinary nature of historic preservation, which relies most heavily on the fields of archaeology, history, architecture, and folklore, allows for holistic interpretations of distinct cultural resources and fuels our understanding of the “living parts of our community life” today.⁵

Certain places are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as “traditional cultural properties” because they derive historical significance from an intangible, traditional value specific to an existing culture. For distinct groups they hold spiritual, supernatural power, play an integral role in traditional practice, convey stories of a particular event, or represent a shared cultural memory. However, as cultural resources, these places prove challenging to preserve as they do not fit tidily into the present National Register of Historic Places preservation framework.⁶ Using a Métis settlement on the South Fork of the Teton River—the place that inspired Joseph Kinsey Howard to write *Strange Empire*—as a primary case study, this thesis illustrates some of the challenges of this preservation framework, contributing to the ongoing discourse concerning the viability of *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*.

⁴ Jabbour, “Folklife, Intangible Heritage, and the Promise and Perils of Cultural Cooperation,” in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*, 439.

⁵ The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Pub. L. No. 89-665; 16 U.S.C.

⁶ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990; Revised, 1998).

The Story

The Métis people, descendant children of the fur trade, share a rich history, one which feeds into broader themes such as the colonization of the North American continent, the settlement story of the American West, national Indian removal policy, and most recently, the assertion of cultural identity and indigenous rights. It is an epic of ethnic convergence upon the arrival of Europeans and Anglo Americans to the Northeastern Great Plains region.⁷

Historically, the Métis identity “embodied a blending of each of the Aboriginal and European backgrounds in a family’s specific mixing. As a whole this evolved into a characteristic new culture sharing predominantly Cree, Assiniboine, Chippewa, French and Scot heritage.”⁸ The merging of these ethnic groups has led to popular confusion concerning their cultural affiliations and ethnic identities.⁹ In the twentieth century, these groups would collectively become known in the United States as the “Canadian Cree” or “landless Indians” of Montana. Shared historical experiences of marginalization, persecution, and discrimination unite them today as a unique ethnic group, which can be studied as discrete communities.¹⁰ In Montana, each community contributes, through

⁷ Sylvia Van Kirk, “Native Women in Canadian Fur Trade Society,” in *Major Problems in the History of the American West*, Clyde A. Milner II, Anne M. Butler, and David Rich Lewis eds. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 1997), 96-102.

⁸ Nicholas Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was... 'One Robe': The Little Shell Tribe's America* (Butte, Montana: Drumlummon Institute and Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, 2013), 38.

⁹ Larry Burt, “Nowhere Left to Go: Montana’s Crees, Metis, and Chippewas and the Creation of Rocky Boy’s Reservation,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 7 (1987): 195.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Sperry, “Ethnogenesis of the Metis, Cree, and Chippewa in Twentieth Century Montana,” (M.A. thesis, University of Montana, 2007), 1.

cultural interconnectedness, to a political alliance known as the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.¹¹

The word “Métis” takes its origin from the French term meaning “mixed-blood.” It is not unlike the term “Creole,” used to describe persons of mixed ancestry descended, in-part, from colonists of French Louisiana or, in more recent contexts, people of mixed Alaskan Native and Russian heritage.¹² “Métis” can also be thought of as an equivalent to “Mestizo,” a word employed along the Spanish American frontier in the Southwest. These identifiers have broad applications, and each captures a reality of colonization.¹³ For the Métis, tragic consequences accompanied the imposition of United States and Canadian sovereignty. Among these consequences were the forced migration of families across the Plains, military suppression of their uprisings, called the Northwest Rebellions, the subsequent execution of the Métis leader, Louis Riel, and exclusion from land negotiations throughout the Reservation Period in the United States.

In the wake of these cultural disruptions, a clutch of Métis families settled in the seclusion provided by the winding canyon mouth of the South Fork of the Teton River in northwestern Montana. Over time, a thriving community developed. At its peak, there were over one hundred Métis in the canyon, living a subsistence lifestyle supplemented by milling lumber, ranching, and soliciting occasional government handouts. As the threat of persecution gradually lifted, members of this Métis “breedtown” filtered into the

¹¹ Nicholas Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was... 'One Robe* , 390-394.

¹² Jennifer S. H .Brown, “Métis, Halfbreeds, and Other Real People: Challenging Cultures and Categories,” *The History Teacher* 27(1993): 23-24.

¹³ Albert L. Hurtado, “When Strangers Met: Sex and Gender on Three Frontiers,” *A Journal of Women Studies* 17 (1996): 52.

surrounding communities. By 1930, the Bruno family relinquished the last of the Métis homestead claims within the South Fork Canyon.¹⁴

This narrative is presented as a necessary historical context in conceptualizing the potential for preserving remnants of this particular Métis settlement along the South Fork. It also reveals the relationship between people and place, which is the foundation for historic preservation efforts and plays a significant role in the perpetuation of the Métis traditional cultural identity in western Montana.

The Place

The South Fork of the Teton River winds through the greater Rocky Mountain Front, whose east face rises abruptly from the flat and semi-arid Great Plains. It is a dramatic and memorable setting. As the South Fork exits the Rockies, it creates a canyon which widens for approximately a mile and a half before it bends sharply past the southern slope of Crystal Mountain.

Ownership of the area is divided among a complex patchwork of federal and private interests (Fig. 1). Since 1897, much of the land west of the South Fork Canyon has been managed by the United States Forest Service as the westernmost reaches of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. Within the national forest there are several wilderness-designated areas, including the Bob Marshall Wilderness, which attract hunters and recreationists year-round. The lands east of the canyon, past its narrow mouth, are privately-owned ranchlands and scattered residential subdivisions. Since 1977, the Friends of the Rocky Mountain Front organization has worked to acquire conservation

¹⁴Matthew Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River: A History of its People" (Unpublished document: Mike and Maureen Mansfield Library, University of Montana, June 1980),16.

easements from property owners in the area.¹⁵ The canyon floor, where remnants of the Métis settlement can be found, was developed in the 1930s as a dude ranch by Kenneth and Alice Gleason, but since 1988 the Nature Conservancy has assumed direct management and ownership of the property.¹⁶ The Bureau of Land Management also has an interest in the area as it maintains parcels adjacent to the Nature Conservancy’s Pine Butte Guest Ranch.

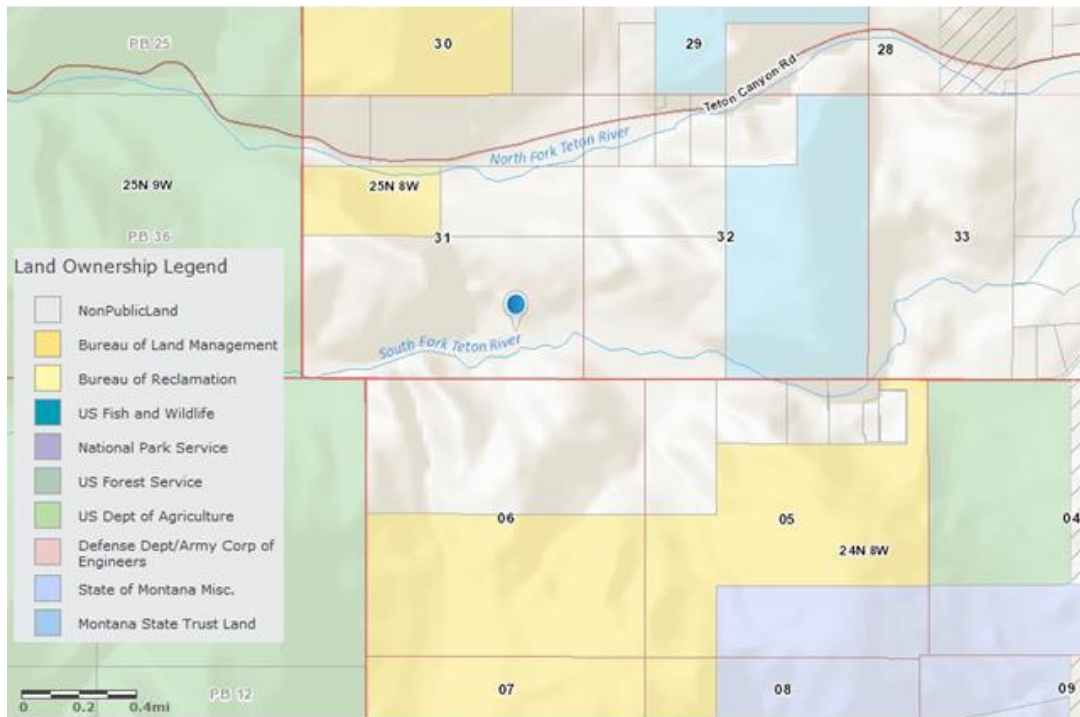


Figure 1. Map of Land Ownership surrounding the South Fork Settlement in Montana. Adjusted from Montana Base Map Service Center, Montana State Library. <http://svc.mt.gov/msl/mtcadastral/>

Because this canyon holds meaning for a variety of groups including those individuals descended from the Métis families who settled there, conservationists and

¹⁵ “Montana: the Crown of the Continent,” website of the Nature Conservancy, <http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/montana/placesweprotect/rocky-mountain-front.xml>

¹⁶ Spencer Beebe, *Cache: Creating Natural Economies* (2010), 36.

agencies concerned with its abundant environmental and natural resources, and community members who call the Rocky Mountain Front home, understanding how these meanings may factor into historic preservation requires an examination of the area's cultural and historical contexts, its extant cultural resources, its traditional uses, and its value to the community.

This examination begins with a narrative of the Métis history, establishing that this group has a traditional cultural identity and that the South Fork Settlement is a historically significant property eligible for listing on the NRHP. Other historic properties associated with this narrative are acknowledged across the Great Plains and in Canada and demonstrate various preservation strategies that may also apply to the South Fork Settlement. Among these properties are the Gingras Trading Post State Historic Site of North Dakota, recognized as representative of the state's economic development as well as for its architectural significance; the Batoche National Historic Site of Canada in Saskatchewan, commemorated primarily as a site of armed conflict; and a neighborhood called "Hill 57" in Great Falls, Montana, which holds significance to a specific group of people known as the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana who are currently developing a grass roots cultural center.

The second part of this study explores the Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) concept within the NRHP program as an alternative preservation strategy for the South Fork Settlement. An analysis of three successfully listed TCPs, Medicine Mountain/Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark, Mount Taylor TCP, and the Green River Drift Trail, illustrates the viability of the designation despite certain challenges. A discussion of failed preservation efforts that led to the creation of the TCP

designation in the 1990s, and to the publication of *Bulletin 38: Guidelines for the Identification and Documentation of Traditional Cultural Properties*, addresses the common challenges preservationists face. Returning to the ways in which the South Fork Settlement meets the NRHP criteria for eligibility, the final chapter of this study proposes the most appropriate preservation strategy is one that meets the needs of the community descended from the Métis settlers that ultimately defines the South Fork Settlement's significance.

The discussion of TCPs and of *Bulletin 38* that this thesis provides is influenced by a combination of primary and secondary sources. Since the introduction of the TCP concept in 1990, a number of concerns and complications have arisen, voiced by members of the preservation community. Some of these concerns are addressed in a 1993 special issue of *CRM Magazine*, which remains relevant after twenty-one years as few case studies exist to provide possible solutions for common challenges in employing the bulletin. Thomas King, co-author of *Bulletin 38*, has written extensively on the issue of TCPs in recent years and has, according to many practitioners, taken a controversial stance on the NRHP program. Authors such as Andrew Guilliford have advocated the identification of TCPs from a strictly tribal perspective, while others including Kelli Carmean, have explored the designation as a tool applicable to the resources of a specific tribe. Donald Hardesty has incorporated the designation into discussions of cultural landscape preservation, and Alan Jabbour has touched on *Bulletin 38* as an emerging focus related to folklife and intangible heritage preservation.

This thesis also considers the views and experiences of individuals within the preservation profession, including Paul Lusignan, historian with the National Park

Service; Amy Cole, project manager at the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Dave Vlcek, a former BLM archaeologist in Wyoming; and Amy Bleier, a research archaeologist at the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office. This collaborative study adds to the increasing body of scholarly research concerning TCP applications, and breaks from the analysis of regulations, the value to Native American cultural groups, and the potential for the bulletin’ revision, to envision *Bulletin 38* as a viable tool applicable to a yet unevaluated site of significance, encouraging others to explore broader applications than have been realized to-date (Table 1).

Table 1. List of acronyms commonly used in the Historic Preservation discipline and employed throughout this study.

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
AIRFA	American Indian Religious Freedom Act
ARPA	Archaeological Resource Protection Act
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
DOE	Determination of Eligibility (for listing on the National Register of Historic Places)
CPRC	Cultural Properties Review Committee
HPP	Historic Preservation Plan
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NHL	National Historic Landmark
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PA	Programmatic Agreement

SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office(r)
USFS	United States Forest Service

CHAPTER II

A NARRATIVE OF DISPLACEMENT

On July 31, 1896, little Jesse Gleason and his siblings pushed their way to the edge of the crowded main street in the small town of Choteau, Montana.¹ The street, unpaved and lined by the false fronts of timber-framed shops and saloons, was likely empty only an hour earlier.² But now, before a growing number of curious onlookers, a parade of over one hundred mixed-blood Cree Indian men, women, and children drew their possessions by cart or travois through the heart of this town. The scene surely stirred mixed reactions, because keeping them moving, keeping them in line, were mounted members of the 10th Cavalry—Lieutenant John J. Pershing’s famed African American Buffalo Soldiers.³ Little Jesse had seen Indians before. He had grown up a mile and a half west of the Blackfeet Agency on the Teton River, and most of his childhood companions were part Indian. A long-running joke held that the Indian mother and midwife attendant at Jesse’s birth took the wrong baby with her when she left.⁴ Jesse looked on, captivated by the polished brass-work on the horses’ tack as the soldiers maneuvered through the crowded street. The politics that gave rise to this event were beyond his five-year-old understanding, but its impact was indelible. He would recount this story many times in

¹ Melinda Livezey, Interview with Robert Zion, Choteau, MT, June 27, 1994.

² “Choteau,” in *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People*,” (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), 81-83.

³ *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People*,” (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), 6.

⁴ Opal Hollar, “Jesse L. Gleason,” in *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People*,” (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), 181-182.

later years to the residents of Choteau, for whom he became a symbol for the end of an era.⁵

An Era of Conflict

The incursion of Anglo settlement in the West displaced indigenous groups who, competing for ever-dwindling game resources, still practiced a semi-nomadic lifestyle across the Plains. The establishment of an international boundary line between Montana and Canada bisected longstanding hunting routes and trading corridors. By the late nineteenth century, those most affected were the Indians who had no reservation. Among them were members of the Assiniboine, Plains Ojibwe, Cree, and Métis communities.⁶ Cree was their *lingua franca* and so became the characteristic that, in the eyes of Anglo settlers, distinguished them from other indigenous peoples. Montanans tended to group these bands together in the pejorative use of the blanket terms “Cree” or “half-breed.”⁷

The description of these people as “Cree” is often confused with references to the Cree proper, people of the Great Lakes region. In the seventeenth century, the Plains Cree, as well as the Plains Ojibwe, came in contact with Europeans through the fur trade. They filled a niche as hunters for the ever-expanding North American fur trade and, following its vicissitudes, migrated west across the Plains into the Northwest Territories. Inter-marriage with trappers and with other indigenous peoples involved in the fur trade was common. It solidified alliances, and it generated new social groups. The most distinct

⁵ Livezey, Interview with Robert Zion.

⁶ This confederation of tribes is also referred to as an extension of the *Nehiyaw-Pwat*, a Cree term for the political and economic alliance forged among Plains Indians involved in the fur trade. Nicholas Vrooman, “No. 11: The Cree Village,” *Drumlummon Views* (2009): 367.

⁷ Martha Harroun Foster, *We Know Who We Are: Métis Identity in a Montana Community* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press: 2006), 162-163.

in their blended customs were the Métis. In the nineteenth century, this amalgam of cultures in the territory was a source of confusion to Euro-American settlers.⁸

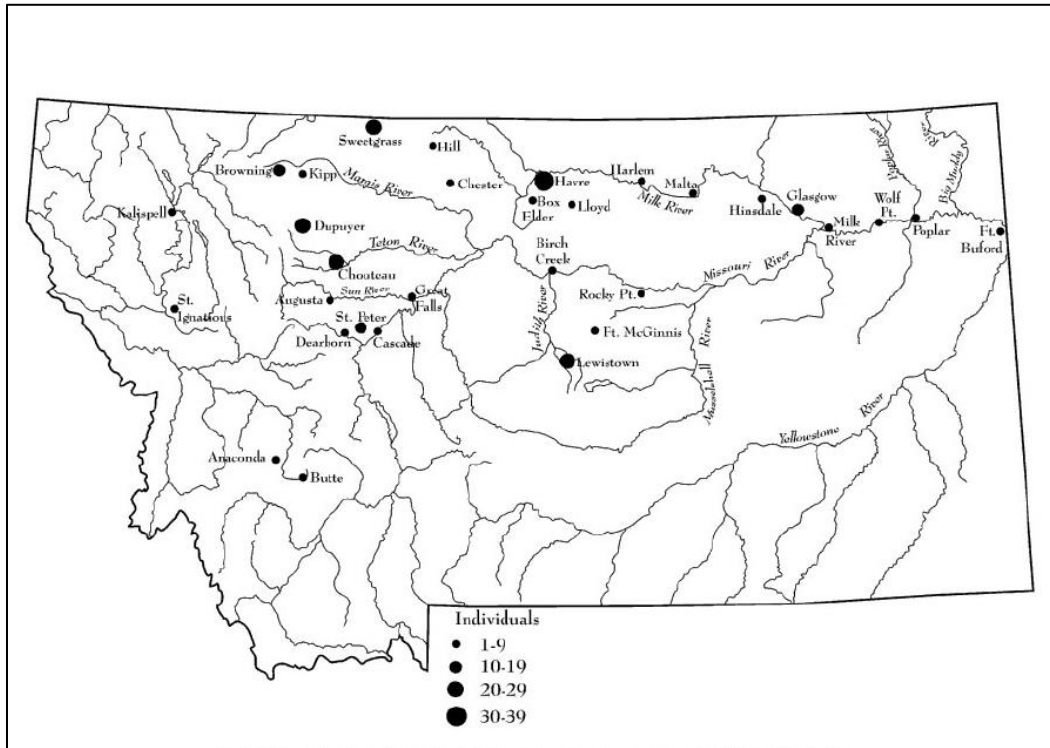


Figure 2. "Métis Settlement sites in Montana circa 1900," Map by Gerhard Ens. Reprinted from *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-Ninth Parallel*, edited by permission of the University of Nebraska Press.

By the 1890s, the Métis and Cree had become Montana's landless Indians. They formed encampments on the fringe of Anglo settlements including Missoula, Choteau, Lewistown, and Butte (see Fig. 2).⁹ The Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, and Flathead received reservations beginning in the 1850s. The U.S. government denied such

⁸Diane Paulette Payment, "Plains Métis," in *Handbook of North American Indians*, 13, part 1, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 661-663.

⁹ Nicholas Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was... 'One Robe'*, 273-275.

lands to the “Cree.”¹⁰ Their growing destitution disgusted settlers and roused contempt toward them. Their status challenged Montana progressives’ push to ‘civilize,’ following the proclamation made by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1890: the American Frontier was officially closed, the country complete. It now fell on the public to sweep away the remnants of the settlement era.¹¹ Historical ties to groups north of the U.S.-Canada border provided a convenient excuse to expel them. A popular attitude to emerge was that all Cree were Canadian and, following the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 (the second rebellion led by Riel), that all were Riel rebels and therefore undesirable foreign outlaws.¹² This became the basis for vehement calls to send the “Cree” back to Canada. An editorial that appeared in *The Montanian* in May 1890 voiced the growing concern:

A general cry is being sent up against the Cree Indians from across the boundary line, who are roaming around through Choteau county without any visible means of support. A small outfit passed through town [Choteau] yesterday presenting a disgusting sight. Their presence this side of the line should not be tolerated by the government as it has a bad effect on the Indians who belong on the reservation, causing the old longing to roam, to return and making them dissatisfied with the restraint put upon them, while the stranger is allowed to do as he pleases. Oust the Crees.¹³

Political agitation evolved into an overwhelming political movement. Citizens made their requests for government action heard, and Montana’s first governor, Joseph K. Toole, took up their cause. He advanced their letters and petitions to the Secretary of War in Washington, who refuted the governor’s assertion. The Secretary reported that evidence of any incursion of Cree Indians involved in the Riel Rebellion was insubstantial. The

¹⁰ Vrooman, “No. 11: The Cree Village,” 373.

¹¹ Vrooman, “No. 11: The Cree Village,” 374.

¹² Larry Burt, “Nowhere Left to Go: Montana’s Cree, Métis, and Chippewas and the Creation of Rocky Boy’s Reservation,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 1 (1987): 203-204.

¹³ *The Montanian*, May 30, 1890.

Crees in Montana and North Dakota appeared to be employed citizens engaged in wood cutting or the Wild West shows. Their removal was uncalled for.¹⁴ But Toole and his successor, Governor John Rickards, determined to rid the state of the Crees they believed were wards of the British government.¹⁵ In 1896 Montana's animosity toward its landless Indians prevailed. Congress signed the Cree Deportation Act.¹⁶ The Act appropriated \$5,000 "to be immediately available...to deport from the State of Montana and deliver at the international boundary line to the Canadian Authorities, all refugee Canadian Cree Indians."¹⁷ This removal would take the form of a human cattle drive.¹⁸

On June 12, 1896, Lieutenant Pershing left his post at Fort Assiniboine on his latest mission. He selected Second Lieutenant, L. J. Fleming, and 42 men to embark on a round-up of the far-flung Cree. They sprang into action the following day.¹⁹ The soldiers took a Cree encampment not far from Great Falls by surprise on June 18. Pershing attempted to calm the roughly one hundred startled men, women, and children, telling them that their government would grant them pardon for their participation in Louis Riel's rebellion.²⁰ Before long, Pershing and his cavalymen were en route to Alberta

¹⁴ Verne Dusenberry and Lynne Dusenberry Crow, *The Montana Cree: A Study in Religious Persistence* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 35.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Vrooman, "No. 11: The Cree Village," 374.

¹⁷ *Statutes at Large of the United States of America from December 1885 to March 1887, and Recent Treaties, Conventions, and Executive Proclamations*, 29 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1987), 117.

¹⁸ Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was... 'One Robe,'* 274.

¹⁹ Frank E. Vandiver, *Black Jack: The Life and Times of John. J. Pershing* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1977), 142.

²⁰ Burt, "Nowhere Left to Go," 202.

with the group of Cree. They apprehended more bands near Havre, Glasgow, Malta, and Butte. The first prisoners were transported by rail to a station on the border, but the appropriated money had dried up by early July.²¹ The round-up continued with one adjustment: the remaining Cree would be made to march to the Canadian border—over two hundred and fifty miles.²²

Initially, the U.S. Army did little to distinguish between those Cree Indians who were in fact Canadian refugees and others entangled in the pursuit. At Fort Missoula, midway through the campaign, a handful of Cree and Métis organized to test the military's indifference. Only a day before, they gained an audience. Pershing and an estimated one hundred and fifty Cree “prisoners” formed a procession through downtown Missoula, similar to the one Little Jesse Gleason would later witness. *The Daily Missoulian* described it as “one of the interesting sights of the season.”²³ They had begun their march the previous week at Camas Prairie where the arrest had taken place then crossed the high waters of the Flathead River. At last, they arrived at Fort Missoula on July 16, 1896. The journey took Pershing's peculiar entourage eight days on foot.

On the morning of July 17, a separate group of Cree and Métis, composed of roughly forty men and women, arrived at the fort. They had come voluntarily to speak out against the wrongful removal of Cree and “half-breeds” and proceeded to make camp just outside the fort walls.²⁴ Many claimed they were citizens of the United States. All demanded exemption from deportation. Pershing and his men released those whose proof

²¹ Vandiver, 142-144.

²² Verne Dusenberry and Lynne Dusenberry Crow, *The Montana Cree*, 37.

²³ *The Daily Missoulian*, July 17, 1896.

²⁴ Frank E. Vandiver, *Black Jack*, 147.

was sound and began sorting through the rapidly growing list of families with similar claims. Ultimately, Pershing handed 148 families over to Canadian authorities at the border. During the entire three month campaign, he delivered well over five hundred individuals.²⁵ On July 23, the front page of *The Daily Missoulian* stated that “among the Crees were half breeds, Chippewas and French people who were indignant and remonstrated much at being sent from the United States.”²⁶ Despite their best efforts, “as they were caught among the tribe they had to suffer and be sent to Canada also.”²⁷

Upon arrival, the Cree were commuted to reserves throughout Alberta. Some were quick to effect an escape back to the draws and canyons of Montana. For the Cree and Métis, this border was porous. One group of Métis in particular was able to evade deportation altogether and establish a community along the South Fork of the Teton River some twenty five miles west of Little Jesse’s town of Choteau.

Seclusion and Grandeur on the Rocky Mountain Front

Joseph Sifroid Bruno had immigrated to Montana from Canada around 1880, at the age of 21.²⁸ He sought to earn his living as a timber logger along the Rocky Mountain Front. In 1890 he married Frezine Ameline, also a Métis immigrant from Canada. As a young girl, she had fled Saskatchewan with her family and resettled not far from Augusta, 26 miles southwest of Choteau, Montana. She and Bruno married at Saint

²⁵ Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was...One Robe*,” 274.

²⁶ “Bound for Canada,” *The Daily Missoulian*, July 23, 1896.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The spelling of the surname Bruno is an adaptation from the French *Brunneau*. Primary sources often refer to this family by either name; the former is most common, and since is in current use by descendants, it will be used throughout this study.

