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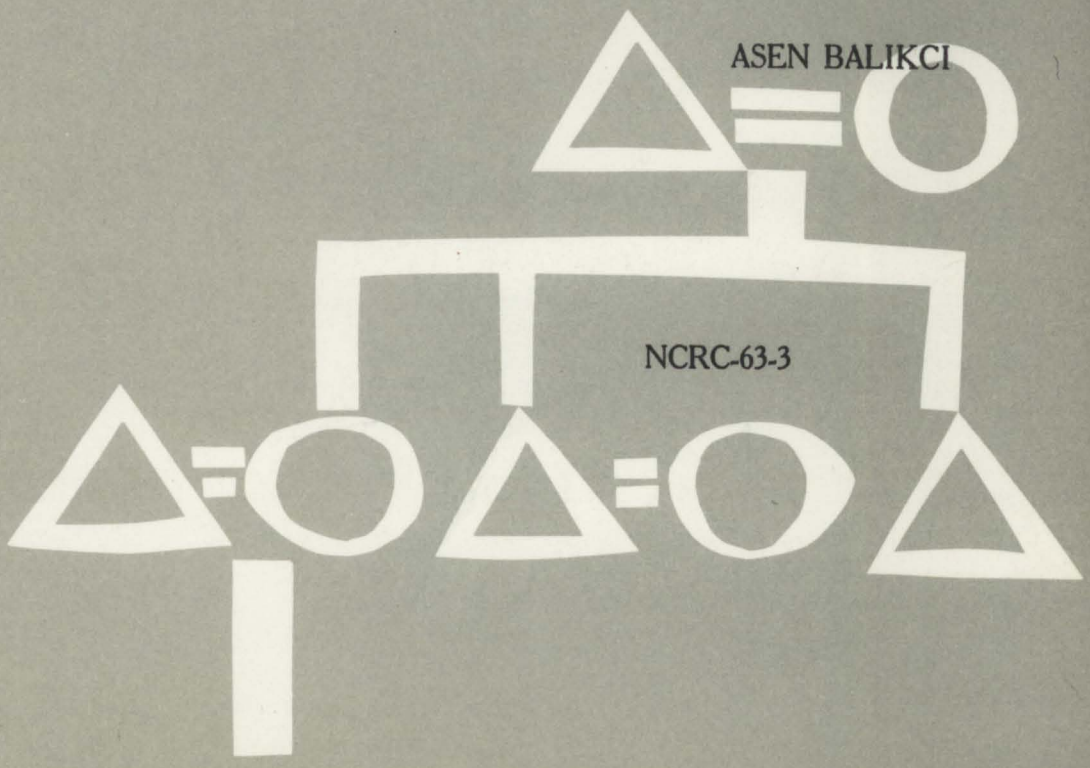
VUNTA KUTCHIN SOCIAL CHANGE

ASEN BALIKCI



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VUNTA KUTCHIN SOCIAL CHANGE

A Study of the People of Old Crow, Yukon Territory

by

Asen Balikci

This report is based on research carried out while the author was employed by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre during the summer of 1961. It is reproduced here as a contribution to our knowledge of the north. The opinions expressed however are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Department.

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Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre,
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Ottawa, Ontario.

February, 1963.