Peter's Mission—the same Roman Catholic mission where, less than five years before, Gabriel Dumont famously recruited Louis Riel to lead his people in rebellion against the Canadian government.²⁹ Wary of the political repercussions experienced by the Cree and Métis on either side of the U.S.-Canada border, Joseph Bruno and his new bride chose to settle along the South Fork of the Teton River, tucked deep within the eastern slopes of the mountains. Basil LaRance, Sr., and his family had also carved a piece of land out of the South Fork Canyon, as did the Grays, the St. Germaines, and a man by the name of Albert Parenteau, known to many as “Big Bear.”³⁰ In fact, between 1876 and 1890 over one hundred Métis men, women, and children called this canyon home. All were refugees, living off the land and remaining relatively unnoticed.³¹ Only Joseph Bruno and Basil LaRance's son, Jackson, ever held any formal title to it.³²

The South Fork Canyon offered seclusion and a wealth of resources. Just past the winding narrows, the South Fork opened to a mountain meadow. Here, the Teton River sustained them. Their horses grazed freely on wild grasses, fish and game provided fresh meat, and an abundance of timber guaranteed a source of income.³³ The Métis settlers did their best to live off the land. They planted gardens; Basil LaRance dug a small ditch to

²⁹Laura Ann Carrier, “Frezine Ameline and Joseph Bruneau,” in *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People* (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), 127.

³⁰“The Canyon People (Métis),” in *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People* (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), 14-15.

³¹ Elizabeth Sperry, “Ethnogenesis of the Metis, Cree, and Chippewa in Twentieth Century Montana,” (M.A. thesis, University of Montana, 2007), 56.

³² T.J. Fanning, *Looking Back on the Front: A Bridging of Historical Perspectives* (New York: Stonesong Press, LLC., 2011), 19.

³³ Matthew Hansen, “The South Fork of the Teton River: A History of its People,” (Unpublished document: Mike and Maureen Mansfield Library, University of Montana, June 1980),14.

irrigate them.³⁴ Women picked wild berries, chokecherries, sarvis berries and wild currants, converting them into tart jams and jellies. Some made bannock, a type of scone cooked over an open flame.³⁵ Meat dried in thin-cut strips and fish smoked over fires built from sapling trees; the smoky aroma likely mingled with the crisp scent of the surrounding juniper. The women reserved certain meats and berries for making the traditional staple of their diet, pemmican, which they stored by the sack-full each year before the onset of winter.³⁶ Log root cellars, dug into hillsides and insulated by earth, ensured some of these goods would last the season.³⁷ Each spring a Catholic priest from St. Peter's visited to baptize any new children in the canyon. Priests made special trips to read last rights as well. In 1890, when Basil LaRance buried his wife Marguerite on a certain gentle, east-facing slope as she had requested in her final days, he drove a hand-hewn cottonwood cross to mark the grave.³⁸

As families grew, more log cabins appeared, dotting the canyon floor. The log cabins these families built were rustic. Four saddle-notched corners typically formed a modest-sized pen. A mixture of bentonite clay, water, and dry horse manure filled the chinks and held the logs together, protecting the family within from the spring's frequent showers and the winter's whipping winds. Families sprinkled water over their dirt floors,

³⁴ Emily Sakariassen, Interview with Al Wiseman, Choteau, MT, August 2, 2012. This interview was conducted immediately prior to and during a personal tour of the South Fork Canyon in which Wiseman told family histories and guided me through a series of former Métis homesteads and associated places.

³⁵ Mary Sexton, interview with Alice Gleason and Ripley Hugo, Choteau, Montana, March 17, 1995.

³⁶ Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River," 14.

³⁷ Sakariassen, Interview with Al Wiseman.

³⁸ Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River," 9.

using the straight edge of a window pane to smooth the muddy surface. Allowed to harden, the new floor would be compacted and perfect for dancing.³⁹

The men harvested the majority of building materials for each cabin from the immediate area. They cut, peeled, and loaded pine logs onto skids and guided the team of horses, drawing each load down the mountainside. On occasion, they floated logs through the canyon on the gentle current of the Teton.⁴⁰ Woodcutting, or “woodhawking,” evolved to be a primary occupation for the Métis men on the South Fork. With a steady influx of Anglo settlers to the outlying regions, demand for cut timber increased. The Métis were close to the source and eager to develop the industry. They cut, processed, and hauled firewood, fence posts, and house logs out of the canyon for sale to the surrounding community. Green Gulch, several miles deeper into the mountains, was a favorite site for cutting. Off and on a saw mill operated there, taking advantage of stands of Engelmann spruce, which could contain as many as 500 board-feet of lumber.⁴¹

In 1899, H. B. Ayers, a photographer with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), wound his way up and down the drainages of the Rocky Mountain Front recording vegetation, wildlife populations, and land use along the way. The USGS factored his report on the South Fork of the Teton River into an overall evaluation of the Lewis and Clarke Forest Reserve. He noted the canyon was occupied by “squatters,” a colony of “half-breed woodcutters” (Figs. 3 and 4). The report also noted that despite discrimination and competition, the Métis settlement produced approximately one million

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Richard Salias, “Angelique Thomas,” *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People* (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), 289-290.

⁴¹ Hansen, “The South Fork,” 14-15.



Figure 3. "Lumber Mill on South Fork of Teton Creek," H.B. Ayers. USGS (1899). Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana.



Figure 4. "Colony of Half-Breed Woodcutters on the South Fork of Teton Creek," H.B. Ayers. USGS (1899). Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana.

board-feet of lumber and six thousand cords of wood and poles for sale and distribution that year.⁴²

In the heart of Choteau, the end of a two-to-three day journey by wagon, stood the South Fork woodhawkers' primary market: the Jos. Hirschberg and Company Store. It was a rough-hewn log building with a clapboard false front, whitewashed. It was not unlike the other businesses buildings that lined small-town main streets across Montana. Above the expansive shop windows, a sign listed dry goods, liquor, tobacco, clothing, and a number of other goods and services supplied within—all at “bottom prices.”⁴³ A pair of German immigrant brothers, Joseph and Julius Hirschberg owned and operated the store. The woodhawkers sold their firewood and lumber to the brothers who then retailed the materials to local ranchers and developers of the burgeoning town.⁴⁴ To this day, descendants of the Métis settlement take great pride in the contribution their ancestors made to the larger community.

But the trade arrangement with the Hirschbergs was not enough to support an entire community, and oftentimes living on the South Fork was lean. Small-scale exchanges with Choteau residents such as John R. Gleason, little Jesse's father, supplemented incomes. Gleason had close friends among the South Fork Métis. He raised livestock and frequently traded beef for firewood. On at least one occasion, he sent Jesse

⁴² *Twenty-first Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey to the Secretary of the Interior, 1899-1900* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900-1901), 59.

⁴³ “Choteau Incorporates,” in *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People* (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), 84; Photograph of Jos. Hirschberg store, date unknown, 85.

⁴⁴ “The Canyon People,” *Teton County History*, 15.

up the canyon to perform the exchange. When Jesse arrived at the Bruno cabin, he was greeted warmly. Joseph Bruno presented an elk quarter and instructed the boy to deliver it to his father. In his adult life, Jesse would hone his own elk-hunting skills among the Métis of the South Fork, befriending Bruno's son, Lorman.

The first generation of school-aged children in the South Fork community, including the Brunos, attended the Fort Shaw Industrial Indian School over fifty miles away.⁴⁵ It was at this government institution that little Lorman learned his first English phrases. At home his family and friends conversed and sang in a Chippewa-French hybrid language known as Michif.⁴⁶ Numerous mission schools and agency schools operated across the northern Plains, but in June of 1892, T. J. Morgan, commissioner of Indian affairs, announced the establishment of the new industrial training school for Indian children at Fort Shaw. Dr. W.H. Winslow, an esteemed physician and teacher from the Indian school in Chiloco, Oklahoma, assumed the role of superintendent.

The Fort Shaw Industrial Indian School claimed to strike a necessary balance between primary courses such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, and gender-based vocational studies. Such studies for girls emphasized cooking, sewing, and managing a home: skills necessary to becoming ideal American women. The boy's lessons focused on carpentry, blacksmithing, farming, and raising livestock: skills necessary to find wage work. Large barracks were erected at the fort to house these pupils for the duration of each school year. Lorman and his siblings would thus be absent from the canyon for

⁴⁵ Bureau of the Census, "Fort Shaw Industrial Indian School, Cascade County, Montana," *Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900*, roll: 910, 1B; Enumeration District: 0215, <http://www.ancestry.com>

⁴⁶ Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River," 17.

extended periods of time. Acculturation was to be the measure of success. Progressive officials praised the curriculum—Fort Shaw would surely become the foremost institution for Indian youth in the state, on par, perhaps, with Carlisle Industrial Indian School in Pennsylvania.⁴⁷

The government school was not without its share of opposition. Members of the public, particularly those who were also members of the Catholic faith, fervently opposed the institution, declaring it took Catholic Indian children from existing mission and private Catholic schools across the state, subjected them to a secular education, and robbed them of religion. A passionate objection published in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, posed a scenario in which the enrollment incentives provided to parents of pupils attracted the “amphibious Crees,” who were “Canadian subjects when attending a Catholic contract school, but who, on entering a non-sectarian Government school, [became] at once full-fledged and native-born American Indians.”⁴⁸ In another instance, both St. Peter’s and St. Paul’s mission schools forced pupils to leave because they were believed to be Canadian Crees. The missions withheld the pupils’ payments.⁴⁹ The encroachment of the Industrial School not only jeopardized the Catholicity of Indian youth, it also challenged their cultural identity—in particular, that of the “Cree.”

In the South Fork Canyon, the traditions that defined the threatened and endangered cultural identity of the Métis did not wane. Every Saturday night, someone hosted a dance in his or her cabin. Nearly every man in the canyon played the fiddle, a

⁴⁷ Kristi Dawn Scott, “Child Artisans of the Northern Plains: Woodcarving at Fort Shaw Indian School, 1892-1910,” (M.A. Thesis, Montana State University, 2011), 4-6.

⁴⁸ L.B.P., “Indian Education: An Impending Calamity to the Catholic Indians of Montana,” *American Ecclesiastical Review: A Monthly Publication for the Clergy* 7, 1 (1892): 477-479.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 484.

tradition that stemmed from the Scottish and Irish employed by the Hudson's Bay Company generations back. Some of the women sang; the St. Germaine women in particular seemed to have a familial gift for it.⁵⁰ Others played the concertina, stomped their feet to the rhythm, or awaited their turns to dance. The foods they ate, the language they used, and the music they heard reassured them of their distinct heritage, and the sounds of a thriving community echoed through the canyon.⁵¹ But on the 31st of July 1896, the canyon would have been silent.⁵² As little Jesse Gleason watched the "parade" of Cree and soldiers, it was unlikely that he made any conscious connection between the people being marched north to Canada and the inhabitants of the South Fork who had gone undetected by Pershing and his men. It would seem a curious injustice that closing the frontier should marginalize the descendants of those who opened it.

Origins of the Montana Métis

The genesis of the Métis identity, celebrated against all odds in the South Fork settlement, had occurred long ago at the heart of the continent—the crossroads of trade. It was an identity hardened by colonial power struggles, economic control, and failed resistance. In the expanse between the Red River and the Rockies, four great river basins converge (Fig. 5). The Nelson River drains north into Hudson's Bay. The St. Lawrence flows east to the Atlantic. The Mississippi runs south where it spills into the Gulf and, just further west, the Upper Missouri courses across the Plains. The stretch of territory

⁵⁰ Livezey, Interview with Robert Zion.

⁵¹ Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River," 14-18

⁵² "The Canyon People," *Teton County History*, 15.

was once rich in resources. The black, loamy soil of the plains allowed for agricultural development. The prairie grasses supported vast herds of bison, commonly referred to as “buffalo.” The rivers and tributaries teemed with game, most importantly beaver. This was the frontier. Beginning in the seventeenth century, these rivers brought strange men into the heart of the continent. French *voyageurs* arrived first, traveling by canoe from the St. Lawrence; then came Scotch and English merchants from Hudson’s Bay. Not long after, Americans began to filter in on the Mississippi. All were eager to explore and exploit in the name of expansion.⁵³

Demand for beaver pelts in Europe fueled this colonial expansion in the New World. Hats made from the felted beaver fur epitomized popular fashion and generated economic opportunity previously unparalleled in the North American interior. The Hudson’s Bay Company, under charter from King Charles II, held absolute jurisdiction over the unexplored territories of British North America.⁵⁴ Its stranglehold on the territory known as Prince Rupert’s Land would last two centuries, though the Hudson’s Bay Company was long hesitant to penetrate their unknown wilderness.⁵⁵

⁵³ Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire*, 23-27.

⁵⁴ Howard, *Strange Empire*, 30-31.

⁵⁵ Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (1935; reprint Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 87.



Figure 5. "Heart of a Continent," Map by Irvin Shope, Reprinted from *Strange Empire* by Joseph Kinsey Howard, by permission of the Minnesota Historical Society Press. Copyright 1994 by Minnesota Historical Society.

The key factor in the success of fur trading was the presence of indigenous peoples, American Indians. Initially, they trapped the beaver and delivered them to trading posts erected throughout the territory. They traded their pelts for European goods such as wool blankets. After the rival North West Company incorporated in 1787, a new system of trade intensified competition for the continent's resources (Fig. 6).⁵⁶ This predominantly French company established its trading posts deep within the fur country, closer to the source of the product and more conveniently located for the Indian trappers.⁵⁷ Free traders soon caught on to the strategy. In the 1780s a French free trader established a post along the Red River at the crux of the two expanding fur trade company empires. The abundant wildlife and resources at the confluence of the Pembina and Red Rivers seemed limitless. The North West Company staked an adjacent claim in 1797. In 1801 Alexander Henry the Younger, a partner in the North West Company, erected a fort on the north bank of the Pembina River.⁵⁸ This strategically located prairie village became a hub of industry and came to be called Pembina. Its inhabitants were typical characters of the fur trade: trappers, merchants, and the mixed-blood children of Euro-Indigenous marriages, such as the Métis.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ June Helm, Edward S. Rogers, and James G.E. Smith, "Intercultural Relations and Cultural Change in the Shield and Mackenzie Borderlands," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Subarctic*, Vol. 6 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981), 147.

⁵⁷ Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 91.

⁵⁸ Howard, *Strange Empire*, 27-28.

⁵⁹ Vrooman, *The Whole Country was...One Robe*, 51.

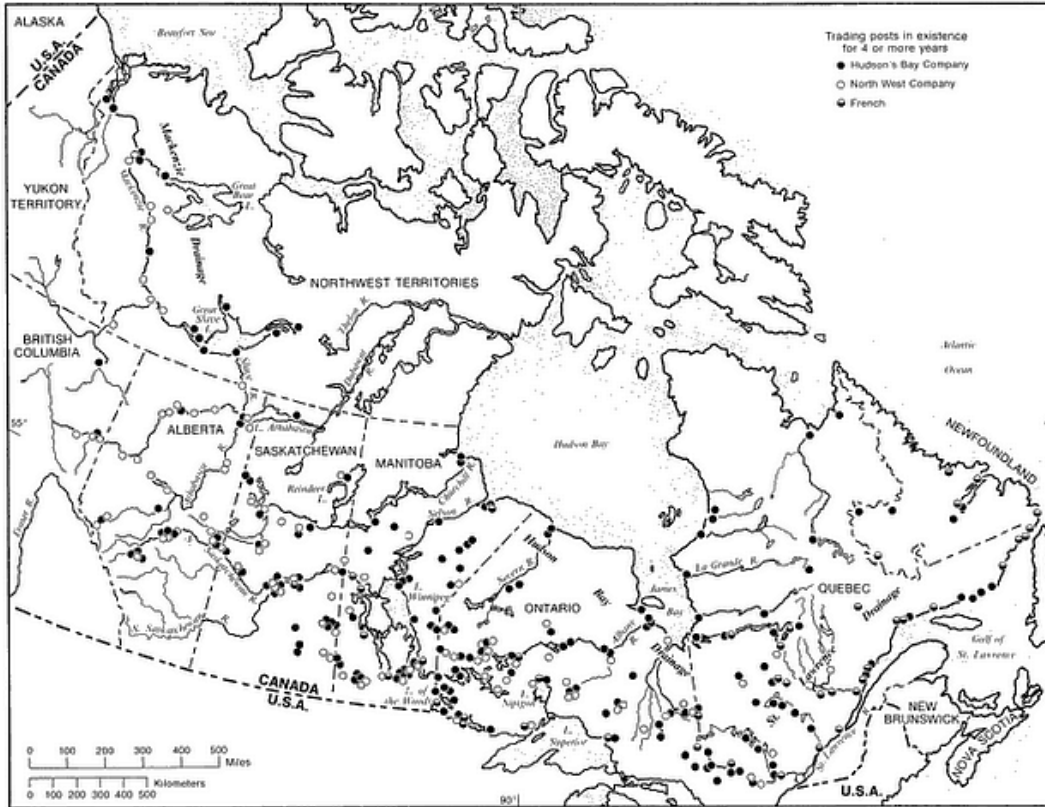


Figure 6. “Sectors of early Indian-White contact and fur trading posts,” Map by Rogers and Smith, Reprinted from June Helm, Edward S. Rogers, and James G.E. Smith, “Intercultural Relations and Cultural Change in the Shield and Mackenzie Borderlands,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Subarctic*, Vol. 6.

The Métis were crucial to the trade economy at Pembina. Their seasonal buffalo hunts on the western plains provided meat for the production of pemmican, a staple provision for the trappers. Métis freighters hauled pelts, pemmican, moccasins, and buffalo meat along the Red River trails to St. Paul, Minnesota. Their mode of transport was the two-wheeled “Red River cart” drawn by oxen. At market, they acquired goods such as tobacco, liquor, farm tools, and guns, which they then carried back to Pembina. But increasing infringement of Euro-American colonists threatened the position of the Métis and the cross-cultural economy they had developed. In his journal, Alexander Henry noted the gradual depletion of beaver throughout the Red River Valley in 1806. In

the ensuing decades, trade would move farther and farther west in search of new sources. Buffalo hunts and the products they yielded became increasingly important to the perpetuation of the fur industry.

In 1811, the Hudson's Bay Company granted the Earl of Selkirk, who held controlling interest in the company, a large tract of land for the establishment of a new colony. He called it Assiniboia. The following year English, Irish, French, German, and Swiss colonists arrived to occupy the settlement centered at Fort Garry. Their agricultural community would become the only major community in the territory not predicated on the fur trade. Selkirk's establishment bisected the territories trapped by the North West Company and thwarted the North West Company's plans for westward expansion. Competition intensified. The influx of new settlers brought a Protestant influence to an area traditionally populated by Métis and French Roman Catholics.⁶⁰ Tension between the groups escalated. In 1816 a series of skirmishes broke out between colonists fighting on the side of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Métis fighting under the authority of the North West Company.⁶¹ The Métis organized an army. Their impassioned campaign against the Hudson's Bay Company's authority cost the lives of 21 of Selkirk's colonists.⁶²

But the security of the Métis' own interests continued unrealized. The two trading companies responsible for the agitation were brought before British Parliament, which

⁶⁰ Chittenden, *The Rise of the American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 93-34.

⁶¹ Jonas A. Jonasson, "The Background of the Riel Rebellions," *Pacific Historical Review* 3 (1934): 270-271.

⁶² From the Métis army, only one man fell at what became known as the Battle of Seven Oaks. This man was the poet Pierre Falcon. A traditional Métis folk song, called the "Falcon Song," commemorates the event and is considered an anthem of the Métis people. Howard, *Strange Empire*, 32.

forced the North West Company into a merger with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Métis escaped harsh penalty for their direct and brutal involvement in the massacre. However, the changing social and economic climate would be of great consequence to them.

Trade had transformed the ecology and economy on the Great Plains. In 1859, the arrival of the first steamboats on the Red River signaled an end of an era in trapping. Buffalo began to disappear from the eastern Plains due in part to the insatiable demand for buffalo robes. Other factors, including introduction of foreign ungulate diseases such as brucellosis and anthrax, competition for food and water with the increasing horse population, the onset of drought at mid-century, and overkilling for sport, ensured that before long, they would disappear in the West, too.⁶³ In 1867 the validity of interracial marriage was challenged in Canadian court.⁶⁴ That same year, the Dominion of Canada was born. Gradually the majority of Métis lost access to the Anglo society, and their once fluid, semi-nomadic, poly-ethnic culture became fixed.⁶⁵ In response, they developed a distinct social structure derived from both their ancestral Plains traditions and the European models for self-governance (Fig. 7).⁶⁶

⁶³ Dan Flores, "When the Buffalo Roamed," in *Western Heritage: A Selection of Wrangler Award-Winning Articles*, ed. Paul Andrew Hutton (University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 11-14; A map of Métis settlements in the U.S. and Canada in the mid-19th century illustrates the changing seasonal hunting migrations as groups had to travel farther from winter settlements for resources. Diane Paulette Payment, "Plains Métis," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Plains*, Vol. 13, Part 1, edited by Raymond J. DeMallie (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 662. By the 1850s, seasonal migrations from the Pembina area reached across North Dakota and into central Montana.

⁶⁴ Julia Harrison, *Metis* (Vancouver, B.C.: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1985), 36.

⁶⁵ Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 240.

⁶⁶ Payment, "Plains Métis," (2011), 664-666.

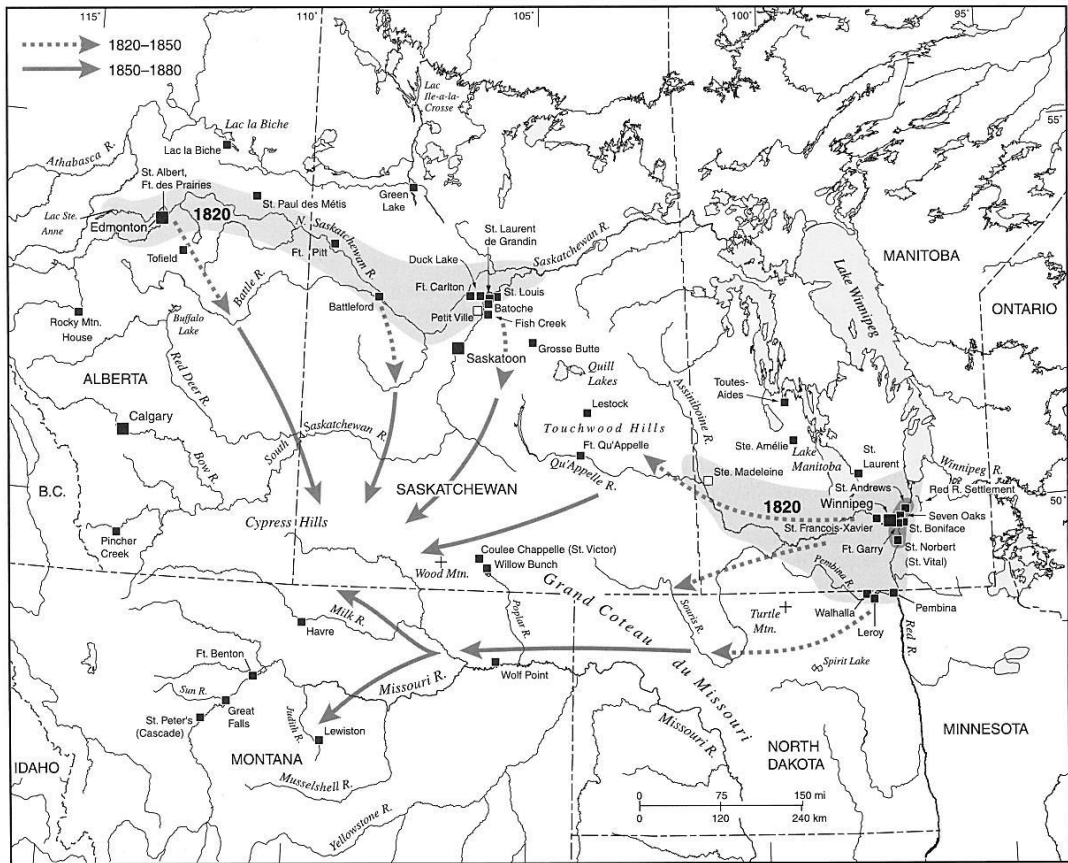


Figure 7. “Areas of Settlement around 1820-1880, with the Red River Settlement in darker shading, and later seasonal shifts for hunting,” Reprinted from Diane Paulette Payment, “Plains Métis,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Plains*, Vol. 13, Part 1, edited by Raymond J. DeMallie.

The Red River Valley became politically divided. As more Americans moved to settlements north of the 49th Parallel, traffic between Minnesota and Prince Rupert’s Land increased. On both sides of the border, U.S. annexation of the territory was discussed as a real possibility.⁶⁷ Minnesota senator Alexander Ramsey advocated that action. The state legislature formally declared its favor of the acquisition of the entire territory between Minnesota and Alaska, but the Dominion of Canada, newly formed in 1867, inserted itself into negotiations with the Hudson’s Bay Company over the transfer of Prince

⁶⁷ Jonasson, “The Background of the Riel Rebellions,” 273.

Rupert's Land. In 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company surrendered its charter and sold it to the Confederation of Canada for £300,000.⁶⁸

On October 11, 1869, a group of surveyors, sent by the Dominion to mark boundaries for the formation of new townships in the Red River settlement, neared the pasture of St. Vital parish. Several Métis men, alerted to the surveyors' presence, cut them off at the church and demanded they leave immediately. The Dominion had not yet acquired jurisdiction over Prince Rupert's Land, and no one living in the affected territory had been consulted in the matter.⁶⁹ Still, the Imperial Government had appropriated \$15,000 for the premature construction of roadways linking the trade colony at Fort Garry to Lake of the Woods in Ontario. Surveyors set out across the West, outlining the bounds of the anticipated province. Incensed and discontented, the inhabitants of the Red River formed a National Committee to put an end to the exploitation of their people by this outside power. Among the Métis men who had been at St. Vital the day they chased the surveyors away and occupied the fort was Louis Riel.⁷⁰

Riel was a young man, in his twenties. He was educated by priests at St. Boniface and later entered the seminary at the Collège de Montréal. His compatriots considered him both an intellectual and a devout Roman Catholic—the ideal spokesman.⁷¹ But Riel was also impulsive, vainglorious, and prone to emotional lapses in judgment. It seems as soon as he assumed leadership of the Métis cause, he guided the crusade rapidly toward

⁶⁸ Ibid, 274.

⁶⁹ Thomas Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel: prophet of the new world*, revised ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 1996), 31.

⁷⁰ Jonasson, "The Background of the Riel Rebellions," 272-275.

⁷¹ George Francis Stanley, *Louis Riel* (New York: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Press, 1963), 18.

rebellion.⁷² On November 2, William McDougall, the territorial governor, approached the British territory north of Pembina. Forty-one merchants and Métis representing the National Committee had rallied at the American border, preventing McDougall's entry.⁷³ They presented a list of rights, their attempt to negotiate the terms of their entry into the Canadian Confederation. When McDougall refused to sign his name to the document, he was detained at a makeshift headquarters in the home of Antoine Blanc Gingras.

Hoping to make their demands heard, Riel and his Métis followers seized Fort Garry and established a provisional government. They elected a legislature. They demanded representation in Canadian Parliament. They clamored for official status for both the French and the English languages, and they sought economic security. In July 1870, Parliament passed the Manitoba Act, addressing a majority of their concerns. The act also asserted the land rights of the Métis and their freedom to practice Catholicism. However, during Riel's occupation of Fort Garry, he had ordered Thomas Scott, a government surveyor who had led a handful of volunteers in an attack on the provisional government, executed. When news of Scott's death reached Ontario, the Canadian government placed a \$5,000 bounty on the head of Louis Riel. The insurrection had succeeded in the creation of a new province of Manitoba for the Métis, but their crusader was forced to flee the country.⁷⁴

The Manitoba Act of 1870 provided for the allotment of 1,400,000 acres of land, to be distributed among the mixed-blood families of the former Red River colony. By

⁷²Jonasson, "The Background of the Riel Rebellions," 272-275.

⁷³ Howard, *Strange Empire*, 116.

⁷⁴ Harrison, *The Metis*, 36-39.

1879, the Dominion had allotted the total lands available, yet families continued to apply for their shares.⁷⁵ The government adjusted the system to accommodate these applicants, but in the process many allotments were simply reassigned, taken from one owner and given to another. The Dominion frequently took away those lands from Métis families absent on seasonal buffalo hunts. Dissatisfied with such treatment and recovering from the Red River Insurrection, many families relocated to the plains farther west. In parts of Montana and North Dakota, they blended in among affiliated groups on U.S. Indian reservations, signing treaties and accepting Indian status. Others settled on the prairies, adapting to a sedentary lifestyle of farming or ranching.⁷⁶ But those who remained north of the 49th Parallel struggled with an indifferent government.

In the decade since his expulsion from Canada, Louis Riel had experienced something between an epiphany and a mental collapse. In 1876, he was committed to Beauport asylum near Quebec and, following his release two years later, he gradually made his way back to the Red River. Convinced that his religious and political beliefs had inspired the persecution he endured, he began to see himself as a prophet and readied himself for martyrdom. Individuals throughout the Plains now recognized Riel as the political leader of the semi-successful insurrection in Canada, and, as he travelled with the Métis across the region, he promoted a Catholic colonization of Montana. He took a teaching position at St. Peter's Mission in the Sun River valley in 1883, but the Métis people soon called upon his leadership once more.

⁷⁵ Jonasson, "The Background of the Riel Rebellions," 277.

⁷⁶ Harrison, *Metis*, 39-41.

In June 1884 Gabriel Dumont, a respected Métis buffalo hunter of Batoche, Saskatchewan, arrived at St. Peter's Mission.⁷⁷ Hungry for adequate representation in Canadian parliament, the Métis of Saskatchewan had petitioned, repeatedly, for provincial status. Responses from Ottawa were rare and evasive. Eleven years of rejected requests drove the Métis to Riel's door. Dumont sought to recruit the former crusader to lead them once again in a rebellion against the Dominion.⁷⁸ Riel accepted the mantle of responsibility. When he arrived at the modest settlement of Batoche, a crowd of Métis rushed to greet him, firing rifles in celebratory salute.

Unrest in Saskatchewan was not limited to the Métis, and Riel sought to form an alliance for their cause. He and leaders of a neighboring English settlement, whose residents had formed a radical group called the Settler's Union, itemized complaints of both groups for a united presentation to the Canadian government. Several months into the movement, a third ally emerged. It was Big Bear, a Cree chief representing a band of roughly five hundred men, women, and children sharing similar grievances against the government.⁷⁹ But as Riel's political and religious obsessions exposed themselves, the Anglo element abandoned the cause. Riel's increasingly violent plans generated concern among the Catholic clergy, as well. In March 1885, Riel declared a provisional government just as he had done at Manitoba.

But a level head seemed to elude Riel. Saskatchewan was already a province of Canada, and the government's neglect of its people did not justify succession. On March

⁷⁷ Howard, *Strange Empire*, 320-356.

⁷⁸ Howard, 358.

⁷⁹ Howard, *Strange Empire*, 365-370.

18th, word that police were en route to Batoche reached the Métis army. Responding, Riel and his followers raided a nearby store for guns and ammunition. At Fort Carlton, approximately twenty miles west, the Mounted Police prepared for conflict. Nine days later, violence broke out at Duck Lake, where a group of Métis rebels led by Dumont overwhelmed a detachment of Mounted Police and civilian volunteers, killing an estimated twenty-five percent.⁸⁰ In the early days of the Northwest Rebellion, the Métis exerted their might.⁸¹

Riel's Northwest Rebellion came to a head at the decisive Battle of Batoche. The battle played out over four grueling days of combat, as some three hundred Métis held out against Major General Frederick D. Middleton and his roughly eight hundred citizen soldiers. The outcome of the battle was grim for the Métis, as many were killed, captured, and put on trial.⁸² Dumont made an escape across the border into the United States. Louis Riel surrendered to authorities, and was tried and hanged for treason on November 16, 1885.⁸³

In the wake of the Riel Rebellions, many Métis families fled across the Canadian border from Saskatchewan into parts of Montana and North Dakota.⁸⁴ Frequently these people found relatives or joined other bands with whom they were closely affiliated. Some carved out a living on the margins of Anglo settlements. Still others sought refuge

⁸⁰ Judy Torrance, "Response of Canadian Governments to Violence," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 10 (1977): 477.

⁸¹ Howard, 387-396.

⁸² Fanning *Looking Back on the Front: A Bridging of Historical Perspectives*, 15-17.

⁸³ Fanning, 17.

⁸⁴ Fanning, *Looking Back on the Front: A Bridging of Historical Perspectives*, 12.

in the draws and canyons of the Rocky Mountains. Fear of persecution and deportation dictated the movements of these people. As the spirit of their frontier faded, it assumed a rightful place in the shared cultural memory of the descendant generations.⁸⁵ For the descendants of one particular group of refugees, those who trace their ancestry to the Métis settlement on the South Fork of the Teton River, this memory is very much intact.

As time passed on the South Fork of the Teton River, the threat of persecution from the United States and Canadian governments subsided. Younger Métis children educated at Fort Shaw and later the county schools, were well-equipped to pursue a variety of vocations in outlying areas. Many initially sought jobs as ranch hands. Some travelled as far as Browning, Montana or the Sweet Grass Hills to find work. Walter and Olive Gray, married in 1914, took haying contracts, as many young couples in the South Fork Canyon did (Fig. 8). They lived and worked among the various ranch families at the foot of the mountains each season. While Walter hayed the fields, Olive cooked for the crew and hauled their water.⁸⁶ Basil LaRance, Sr., drove freight from Great Falls to Choteau to make ends meet.⁸⁷ In 1923, the Fellers family left the canyon in search of a better life in Alberta. Around the same time, Angelina LaRance remarried and moved to the Pacific Coast. It was a time of transition, but these families would not abandon their common memories and cultural past.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Vrooman, *The Whole Country was...One Robe*, "274-275.

⁸⁶ *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People*, "186.

⁸⁷ Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River," 16.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 18.



**Figure 8. Mack Bruno in front of a Hay Wagon, and Team, (date unknown).
Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson Private collection.**

In 1924, Jesse Gleason, with the help of Lorman Bruno, built a log hunting cabin in the canyon from which they guided pack hunting trips into the wilderness. Everything Jesse had learned from the Métis about elk hunting in his youth, he now carried with him. He became a skilled artist, capturing the South Fork and its surrounding mountain vistas on canvas.⁸⁹ Outfitters flocked to the area, taking advantage of the potential for outdoor recreational tourism in the picturesque grandeur of the Rockies. In 1930, Jesse's nephew, Kenneth, filed for a 640-acre grazing homestead along the north side of the canyon. At the onset of the Great Depression, he was determined to enter the dude ranching business and base his operation along the South Fork of the Teton River. In 1929, Frezine Bruno bequeathed shares in her homestead to each of her 11 children, but most of them had long since left the canyon. On behalf of his nephew, Jesse approached each of the Brunos,

⁸⁹ *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People,* 182.

obtaining from each a quit-claim deed to his or her share of the family's land. The official transfer of those shares signaled the end of the era a long time coming. In 1932, Lorman Bruno was the last of the South Fork Métis to leave his residence in the comfort and seclusion of the canyon.⁹⁰

While they had filtered out onto the Plains and into the nearby towns, the South Fork Métis managed to maintain a strong presence in the region (Figs. 9-14).⁹¹ On a single sheet from a Population Schedule, filled out in 1930, appear the names of five Métis families, 22 individuals, from the "Bellevue School District 16," the district encompassing the sweep of flat land west of Choteau proper at the foot of the Rocky Mountain Front. These five families had enrolled their children, the newest generation in this community of Métis, in the school located only eight miles from the mouth of the canyon their parents once called home.⁹²

Descendants of the South Fork settlement revisit the canyon, some with considerable frequency. Though the physical reminders of their ancestors' lives are largely in ruin, their story survives in this place. On the hillside cemetery, under the rattling leaves of an aspen tree planted to honor Marguerite LaRance decades ago, the faded plastic flowers of memorial offerings mark a struggle of hope and the undying spirit of a people. Here, along the clear waters of the Teton, the history of the Métis and the culture of a community are forever imprinted.

⁹⁰ Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River," 18-19.

⁹¹ T.J. Fanning, *Looking Back on the Front*, 21-23.

⁹² Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Montana, Teton County, Bellevue School District 16," *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*, roll: 1264, 1A; Enumeration District: 0013, <http://www.ancestry.com> (Accessed 9/3/2013).



Figure 9. Mack Bruno, Buford Gray, and Alfred Gray in the South Fork Canyon, (date unknown). Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson, Private Collection.



Figure 10. Return from a winter hunt, (date unknown). Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson, Private collection.



Figure 11. Boy hunting rabbits in the South Fork Canyon, (c. 1925).Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson, Private collection.



Figure 12. Marie Bruno stands in front of her family cabin, (date unknown). Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson, Private collection.



Figure 13. Olive Bruno, Freda Gray, Elaine Gray, (date unknown).Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson, Private collection.



Figure 14. Angela Ameline with others picnicking in the canyon, (date unknown). Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson, Private collection.

CHAPTER III

PRESERVATION OF THE MÉTIS NARRATIVE

Strategies for the preservation of place and the stories place evokes vary in response to the needs of a particular community or culture. Arguably the most commonly employed strategy for preservation is the NRHP, the purpose of which is to preserve, in a physical sense, the significant places and stories of an entire nation. Places listed, or determined eligible for listing, are a diverse reflection of our collective cultural values, both past and present; sites associated with the Métis culture are among them.¹ The following three examples indicate that, regardless of whether they have achieved formal designation or national status, stories similar to those that tie the Métis community to the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon are significant and acknowledged. In each example, a specific group of people ascribes significance to a particular place and has devised a strategy for preserving its significance.

Gingras Trading Post State Historic Site, North Dakota

In a level field approximately a mile and a half northeast of Walhalla, North Dakota, sits a pair of log buildings: a house and a store. These buildings are remnants of the fur trade, said to be the oldest standing buildings in the state (Fig. 15). A Métis trader by the name of Antoine Blanc Gingras built them in the 1840s to serve as his home and base of operation in the Red River Valley. The Métis remember Gingras for his participation in the Riel Rebellions. For them, this historical site is culturally significant as Louis Riel's Red River hideout. For others in the state, the site represents an important

¹ Alan Jabbour, "Folklife, Intangible Heritage, and the Promise and Perils of Cultural Cooperation," 423-442.

theme of development in the region. Since 1971, the State Historical Society of North Dakota has owned and cared for the buildings. They are also listed together on the NRHP as reflections of North Dakota's political and economic history and as examples of uncommon construction characteristics that coincide with Gingras's personal experiences and affluence.²



Figure 15. Gingras Trading Post State Historic Site of North Dakota (2006). Archaeology and Historic Preservation Division, Courtesy of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

In the mid-nineteenth century, intense commercial competition among fur traders still dominated the social, economic, and political climate in the Red River Valley. The Hudson's Bay Company maintained a majority of the trading posts in the region. By the 1840s, however, the growing number of independent tradesmen, especially those in the

²Walter L. Bailey, "Gingras Trading Post/Gingras State Historic Site," National Register of Historic Places form, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975, 1-5.

Red River Valley, began to challenge the monopoly. Among the competitors were experienced company traders Norman Kittson and Henry Hastings Sibley, who forged the partnership known as “Kittson’s Outfit” at Pembina in 1843.³ Working closely with Métis traders, including Antoine Blanc Gingras, this pair of American tradesmen was able to compete against the Hudson’s Bay Company, revolutionize the transportation industry, and transform the Red River Valley. The personal legacy of Antoine Blanc Gingras is an extension of their lasting influence.

Kittson first arrived in the Red River Valley in 1843. Sibley had hired him to replace Joseph Rolette, Jr., head of the American Fur Company in the Red River Valley. That year, Kittson established three new posts, each in the vicinity of the town of St. Joseph, roughly thirty miles west of the Pembina post. He hired Gingras, a Métis free trader often under contract to the Hudson’s Bay Company, to supervise trade at the new Hair Hills post along the Souris River. Gingras proved to be a shrewd businessman and valuable asset to the team. He served as a middleman in trade between the fur company and the Métis hunters on the Plains.⁴

Gingras’s base of operation, St. Joseph, was a border town, only two miles south of the 49th Parallel, not far from present-day Walhalla, North Dakota. Commercial activity in the town drew on Métis families, in particular, from either side of the border. It became a gathering place for the seasonal buffalo hunts during which hundreds of Métis men, women, and children set out across the Plains in pursuit of the ever-dwindling herds. These hunts produced the buffalo robes that were in such high demand in eastern

³ Clarence W. Rife, “Norman W. Kittson, a Fur-Trader at Pembina,” *Minnesota History* 6 (1925): 227.

⁴ Clarence W. Rife, “Norman W. Kittson, a Fur-Trader at Pembina,” *Minnesota History* 6(1925): 228-229.

markets. They also provided meat that the women dried and processed into pemmican. They brought these materials back to the Red River Valley by ox cart and traded directly with Gingras for tobacco, liquor, sundries, and other manufactured goods at the post. The success of the Kittson's Outfit post outraged Governor Alexander Christie of the Hudson's Bay Company. He denounced the outfit in 1845 and accused the company of smuggling.⁵ Still, the business of the fur trade continued, and the competition spurred development in the region. By 1849, St. Joseph's population had surpassed one thousand.⁶

The surplus robes Kittson's Outfit acquired from the Métis buffalo hunts made their way to market in St. Paul and Mendota, Minnesota, where they were traded in bulk for manufactured goods. In the absence of a railway link between Pembina and St. Paul, Kittson's Outfit harnessed the technology used by the Métis on their buffalo hunts. The outfit hired teams of men with Red River ox carts to transport the goods over five hundred miles across the Plains to market.⁷ To this day, the two-wheeled wooden carts are a symbol of the fur trade era and the last of the buffalo hunting days. Competitors caught on to the use of ox carts. Even the Hudson's Bay Company mimicked their system of shipment. Three major cart routes emerged across the Plains, and for the next two decades, this method of transportation was the standard.

Kittson and Sibley had made a wealthy man of Gingras. Furthermore, they had given him opportunities from which to build his own legacy. He maintained viable fur

⁵ Nancy L. Woolworth, "Gingras, St. Joseph and the Métis in the Northern Red River Valley: 1843-1873," *North Dakota History* 42 (1975): 18.

⁶ <http://history.nd.gov/historicsites/walhalla/index.html>

⁷ Walter L. Bailey, "Gingras Trading Post/Gingras State Historic Site," National Register of Historic Places form, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975): 4-5.

trading posts in both St. Joseph and Pembina, carving out his own niche in the region's economy. With the opening of free trade between the United States and Canada in 1849, his business grew. The new-found affluence earned him public attention and ultimately enabled him to enter the political arena. When the United States welcomed the incorporated Minnesota Territory, the people of the Pembina district elected Gingras to the territorial legislature. He was known as one of the "Moccasin Democrats," advocating expansionist policies and territorial sovereignty.⁸ By 1861, Gingras was a reputable political figure and the richest man in the region. He had established a trading post at Fort Garry (present-day Winnipeg, Manitoba), spearheaded a petition for the creation of Dakota Territory, and arrived at a net worth of \$60,000. In 1869, he used his influence among the Métis people of the Red River Valley to garner support for the Riel Rebellion. He was personally acquainted with Louis Riel and sympathetic to his insistence that Canada meet Métis demands before taking possession of Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company.⁹ When Lt. Governor McDougall refused to sign the list of rights that the Comité National des Métis presented in October of 1869, Riel ordered his detainment. McDougall spent the duration of his captivity in the home of Gingras.¹⁰ The passage of the Manitoba Act addressed the concerns of Riel's Métis insurgents, but the Canadian government placed a \$5,000 bounty on Riel's head. During Riel's exile, he is said to have stayed for a time with Gingras and his family at St. Joseph.¹¹ A popular

⁸ Woolworth, "Gingras, St. Joseph and the Métis in the Northern Red River Valley: 1843-1873," 20.

⁹ Jonasson, "The Background of the Riel Rebellions," 272-275.

¹⁰ Thomas Flanagan, "Louis Riel and the Dispersion of the American Métis," *Minnesota History* 49 (1985): 179-180.

¹¹ Harrison, *The Métis*, 36-39.

attraction at the Gingras State Historic Site is a small hatch in the ceiling that leads to an attic space, Louis Riel's rumored place of refuge.

The two buildings at the Gingras Trading Post State Historic Site are also viewed as physical manifestations of Antoine Blanc Gingras's commercial success, political fortitude, and public appeal. Both structures are one-and-a-half story, gable-roofed, square-hewn log structures with dovetailed corners. They are considered a stylistic amalgam of classic American and French-Canadian log cabins typical of the Métis culture along the international border. Carved verge boards, horizontal wood cladding, and brightly painted interiors adorn the house, illustrating the rise in Gingras's social and economic standing and the influence of the high-style architecture popular in St. Paul.¹²

The State Historical Society of North Dakota recognized the cultural and historical value of the Gingras Trading Post. However, when they acquired the site in 1971, decades of reuse and neglect had altered the appearance and condition of the buildings. Following the purchase, the historical society conducted archaeological and historical investigations to determine that sufficient integrity of the materials, design, and fabric warranted a restoration project. Federal historic preservation grants funded the efforts to restore both the house and the trading post to their mid-nineteenth century appearance.

In 1993, the historical society devised a master plan for improving four of the state's most important historic sites, among them the Gingras Trading Post. The ambitious plan called for a substantial investment from the state. Building costs requested for the first year, which included preparation of a Historic Structure Report, exceeded

¹² Walter L. Bailey, "Gingras Trading Post/Gingras State Historic Site," National Register of Historic Places form, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975), 4.

\$120,000. A new interpretation program called for \$131,500 for the first year.¹³ The allocations for the revitalization of this property illustrate the state's support of a long-term heritage investment. As stated in the opening of the master plan: "Antoine Gingras and his times must be brought to life if the full potential and appeal of this important site are to be realized."¹⁴

The interpretation at the Gingras trading post now complements the themes and topics of the Pembina State Museum approximately thirty miles away. Broadsides and exhibits at the Gingras site focus on the life and achievements of Antoine Blanc Gingras, the history of the Métis people, the history of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa (a group whose history is entwined with that of the "landless Indians" of Montana), and the roles each played in the development of the fur trade. A webpage for the site serves as a public forum where visitors can share stories and photos of their trips to the Gingras site and reflect upon the themes covered in the site's interpretation. In addition, the webpage promotes other related historical sites and cultural events such as the Louis Riel and Métis Veterans Honour Day held at Batoche National Historic Site in Saskatchewan.¹⁵ In some ways the Gingras Trading Post State Historic Site transcends the historical significance for which it is listed on the National Register. The initial support for the preservation of this site and its story, and its popularity among visitors, reveal an appreciation for cultural heritage and recognition of the Métis role in shaping the region.

¹³ Robert A. Matthai Associates, *Gingras Master Plan*, (Bismarck, ND: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1992), 1-17.

¹⁴ Robert A. Matthai Associates, *Gingras Master Plan*, (Bismarck, ND: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1992), 3.

¹⁵ Gringras Trading Post State Historic Site Facebook page, (Accessed 1/20/ 2014). <https://www.facebook.com/GingrasTradingPost>

Batoche National Historic Site of Canada, Saskatchewan

Each year, during the third week of July, hundreds of Métis men, women, and children gather at the Batoche National Historic Site in Saskatchewan, Canada, for the Back to Batoche festival. The four-day celebration commemorates the fateful Battle of Batoche in 1885 and celebrates the perseverance of Métis culture. Thousands flocked to the park on Saturday, July 19, 2013, to witness a milestone event in modern Métis history: the repatriation of what is purported to be the legendary Bell of Batoche. In 1884, the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Albert had christened the 20 pound cast-silver bell “Marie Antoinette,” before it was mounted in the tower of the Church of St. Antoine de Padoue on the eve of rebellion. For many Métis, the bell is a symbol of Riel’s Provisional Government, the battle waged at its de facto capital, and the lasting impacts of Riel’s defeat at Batoche. Following the battle, soldiers of the Northwest Field Forces had looted the town stores and residences, taking any valuables with them as they returned to eastern provinces. The most notable war trophy was the bell. The Bell of Batoche was believed to be taken to Ontario, though precisely where and by whom remains a mystery. It surfaced sometime in the 1930s, when it could be seen hanging in the Millbrook fire hall. When the fire hall burned down, the bell was salvaged. The Royal Canadian Legion assumed ownership and placed the bell on display in the chapter hall. It became a popular tourist attraction, but removed from its historical context, was imbued with new meaning. In a glass case nearly a thousand miles from what many would call its rightful home, the muted Bell of Batoche symbolized the government’s suppression of the Métis.¹⁶

¹⁶ “Bell of Batoche returning to the Métis of Manitoba,” *Toronto Star*, June 18, 2013.

Attempts to repatriate the Bell of Batoche failed. The Royal Canadian Legion refused the federal government's request to return it to the Métis people in 1967. In 1989, Métis leaders in western Canada demanded its reinstatement at Batoche, but to no avail. In 1991, Billyjo Delaronde, a Métis man, took matters into his own hands. On a 'gentleman's dare,' he broke into the legion hall, absconded with the bell, and disappeared from the public eye. Twenty-two years after his crime, to the relief of many Métis people, Delaronde came forward with the relic. The Back to Batoche day festival of 2013 provided a perfect opportunity for Canadians to experience the bell's repatriation. For the first time in 128 years, the bell rang out across Batoche, this time calling the Métis visitors to mass at the heart of a once thriving, now preserved, settlement.¹⁷

When plans for the repatriation of what they believed to be the Bell of Batoche were first announced, Parks Canada appealed to representatives of the Métis of Manitoba to remount the bell in the Church of St. Antoine de Padoue. The proposal met with stern opposition from Métis citizens. Rather than transfer stewardship of the sacred cultural relic to the federal government—the Métis' former foe—representatives arranged for the Bell of Batoche to make a series of museum appearances across western Canada. The bell is now on permanent display at the St. Boniface Museum in Winnipeg, a French-

¹⁷ Alexandra Paul, "Famous Bell Gets Riel Day Showing," *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 14, 2014; Residual controversy surrounding the bell's provenance has prompted staff at the St. Boniface Museum to research the newly-acquired artifact. In April, 2014, the Canadian Broadcasting Company aired a documentary that generates new debate about the bell. The documentary claims fragments of a bell salvaged from a church fire in St. Laurent, Saskatchewan are the true remains of Marie Antoinette. The producers suggest the bell housed at the St. Boniface Museum may in fact be a bell taken around the same time from the parish at Frog Lake, Alberta, another setting of conflict during the Northwest Rebellions. Alexandra Paul, "Bell of Batoche really the Bell of Frog Lake: CBC documentary 'conclusive'," *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 14, 2014, <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/bell-of-batoche-really-the-bell-of-frog-lake-255123981.html>.

Canadian non-profit organization whose guiding principle is expressed in their motto: “our stories, our museum.”¹⁸

Stewardship of cultural places and structures is often as much a topic of concern or contention as the stewardship of cultural artifacts such as the bell. Since 1923, Parks Canada, the Canadian equivalent of the United States National Park Service, has managed the site of the Batoche settlement as a National Historic Site. Structural reminders of the town, such as the Roman Catholic church from which the bell is said to have been taken, as well as archaeological remains from the infamous battle, attract approximately 24,000 tourists a year and educate the public about Canadian—and more specifically Métis—history and culture.¹⁹ The Batoche National Historic Site of Canada initially focused on commemoration of the armed conflict between the Canadian government and the Métis provisional government under Louis Riel.

In the 1950s, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada sought to broaden its interpretation to include a variety of site features and historical narratives.²⁰ The Batoche National Historic Site now promotes the historical memory of Batoche village through its building restorations and living history exhibitions, interpretations of intact portions of the historic Carlton Trail, as well as illustrations of the Métis long lots within the context of agricultural settlement patterns. In 2000, Minister of Canadian

¹⁸ Alexandra Paul, “Famous Bell Gets Riel Day Showing,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 14, 2014.

¹⁹ Sheila Copps, Forward to *Batoche National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*, (Parks Canada, 2000), i.

²⁰ Batoche National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan, 9.

Heritage Sheila Copps broadened the management of these resources in a milestone, action-oriented management plan approved by Parliament.²¹

This most recent management plan for the Batoche National Historic Site of Canada emphasizes new developments in Parks Canada's management of historic sites. The primary development is the concept of "commemorative integrity," an approach to interpretation that includes alternative definitions and perceptions of historical significance not previously acknowledged at Batoche. Contemporary views, informed by traditional knowledge, are also made accessible through this development.²² The goal is to present the public with "the many voices of history," not simply that of Parks Canada.²³ One strategy that is currently implemented at Batoche is the incorporation of oral history contributed by Métis elders.²⁴ In an interview with a Saskatchewan newspaper about the new management plans, site manager Ray Fiddler stated, "There have been a lot of stories that haven't been told. Parks Canada has the perspective of the many voices. So, we are trying to get all of the stories out there from all different perspectives. We are ensuring that they are being told to the public."²⁵

²¹ Catherine Gagnaire, "Sheila Copps Tables Batoche National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan," website of Parks Canada, *News Releases*, August 16, 2000. http://www.pc.gc.ca/APPS/CP-NR/release_e.asp?id=406&andor1=nr

²² Similar language is used in the Parks Canada management plan for the 2010 Torngat Mountains National Park, a park created following a modern treaty with the Labrador Inuit, <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nl/torngats/plan.aspx>.

²³ The shared management for commemorative integrity dovetails with an objective of Parks Canada's Corporate Plan aimed at including Canadians in decision-making for heritage areas. More information can be found on the Parks Canada website, <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/lhn-nhs/qc/grosseile/docs/plan1/sec6/page2k.aspx>

²⁴ *Batoche National Historic Sites of Canada Management Plan*, 9.

²⁵ Shaunna Grandish, "Batoche Under Shared Management with Agreement," *Saskatchewan Sage*, 2009.

As Batoche is most notably commemorated as a site of armed conflict between clashing cultural groups, the plan recognizes the necessity of the application of this multivalent approach to interpretation. The importance of the site as a whole is paramount to understanding the complexity of both the historical and the contemporary perspectives of the events. When an individually significant component is integrated clearly and concisely into the larger narrative of Batoche, the visitor is more likely to understand the site's importance on the national level. Commemorative integrity is enhanced in this plan by the involvement of the Métis people and the community at large in its preservation.

This ideal informs a second major strategy within the new holistic approach: the participation of the Métis of Saskatchewan in management decisions. Implementation of the Batoche National Historic Site management plan is the responsibility of the Shared Management Board, created by the Batoche Management Agreement.²⁶ The Shared Management Board is composed of six members, three appointed by Canadian Heritage and three appointed by the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. Members are tasked with revitalizing the Batoche National Historic Site, ensuring it remains an honored place for the Métis people and Canadian citizens alike.²⁷ The overarching aim of the Board's plan is to impart a "collective sense of Canada's national identity." The goals are to ensure the commemorative integrity of Batoche, solidify the good working relationship between the site staff and representatives of the Métis Society of Saskatchewan, and build upon both

²⁶Yvonne N. Vizina, "Moving Heaven and Earth," *New Breed Magazine: A Cycle of Growth for the Métis Nation* (2001): 27.

²⁷ Parks Canada, "Batoche National Historic Site of Canada Shared Management Board," website of Parks Canada, <http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/sk/batoche/plan/conseil-board.aspx>

parties' strengths for the benefit of the Batoche Historic Site.²⁸ While these goals may seem rather modest, the quality of partnership implied in their achievement addresses the very concerns expressed by many Métis. As illustrated in the repatriation of the bell of Batoche, this site—a culturally significant place to the Métis—is property of the federal government. Yet at the Batoche National Historic Site of Canada, the Métis have, in one new step, sounded their sovereignty and asserted their cultural identity.

Hill 57, Montana

Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982 provides for and protects the constitutional rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. The term “Aboriginal” includes the Métis along with Inuit and First Nations individuals. This degree of recognition, however, is not experienced by many persons of similar Métis heritage across the border. In the United States, the Métis cultural group is, for the most part, without a land base and without tribal benefits. The federal government recognizes approximately five hundred and sixty tribes throughout the country. Among 260 additional groups currently petitioning for the same recognition is the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana—a group devoted to preserving their traditional cultural past.²⁹

This cultural past contributes to the broader Métis narrative of displacement on the Plains. Like the Turtle Mountain Chippewa in North Dakota or the Assiniboine of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana, the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians includes individuals with varying degrees of Métis descent. This is the lasting

²⁸Yvonne N. Vizina, “Moving Heaven and Earth,” 24.

²⁹Marga Lincoln, “A People with no place: Story of landless tribe told by historian,” *Independent Record*, September 1, 2013.

consequence of the historical confederacy formed among members of the Plains Chippewa, Cree, Assiniboine, and Métis, known collectively as the Nehiyaw-Pwat. Through the late nineteenth century, members of these particular tribes were part of a dispossessed population of “fur trade-era refugees.” Anglo society had neglected them in the political and economic reconfiguration of the West, and they became known to others as the “Landless Indians,” the “Canadian Cree,” and the “half-breeds” (an English pejorative of the term “Métis”).³⁰ Dispersed throughout Montana, these groups challenged societal restraints, petitioning for land reservations, blending into other tribal populations, or subsisting in the margins of society.³¹ Some of Chief Little Shell’s band chose to settle on the edge of Great Falls, Montana. Today members of the descendant community have “proudly maintained their foundational identity as Aboriginal peoples”—an identity they continue to express from the base of Hill 57.³²

The University of Great Falls hosts an annual symposium and powwow in honor of Sister Providencia and her efforts on behalf of this Little Shell Tribe.³³ Sister Providencia Tolan was the tribe’s great lobbyist. Born and raised in Montana, she spent much of her youth in the Flathead Valley, in the vicinity of the St. Ignatius Mission. From a young age, she aspired to provide education for the various tribes in Montana. She took her professional vows as a Sister of Charity of Providence in Washington State

³⁰Nicholas Vrooman, “No. 11: The Cree Village,” *Drumlummon Views* (2009): 377-367.

³¹Michael Hogue, “Crossing the Line: Race, Nationality, and the Deportation of the ‘Canadian’ Cree in the Canada-U.S. Borderlands, 1890-1900,” in *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on the Regional History of the 49th Parallel*, ed. Sterling Evans, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 155-171.

³² Nicholas Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was...*, 5.

³³Nancy MacLean, “University of Great Falls Honors Sister ProvidenciaTolan,” *Caritas: A Publication for the Sisters of Providence and Friends* (2008): 2.

in 1930, earned a degree in sociology from the College of Great Falls in 1944, and soon after joined the faculty. In addition to teaching, she took up social work with the people living in the fringe settlement of Hill 57.³⁴ She taught their children to read, and, most significantly, she instilled in them the confidence and dedication necessary to change society. Overcoming their social and economic status was not easy considering this people's long history of displacement and discrimination.

By the 1860s, increased Anglo settlement, particularly in the Red River Valley, combined with the loss of buffalo throughout the Plains, prompted a diaspora of indigenous groups, notably those known at the time as the Pembina bands of Chippewa Indians.³⁵ Chief Little Shell led the mixed Chippewa bands of Montana. He and his band, which included Métis families, traveled the Plains following what resources they could, often returning seasonally to relatives in the Turtle Mountains of north-central North Dakota. While those families in the Turtle Mountains received a land reservation by the 1890s, it was not enough to accommodate all those affiliated with their tribe. Chief Little Shell actively fought for a much needed expansion of that reservation.³⁶ In 1892, the United States government entered into its first agreement with the Pembina Band of Chippewa in North Dakota, but what small glint of hope this sparked was short-lived.

³⁴ Joan Bishop, "From Hill 57 to Capitol Hill: 'Making the Sparks Fly': Sister Providencia Tolan's Drive on Behalf of Montana's Off-Reservation Indians, 1950-1970," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 43 (1993): 17-20.

³⁵ Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was...*, 13. This term was used by the federal government to describe the group from which many bands today, including the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa of Montana, the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa of North Dakota, the Red Lake Band of Chippewa of Minnesota, the White Earth Band of Chippewa of Minnesota, and the Rocky Boy's Chippewa Cree of Montana trace a common genealogy. Many individuals involved in the Red River diaspora made their way west, into Montana, where they sought work or followed resources according to traditional methods to the best of their ability.

³⁶ Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was...*, 273-274. Many individuals involved in the Red River diaspora made their way west, into Montana, where they sought work or followed resources according to traditional methods to the best of their ability.

The government did not recognize Chief Little Shell as a hereditary leader and had handpicked a council composed of 32 Chippewa, 16 of them full-blood, to decide terms of the agreement, primarily standards for enrollment based on blood quantum. Generations of band mobility and intermixing had confused the Commission of Indian Affairs, which previously sorted peoples into unclear and seemingly arbitrary tribal groupings. The majority of the Council of Thirty-Two demanded that individuals of mixed-blood be recognized as members of the tribe as well. The government insisted upon a formal census. It found only a handful of families to be full-blood Chippewas, and the council's demands were ignored. The land was opened up for Anglo settlement.³⁷ Chief Little Shell had protested the ratification of what became known as the "Ten Cent Treaty."

Ultimately, the treaty excluded over five hundred people from enrollment on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. The 112 men, women, and children under the leadership of Chief Little Shell were among those scorned.³⁸ The government's concern over the blood-quantum of indigenous ancestry was creating a new population of landless and wandering Indians. However, one provision of the ratified treaty allowed those unable to secure land on the reservation to file for homestead claims on lands held in the public domain. During that year, over five hundred members of the Turtle Mountain band did just that. Of these, 142 of those filed for homesteads in the vicinity of Great Falls, Montana. But this was only a fraction of the total number of individuals denied enrollment. Many faced the reality of homelessness. Over the next several decades, these

³⁷ "The History and Culture of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa," State Historical Society of North Dakota. http://ndstudies.gov/tm_treaties

³⁸ Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was...*, 247.

men and women sought work where they could find it and survived by whatever means necessary. Burdened with the stigma of being “Canadian Cree,” these families met with hostility from the Anglo population.³⁹

One group in particular subsisted on the things residents of Great Falls had discarded. In the 1920s, a congregation of the Little Shell established a shanty town that would later become Sister Providencia’s poster-child for the economic state of Indians across the nation.⁴⁰ The group located on the side of Mount Royal, a butte on the edge of town, better known as “Hill 57” for the 80-foot high Heinz 57 advertisement fashioned on its slope from whitewashed boulders. Homes consisted of tar paper walls and lacked electricity and plumbing through the 1960s (Figs. 16 and 17). The community of around two hundred shared one water pump. Families scavenged the town dump and gathered and cooked discarded offal from behind the local slaughterhouse. Dysentery and disease were common. Some of the inhabitants of Hill 57 managed to find seasonal work doing odd jobs on nearby ranches, and a few even followed the Northwest fruit harvests.

³⁹ Verne Dusenberry, “Waiting for a day that never comes: The Dispossessed Metis of Montana,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 8(1958): 36-37.

⁴⁰ Dusenberry, “Waiting for a day that never comes: The Dispossessed Metis of Montana,” 38. Other families chose to settle near communities such as Choteau, Augusta, and Dupuyer along the Rocky Mountain Front. Still more made their way across the Hi-Line to Havre, Chinook, and Glasgow.



Figure 16. “Hill 57” Great Falls Indian Camp, 2 (1934). Courtesy of Nicholas Vrooman, Private collection. From: “Subsistence Homesteads Project.”



Figure 17. “Hill 57” Great Falls Indian Camp, 3 (1934). Courtesy of Nicholas Vrooman, Private collection. From: “Subsistence Homesteads Project.”

By the 1950s, some of the city's scorn turned to concern. Senators Lee Metcalf and Mike Mansfield made a failed attempt to pass emergency relief legislation for the Little Shell. Eventually, families moved into public housing. But the Little Shell remained a disenfranchised people. Today, 12 tribal nations reside in the state of Montana. Eleven have homelands reserved through treaty or by executive order across seven reservations. The Little Shell Band of Chippewa Indians remains "landless" but ardently seeks federal recognition in hopes of establishing its own tribal land base.⁴¹ Despite its association with unpleasant memories of past poverty and hardship, Hill 57 has become central to the Little Shell's cause.

In November 2013, the preservation impulse among the descendant community manifested itself in the establishment of a culture center located at the base of the hill—the landmark symbolic of their people's perseverance. The Little Shell Chippewa Center provides a long-needed gathering space from which tribal members can promote cultural events to ensure that the Little Shell's struggles will not be forgotten.⁴² In an interview with Jeff Welsch, which appeared in a 2013 issue of *Montana Quarterly*, James Parker Shield reflected on the significance Hill 57 continues to hold for his tribe, emphasizing the importance of the culture center's relationship to its setting: "The historical presence on Hill 57 explains the tribe's desire to re-colonize there and splash it with a fresh coat of cultural paint...they simply need some affirmation, and some help, to feel as if they're finally, really home."⁴³ The Little Shell Chippewa Center is a momentous step for the

⁴¹ Linda McCulloch, "The First Best Place," *Phi Delta Kappan* 88 (2006): 195.

⁴² Michael Beall, "Little Shell Break Ground on Hill 57 Visitor Center," *Great Falls Tribune*, November 3, 2012.

⁴³ Jeff Welsch, "Waiting for the Day," *Montana Quarterly* 9 (2013): 33.

tribe. In the absence of a federal land base, it unites this cultural group as they celebrate their identity and assert their resilience.⁴⁴

Seeking the Best Preservation Model

As the Gingras State Historic Site, Batoche Historic Site of Canada, and Hill 57 demonstrate, the cultural identity of the Métis people is geographically variable. Their cultural identity is both expressed through historical and traditional values and is continually redefined in response to social, political, and environmental circumstance. Such factors inform an appropriate model for the preservation of place and the significance place may hold for a specific people. The Gingras State Historic Site benefits the residents of North Dakota. It is restored and interpreted to visitors in order to educate. Parks Canada manages Batoche to reach a national audience for a similar purpose. Hill 57 is preserved on a local scale by and for the community that defines its significance. Each site, as a preservation model, satisfies the needs of a particular community but none of these models by itself is a perfect fit as a preservation strategy for the South Fork Settlement.

Preservation of the former settlement along the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon shows potential for recognition as a historic site when compared to the Gingras Trading Post. The South Fork Settlement exhibits similar historical significance reflected in the material culture that remains. The Métis settlers there contributed to the surrounding area's development and assumed an economic role as wood cutters and millers early-on, providing materials for the erection of ranches and buildings in and around the burgeoning town of Choteau. An extant cabin, constructed by the Bruno

⁴⁴Jeff Welsch, "Waiting for the Day," 33-35.

family in 1908, could serve as a focal point for a historic site similar in plan to the Gingras Trading Post.⁴⁵ Based on the success of the historic site, interpretation of the South Fork Settlement's history is likely to have public appeal. However, a more appropriate preservation model would be one sensitive to the property owner's use, in this case the Nature Conservancy's guest ranch, while meeting the needs of the descendant community. To explore alternative avenues of preservation, it is important to recognize other ways in which the Métis celebrate and express their cultural identity and interpret their own history to the public.

At the Batoche National Historic Site of Canada, the Métis assume an active role in interpretation, providing oral histories, participating in education programs, and, of course, attending the Back to Batoche Days Festival. Active engagement in interpreting the South Fork Settlement could benefit the public understanding of the resource and the descendant community, but the integrity of material remains is vastly different from the living history environment of Batoche. How the descendant community commemorates the past as it relates to place is also specific to them, and based on traditions, not commemoration.

The South Fork Settlement is more amenable to the preservation strategy seen at Hill 57, where recognition of significance is limited to the Little Shell Tribe in Montana. As a grass-roots example of preservation, it parallels the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon. Since the 1980s, the community in and around Choteau, Montana, has underscored the history of the Métis in the region, incorporating their role in local histories, celebrations, and museum interpretation. Unlike the Little Shell Chippewa, however, these representations are not yet set within the context of the associated

⁴⁵ "The Canyon People," *Teton County History*, 15.

settlement site.⁴⁶ The relationship between cultural groups and the places with which they associate significance varies and it is an important consideration in determining the most appropriate method of preservation.

⁴⁶ *Teton County History: The Story of Teton County, Montana, Its Land, Its Infancy, Its People,*” (Choteau, MT: Choteau Acantha, 1988), entire.

CHAPTER IV
BULLETIN 38: EXPANDING VIEWS
ON TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTIES

In April, 1993, the State Archaeologist of New Mexico and an area archaeologist for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) co-organized a symposium for the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology. They whimsically entitled it “Take Me to Your Leader”—a play on common misconceptions concerning consultation with traditional communities.¹ Protocol for working alongside traditional communities is discussed in a number of guidelines issued by the National Park Service (NPS) through the NRHP. One particular publication, *Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, provides strategies for communication with these communities and identification of their traditional cultural resources.² However, traditional cultural properties are not a separate category of recognition within the National Register, nor are they currently a distinct property type. Rather, they are recognized cultural resources, overlaid with certain significances, which demand an alternative approach to the criteria of evaluation.³

Unlike other categories of historic sites, which can include certain religious or sacred places such as historic churches or cemeteries, the significance of a TCP is defined by a traditional cultural community. The values they ascribe are often vital to their sense

¹ Lynne Sebastian, “Traditional Cultural Properties and Consultation with Traditional Communities,” *CRM* (1993): 15.

² Patricia Parker, “What you do and how we think,” *CRM* 16 (1993): 1-4.

³ *The NTHP Preservation Leadership Forum Blog*, “Recognizing Historic Sites that Remain Culturally Significant Today,” blog entry by Will Cook, March 13, 2013, http://blog.preservationleadershipforum.org/2013/03/13/traditional-cultural-properties/#.UzhXE_ldWgY

of cultural identity and can prove difficult for others to recognize. Evaluating and documenting TCPs therefore requires access to ethnographic information and, more often than not, expertise of knowledgeable traditional practitioners.⁴ The following case studies reveal the challenges of cultural consultation and the controversies that may arise in applying the term “traditional cultural property” to a particular place.

Medicine Mountain/Medicine Wheel NHL, Wyoming

Groups of people have often identified with particular places such and they regard their importance regionally, culturally, and spiritually.⁵ Such landscapes, even expansive ones, can be eligible for listing on the Nation Register in a number of ways: they can comprise contiguous or discontinuous districts; rural, vernacular, or urban Cultural Landscapes such as Golden Gate Park; National Heritage Areas like Niagara Falls; National Monuments such as Canyon de Chelly; and even National Historic Landmarks such as Devil’s Tower. Some also are recognized and designated as Traditional Cultural Properties.⁶ Medicine Mountain in Wyoming is an example of a landscape whose spiritual significance has been nationally recognized for decades but recently reexamined, has been determined eligible, more specifically, as a TCP.

East of Lovell, in north-central Wyoming, the western face of the Bighorn Range rises from the surrounding plain. The chain of relatively flat-topped mountains extends

⁴ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990; Revised, 1998), 2.

⁵ King, *Places That Count*, 119.

⁶ Donna J. Seifert, et. al., “Bulletin 21: Defining Boundaries For National Register Properties,” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1995, revised 1997).

approximately two hundred miles north-south into the bordering state of Montana. Along a ridge immediately west of the peak known as Medicine Mountain lies one of the most intact and controversial Native American sacred sites identified in North America: the Bighorn Medicine Wheel. This site is a National Historic Landmark (NHL), designated in 1970 for its archaeological significance. Since then, a substantial amount of new information has led to the expansion of the landmark and a more comprehensive understanding of its cultural significance. The expanded and renamed Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain National Historic Landmark District was the first Traditional Cultural Property explicitly approved as a National Historic Landmark.⁷ It is a complex site with a period of significance spanning from 4770 BCE to the present and a landscape that encompasses 4,080 acres and includes a wide variety of features, such as traditional plant harvest sites and chert quarries, many of which are still in use.⁸

The most acclaimed feature of this district is the Medicine Wheel itself, a circular stone cairn resembling a wagon wheel.⁹ The outermost circle is ninety feet across and is linked by twenty eight radial spokes to an inner circle about fifteen feet across (Fig. 18). It is an ancient and sacred space. More than twenty tribes attribute significance to the Medicine Wheel and to Medicine Mountain, making it one of the major sacred sites on the Plains. The Northern Cheyenne, Blackfoot, and Lakota all have traditional ties to the

⁷ “Medicine Wheel Medicine Mountain National historic Landmark Approved,” *Indian Affairs: A Publication of the Association on American Indian Affairs* 170 (2011): 1.

⁸ Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010, 4.

⁹ At least 70 medicine wheels have been recorded throughout the Great Plains in South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Alberta and Saskatchewan. While the Bighorn Medicine Wheel is not unique, it is considered the type site for medicine wheels due to its integrity and notoriety. “National Register of Historic Places: Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark,” website of the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, <http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us/NationalRegister/Site.aspx?ID=60>

site as a place to contemplate and seek spiritual guidance.¹⁰ Among these groups, the site serves as an integral part of vision quests, Sun Dances, prayer, and silent meditation.¹¹ These associations are not tied to the physical characteristics of each feature, but to the practices carried out to this day, qualifying it as a functional resource and a Traditional Cultural Property in the NRHP.



Figure 18. Big Horn Medicine Wheel, Wyoming, Richard Collier, Photographer. Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.

Anglo-American interest in the Medicine Wheel's origin and meaning began with an article published in 1895 in *Field and Stream*, which compared the Medicine Wheel to Aztec calendar stones. In 1902, the site was recorded by S.C. Simms for the Chicago

¹⁰ Thomas King, *Places That Count: Traditional Cultural Properties in Cultural Resource Management*, (New York: Altamira Press, 2003), 216-217.

¹¹ Lloyd Burton, *Worship and Wilderness: Culture, Religion, and Law in Public Lands Management* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 164.

Field Museum of Natural History.¹² In 1957, the United States Forest Service (USFS) set aside 200 acres of the Bighorn National Forest surrounding the wheel in an attempt to preserve the feature.¹³ The following year, the Wyoming Archaeological Society, a group of amateur archaeologists, conducted the first excavation there. In these early explorations the focus of study was narrow and the ethnography incomplete for building a holistic understanding of the space's traditional cultural relevance.¹⁴ Prior to a boundary increase, approved by the Secretary of the Interior in 2011, the documentation of the site's importance failed to incorporate the ways in which it is used and viewed in the present. Not until the challenge of balancing site visitation and resource preservation came to a head in the contentious legal case of *Wyoming Sawmills v. United States Forest Service*, in 2004, did issues of traditional cultural significance begin to enter public awareness.¹⁵

During the 1970s and 1980s, a widespread revival of Native American ceremonial practices resulted in increased visitation to the Medicine Wheel NHL. USFS employees began to issue permits for the performance of traditional ceremonies at the site. This period coincided with a heightened interest from non-native practitioners as well, particularly among the “New Age” community.¹⁶ To address the management of previously unrestricted vehicular access to the site, the USFS published a Draft

¹² David Hurst Thomas, *Places in Time: Exploring Native America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 63-67.

¹³ *Wyoming Sawmills Incorporated v. United States Forest Service Bill Bass*, No. 02-8009, 2000 U.S. App. (10th Cir., September 20, 2004), <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-10th-circuit/1235609.html>

¹⁴ Thomas, *Places in Time*, 65.

¹⁵ Lloyd Burton, *Worship and Wilderness: Culture, Religion, and Law in Public Lands Management*, 164.

¹⁶ Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, *National Historic Landmark Nomination: Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2010, 5.

Environmental Impact Statement in 1991. Three years later, the agency proposed the pavement of an access road and parking lot leading to the Medicine Wheel. The USFS believed that, because the National Register listed the Medicine Wheel as significant solely under Criterion D for its archaeological merit, the undertaking would have no adverse effect. Due to congressional amendments to the NHPA only two years before, the Section 106 process required consultation with tribal representatives, who voiced concern about how providing increased access ignored the religious aspect of the site's cultural significance. Both the Medicine Wheel Coalition on Sacred Sites of North America and the Medicine Wheel Alliance, inter-tribal organizations of traditional practitioners, assumed a central role in what became a contentious consultation process.

Other agencies embroiled in the issue included the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Bighorn County Commissioners, and, of course, the USFS. Ethnographic and archaeological surveys compiled information relevant to the area surrounding the 200-acre NHL. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) established priority for the protection and continued traditional cultural use of the Medicine Wheel at the Bighorn National Forest. This MOA was followed several years later by a Programmatic Agreement (PA), the purpose of which was to develop a long-term plan for site management. Together, the consulting parties developed a Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) for the management of the historical and cultural resources to be implemented by the Bighorn National Forest. The HPP amended the existing Bighorn National Forest Plan, outlining the integration of the preservation and traditional uses of historic properties with the Forest Service's dual

mandate.¹⁷ By 1996, the PA had established a 23,000-acre “area of consultation” to include all cultural resources associated with the Medicine Wheel and, in fulfillment of Executive Order No. 13007, to facilitate traditional cultural uses within the boundary.¹⁸

Following the HPP, the USFS placed restrictions on livestock grazing and timber harvesting within the vicinity of the NHL in an effort to minimize adverse effects not only to the resource but to its newly recognized traditional cultural uses. An adverse effect, as defined by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, is any activity that diminishes the integrity of a property’s significant historic features. For Traditional Cultural Properties, an adverse effect can include an activity that hinders the ability of the traditional culture to engage with the resource.¹⁹ In this case, tribal representatives had expressed concern that continued commercial traffic associated with logging and grazing practices might degrade traditional use of the Medicine Wheel. Their questions prompted reconsideration of a long-standing commercial presence as an adverse effect on not just a site, but a cultural landscape.

The new restrictions stirred controversy. Wyoming Sawmills, Inc., a commercial timber company and primary client in timber sales in the Bighorn National Forest for over thirty years, claimed that the USFS violated its own regulations in adopting the HPP. The corporation alleged that the USFS did not disclose the long-term effects the new designation would have on timber sales in the area long considered suitable for logging. Furthermore, in restricting logging activity in favor of Native American religious uses,

¹⁷ The USFS multiple-use mission is mandated by the 1960 Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act, as well as the National Forest Management Act of 1978 to ensure the adoption of resource management plans.

¹⁸ “Executive Order No. 13007: Indian Sacred Sites,” May 24, 1996 on website of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, <http://www.achp.gov/EO13007.html>

¹⁹ 36 C.F.R. § 800.5 (2011), <http://www.achp.gov/regs-rev04.pdf>

Wyoming Sawmills felt the USFS was also violating the First Amendment. They filed action in the United States district court in 1999. Among the defendants named in the courtroom battle were the USFS, the Secretary of Agriculture, and several individual officers within the Forest Service. In 2003, the district court ruled in favor of the USFS. This case illustrates the ability of an agency to overcome management obstacles in assuming responsible stewardship of a cultural resource.²⁰

By 2008 the consulting parties had decided on an expansion of the National Historic Landmark. The USFS hired Front Range Research cultural resource management consultants to prepare a nomination to expand the NHL documentation to include broad patterns of history among its criteria, add Native American traditional cultural values to its statement of significance, stretch the period of significance from 7000 BCE to present, and redraw boundary lines to include related archaeological sites and sites associated with tribal traditional practices. The updated nomination, which included an additional 4,000 acres, reached the NPS in the fall of 2010. Wyoming's preservation review board approved the changes unanimously, and what was once the "Medicine Wheel NHL" gave way to a more inclusive "Medicine Mountain NHL" district.²¹

More than twenty years in the making, the expanded and improved Medicine Wheel/Medicine Mountain National Historic Landmark encompasses the primary ceremonial sites on Medicine Mountain, ensuring the harmonious protection of both the

²⁰ Price, Nicole, "Tourism and the Bighorn Medicine Wheel," in *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*, ed. David Carmichael et al. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 262.

²¹ Brian Beadles, Historic Preservation Specialist with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, e-mail to author, March 13, 2014; "National Register Review Board Meeting Minutes," (September 16, 2010).

traditional cultural and historic values of the area.²² The arduous struggle to resolve preservation challenges and conflict created a precedent for traditional cultural sites, particularly those sacred to native peoples.²³ The case of Medicine Mountain verifies the value of consultation with traditional communities. Furthermore, inclusion of the expanded area reflects the recognized significance of continued use and brings the site into the present context of numerous American Indian tribes, integrating the past and the present.

A similar opportunity to recognize a bridging of past and present in a holistic approach to preservation exists along the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon. Members of the community descended from the Métis settlement continue to engage with spaces in the canyon, though they no longer live within its confines. Among these individuals, there is a reverence for that landscape expressed through cultural traditions. However, these traditions—places visited and stories told—are specific to the descendant community. While other cultural groups may consider elements of the same landscape sacred in some light, the South Fork of the Teton River settlement is not likely to achieve the national distinction Medicine Mountain holds.

Mount Taylor, New Mexico

Traditional Cultural Properties tend to encompass large swathes of land under multiple owners and managing agents, further complicating State or National Register listings. In 2008, New Mexico set a precedent that would not become fully realized until

²² Gib Mathers, “Medicine Wheel Expansion Celebrated,” *The Powell Tribune*, September 1, 2011. <http://www.powelltribune.com/news/item/8699-medicine-wheel-expansion-celebrated>

²³“Medicine Wheel Medicine Mountain National historic Landmark Approved,” *Indian Affairs: A Publication of the Association on American Indian Affairs* 170 (2011): 1-2.

four years later. The case involved the nomination of Mount Taylor in central New Mexico for inclusion on the New Mexico Register of Cultural Places in the midst of uranium ore exploration.

In 1849, a topographical engineer with the U.S. Army named the highest peak of the San Mateo mountain chain in honor of President Zachary Taylor. But the 11,301-foot high mountain was already known by a host of other names.²⁴ For the Pueblos of Acoma it is *Kaweshtima*, the “Mountain of the North.” For the Zuni Pueblo it is *Dewankwi Kyabachu Yalanne* which means “in the east snow-capped mountain.” The Hopi Tribe calls it *Tsiipiya*, while members of the Laguna Pueblo know it as *T’sé pina*. The Navajo Nation’s word for the majestic landmark is *Tsoodzil*, “Turquoise Mountain.”²⁵ In June 2008, following months of consultation with federal agencies and developers, these five separate cultural groups submitted a combined application requesting the protection of the landform. In it, each of the nominating tribes presented a case for the cultural significance of the mountain, and they did so using the Traditional Cultural Property designation.²⁶

Mount Taylor is a volcano on the Colorado Plateau, approximately fifteen miles northeast of the border town of Grants. It is a highly visible point surrounded by black lava flows and has been a navigational landmark as well as a source of regional identity

²⁴Cynthia Buttery Benedict and Erin Hudson, “Mt. Taylor Traditional Cultural Property Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places,” (USFS, 2008), 3.

²⁵Anne Berkley Rodgers, “Mount Taylor,” Application for Registration New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, (Santa Fe, NM: Historic Preservation Division, 2007), 1.

²⁶Anne Berkley Rodgers, “Mount Taylor,” Application for Registration New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, 1-3.

for American Indian groups, Spanish settlers, and Euro-American explorers (Fig. 19).²⁷ The landform has attracted human use and occupation for millennia, the earliest known occupation dating to the Archaic Period.²⁸ Archaeological excavations have uncovered ancestral Puebloan villages from around 1000 BCE, and remnants of hogans, corrals, and hearth features, concentrated at its base, reflect Navajo ties to the place.²⁹ As ethnographer Roger Anyon observed, “Mount Taylor has left an indelible mark on the imaginations of many generations of people from many cultures.”³⁰



Figure 19. Mount Taylor, New Mexico. Courtesy of Amy Cole, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

²⁷ Kevin Blake, “Sacred and Secular Landscape Symbolism at Mount Taylor, New Mexico,” *Journal of the Southwest* 41(1999): 487-488.

²⁸ The Archaic Period was between c.a. 5,500 and 500 CE. Cynthia Buttery Benedict and Erin Hudson, 6.

²⁹ Buttery Benedict and Hudson, 8.

³⁰ Roger Anyon, “Initial Hopi Ethnographic Study and Reconnaissance for the Enchanted Skies Park and Observatory, Cibola County, New Mexico,” (Kykotsmovi, AZ: Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, 2001), 3.

For the Navajo (Diné), the mountain is one of six sacred mountains. In their origin story, their people ascended to this region of northwestern New Mexico through a series of four underworlds. The Diyin Dine'è, holy leaders and creators of the Earth Surface People, prepared this land for the Navajo to settle, shaping the sacred mountains to bound their nation. These mountains have human qualities and command respect and honor. *Tsoodzil* (Mount Taylor) is a “bringer” and a “taker” of life, and the Navajo conduct prayers and make offerings to her. In return, she provides them with living resources including plants, animals, and spring water. If the mountain is disrespected, the Diyin Dine'è will abandon the Navajo and *Tsoodzil's* power will be diminished. Today, the Navajo Nation incorporates these beliefs into law. The Navajo Nation Code states that these mountains must be “respected, honored and protected for they, as leaders, are the foundation of the Navajo Nation.” Disturbance of this respect and balance directly influences the fate of their traditional culture.³¹

But the Navajo Nation and their neighboring tribes who ascribe their own sacred beliefs to this place are not the only stakeholders. Ownership of lands, on and around the mountain reveals the variety of people and agencies with a vested interests in the landform. The highest elevations of the San Mateos range are mostly public lands which the Mount Taylor Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest administers. Immediately south and southeast of the mountain are patches of the Acoma and Laguna Reservations. The Navajo Nation lands lie to the north, west, and east, at a slightly greater distance. A state highway runs throughout the mountain chain, and a patchwork of state and BLM lands blankets the outlying flatlands. Private ranchlands and Spanish

³¹ Anne Berkley Rodgers, “Mount Taylor,” 29-30. Marsha Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 69-73.

Land Grant communities also abut Mount Taylor and its surrounding mesas, completing the multi-use, multi-cultural landscape.³²

A network of gravel roads leads to campgrounds and recreation areas, popular among these locals and tourists alike. Grazing, wood-gathering, mountain biking, and snowmobiling are all common, permitted uses within the Cibola National Forest. In the 1990s, the USFS encouraged greater use of Mount Taylor for recreational purposes in an effort to relieve the impacts of recreation on other nearby peaks. The USFS embarked on a promotional campaign for Mount Taylor, and the New Mexico State Highway Department installed visitor signs pointing to the trailheads. For the prevention of erosion and potential disturbance to American Indian religious sites, an area of restricted use encircles the summit. The USFS recognized Mount Taylor then as a cultural resource whose importance could be deteriorated by human activity.³³

Mount Taylor happens to sit atop a rich uranium ore reserve. In 2007, when the price of crude oil in the U.S. reached an all-time high, investors took new interest in uranium and nuclear power as an alternative energy source.³⁴ The resurgence of commercial interest on the slopes of Mount Taylor and its surrounding mesas challenged the cultural status the five nominating tribes sought. A heated debate ignited over the appropriate use of public and private lands and reopened the wounds left by a previous uranium boom, from 1950 to 1980, when mines along the Grants Mineral Belt formation supported surrounding communities, but at the cost of environmental contamination and

³² Anne Berkley Rodgers, "Mount Taylor," 4-6.

³³ Kevin Blake, "Sacred and Secular," 494-495.

³⁴ http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/money/economy/2008-07-11-3815204975_x.htm

radiation.³⁵ Exploration for uranium can be invasive. Soil, water, and rock samples must be collected, aerial photographs taken, and geologic maps drawn, followed by mining and the constant movement of equipment, water trucks, and other support vehicles. This activity can introduce visual, atmospheric, and audible elements, each commonly considered adverse effects to a property's historic or cultural features.

Other long-term impacts are air and water contamination. Exposure to discharge water, uranium, radium, selenium, and other toxic material pollution is a painful memory to many families in the area. Open-pit and underground mining each has, at a bare minimum, a visible impact on the landscape, as does uranium milling, which requires harsh chemicals and produces highly radioactive tailings.³⁶ For some, a new wave of uranium extraction and yellowcake production is a desperately-needed economic opportunity. For others it poses an inexcusable threat to human health, livestock, and the sanctity of Mount Taylor. To the nominating tribes, environmental activists, and preservation advocates, Mount Taylor was and still is in a state of "emergency," due to the threat of uranium mining.³⁷ In 2008 these groups were determined to protect it from what they perceived to be a desecration.³⁸

Chairman Estévan Rael-Gálvez called to order the special meeting of the State of New Mexico Cultural Properties Review Committee (CPRC) on the afternoon of

³⁵ Laura Paskus, "Dueling Claims," *High Country News: For People Who Care About the West* (December 7, 2009), 4. <http://www.hcn.org/issues/41.21/dueling-claims>

³⁶ Lise Young, "What Price Progress? Uranium Production on Indian Lands in the San Juan Basin," *American Indian Law Review* 9 (1981): 1-50.

³⁷ Paskus, "Dueling Claims," 1-4.

³⁸ Paskus, "State's High Court Aids Mt. Taylor Preservation Efforts," *New Mexico In Depth*, February 7, 2014.

February 22, 2008, in Albuquerque. The only item on the agenda was the proposal for a temporary State Register listing for the Mount Taylor Traditional Cultural Property spanning parts of Cibola, McKinley, and Sandoval Counties. The emergency nomination, drafted by Ann Berkley Rodgers on behalf of the tribes, proposed a boundary drawn around Mount Taylor and the surrounding mesa tops, at an elevation of 8,000 feet and higher.³⁹ The designated area would cover 400,000 acres and include state, federal, public, tribal, and land grant parcels.⁴⁰ Companies and permitting agencies with plans to develop within the area, even on private lands, would be required by state law to consult with the tribes and pueblos. The proposed change would slow the streamlined “minimal impact” permit process already in place. Many mining company officials and private landowners with development plans felt outrage.

The CPRC upheld its mission to identify and advise on the protection of the state’s cultural properties, soliciting testimony both for and against the emergency nomination. Dan Lorimier with the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club commented in support of the proposed protection of public lands. Alethea Martinez, heir to the Juan Tafoya Land Grant, requested more information on how such a designation might affect her development plans. Several attendees claimed they had not received advance notice of the meeting and were therefore unfamiliar with the proposal and unprepared to comment. Director Katherine Slick of the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office apologized for the inconvenience and promised full notification upon submission of a

³⁹ The proposed boundary elevation had one exception: a southwest section that dipped to 7,300 feet to include over one hundred resources determined eligible along Horace Mesa. “Minutes of the State of New Mexico Cultural Properties Review Committee,” (February 22, 2008), 2.

⁴⁰ Anne Berkley Rodgers, “Mount Taylor,” 4-6.

final nomination. The CPRC adjourned. They had unanimously approved Mount Taylor as a temporary TCP. Unfortunately, they had also violated New Mexico's Open Meetings Act.⁴¹

In May, the State Attorney General's office declared the Office of Cultural Affairs in violation of due process. Rumors of a land grab circulated. In June, the CPRC called a second hearing on the emergency listing of Mount Taylor. Over seven hundred people filed past protesters from both sides of the controversy and crowded into the auditorium. The CPRC heard five hours of testimony, during which tensions escalated. Locals claimed the state was guilty of preferential treatment to the tribes. Some questioned the motives of environmental groups backing the nomination. Other attendees feared religion was obstructing economic progress. Subsequent exploration permits became stages for further public eruption. Neutron Energy stated in a public permit hearing with the USFS that the nomination was unwarranted and that new regulations would waste both time and money. "New Mexico needs the development," was the sentiment expressed by Markita Noon, the executive director of the Citizen's Alliance for Responsible Energy (CARE). Many agreed. "Opposing these measures is not anti-native, it is pro-growth," she stated in one of a series of op-ed articles to appear in the *Cibola Beacon* as the controversy continued to unfold.⁴² But the nominating tribes persisted in their efforts.

⁴¹ "Minutes of the State of New Mexico Cultural Properties Review Committee," (unpublished transcript, February 22, 2008), 9-13.

⁴² Markita Noon, "Bigger Than Mount Taylor," website of the *Cibola Beacon*, Friday, March 19, 2009. http://www.cibolabeacon.com/opinion/guest_opinion/bigger-than-mount-taylor/article_5be184c7-ae4-5102-98f7-d8b1810819c5.html

In June 2009, the state announced that the CPRC had permanently listed the Mount Taylor Traditional Cultural Property on the State Register of Cultural Properties. The determination exempted 89,000 acres included in the initial application, easing some concerns, particularly among the Land Grant communities. But an all-out victory for either side would not be felt until February 6, 2014. In October 2009, following the permanent state listing, Rio Grande Resources, RayEllen Resources, Strathmore Resources, Laramide Resources, Roca Honda Resources, various private property owners, the Cebolleta Land Grant, and the New Mexico public lands commissioner filed a lawsuit against the New Mexico Cultural Properties Review Committee claiming that the area was too large and that the designation deprived them of their property rights. Fifth Judicial District Court Judge William Shoobridge reversed and remanded the CPRC's TCP designation. The pueblos and tribes intervened, as did a handful of non-profit organizations concerned with protection of the environment on Mount Taylor.⁴³ The National Trust for Historic Preservation sprang to action, placing Mount Taylor on its most-endangered list. In 2011 the case was taken to the New Mexico Supreme Court at the same time that the Cibola National Forest began reviewing uranium mining permits. Two projects, the Roca Honda and La Jara Mesa uranium mining projects entered the federal NEPA and NHPA regulation processes. Finally, after seven years of litigation, the New Mexico Supreme Court voted unanimously in favor of the reinstatement of Mount Taylor as a Traditional Cultural Property under New Mexico state law.

⁴³ Donald Jaramillo, "Judge reverses mountain status," *Cibola Beacon*, February 8, 2011. http://www.cibolabeacon.com/news/judge-reverses-mountain-status/article_47776dfa-4782-5e39-857e-02ea0f4964aa.html

The designation both set a strong precedent and sent a political message. The CPRC operations were not only determined lawful, but they can now continue to designate other properties across the state, regardless of landmass. Such properties will now have the level of attention that consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office affords. “The litigation was certainly worthwhile and a battle won,” Amy Cole, the National Trust’s project manager for Mount Taylor offers. “But the war is not over. Like many preservation projects, this is not over, but will continue to unfold at the Forest Service and in state government for years to come!”⁴⁴

Mount Taylor is a preservation model for other landscapes and landforms revered for cultural significance and integral to traditional beliefs and practices. The significance of the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon has the potential to fit this category of large, sweeping traditional cultural places. The historic settlement is clustered on the canyon floor, but there are surrounding features of the landscape that also inform the descendant community’s cultural identity. Nancy Thornton, a non-Métis resident of Choteau, leads a local effort to name a particular mountain ridge that leads south from the canyon settlement toward Ear Mountain, “Métis Ridge.” If realized, the title would pay tribute to the importance of this landscape to the Métis community and the history of the area.⁴⁵

As illustrated in the cases of Medicine Mountain and Mount Taylor, traditional practices are frequently specific to, and inseparable from, features of the natural

⁴⁴ Amy Cole, Senior Field Officer and Regional Attorney at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, e-mail to author, March 3, 2014.

⁴⁵ Nancy Thornton, “Metis Ridge: A Proposal to Name a Mountain in Teton County, Montana, Last updated 3/16/2014. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mtteton/metisridgeproposal.html>

landscape.⁴⁶ For many Native American communities, sacred sites hold religious spiritual or supernatural power, or may play a role in the conveyance of traditional cultural beliefs. They are therefore important to retaining cultural identity. However, it is important to understand that *Bulletin 38* is not limited to use for Native American sacred or traditional places.⁴⁷ This is a common misconception, even among tribal officials and historic preservation practitioners. The misconception is best corrected through example. Though few strong cases of non-Native American TCPs are available, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Grotto in upstate New York and Bohemian Hall and Park in Queens are notable examples on the ever-growing list. In February 2014, the Green River Drift Trail in Wyoming also achieved National Register status. It challenged agency thinking and ultimately broadened the nation's understanding of TCP applicability.⁴⁸

Green River Drift Trail, Wyoming

In the 1880s, cattle was king in the state of Wyoming. The disappearance of bison from the Plains and the completion of the transcontinental railroad opened the range to the livestock industry. Most ranching families of Sublette County in southwestern Wyoming have ties to the earliest waves of ranching settlement. But the development of

⁴⁶ Jack F. Trope, "Protecting Native American Sacred Sites and Religious Freedom," *Wicazo Sa Review* 7 (1991): 53.

⁴⁷ Andrew Guilliford, *Sacred Objects and Sacred Places: Preserving Tribal Traditions* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2000), 103.

⁴⁸ Paul Lusignan, National Register of Historic Places program historian, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2014. Photographs and more information concerning the Bohemian Hall and Park TCP is available on-line at the website of the American Folklore Society: Molly Garfinkel, "Bohemian Hall and Park: A Traditional Cultural Property in New York City," <http://www.afsnet.org/?page=FHPBohemianHallStudy>.

cattle ranching was, and continues to be, entwined with the evolution of the management of public lands.⁴⁹

In 1902, the federal government began to require permits for running livestock on the forest reserves created under the General Public Lands Reform Act of 1891. Three years later, the Department of Agriculture established the USFS, which introduced a system for grazing permits accompanied by a grazing tax. Initially, stockmen objected to the fee that the USFS set at t10 cents per hundred head and 20 cents for any additional cattle. The stockmen claimed it would be a “sore injustice,” a further hardship they could not and would not endure. This episode was the first in the long history of multiple land-use conflicts between federal agencies and Wyoming ranchers.

In 1916, a group of stockmen in Sublette County organized the Upper Green River Cattle and Horse Growers Association, later shortened to Upper Green River Cattle Association.⁵⁰ The association learned flexibility in working with the USFS, particularly during the 1920s when the two coordinated the division of the rangelands into smaller, more easily managed units. The 1946 merger of the General Land Office and the Grazing Service introduced the BLM to the collaborative management of grazing, recreation, and development on public lands in the area.⁵¹

Today, Wyoming has the largest number of energy-related activities in the country, each requiring consultation for the protection of natural and cultural resources.

⁴⁹ Laura Nowlin and Jonita Sommers, “Green River Drift Trail Traditional Cultural Property,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 20-26.

⁵⁰ The organization’s name change occurred in 1925 and reflects a shift in focus, abandoning horse rearing as a major aspect of the Association’s operations. Laura Nowlin and Jonita Sommers, “Green River Drift Trail Traditional Cultural Property,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2011, 20.

⁵¹ Laura Nowlin and Jonita Sommers, 20-22.

However, inadequate federal funding for the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office challenges the state's ability to balance the demands of development with the charge of historic preservation.⁵² In 2006, the Historic Context Development Steering Committee, appointed by Governor Dave Freudenthal, prioritized seven historic contexts for use by researchers and federal and state agencies in the evaluation of historic properties in direct response to an increase in federal undertakings.

The study was part of the state's Planning and Historic Context Development Program, designed to facilitate compliance specifically within the NHPA. The committee selected the contexts based on anticipated development conflicts and impacts to particular cultural and natural resources. Cultural resources associated with each context were to be considered "at risk." One such resource, categorized under "Homesteading, Ranching, and Stock Grazing in Southwest Wyoming," is the Green River Drift Trail. The list secured a future for the Drift Trail, the oldest continually used stock drive in the state.⁵³ In 2012, a group of ranchers in Sublette County nominated it for listing on the NRHP as a Traditional Cultural Property.⁵⁴

The Green River Drift Trail TCP (popularly known as "the Drift") is significant to the practices of that ranching community. The Drift is a linear corridor that winds along the upper Green River, linking the high desert mesas of southern Sublette County and the Bridger-Teton National Forest in the north. For over one hundred years, cattle ranchers have used the Drift to move their herds to seasonal grazing lands. Its natural features

⁵² Historic Context Development, Executive Summary, <http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us/pdf/ContextExecutiveSummary.pdf>

⁵³ Laura Nowlin and Jonita Sommers, 24.

⁵⁴ "Homesteading, Ranching, And Stock Grazing in Southwest Wyoming Context Study," 23.

include draws and creek beds along the corridor and provide relatively consistent sources of forage and water. The addition of man-made features such as fences and bridges has contributed to both the visibility and the usability of the system (Figs. 20 and 21). Since the first documented use of the Drift in 1896, generations of seasonal migrations have shaped the 58-mile route and its spur lines. Today, the Drift crosses lands managed by the BLM, the USFS, the state, and private property. It also incorporates several stretches of county road.⁵⁵

The BLM and USFS continue to play an integral role in the use of the Green River Drift Trail and factor into its state-wide significance. Historically, both agencies have permitted the Upper Green River Cattle Association to graze on the public lands. Spring grazing occurs on BLM lands and lasts from May through June. The USFS allotment on the Bridger-Teton National Forest contains four different pasture systems, which are grazed on annual rotation in the summer months. The link between private ranchers and the federal government is emphasized in the National Register nomination as demonstrating the evolution of the administration of public lands in Wyoming.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Laura Nowlin and Jonita Sommers, 15.

⁵⁶ Laura Nowlin and Jonita Sommers, 1-4.



Figure 20. The Green River Drift Trail, Marsh Creek segment (2012). Richard Collier, Photographer. Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.



Figure 21. The Green River Drift Trail, Noble Lane segment (2012). Richard Collier, Photographer. Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.

Another emphasis in the National Register nomination is on the migration strategy, or “drift,” which involves up to seven thousand head of cattle and about forty ranchers.⁵⁷ They move the herd generally five to seven miles a day, rising as early as three in the morning to reach the next watering hole by the heat of midday. “The tradition is ingrained in the cattle as well as the riders. The cows know where they are going and are ready to reach their summer pasture.”⁵⁸ Due to the complexity and amount of work needed to complete a stock drive and to maintain the Drift, responsibilities are shared among men, women, and children. Each rancher belongs to the tight-knit ranching community along the Green River in an otherwise sparsely populated county. Over the decades, they have developed a sort of cultural language to match the lifeway predicated by their biannual Drift practices. The result is a sense of identity manifested in the stewardship of the resource. “The ranchers who use the Drift share this identity that comes with the isolation of a specific place, the demanding nature of one’s way of life, and a tradition that develops through the generations.”⁵⁹ Participation in the Drift has grown from an agricultural necessity to a cultural representation of strength and perseverance. In the midst of development accompanying the Pinedale Anticline energy boom, this culture group channeled that strength into preserving their traditions.⁶⁰

BLM archaeologist Dave Vlcek first applied the term “Traditional Cultural Property” to the Green River Drift Trail in casual reference to its bottleneck, Trappers’

⁵⁷ Nowlin and Sommers, 14-16.

⁵⁸ Nowlin and Sommers, 26.

⁵⁹ Nowlin and Sommers, 15.

⁶⁰ Nowlin and Sommers, 29.

Point—an area recognized as a prehistoric and historic archaeological site.⁶¹ The promontory also overlooks—and hosts an interpretive site for—the Green River Rendezvous NHL, a former gathering place during the fur trade era. Trappers’ Point is surrounded by historically significant features, and Vlcek promoted the preservation of its view shed as a priority in planning projects. Since 2010, the Wyoming Department of Transportation has engineered a series of overpasses and tunnels across U.S. Highway 191 as part of a “wildlife connectivity” project. The goal of the project is to mitigate the impact of traffic on animal migrations, including the biannual Drift. The tunnels facilitate the continuation of the traditional stock drive and illustrate the agency’s attentiveness, in part, to the compliance priorities established in 2006. The bottleneck happens to be a collecting point where ranchers sort their branded cattle for shipment and sale. Below Trapper’s Point, these ranchers discuss their stock, calculate losses, and predict their income. They also assess the success or failure of the Drift operation. According to Vlcek, the bottleneck is a culturally identifying place. For these ranchers, it is the “make or break of their entire year...It’s like the heart and pulse of the entire Drift.” Vlcek was familiar with the use of TCP designations in evaluating Native American sacred sites.

Beginning in late nineties, when the Anticline energy boom increased pressure on all cultural resources in the area, the ranching community took to the TCP concept as a means to stave off development in the Drift.⁶² Laura Nowlin, a Historic Preservation Specialist, assisted rancher Jonita Sommers in the completion of a National Register nomination. They identified a total of sixty contributing properties across private, public,

⁶¹ Dave Vlcek, discussion with author, March 14, 2014.

⁶² Dave Vlcek, discussion with author, March 14, 2014.

state, and federal lands. It had to be nominated as a district, encompassing 7,041 acres.⁶³ The local BLM office, overwhelmed by the prospect of managing such a large listed property, disputed the eligibility of the property. However, the BLM had documented and treated each resource in the district as eligible in the past, bringing credibility of their argument into question.⁶⁴

The Wyoming SHPO held three public meetings to discuss the nomination. For the private landowners, the pressing question was how such a designation would affect their ability to conduct oil and gas exploration and extraction. To the public at large, it appeared the nomination might limit their use of public lands for recreation.⁶⁵ Despite initial confusion and agency opposition, Sommers, co-author of the nomination, managed to acquire the necessary consent from ranchers and private property owners along the Drift. In November 2013, the Green River Drift Trail Traditional Cultural Property was formally listed on the National Register. The BLM has since entered into a successful Programmatic Agreement for the management of the Drift. Though the Drift's placement on the National Register is relatively recent, word of its success has already spread across the western states.⁶⁶ Vlcek is optimistic about the example the Drift's status will set:

[The Drift] is going to be precedent setting because federal laws and regulations managing cultural resources are not written just for archaeologists...they are written for everybody. The TCP is so elemental to a people's culture and should be applied to other historic properties...As the concept is more broadly used, you will see more non-

⁶³ Nowlin and Sommers, 13-33.

⁶⁴ Dave Vlcek, discussion with author, March 14, 2014.

⁶⁶ "Programmatic Agreement Among the Bureau of Land Management, The United States Forest Services, the Federal Highway Administration, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Regarding the Green River Drift in Sublette County, Wyoming," (working draft, Sublette County Historic Preservation Board CLG, 2014), 1-9.

Native American applications. If a place is so engrained in the cultural milieu, it is a TCP.⁶⁷

Vlcek envisions a preservation strategy accessible to both trained professionals and traditional communities. Each successful application of the TCP model supplements the mission of the NHPA, and opens a door for the recognition of sites such as the South Fork Settlement, whose traditional community is as worthy a candidate as the ranchers of Sublette County.

The TCP concept already has a relatively wide range of applications, as illustrated in the previous case studies. The Medicine Mountain/Medicine Wheel NHL is elemental to the culture and spirituality of the Northern Cheyenne, the Blackfoot, and the Lakota, among other Native American tribes. Mount Taylor anchors the ways in which the Pueblos of Acoma, Zuni, Laguna, Hopi, and the Navajo Nation define themselves, their origins, and the universe. The Green River Drift Trail is engrained in the lifestyle the cattle ranchers of Sublette County, Wyoming have preserved for over a century. These three TCPs can help inform the evaluation of other sites through a more inclusive preservation strategy that acknowledges traditional cultural communities. The Métis descended from the South Fork Settlement could constitute as such a community. In order to fully understand the significance of the South Fork Canyon and its eligibility for listing on the NRHP, the traditional values of this community must be explored.

⁶⁷ Dave Vlcek, discussion with author, March 14, 2014.

CHAPTER V

BULLETIN 38: UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Thomas King and Patricia Parker, co-authors of *Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, did not invent the concept of the TCP. They did, however, introduce a vocabulary with which to identify and evaluate such places for eligibility to the NRHP, arming the ordinary citizen with a revolutionary preservation tool. The concept behind the TCP stems from the mission of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to preserve the foundations of the nation's collective history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture as "living parts of our community life." The NPS holds eligibility decisions concerning those foundations and their significance to necessary professional standards. However, interpretation of significance in the preservation discipline has been slow to adopt new ideas and approaches to recognizing it. These standards do not preclude recognition of TCPs, but King and Parker believed that the overemphasis on the opinions of trained historians, architects, and archaeologists could overshadow the value of the places representing the traditional cultural identity of living groups, some of whom may feel excluded from the process. In drafting *Bulletin 38*, King and Parker sought to correct this potential imbalance from within the existing framework of the NPS.¹

Bulletin 38's publication in 1990 was consistent with broader social and political celebrations of America's diversity during the latter half of the twentieth century. A major shift in the historic preservation movement embraced a "broadening of the view of what should be preserved, and a no-less-important expansion of the contexts within

¹ The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Pub. L. No. 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470.

which to regard the objects to be preserved.”² New attitudes toward open communication with cultural groups, tribes in particular, resulted in the enactment of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), the Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA), and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).³ In 1980, amendments to the NHPA directed the Secretary of the Interior and the American Folklife Center to advance the study of culture—more specifically to preserve and conserve the *intangible* elements of our shared cultural heritage. The amendments also called for a recommendation of ways to ensure the continuation of these diverse expressions of our American heritage.⁴ The NPS developed *Bulletin 38* to address the issue of traditional cultural resources. King and Parker have each remarked that, in drafting the bulletin, they drew inspiration from significant preservation disputes, including the San Francisco Peaks controversy and the demolition of Poletown.⁵

The San Francisco Peaks, which form one of the four corners of the Navajo world and are home to Hopi spiritual beings called “Katchina,” comprise a sacred landscape, much of which the USFS manages within the Coconino National Forest. In 1979, the USFS moved to permit an expansion of the Arizona Snowbowl alpine ski resort which included the construction of a new lodge, paved roads and parking, and four new

² Alan Jabbour, “Folklife, Intangible Heritage, and the Promise and Perils of Cultural Cooperation,” in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert E. Stipe, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 432.

³ Charles Carroll, “Administering Federal Laws and Regulations Relating to Native Americans: Practical Processes and Paradoxes,” *CRM* 16 (1993): 16-21.

⁴ O.H. Loomis, *Cultural Conservation: the Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1986).

⁵ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990; Revised, 1998).

ski lifts all within the forest boundaries.⁶ The Navajo and Hopi identified sacred sites in the area of the proposed development and strongly opposed the expansion. After the USFS determined that their sacred sites were not eligible within the National Register framework, the two tribes brought litigation against the agency, claiming a violation of AIRFA as well as the First Amendment. Their case did not hold up in federal court, however, and the suit was denied.⁷ Still, the intensity of the conflict signaled to King and Parker an underlying tendency of agencies to “treat consultation as a rote exercise in notification-and-response.”⁸

A second influential controversy ignited in March 1981, when General Motors proposed the construction of a state-of-the-art automotive plant in an attempt to revitalize Detroit’s auto industry. The plant promised an increase in tax revenue and much desired job creation, but the land selected for the project encompassed a neighborhood called Poletown on Detroit’s east side. The city government exercised its power of eminent domain to acquire the land, which generations of predominantly Polish immigrant families called home.⁹ The demolition of some thirteen hundred houses, one hundred and forty businesses, a handful of churches, and a hospital spurred residents to file a civil

⁶ King, *Places That Count*, 28-30.

⁷ Laurence French, *Native American Justice* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2003), 109.

⁸ Tom King, “Beyond Bulletin 38: Comments on the Traditional Cultural Properties Symposium,” *CRM* 16 (1993): 60.

⁹William Safire, “Poletown Wrecker’s Ball,” *The New York Times*, April 30, 1981. <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/04/30/opinion/essay-poletown-wrecker-s-ball.html>; Danilo Anselmo, “Background: Poletown Neighborhood Council v. Detroit,” in *Oral Arguments in the Michigan Supreme Court Discussion Guide*, (Lansing, MI: Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center, 2012), 11.

lawsuit against the City of Detroit. The suit escalated to a high-profile legal battle before the Michigan Supreme Court, which ultimately ruled in favor of the city.¹⁰

In each of these cases, the resulting destruction of cultural resources revealed a general reluctance to address carefully community values in resource evaluation and preservation planning.¹¹ The notion that some agencies and even SHPOs may have lost sight of the intent of the NHPA motivated the authors of *Bulletin 38* to draft the guidelines.¹²

Recognizing TCPs

In 1990, *Bulletin 38* reassured the very people who comprise the “living parts of our community life” addressed in the NHPA that their concerns deserved the careful attention of trained preservation professionals and academics. The publication provides a sequence of three steps for the identification and evaluation of properties to which communities ascribe traditional cultural values. The steps are similar to those used in determining the eligibility of any historic property.

Steps one and two ascertain that the entity under consideration is a historic property and that it retains integrity.¹³ It is important to acknowledge that the National Register does not include intangible resources such as the expression of a cultural

¹⁰ Iver Peterson, “Poletown Vigil Fails to Stop Bulldozers,” *The New York Times*, May 5, 1981. <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/05/05/us/poletown-vigil-fails-to-stop-bulldozers.html>

¹¹ Thomas F. King, “Beyond Bulletin 38: Comments on the Traditional Cultural Properties Symposium,” *CRM* 16 (1993): 60.

¹² King, *Places That Count*, 31.

¹³ Parker and King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990; Revised, 1998).

practice or belief, but tangible *places* with which the expression is associated.¹⁴ The final step establishes whether or not a traditional cultural property is eligible for listing, applying the four basic National Register Criteria for evaluation, followed by the Criteria Considerations. Unique to TCPs is the requirement of simultaneous historical and contemporary significance—the ongoing relationship between the property and the expression of cultural practice of belief.¹⁵

While it is not often easy for preservation professionals and academics to understand such places through the eyes of those who value them, the steps outlined above assist Federal agencies, SHPOs, Certified Local Governments, and Tribes in recognizing evidence of such traditional associations. A reasonable and good faith effort to identify and evaluate potential TCPs relies heavily on ethnographic research, including consultation with knowledgeable representatives from the cultural tradition. Therefore, culturally sensitive consultation practices and recommended methods for determining source reliability are included in *Bulletin 38*. As it is the professional’s role to help members of the traditional community articulate their views and relate their traditional values to the National Register criteria, the guidelines also equip users with a standardized vocabulary, facilitating the transfer of critical information through consultation.¹⁶

¹⁴ Use of the term “place” is often promoted over use of the term “property” to avoid confusion concerning property rights and out of respect for certain traditional cultural groups’ views of land ownership. Both terms appear in *Bulletin 38* but “property” is the term consistent with other National Register standards.

¹⁵ Charles W. Smythe, “The National Register Framework for Protecting Cultural Heritage Places,” *The George Wright Forum* 26 (2009): 17.

¹⁶ Parker and King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 7-9.

Ultimately, *Bulletin 38* asserted that traditional cultural properties were eligible for inclusion on the National Register. But the intangible qualities of traditional cultural significance often elude archaeological, historical, and architectural surveys. The USFS, the BLM, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs objected to the publication, claiming TCPs were not their responsibility. But Section 106 of the NHPA requires compliance from all federal agencies, in addition to any administrators of undertakings that involve federal funding or permitting. Some professionals viewed the creation of a seemingly unnecessary set of cultural and historical resources for consideration in preservation planning as a new burden. The congressional amendments to the NHPA in 1992 directed agencies to consult with tribes concerning treatment of potential TCPs as outlined in the bulletin and made the obligation to traditional cultural property identification and evaluation irrefutable. Yet discrepancy in the interpretation of the concepts within *Bulletin 38* continues to cloud the issue.¹⁷

New Approaches

Bulletin 38 introduced the vocabulary and criteria by which TCPs are to be evaluated, but conflicting interpretations of the document have caused the NPS to consider revising them. Since 2012, the NPS has solicited comments regarding the identification, evaluation, and documentation of TCPs from tribal, state, national, and local historic preservation professionals as well as federal agencies and interested members of the public.¹⁸ The comments received show that the overwhelming number of

¹⁷ Public Law 102-575, *16 U.S.C 470* 101(d)(6)(B) <http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/nhpa1966.htm>

¹⁸ These comments are available on a NPS webpage dedicated the open discussion of *Bulletin 38*'s strengths and weaknesses. http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/guidance/TCP_comments.htm

requests for better assistance in handling TCPs comes from professionals, not from members of the public-at-large or specific communities that have a direct investment in such resources. This is an important detail that reveals that the dissatisfaction with current guidelines stems largely from bureaucratic inconsistencies and agency frustrations in handling TCPs. Tom King has been particularly vocal about the potential revisions to *Bulletin 38*, urging the NPS to “take a good hard look at the guidance you already have, and consider ways to resolve inconsistencies that exist among the voluminous piles of paper you have generated in the past...these suggestions may run counter to long-standing NPS policy.” Since drafting the publication in the 1990s, King has questioned the effectiveness of the NRHP, advocating a less formal approach to historic preservation. Not all comments submitted to the NPS concerning TCPs are as critical. Some professionals support greater use of the bulletin, claiming that it already makes much-needed allowances for dynamic resources. However, most commenters express a desire for two things: expanded definitions and more case study examples.¹⁹

While the solicited concerns and requests are valid, certain patterns among them suggest a deeper conflict inherent within the NRHP. It cannot be overlooked that the National Register has a dual purpose. As an inventory of our nation’s historical and cultural resources, it advocates the preservation of place and the stewardship of a collective past. As a rulebook, it provides the criteria necessary for listing and thereby governs the processes of preservation planning and compliance with Section 106 of the

¹⁹ National Park Service “National Register of Historic Places Program: Traditional Cultural Properties Request for Comments,” http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/guidance/TCP_comments.htm

NHPA, which mandates consideration of the effect of federal undertakings on historic resources.²⁰

Section five of *Bulletin 38* discusses ways in which to document TCPs but, as Lynne Sebastian anticipated in 1993, it has proven to be a daunting task for cultural resource management at the state level.²¹ One state currently experimenting with the identification and evaluation of TCPs is North Dakota. Developments accompanying the state's ongoing oil boom have led to an increase in review and compliance cases mandated under the NHPA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Since 2009, the number of cultural resource site records from across the state has grown 97 percent, an inundation that has necessitated a streamlined method for identifying TCPs.²²

In 2013, several tribes approached the North Dakota SHPO about drafting a form for recording tribally-identified TCPs. Previously, documentation had always occurred through paperwork designed for archaeological or architectural resources. The SHPO saw potential where no known precedent existed. Amy Bleier, research archaeologist at the State Historical Society of North Dakota, devised the "Cultural Heritage Form" tailored to sacred sites and TCPs. Bleier had her own motivation: "There were tribally-identified sites that were non-archaeological, non-architectural, being recorded on the site files.

²⁰ William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, 3rd ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006), 51.

²¹ Lynne Sebastian, "Protecting Traditional Cultural Properties Through the Section 106 Process," *CRM* 16 (1993): 24.

²² Jessica Holdman, "Archaeologists busy in N.D.," *The Bismarck Tribune*, April 13, 2014, http://bismarcktribune.com/bakken/archaeologists-busy-in-n-d/article_545b2636-c0df-11e3-8ca2-001a4bcf887a.html

[They] really didn't belong there because there's not material culture associated with them."²³

The form developed by Bleier is not radically different in layout or instruction from other documentation instruments. It requires a legal description, a map, photos, and verbal description of the resource. But it also asks for an ethnic or cultural affiliation if it is known and any traditional or spiritual value it may hold to a specific group. Currently, review and compliance with Section 106 is the driving force behind Bleier's project, though she can see the North Dakota Cultural Heritage Form playing an important role in National Register nominations of TCPs in the future.

Bleier's form has been adapted by tribes across North Dakota. Other states are likely to follow this lead. Bleier canvassed SHPOs in other states, particularly states west of the Mississippi, early in her efforts. Many western states have comparable experiences dealing with tribal consultation, large-scale sites, and increased energy development. In 2013, Wyoming and Minnesota were the only states that indicated they were developing a similar, distinct documentation strategy for TCPs.²⁴ Wyoming has taken particular strides in employing the *Bulletin 38* concept. An optional section is built into Wyoming's state site forms specifically for the identification and evaluation of TCPs. Though the section has seen relatively little use, the state of Wyoming is setting a strong example.

²³ Amy Bleier, discussion with author, March 14, 2014.

²⁴ Bleier felt Minnesota's form, which stemmed from a specific 106 project, required more information than necessary for consultation—far too much to expect to receive in the booming western counties of North Dakota considering the sensitivity of traditional cultural information and the preliminary nature of the field work.

Wyoming's recent Green River Drift Trail TCP designation has caught the interest of neighboring western states.²⁵

Old Conflicts

The history of complications and challenges in identifying, documenting, and evaluating TCPs adds to the general reluctance to employ *Bulletin 38*. Two particular properties, the route of the *Kiks.ádi* Survival March in Alaska and the Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars District in Massachusetts, demonstrate that interpretations of the TCP concept vary among community members, agencies, and the NPS, and that not all interpretations will satisfy traditional culture groups and the National Register criteria.

In the 1990s, the USFS planned several timber sales in the Tongass National Forest of Alaska. However, the local Tlingit Tribe claimed traditional, intangible associations with some of the lands involved in the proposed project. In 1802, the Tlingit drove enemy Russians out of Alaska. But the Russians returned two years later and bombarded the tribe's village. After several days of conflict, the Russians forced the tribe to flee across part of the present-day national forest. Their route to safety has become a symbol of their people's survival. The descendants reenact the *Kiks.ádi* Survival March, as it is known today, in celebration of their cultural identity. Concerned for the sanctity of this place, the Tlingit attempted to nominate the historical route of their retreat for listing on the NRHP as a TCP and filed an injunction against the timber sale in 1998.²⁶

²⁵ Amy Bleier, discussion with author, March 14, 2014.

²⁶ Javier Marqués, "Federal Historic Preservation Case Law Update 1996-2000," supplement to *Federal Historic Case Law: Thirty Years of the National Historic Preservation Act*, (Washington, D.C.: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2002), 11. <http://www.achp.gov/caselaw96-00.pdf>

The Alaska SHPO received an informal draft of the *Kiks.ádi* Survival March Route Trail nomination and forwarded it to the Keeper's staff for an informal opinion. Neither the SHPO nor the Keeper placed confidence in the route's eligibility. The Keeper found the absence of passage marks, such as wagon ruts, and the lack of documented landmarks problematic in defining the route as a tangible, definable place. The Keeper also felt the reenactment of the march did not constitute a continued, traditional use. King and Parker, authors of *Bulletin 38*, supported the Tlingit cause. In their rebuttal they asserted that the fleeing Tlingit had no vehicles with which to leave traces, no time to create a primary-source record of the event, and no subsequent bombardments from which to run.²⁷ However, it was not the authenticity of the cultural memory and historical event that the Keeper doubted. Instead, it was the eligibility of the route in terms of the National Register criteria. It is possible the *Kiks.ádi* Survival March Route Trail might have received a determination of eligibility (DOE) under Section 106. But in court, the tribe failed to substantiate the traditional value of the property itself, and the injunction on timber sales along the Survival March was denied.²⁸

Tribes are not the only cultural groups who have proposed a TCP designation and failed. In 2007, the Keeper rejected a DOE for the Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars Historic District in Massachusetts. Since the mid-twentieth century, painters, poets, novelists, and actors have lived and worked in the small cottages outside Provincetown, which flourished as an artists' collective celebrated by the neighboring communities. In 1961, when the surrounding landscape was incorporated into the Cape Cod National

²⁷ King, *Places That Count*, 164-166.

²⁸Javier Marqués, "Federal Historic Preservation Case Law Update 1996-2000," supplement to *Federal Historic Case Law: Thirty Years of the National Historic Preservation Act*, 11.

Seashore, the NPS gave the occupants varying reservations of use, some of which were lifetime leases similar to NPS inholdings. Since the mid-1990s, the NPS has offered programs in partnership with various non-profit organizations for artists and writers-in-residence, promoting the traditional character of the dune shacks.

In 1989, the NPS recognized the dune shacks as eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for historical associations with the American arts, Criterion B for association with poet Harry Kemp, and Criterion C for the district's design, emblematic of mid-twentieth century summer retreats. The NPS determined the district achieved these aspects of significance within a historical context between the 1880s and 1960. In 2004, when many of the leases were expiring, the NPS hired a consultant to conduct an ethnographic study of the district. In the consultant's opinion, the continuity of a similar lifestyle led by otherwise unrelated individuals of the dune shack society qualified the district as a TCP. The Massachusetts SHPO disagreed.²⁹ So did the Keeper.

The NPS initially explored the potential for this new area of significance. In 2006, the NPS conducted a TCP Assessment of the Dune Shacks district. The assessment compared the historical and contemporary traditional practices and beliefs associated with the property. The traditions had changed over time in response to technological, environmental, and social developments. Change usually damages a property's integrity, but the authors of the assessment argued that, as the period of significance for the district as a TCP extends to the present, these changes contribute to the property's dynamic continuity of use. The assessment also revealed that families considered long-term users of the shacks still practiced several core traditional cultural activities in the district. These

²⁹ Charles W. Smythe, "The National Register Framework for Protecting Cultural Heritage Places," *The George Wright Forum* 26 (2009): 20-22.

included writing, beach combing, food foraging, fishing, creating art, and retreating from society—activities which define aspects of the Provincetown-Lower Cape Cod historical community identity. The authors concluded these activities added to the national significance, the development of American arts and literature, and that the relationship between the traditional practices and the property appeared to have strong integrity.³⁰ *Bulletin 38* states that strong integrity occurs when the property is “regarded by a traditional cultural group as important in the retention or transmittal of a belief, or to the performance of a practice.”³¹ According to the NPS assessment, the Dune Shacks district played an integral role in the community’s identity.

Questioning the composition of this cultural group, the Keeper challenged the identity of the community in 2007, and, after careful consideration, the NPS declared the district ineligible as a TCP. Despite widespread public support for the designation, the Keeper felt the dune shack community did not meet the definitions provided in *Bulletin 38*. According to the bulletin, the same culture group that continues to the present must have existed historically. The Keeper believed the long-term occupants of the shacks, the transient visitors and tenants, and the residents of the Provincetown community lacked cohesion and did not possess this important characteristic. As stated in the NPS news release, “the groups that are culturally identified with the district were historically (and

³⁰ Robert Wolfe and T.J. Ferguson, “Traditional Cultural Significance of the Dune Shacks Historic District, Cape Cod National Seashore,” Traditional Cultural Property assessment, National Park Service, May 3, 2006, http://www.nps.gov/caco/parkmgmt/upload/Cape_Cod_Dune_Shack_TCP_Assessment_%20Final.pdf

³¹ Parker and King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 11.

continue to be) fluid, evolving, and different from one year to the next.”³² When the NPS prepared a successful nomination for the district in 2011, it omitted the traditional cultural associations from its statement of significance. In May 2012, the NPS proposed a preservation plan for the Dune Shacks of Peaked Hill Historic District. Though the property is not formally acknowledged as a TCP, the plan explicitly supported the continued traditional uses of the dune shacks as defined in *Dwelling in the Dunes: Traditional Use of the Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars Historic District, Cape Cod*, the initial ethnographic report.³³

The public attention given the cases of the *Kiks.ádi* Survival March Route Trail and the Dune Shacks of the Peaked Hill Bars Historic District may deter communities that associate similar traditional cultural practices with a particular place from engaging the National Register program. For such groups, an alternative means of preservation may not be applicable. Other methods of preservation may not satisfy their cultural aims or needs. It is ironic, as Charles W. Smythe, a former cultural anthropologist for the NPS has pointed out, “that an approach to preserving heritage that was developed to be more inclusive is now seen by some to be exclusionary and a problem perpetuated by heritage institutions and professionals.”³⁴ King, whose has written extensively on both cases, asserts that “in each, a passionate community seeking to preserve a piece of its history, an

³² “Cape Cod Dune Shacks found not to meet criteria for recognition as a Traditional Cultural Property,” *National Park Service News Release*, May 24, 2007. <http://www.nps.gov/caco/parkmgmt/upload/TCPNPSPR5.24.07.pdf>

³³ National Park Service, “Cape Cod National Seashore: Dune Shack Historic District Preservation and Use Plan/Finding of No Significant Impact,” National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (2012), 1. <http://www.nps.gov/caco/parkmgmt/upload/DuneShackFONSI.pdf>

³⁴ Smythe, “The National Register Framework for Protecting Cultural Heritage Places,” 24.

emplacement of its identity, was overwhelmed by the power of the U.S. government's official historic preservation establishment."³⁵

Ongoing Challenges

Establishing the significance of a traditional cultural resource is arguably the biggest challenge in identifying TCPs.³⁶ Because a TCP is significant to an existing community and integral to their traditions, it should demonstrate cultural continuity. It is therefore important to understand the definition of "tradition" stated in *Bulletin 38*, as it is intended to encompass both past and present:

"Traditional" in this context refers to those beliefs, customs, and practices of a living community of people that have been passed down through the generations, usually orally or through practice. The traditional cultural significance of a historic property, then, is significance derived from the role the property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.³⁷

A tradition such as the seasonal cattle drift in Sublette County, Wyoming, is a clear example of modern cultural behavior rooted in historical practice. The practice has changed over time, incorporating modern technologies and adapting to current environmental and social circumstances. However, these developments have not significantly damaged the Drift's integrity as the setting of a culturally significant custom.

³⁵ Thomas F. King, "Traditional Cultural Properties in Historical Perspective, and the Promise of Critical Cultural Geography," Academia.edu.
http://www.academia.edu/4424671/Traditional_Cultural_Properties_in_Historical_Perspective_and_the_Promise_of_Critical_Cultural_Geography

³⁶Parker, "What you do and how we think," 4.

³⁷Parker and King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 1.

According to Parker, the significance of TCPs “cannot be determined by historians, ethnographers, ethnohistorians, ethnobotanists, and other professionals. The significance of TCPs must be determined by the communities that value them.”³⁸ But the term “community” is undefined by *Bulletin 38*. This particular failure to establish a standard description has, over the years, created a rift between those who believe the guidelines are tailored to Native American cultural and spiritual sites and those who feel they have broader applications.

Properties with traditional cultural significance have been listed on the National Register, or determined eligible for listing, since the 1970s, though the term had not yet been coined. These early examples are predominantly spiritual or sacred sites associated with Native Americans, such as Pahuk Hill, a promontory the Pawnee venerate along the Platte River in Nebraska (listed in 1973); Bear Butte in South Dakota, associated with the Cheyenne prophet Sweet Medicine (listed in 1973); and the Bassett Grove Ceremonial Grounds in Oklahoma, a place integral to the Seneca and Cayuga traditional ceremonial practices (listed 1983).³⁹ Through the 1990s, application of the TCP concept expanded. In 1991 a seemingly empty, paved lot in New Mexico gained recognition as a place where the Hispanic community conducted its costumed dance called the “Los Matachines.” The Los Matachines de El Rancho Site is not on the National Register, but is one of the first determinations of eligibility to challenge misconceptions that followed *Bulletin 38*’s publication. Today the list of TCPs is an ever-evolving selection of properties.⁴⁰

³⁸ Parker, “What you do and how we think,” 5.

³⁹ Paul Lusignan, National Register of Historic Places program historian, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2014.

⁴⁰ Lynne Sebastian, “Protecting Traditional Cultural Properties Through the Section 106 Process,” *CRM* 16 (1993): 23.

Currently, the number of TCPs formally listed on the NRHP is estimated at eleven (Table 2). As the National Register program database has no definitive way to generate an official list of all nationally designated TCPs at this time, Paul Lusignan, a National Register historian, has taken it upon himself to keep an informal tally. His list includes properties on the Register as TCPs, as well as properties determined eligible by the Keeper. Of the 88,000 National Register listings, fewer than a dozen provide a model for implementation of *Bulletin 38*. Lusignan’s list does not include TCPs determined eligible for inclusion through a consensus agreement between a federal agency and a State Historic Preservation Officer under Section 106. According to Lusignan, “such a list might total hundreds of designations.”⁴¹

Table 2. Traditional Cultural Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places as of February, 2014.

Property	Location	Year Listed
Tahquitz Canyon	California	1972
Tonnachau Mountain	Federated States of Micronesia	1976
Coso Hot Springs	California	1978
De-No-To Cultural District	California	1985
Kuchamaa (Tecate Peak)	California	1992
Mus-yeh-sait-neh Village and Cultural Landscape Property	California	1993
I’itoi Mo’o (Montezuma’s Head) and ‘Oks Daha (Old Woman Sitting)	Arizona	1994
Annashisee lisaxpuatahcheeaashisee (Medicine Wheel on the Big Horn River)	Montana	1999

⁴¹ Paul Lusignan, National Register of Historic Places program historian, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2014.

Ma-ka Yu-so-ta (Boiling Springs)	Minnesota	2003
Pascua Cultural Plaza	Arizona	2004
Green River Drift Trail	Wyoming	2014

The relatively low number of listed TCPs reflects a widespread reluctance on the part of traditional communities to pursue National Register status for their resources. Many reasons exist to explain this phenomenon, most of which are touched on in *Bulletin* 38 and are rooted in the fact that the traditional cultural significance that communities ascribe to certain resources is often sensitive.⁴² Fundamental differences in cultural beliefs and values can hamper the evaluation process. As the *Bulletin* explains, “it is important to understand the role that the information being solicited may play in the culture of those from whom it is being solicited.”⁴³ Identification of TCPs is often dependent upon oral testimony.⁴⁴ However, the unwillingness of a community or an individual to share information concerning sacred places or spiritual practices with professionals or other cultural outsiders is not uncommon. For some cultural groups, possession of certain stories, myths, or other knowledge is a privilege. Rules may govern their transmittal. King’s and Parker’s recommendations for sensitive consultation aim to foster an understanding of those cultural protocols, which should inform the evaluation. King and Parker also caution that it may not always be possible to arrange for the

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Parker and King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 8.

⁴⁴ Lynne Sebastian, “Protecting Traditional Cultural Properties Through the Section 106 Process,” 24.

exchange of culturally sensitive information in the way those being consulted might prefer.⁴⁵

Language can be a barrier. Specific information may not translate easily into languages other than the language of the traditional culture, and nuance may easily be lost. Cultures whose traditions are shared orally may be uncomfortable with written documentation and communication of their worldviews. Accommodating the needs of traditional communities is subject to circumstance and can prove difficult. However, attempts to create the necessary dialogue are an important part of the “good faith effort” required by law.⁴⁶ When, on occasion, information is decidedly inappropriate for cultural groups to release, nominations can proceed with selective information. As amended in 1992, Section 304 of the NHPA provides broad discretion to withhold such confidential information in the best interest of the affected community.⁴⁷

Misinformation concerning *Bulletin 38*, or the NRHP in general, is another potential cause for a traditional community to mistrust the process. Those familiar with the failure of the Tlingit to obtain National Register status for the *Kiks.adi* Survival March Route Trail may perceive the nomination process as too unpredictable. The case clearly demonstrated that state and federal preservation officials cannot provide a meaningful guarantee that a place will be protected based on what the tribe is willing or

⁴⁵ Parker and King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 8-9.

⁴⁶ Sally Thompson Greiser and T. Weber Greiser, “Two Views of the World,” *CRM* 16 (1993): 9-11.

⁴⁷ Carol D. Shull, “Traditional Cultural Properties in the National Register of Historic Places: Educating the Public about Cultural Heritage,” *CRM* 16 (1993): 6.

able to disclose. Creating a dialogue with tribes about their participation is the first step in convincing them their participation and effort is worthwhile.⁴⁸

The inclusive approach to defining, identifying, and evaluating significance is gaining acceptance. The slowly growing number of places listed and recognized as TCPs illustrates that the NRHP program is becoming more inclusive and accessible to untrained individuals and communities. But this raises questions about the nature of traditional communities in their modern contexts and their traditional cultural values.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ David W. Cushman, "When Worlds Collide: Indians, Archaeologists, and the Preservation of Traditional Cultural Properties," *CRM* 16 (1993): 49.

⁴⁹ Paul R. Lusignan, "Traditional Cultural Places and the National Register," *The GWS Journal of Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites* 26(2009): 42.

CHAPTER VI
ENVISIONING MÉTIS HERITAGE PRESERVED
AT THE SOUTH FORK SETTLEMENT

Envisioning the preservation of Métis heritage along the South Fork of the Teton River in Montana may not be particularly challenging from the perspective of a trained historian or archaeologist. Envisioning the *most appropriate* preservation, however, requires an exploration of place and identity. The appropriate strategy may be designation as a TCP, or it may be designation under a separate NRHP property type, such as an archaeological site or a Cultural Landscape. Establishing the role this place plays in cultural memory and continuity depends on both tangible traces of the past and the traditional knowledge and beliefs held by descendant community members. Both inform the applicability of common preservation strategies to the South Fork Settlement and help establish a foundation for understanding the significance it holds within the descendant community.¹

Remnants of the Past

The Teton River originates at the Continental Divide within the Lewis and Clark National Forest and winds its way out of the mountains, across the flat, semiarid grasslands, beyond the town of Choteau. Early in its course, the Teton River's South Fork meanders through a lush valley meadow. There, among the quaking aspen groves and creeping juniper can be found the remnants of what residents of Choteau, some twenty-five miles to the east, once derogatorily called "Breed Town." But to the astute visitor,

¹ Alan S. Downer and Alexandra Roberts, "Traditional Cultural Properties, Cultural Resource Management, and Environmental Planning," *CRM* 16 (1993): 12-14.

features on the landscape along this short stretch of the Teton suggest that others once called this place home.²

The surrounding mountains create a bowl-like enclosure, and the narrow, winding canyon obscures it from the outside world (Fig. 22). At the north end of the meadow, a ring of earth rises approximately two feet off the ground. The center is depressed, and the entire feature is overgrown with tall grass and thorny shrubs. Logs that once formed a tight corner notch jut out of the shallow mound. Bits of china, bottle glass, and ceramics litter the ground and might suggest to an archaeologist the location of a former root cellar. The collective memory of the Métis who trace descent from those who settled in the South Fork could confirm that claim with the authority of traditional knowledge.³

Much material evidence of the late nineteenth century settlement in the South Fork Canyon has been appropriated by the Circle 8/Pine Butte Guest Ranch, currently owned by the Nature Conservancy. In 1930, Kenneth and Alice Gleason bought up quit-claims from those Métis who continued to inhabit the canyon, to begin their dude ranch operation. And yet the presence of the past did not disappear altogether. A portion of the original Circle 8 lodge building is recycled from the hunting lodge Jesse Gleason and his Métis friend, Lorman Bruno, constructed. A well-preserved guest cabin is the oldest building in the canyon.⁴ It bears several characteristics associated with regional Métis building traditions including a string-latch locking mechanism on its doors.

² Al Wiseman, interviewed by Emily Sakariassen, Choteau, Montana, August 2, 2012.

³ Ibid.

⁴Ripley Hugo, Interviewed by Kristi Hager, Missoula, MT, December 9, 2012, Montana Historical Society.

Local historian Al Wiseman, a member of the Métis community, has identified other remnants of the past. His map marks family root cellars, a horse barn and corral, the site where Big Bear built his cabin, and the place where Wiseman's own mother was born, among other features (Fig. 23). Each item of information held by members within this community is etched in their shared cultural memory. Wiseman has taken it upon himself to convey their knowledge to any individual with an expressed curiosity.⁵ This traditional knowledge is vital in understanding the significance the traditional community ascribes to the site of the South Fork Settlement, and informs what preservation efforts this community might pursue.

⁵ Al Wiseman, interviewed by Emily Sakariassen, Choteau, MT, August 21, 2012.

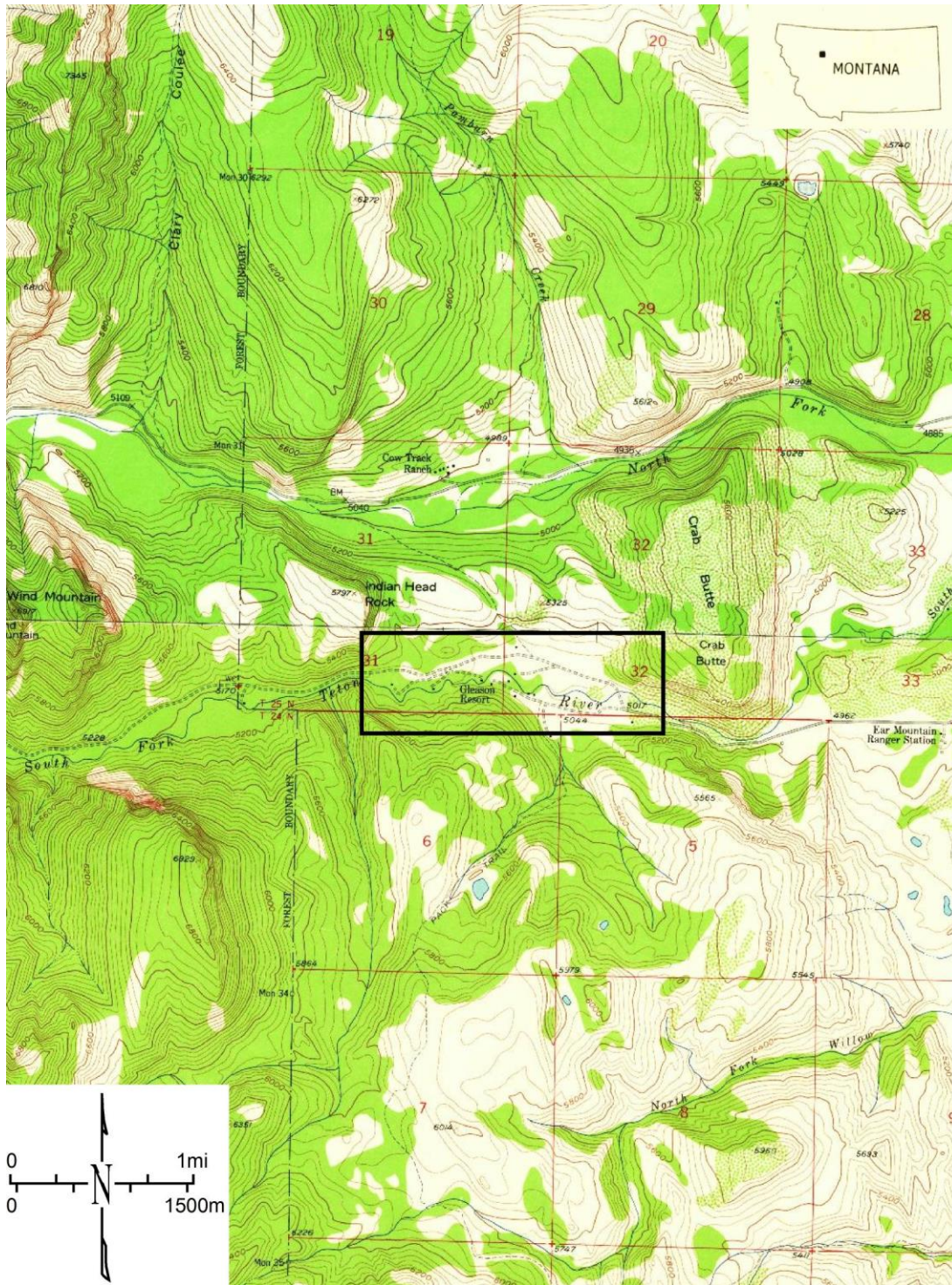


Figure 22. South Fork of the Teton River Canyon study area outlined from “Ear Mountain” and “Cave Mountain” USGS quadrangles (1958), adjusted by author.

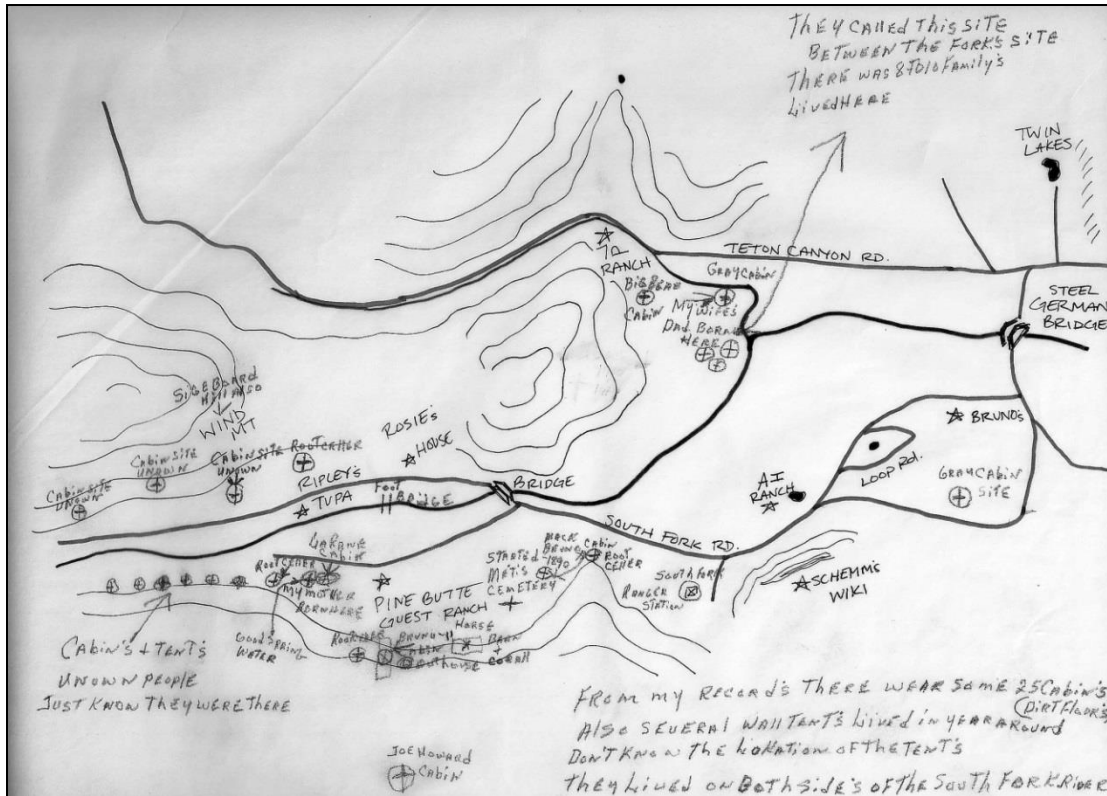


Figure 23. Annotated map of the material remains of settlement on the North and South Forks of the Teton River (2013). Courtesy of Al Wiseman.

Traditional Knowledge Recovered

In the fall of 1993, Choteau residents of Métis descent took action and initiated a cultural revival.⁶ Nicholas Vrooman, esteemed folklorist and foremost historian of the Métis narrative, met with members of the Choteau community, Al Wiseman and Duke LaRance. Together they organized a committee to research and document Métis heritage in the area. The Métis Cultural Recovery Trust, as they referred to themselves, embarked on a series of projects ranging from the installation of a reconstructed Red River ox cart in front of Choteau's Old Trail Museum, to the recording of several dozen histories from various community members. In order to recover the broadest reach of cultural and

⁶“OTM’s display raises awareness of the Metis Culture,” Choteau Acantha, Choteau, MT, May 21, 2003, http://www.choteauacantha.com/article_beab09a9-0e3f-54c5-93d2-faf3d0893253.html

historical information possible, they enlisted the expertise of Vrooman, who held a series of ethnographic workshops in the town.⁷ A host of similar Métis cultural preservation organizations emerged around the same time across the Great Lakes and Great Plains regions, likely spurred by an amendment to the Canadian constitution that gave the Métis of Canada aboriginal rights, something the Little Shell Tribe continues to fight for in this country. Vrooman believes local cultural revival efforts in the United States, such as the Métis Cultural Recovery Trust, “have given real promise that the Métis story will survive.”⁸

The Métis Cultural Recovery Trust was active for a period of only about five years, yet it contributed over thirty oral histories to the Montana Historical Society collections, set up interpretive signage throughout the area, and built the Old Trail Museum’s first exhibit about the Métis. The “Métis House” on display in Choteau provides visitors a glimpse into life in the South Fork Canyon. The interior is a model historical Métis home, based on the traditional knowledge and memories passed down from the generations raised on the South Fork.⁹ A series of child-friendly interactive interpretive panels known as the “Then and Now” exhibit illustrates the various cultural changes generations of Métis in the area experienced over time. Students from the Choteau public school and the De La Salle Blackfeet School in Browning created the

⁷ The Montana Preservation Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting Montana’s historic places, traditional landscapes, and cultural heritage, honored with a Historic Preservation Excellence Award in 2013 for his efforts on behalf of the Métis and Little Shell peoples. Website of the Montana Preservation Alliance, “Historic Preservation Excellence Awards 2013,” <http://www.preservemontana.org/preservation%20awards.html>

⁸ Nicholas Vrooman, introduction to *Strange Empire*, by Joseph Kinsey Howard (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1952; reprint, St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994), xxiii-xxv.

⁹ Al Wiseman, in discussion with the author, March 28, 2014.

series in 2011. Their generation's interest in this history, as well as in updating the Métis House display, demonstrates the lasting influence of the Métis Cultural Recovery Trust.¹⁰

Consideration of National Register Criteria

The Métis House exhibit is, ironically enough, located inside an Anglo homestead cabin that the Old Trail Museum moved from a site approximately four miles east of Choteau. To see actual traditional Métis log construction, one must visit the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon. Wiseman acknowledges the value of experiencing history in situ. He guides fieldtrips for tourists and residents alike, and offers his interpretations of what remains in the canyon.¹¹ But his interpretation of the material culture is, by nature, subjective. Each feature or artifact may have cultural significance to members of the Métis community. Determining the quality of that significance as it fits within the broader context of American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture, requires the application of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. However, in the case of the South Fork Settlement, which contains a variety of materials and layers of potential historical significance, more than one criterion is likely to apply.¹²

¹⁰ Nancy Thornton, "De La Salle students share tipi lore," *Choteau Acantha*, April 13, 2011, Choteau, MT, http://www.choteauacantha.com/news/article_01205186-2b97-5219-9408-e3f6d51242b1.html

¹¹ Al Wiseman, interviewed by Emily Sakariassen, Choteau, MT, August 21, 2012.

¹² National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990; Revised 1997), 1-2.

Criterion C Applicability

Nestled in a densely wooded plot along the north bank of the Teton River is a small one-story, rectangular log cabin commonly referred to as the Hugo Cabin, in reference to its most recent occupant, poet Ripley Hugo. Of the two structures in the canyon that remain from the period overlapping with the Métis settlement, the Hugo Cabin is the older and better representation of what life might have been like for those who subsisted in the mountain meadow (Fig. 24).¹³

Lorman Bruno is said to have constructed the Hugo Cabin in 1908. Residents in and around the South Fork Canyon remember Bruno as a prolific builder. They attribute several log cabins that still dot the foothills to his skill as a craftsman. But the last surviving structures of the Métis settlement are arguably his most important legacy.¹⁴ Bruno grew up in the South Fork Canyon immersed in the ways of the timber trade. A 1930 Census of Lake County, Montana, shows he was born in 1893, around the same time as little Jesse Gleason. When the Hugo Cabin was completed, Lorman was roughly fifteen years old and was more likely a helping hand in a family or community-scale effort.¹⁵ Nevertheless, he is the one the local tradition remembers. Each bevel-ended purlin and double saddle-notch on the structure is a mark of the Métis method he learned. They built this cabin, in its original form, in response to local resources and as best they

¹³ Al Wiseman, interviewed by Emily Sakariassen, Choteau, MT, August 21, 2012.

¹⁴ Ripley Hugo, interviewed by Kristi Hager, Missoula, MT, December 9, 2012, Montana Historical Society.

¹⁵ Bureau of the Census, "Montana, Mission, Lake County," *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930*, roll: 1257; Page: 10B; Enumeration District: 0006; <http://www.ancestry.com> (Accessed 11/22/2013); Kristi Hager, Interview with Ripley Hugo, Missoula, MT, December 9, 2012, Montana Historical Society.

could.¹⁶ The Hugo Cabin represents more than a common, regional building tradition. It reveals a set of values behind the conscious decision on the part of the South Fork builders—function over form—a decision that afforded each family shelter, comfort, and, ultimately, a sense of place that has stood the test of time.



Figure 24. Hugo Cabin (2013). Photographed by author.

Lorman Bruno was a constant presence in the canyon even after the Gleason family began operating the Circle 8 Guest Ranch. He made his living as a wood cutter and as a carpenter, and in 1945, when Kenneth Gleason attached a rear addition to the Hugo Cabin, Bruno assisted. Kenneth also made alterations to the once modest hunting lodge Bruno and Jesse Gleason had built in the 1920s. However, the lodge’s integrity is

¹⁶Matthew Hansen, “The South Fork of the Teton River: A History of its People,” (Unpublished document: Mike and Maureen Mansfield Library, University of Montana, June, 1980), 20.

of little consequence in understanding the Métis settlement period in the canyon. It was never inhabited as part of the settlement. Instead, it symbolizes the transition from a subsistence settlement to a recreation destination.

The Hugo Cabin experienced transition as well. It earned notoriety after the last of the Bruno lands changed hands, as the literary retreat of novelist Mildred Walker and later, poets Richard Hugo and Ripley Schemm Hugo, Walker's daughter.¹⁷ Today, neither standing structure is a strong representation of the Métis story. While the Hugo Cabin retains excellent integrity of materials, design, feeling, location, association, workmanship, and setting it now reflects a separate area of significance, tied to American literary traditions, distanced in time and relevance from the Métis narrative. Its role in the preservation of the Métis presence in the South Fork is compromised, and Criterion C alone would fail to do justice to the site's traditional cultural importance.

Criterion D Applicability

Though no one has yet conducted preliminary archaeological testing of the Métis settlement on the South Fork, properties which present a visible assortment of material culture (i.e. remnants of cabins, root cellar depressions, and scattered household artifacts) may be eligible under National Register Criterion D if they have yielded, or are *likely to yield*, information important to understanding prehistory or history.¹⁸ Criterion D can be relevant to many types of structures and objects, but practitioners typically apply it to

¹⁷Ripley Hugo, interviewed by Kristi Hager, Missoula, MT, December 9, 2012, Montana Historical Society.

¹⁸ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990; Revised 1997), 21-24.

archaeological sites or districts. Like TCPs, quite often these sites are significant to Native American groups and are important to the retention of cultural identity. For example, archaeological investigation of a site consisting of midden deposits, hearths, ceramic assemblages, and other evidence of human occupation might answer important research questions about former indigenous settlement patterns, subsistence practices, or plant domestication that could not readily be attained elsewhere.¹⁹

The site of the South Fork Settlement has the potential to yield similar historical archaeological data. Excavation could uncover information concerning local technologies, foodways, or quality of life. This information could reflect the settlement decisions made by the Métis and reveal the cultural changes that occurred there over time. These are common results of historical archaeological investigations and assist in interpreting a site and managing for its preservation.²⁰

However, while this is an acceptable preservation method from certain perspectives, one of the challenges in applying Criterion D to a historic property can occur when a living, traditional community exists. Excavation is not always welcomed.²¹ In fact, some tribal groups might not accept it as a viable means to mitigate a planned impact to traditional cultural resources.²² Though these traditional cultural groups have

¹⁹ Judy Brunson Hadley, "Traditional Cultural Properties: Pros, Cons, and Realities," *CRM* 16 (1993): 48.

²⁰ Charles Orser, Jr. *Historical Archaeology*, 2nd ed., (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2004), 192.

²¹ Charles Carroll, "Administering Federal Laws and Regulations Relating to Native Americans: Practical Processes and Paradoxes," *CRM* 16 (1993): 19-20.

²² Kelli Carmean, *Spider Woman Walks This Land: Traditional Cultural Properties and the Navajo Nation*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), 116.

occasionally criticized the use of Criterion D in the National Register, the reality is that archaeological excavation is a common mitigation tool and preservation strategy.²³

In recent years, collaborative approaches to archaeology have better balanced the ethics, methods, and theories of the discipline with the specific concerns of descendant communities. The approach stems, in part, from the 1992 amendments to the NHPA which mandated tribal consultation but is also related to the rise of public archaeology, driven by the belief that archaeology can and should serve a variety of groups. Stephen Silliman, professor of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts and author of *Collaborating at the Trowel's Edge*, has described stake-holder or descendant community participation in archaeology as adding a valuable dimension to the interdisciplinary study of material culture. According to Silliman, “doing archaeology as anthropology necessitates paying careful attention to the *living* people who descend from the past and not just the past.”²⁴ As local knowledge among the living people of a community dwindles, archaeologists assume a greater responsibility in its recovery and retention.

An important factor in the collaborative approach, and one by which its success is ultimately measured, is reciprocity. Both the results and the process of archaeology can directly benefit communities in a number of ways. Data recovered and interpreted can correct false histories or misconceptions about the past, and facilitate healing, reconciliation, or repatriation; a strong, collaborative research design can unite a community to meet a common goal; and access to professional expertise on-site can build

²³ Charles Carroll, “Administering Federal Laws and Regulations Relating to Native Americans: Practical Processes and Paradoxes,” 19-20.

²⁴ Stephen W. Silliman and T.J. Ferguson, “Consultation and Collaboration with Descendant Communities,” in *Voices in American Archaeology*, ed. Wendy Ashmore, Dorothy T. Lippert, and Barbara J. Mills (Washington, D.C.: Society for American Archaeology Press, 2011), 55.

the capacity of community members to pursue further education and training in related fields. Increasingly, traditional cultural groups have asserted the ability to contribute answers to their own research questions through archaeology in place of other, less intensive preservation strategies, such as community action studies, which remain common.²⁵

Community action studies, like public archaeology, are also collaborative, and provide individuals the means to take systematic action and undertake personal or group inquiries, reviving and restoring traditional cultural knowledge.²⁶ This is a preservation strategy the descendants of the South Fork Settlement have employed in the recent past. While the use of Criterion D would not likely offend this traditional community, its members are not likely to perceive the potential benefits of excavation and archaeological testing as direct and meaningful in the perpetuation of the traditional cultural beliefs and practices associated with the canyon. As archaeologists Mark Leone and Parker Potter, Jr. stated, “in terms of criteria for site significance, our job is...to understand what they mean and what they do through a dialogue with whom they affect.”²⁷ Through the cultural lens of the descendant community of the South Fork Settlement, the extant structures and archaeological remnants in the canyon are only components in a site whose significance begs a broader preservation perspective.²⁸

²⁵ George Nicholas, “Collaborative Encounters,” in *Voices in American Archaeology*, ed. Wendy Ashmore, Dorothy T. Lippert, and Barbara J. Mills (Washington, D.C.: Society for American Archaeology Press, 2011), 296-297.

²⁶ Marcia Pablo, “Preservation as Perpetuation,” *American Indian Quarterly* 25(2001): 18.

²⁷ Mark P. Leone and Parker B. Potter, Jr., “Legitimation and the Classification of Archaeological Sites,” *American Antiquity* 57 (1992): 137-145.

²⁸ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990; Revised 1997), 17-20.

Significance of Setting

The natural resources within the South Fork Canyon that initially attracted and fostered cultural developments contribute to the area's landscape as well as to the site's use and significance. Because landscapes can be viewed in a number of ways, ongoing human relationships with a landscape can inform how a site might best be preserved. Viewed as history, a landscape becomes a record of man's interaction with nature, a setting for chronological action and adaptation. As ideology, it can be thought of as a manifestation of freedom, utility, or progress.²⁹ For a sample of the community descended from the Métis settlement, it appears to be all of these and more.³⁰ A broader approach to its preservation might be to conceptualize the South Fork Settlement as a cohesive landscape that has shaped and been shaped by its history of occupation.

An agency, such as the BLM, whose role is to ensure balanced resource protection across extensive domains, might visualize the area of the South Fork Settlement in terms of a cultural landscape. The NPS defines a cultural landscape as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources...associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”³¹ Cultural resources *within* a cultural landscape, like TCPs, reflect the beliefs, values, ideologies, and meanings that a contemporary cultural group shares. As a whole, the landscape is a

²⁹ D.W. Meinig, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: University of Oxford Press, 1979), 40-43.

³⁰ The survey of Métis descendant community members with familial ties to the South Fork area was distributed by Métis elder Al Wiseman. Responses were sent to the author anonymously. Individuals' response sheets are labeled “A” through “H” for the sake of reference.

³¹ Charles A. Birnbaum, *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1990), 1.

construct of the group's distinctive responses to the surrounding environment as well as social, economic, or political circumstances.

Most historic properties, like the South Fork Settlement, retain some landscape component important to conveying significance.³² The narrow mouth of the South Fork Canyon, for example, historically provided the Métis families much-needed refuge and protection from the U.S. and Canadian governments. The South Fork's bottleneck is a popular backdrop in family photographs taken in the canyon throughout the 1920s and 1930s, indicating its continued significance in the refinement of their traditional cultural values (Figs 25 and 26). Determining a set of ascribed values for the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon is necessary in developing a holistic view of the site in its landscape.³³

³² Richard W. Stoffle, David B. Halmo, and Diane E. Austin, "Cultural Landscapes and Traditional Cultural Properties: A Southern Paiute View of the Grand Canyon and Colorado River," *American Indian Quarterly* 21 (1997): 231.

³³ Donald Hardesty, "Ethnographic Landscapes: Transforming Nature into Culture," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, ed. Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 171.

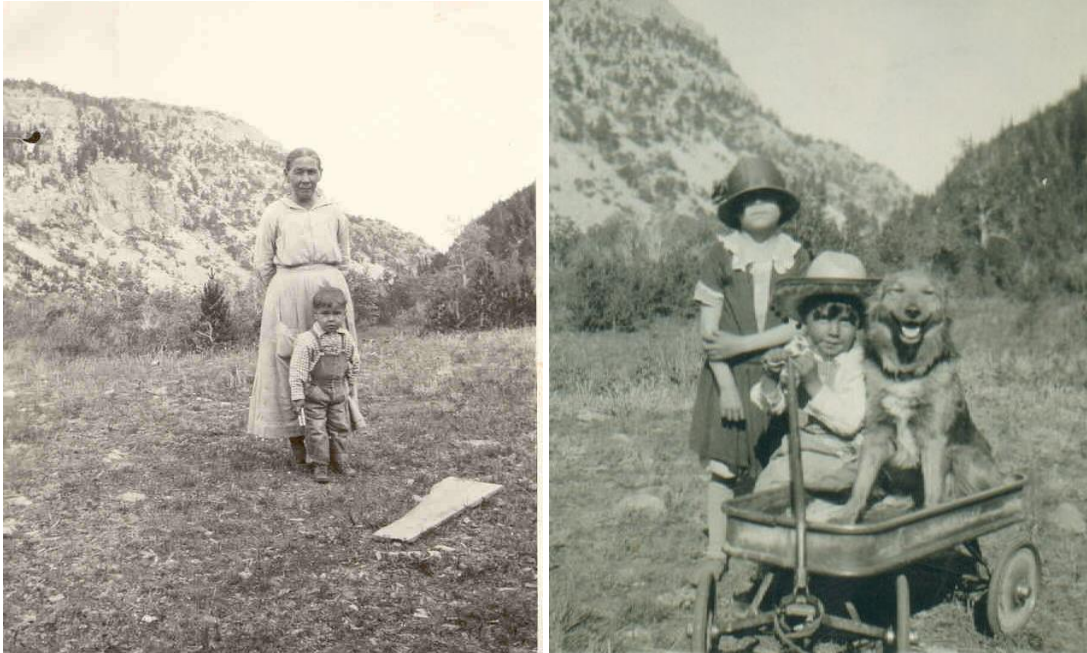


Figure 25. (left) Frezine and Howard Ameline, (date unknown). Figure 26 (right) Children in the South Fork Canyon, (c. 1925). Courtesy of Chuck and Linda Watson, Private collection.

Landscapes have value when “associated peoples perceive them as traditionally meaningful to their identity as a group and the survival of their life ways.”³⁴ A number of individuals descended from the South Fork Métis show willingness, even eagerness, to share their people’s history with outsiders. For some, the act of telling stories of this place is an expression of cultural identity. Certain landscapes with this type of ascribed value qualify as *ethnographic* cultural landscapes under NPS guidelines.³⁵ Ethnographic landscapes may overlap with or contain other historic cultural landscapes and values. They may also contain TCPs, as if they are landmarks within a broader resource system.

³⁴ Robert K. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1998), 15-28.

³⁵ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *Presence of the Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 5-6.

The South Fork of the Teton River Canyon could be seen as such a landmark, belonging to the broader cultural landscape of the Métis narrative. To borrow Vrooman's expression, which embodies the very meaning of the South Fork within the broader cultural and historical context, this place belongs to the "traditional tribal archipelago of communities" across the Plains—a discontinuous landscape shaped by the subsistence needs and a will to survive.³⁶ Each community, or *island*, in Vrooman's "archipelago" represents a distinct response to historical, sociopolitical, and economic pressures.

This unconventional scene, from which descendants claim sense of place, has confused many cultural outsiders, historically perpetuating discrimination and marginalization of the Métis, the Little Shell, and other associated groups throughout the twentieth century. Despite this reality, the Métis of Montana are seen today as, in Vrooman's words, a "most remarkable people yet living within a traditional Aboriginal American tribal society."³⁷ Preservation of this shared heritage has occurred in various ways at sites such as the Gingras State Historic Site in North Dakota and the Batoche National Historic Site of Canada. Local efforts to create a culture center have kept alive the memory, use, and significance of Hill 57, on the fringe of Great Falls.

Some might argue that these places do not comprise an ethnographic cultural landscape because they lack continuity of occupation by the descendant community. A common criticism of ethnographic landscapes is that the designation places emphasis on the landscape's value to ethnographic research instead of on its value to the perpetuation

³⁶ Vrooman, *The Whole Country...*, 393.

³⁷ Vrooman, *The Whole Country...*, 396.

of the cultural expressions of the group.³⁸ This might be appropriate for certain landscapes but each of these particular places associated with the Métis identity has a set of cultural meanings that warrant attention as individual TCPs. Though the South Fork Settlement fits into the broader landscape, alone, it is not a strong candidate as a cultural or ethnographic landscape. Alone, it symbolizes something sacred defined by those directly descended from the families that settled there. In this respect, the South Fork Settlement would be better classified as a TCP.

Places with specific ascriptions of sacred value have emerged in distinct settlements and have retained a direct relevance to existing communities.³⁹ Preservationists might be troubled, as has been the case in the past, with defining the Métis identity as it varies among these communities. The community descended from the families who settled the South Fork Canyon has demonstrated, through its cultural revitalization in the 1990s, its qualifications as a traditional cultural “community,” and the community members’ willingness to share traditional information assists the process of defining the significance of this place. *Bulletin 38* has success stories that set precedent for the evaluation of these places. It is a viable preservation tool, and, when tailored carefully to an eligible resource and the people to whom it matters, the TCP designation can be meaningful in acknowledging the identity of a traditional cultural group such as the Métis.

³⁸ http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/guidance/TCP_comments.htm

³⁹ Vrooman, *The Whole Country Was...*, 395.

Place and Cultural Identity

A sample survey of Métis men and women who are descended from the families that settled the South Fork Canyon shared ways in which they perceive the settlement site as meaningful to their cultural identity. Responses varied, but certain patterns reveal traditional ways of engaging with the past. Most of the traditional activities described by the descendant community members are perpetuated on a family scale, and only certain activities are directly associated with place-making along the South Fork of the Teton River. Others are expressed through interaction with history-related resources such as the Old Trail Museum exhibits. One elder described her experiences with the South Fork exhibit as having “reinforced that the way I was raised was according to the way all of my family was raised. It gives me a sense of home and family.”⁴⁰ More traditional experiences named by the surveyed community members include preparing certain foods, sharing certain stories, hunting deer or elk in particular places, and attending increasingly rare Métis fiddle dances across the state. Meals such as “bannock and bullets” (a fried bread served with boiled meatballs) are typically served on special occasions such as family reunions or New Year’s Day—historically a favorite holiday among the Métis.

Certain stories pertain to the South Fork Settlement, stories about family history that play into the larger narrative of the Métis. From these stories of “living, learning, loving, playing on the South Fork of the Teton River,” descendants of the original settlement families form mental perceptions of place.⁴¹ The stories inform how they identify with the footprint of a former cabin or a logging trail left behind. The exhibit at

⁴⁰ Métis descendant community member G, surveyed by author March, 2014.

⁴¹ Métis descendant community member D, surveyed by author March, 2014.

the Old Trail Museum is just such a place. According to one elder, the exhibits reassure her cultural sense of home and family. Others among the descendant community derive these very senses directly from the South Fork Canyon.

Arguably as significant as sense of home and family are religious perceptions of this place. Historically, the Métis who inhabit this area belong to the Roman Catholic faith. Persistence of this faith is a likely source of pride. Despite the distance to St. Peter's Mission, where Louis Riel taught school prior to the Northwest Rebellion, the families that historically settled the South Fork Canyon continued to observe their Roman Catholic traditions. Priests from the Mission visited the canyon community when possible for baptisms and burials. In the face of persecution, the religious dedication of this community did not wane. Today, that traditional spirituality is evident in personal associations with the canyon itself. According to Wiseman, what kept the Métis people together was their faith: "when they lived up here in the mountains that was their church."⁴²

Several members of the descendant community own lands in proximity to the canyon mouth. One Métis man considers his family "blessed" to have a small cabin along the South Fork of the Teton River, not far from where his ancestors dwelled. "It feels like a part of me," he says, a sentiment common among those prompted to describe its significance.⁴³ Another community member claims the canyon area is most memorable because of its beauty "so close to God's church."⁴⁴ The canyon has been acknowledged

⁴² Al Wiseman, interviewed by Philip Aaberg, *Of the West*, Montana Public Radio, July 26, 2011, <http://ofthewest.net/al-wiseman-program-29/>

⁴³ Métis descendant community member A, surveyed by author March, 2014.

⁴⁴ Métis descendant community member C, surveyed by author March, 2014.

by multiple individuals as holding personal or spiritual significance in addition to its historical values. There is sacredness to this place. The religious ideology blends into family history and remembered stories. The combination defines this community's origins and this space.

These perceptions, communicated through the sharing of traditional knowledge are not unfamiliar to a Western mindset. Shared traditional and cultural values come to light in this setting perhaps because, in the South Fork, among the scattered remnants of the once pejorative "Breed Town," a bridge between past and present is palpable. The cemetery where Marguerite LaRance was buried is now shaded by quaking aspen, but plots are well-kept (Fig. 27). The descendants of the South Fork Settlement continue to visit it, to pay respects and leave tokens of their remembrance. Though the Nature Conservancy now owns and manages that land, it remains the most recognizable traditional use of the canyon; the path to its gate is well-worn.⁴⁵ A reproduction ox cart and interpretive sign draw curious hikers, guests at the Pine Butte Guest Ranch, and other members of the public to the cemetery's edge. This spot is the most tangible testament to local recognition of the Métis community's traditional rites and values.

⁴⁵Matthew Hansen, "The South Fork of the Teton River: A History of its People," (Unpublished document: Mike and Maureen Mansfield Library, University of Montana, June 1980), 16.



Figure 27. Teton Canyon Cemetery (2013). Photographed by author.

The tie between past and present is key to envisioning the TCP strategy applied to the South Fork Settlement. *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* describes ways in which certain traditional cultural values contribute to a property’s significance. Those places associated with oral historical accounts of the founding of a tribe or society are considered eligible.⁴⁶ Circumstance forced the Métis to adapt to the subsistence lifestyle afforded them in the secluded canyon. The way of life the descendant community in and around Choteau knows today is a result of that major shift. What happened in this distinct community might even be considered a *refounding* of their traditional cultural identity and it defines their traditional cultural values. The Métis Cultural Recovery Trust was an attempt to keep the Métis

⁴⁶ “How to Identify the Type of Significance of a Property,” Website of the NPS, www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_6.htm#crita

story alive in Montana. It was a learning experience for those involved.⁴⁷ Designation under *Bulletin 38* has the potential to revive that effort and preserve not only their stories, but the very place that holds their collective traditional cultural values. Without place, how are they to teach?

The South Fork of the Teton River flows through a nexus of land-use, land-ownership, land-management, and land-values. The USFS, the BLM, the Nature Conservancy, the wildlife enthusiast, and the Métis descendant come together in this picturesque setting to appreciate what it has to offer. These groups display mutual respect for one another's presence. Al Wiseman lectures about the Métis and the Blackfeet to guests of the Pine Butte Guest Ranch. Gene Sentz, co-founder of Friends of the Rocky Mountain Front organization, stops along a hike to snap a photo of the fallen-in log cabin that belonged to Albert Parenteau, known in the canyon settlement as "Big Bear".⁴⁸ The BLM hosts a small gathering to debut a cultural interpretive sign at the base of Ear Mountain, where musicians play a traditional Métis fiddle tune.⁴⁹

Respect for place-attachment is threaded throughout the discussion of TCPs. What occurs in the South Fork of the Teton River and surrounding area at present is idealized in the cultural resource laws and regulations meant to facilitate this precise behavior. The purpose of the NHPA that King and Parker hoped to remind practitioners of with *Bulletin 38* is alive and well here.⁵⁰ The best model for the preservation of the

⁴⁷ Nicholas Vrooman, e-mail to author, April 3, 2014.

⁴⁸ Gene Sentz, e-mail to the author, January 10, 2013.

⁴⁹ Ann Bouchers and Rod Sanders, "New Interpretive Panel Highlights Métis," website of the Bureau of Land Management, last modified June 28, 2012, <http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/info/newsroom/steward/09fall/metis.html>.

⁵⁰ King, *Places That Count*, 31.

South Fork Settlement is to embrace the significance of this cultural landscape in a holistic manner, celebrate its significance in the broader patterns of the nation's history, recognize its potential to yield information, and to refer to it as a Traditional Cultural Property so that people of all backgrounds may appreciate that something here is sacred.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the 1940s, Joseph Kinsey Howard had intended to write a novel based on the Métis individuals he met in Montana. As his relationship with this community evolved, he realized they had an important history not yet told. Howard redirected his efforts to record this encompassing narrative in the definitive Métis history, *Strange Empire*.¹ In 1896, when little Jesse Gleason witnessed Lieutenant John J. Pershing and his Buffalo Soldiers march a group of “Cree” men, women, and children through the center of Choteau, it was but a momentary glimpse of the Métis story.² Other moments in this story are imprinted on particular places across the Great Plains. The impulse to retain these storied places can inform different strategies for their preservation. The South Fork of the Teton River Canyon west of Choteau, the Gingras Trading Post State Historic Site in North Dakota, the Batoche National Historic Site in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the neighborhood called “Hill 57” in Great Falls, Montana, are among those considered, to varying degrees, historically and culturally significant.³

But the subtlety with which the significance of certain places can be expressed often challenges the preservationist searching for the most appropriate approach to preservation. Today, the National Register program provides strategies for identifying a wide variety of significant historic and cultural resources, including the properties

¹Nicholas Vrooman, introduction to *Strange Empire*, by Joseph Kinsey Howard, xv.

²Melinda Livezey, Interview with Robert Zion, Choteau, MT, June 27, 1994.

³Walter L. Bailey, “Gingras Trading Post/Gingras State Historic Site,” National Register of Historic Places form, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1975, 1-5; Jeff Welsch, “Waiting for the Day,” *Montana Quarterly* 9 (2013): 33

Thomas King and Patricia Parker defined in 1990 through the publication of *Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*.⁴ *Bulletin 38* may have its detractors and could be improved from the ongoing discussion over its revision. The bulletin might benefit from the inclusion of a strong working definition of “community.” Its directive for continued use could be refined and better guidelines for boundary determination could be incorporated. Still, the TCP concept and its original intent are sound. It is an inclusive strategy that recognizes a broader perspective and serves a greater good. It remains a viable preservation tool, one with demonstrated success stories. The bulletin upholds the mission of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act—to preserve the foundations of the nation’s collective history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and *culture* as “living parts of our community life.”⁵

The bulletin defines the significance that TCPs exhibit as “derived from the role the property plays in a community’s historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.”⁶ Medicine Mountain/Medicine Wheel NHL in Wyoming is a TCP because it is a place to which Native American religious practitioners have historically gone—and still go—to perform ceremonial activities according to the traditional rules of their culture.⁷ Changing perspectives of the Medicine Wheel’s significance gave rise to a momentous boundary

⁴ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 1.

⁵“The National Register of Historic Places Overview”, Website of the NPS, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/brochure/#natrec>

⁶ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 1.

⁷ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 1.

expansion in 2010. The decision added 4,000 acres to the existing district, acknowledging the role landscape can play in the continuity of activities and beliefs important to traditional cultural communities.⁸

Mount Taylor in New Mexico is a TCP because it is a property associated with the traditional beliefs certain Native American groups hold about their origins and the nature of the universe.⁹ It is an empowering case study for the application of this preservation strategy because of the multiple communities that attribute this associative, traditional cultural significance to the same landform. For the pueblos of Acoma, Zuni, Laguna, and Hopi, and the Navajo Nation, obtaining the degree of protection deemed necessary for the continuation of their traditional cultural practices, beliefs, and values required setting aside historical antipathies to achieve a common goal. Despite their reliance on the efforts of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in reaching that goal, together *they* determined the cultural traditions and associations and asserted that *they* are therefore the “definers” of Mount Taylor’s significance.¹⁰

The Green River Drift Trail in Wyoming is a TCP because it involves a rural community whose pattern of land use reflects the cultural traditions valued by the long-term community members.¹¹ The traditions of the cattle ranching community on the Drift

⁸ Gib Mathers, “Medicine Wheel Expansion Celebrated,” *The Powell Tribune*, September 1, 2011. <http://www.powelltribune.com/news/item/8699-medicine-wheel-expansion-celebrated>; Brian Beadles, Historic Preservation Specialist with the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, e-mail to author, March 13, 2014.

⁹ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 1.

¹⁰ Charles W. Smythe, “The National Register Framework for Protecting Cultural Heritage Places,” 20-22.

¹¹ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 1.

Trail have persisted for over a century.¹² Though the community is not an indigenous cultural group, nor tied spiritually or religiously to the Drift Trail, the ranchers do constitute a “community” in terms of *Bulletin 38*. The Green River Drift Trail received National Register status in February 2014 and has already become a leading model for the application of the TCP strategy to non-Native American resources, broadening the possibilities for preservation.¹³

These possibilities extend to the South Fork Settlement as well. In terms of *Bulletin 38*, the South Fork Settlement could be argued eligible for listing on the NRHP for its association “with the cultural practices and beliefs of a living community.”¹⁴ That living community consists of the Métis individuals descended from the South Fork settlers. They form a cohesive group, retain special knowledge, and express special interests in the South Fork of the Teton River Canyon, which qualifies as a property according to the TCP guidelines. The practices and beliefs of this community are “rooted in that community’s history” and are “important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity.”¹⁵ But ultimately the South Fork Settlement’s eligibility as a TCP is defined by the integrity of the relationship between the “property and the beliefs or practices that may give it significance.”¹⁶ This integrity could be illustrated in the descendant

¹² Laura Nowlin and Jonita Sommers, “Green River Drift Trail Traditional Cultural Property,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 3.

¹³ Amy Bleier, discussion with author, March 14, 2014; Dave Vlcek, discussion with author, March 14, 2014.

¹⁴ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, 10-11.

¹⁵ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker, 1.

¹⁶ Tom King and Patricia L. Parker,.

community's preservation impulse. The community regards the South Fork Settlement as a sacred place, important in the retention of its traditional cultural identity.

The broader Métis cultural identity is one shaped, in large part, by a history of displacement. The incursion of Anglo settlement in both the U.S. and Canada brought an end to their role in economic trade in the Red River Valley. As the buffalo disappeared across the Great Plains, their seasonal migrations pushed farther and farther west. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, the Métis formed agricultural settlements, but rebellion against the Dominion failed to secure the provincial status they desired. Some families in the U.S. received allotments of reservation land in North Dakota, and still others became the "landless Indians" subject to deportation or discrimination in Montana.

The South Fork Settlement symbolizes the transition many Métis people faced in the United States. Though it was initially thought of as a place of refuge, a sedentary way of life developed there, a community grew, and it became a home. While several important preservation strategies could recognize the historical significance of the South Fork Settlement to the Métis, only the application of the TCP concept captures the link between past and present as held sacred by the members of the immediate descendant community—the significance *they* alone define.

CHAPTER VIII

EPILOGUE

On April 2, 2014, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs approved the Little Shell Tribe of Indians Restoration Act, a bill pushed by Senators Jon Tester and John Walsh. Tester first introduced legislation to achieve federal recognition for the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana in 2007, but it is a status the tribe, consisting of roughly four thousand members, has sought for over thirty-five years. The Little Shell's efforts to assert and preserve their cultural identity resulted in state recognition in 2000, and, with the support of Montanans, they will continue to fight for this long-overdue acknowledgement.¹ To a similar end, this thesis has demonstrated how traditional cultural groups can implement the Traditional Cultural Property designation to declare and preserve the places which embody and contribute to their cultural values, traditions, and identities.

The TCP, as a preservation strategy, is accessible for unrecognized traditional communities such as the Métis descendants of the South Fork Settlement living in and around Choteau, Montana. Given the demonstrated strength of their preservation impulse, it is not unlikely a representative among them would someday seek a National Register nomination for the property. To move such a project forward would first require consultation with property owners and managers, in this case, the Nature Conservancy as well as the BLM and the USFS. Next, one would establish communication with knowledgeable parties and those with vested interest not only in the property itself, but in its use and the continuation of associated traditional beliefs and practices. This

¹ "Senate Indian Affairs Committee Approves Tester and Walsh's Little Shell Recognition Bill," press release April 2, 2014, http://www.testersenate.gov/?p=press_release&id=3327 (Accessed 6/4/14).

community might include descendants of the South Fork settlers, area ranchers, and recreationists.

While this thesis has presented select responses from members of these groups, a much more intensive ethnographic study and historic context would be needed to complete a nomination or determination that the property is eligible as a TCP. Such an effort might benefit from a collaborative research design incorporating the expertise of preservation professionals or consultants. This would be particularly useful in determining the boundaries of the nominated property, and documenting and recording extant features (i.e. cabins, roads, paths, depressions, irrigation ditches, and graves). This is a formidable task, but not an insurmountable one. For this very reason, the National Register issues guidelines such as *Bulletin 38*. After all, the preservation of place depends on those who comprise the “living parts of our community life,” and to the descendant community of the South Fork Settlement, this place matters.²

² The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Pub. L. No. 89-665; 16 U.S.C. 470.

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