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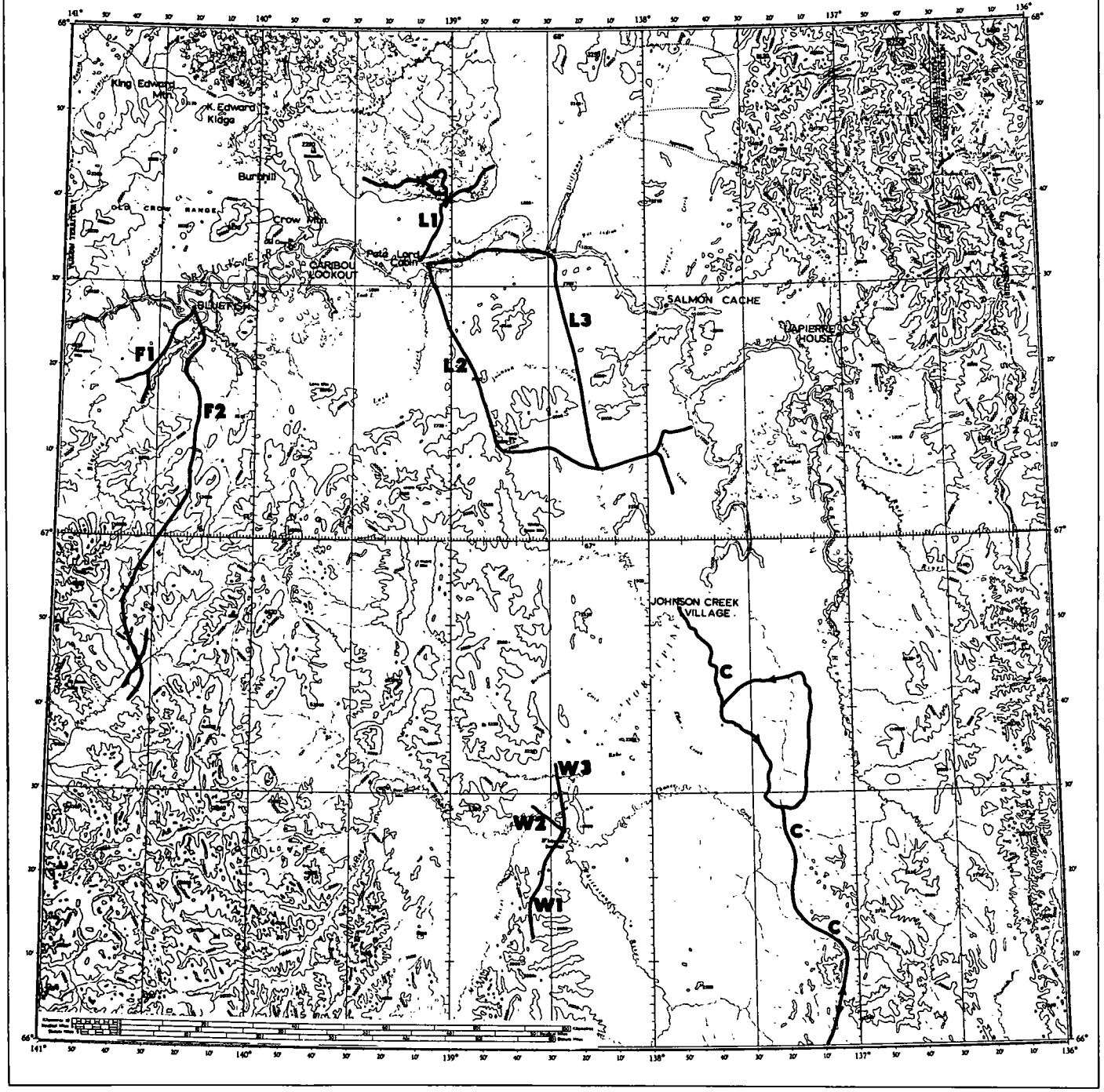
PREFACE

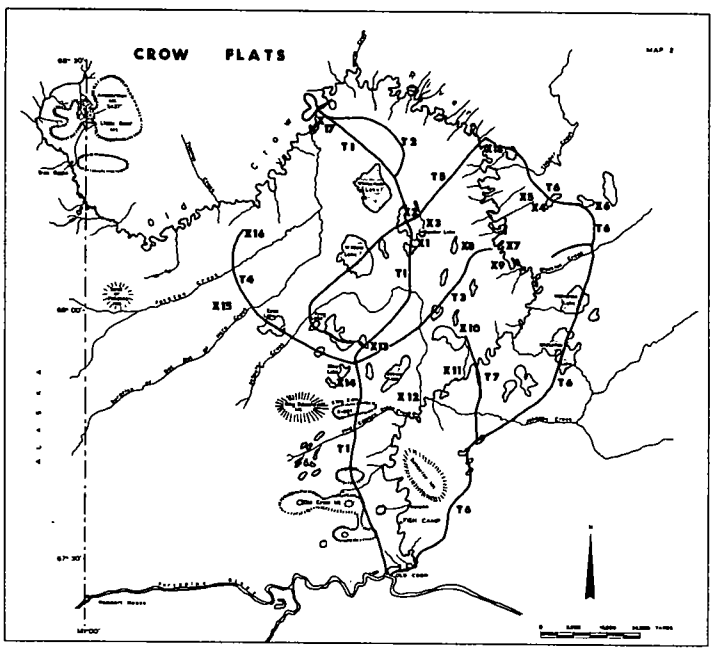
The ethnographic material contained in this report was collected during a nine weeks field trip among the people of Old Crow, Yukon Territory, during the summer of 1961. The Rev. Fathers Bulliard, O.M.I. and Mouchet, O.M.I. should be particularly thanked for helping me understand the "Indian way". I am particularly grateful to Philippe Dicquemart, Moses Tizya, Andrew Tizya, Charlie Peter Charlie, Charlie Thomas and Robert Linklater for their collaboration in securing ethnographic data. The intellectual stimulation received from Mr. Victor Valentine, Chief, Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, should be particularly mentioned. Acknowledgment is made to the Département d'Anthropologie, Université de Montréal for enabling me to complete the writing of this report. Substantial data on the now vanished shamanistic art of the Vunta Kutchin, together with some traditional texts will be published elsewhere.

ERRATA

On pages 130 to 133 for "matrilocal" read "matrifocal"

THE COUNTRY OF THE VUNTA KUTCHIN




CROW FLATS

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The traditional habitat of the Vunta Kutchin Indians extends over a vast territory in the northern part of Yukon Territory, Canada. Hunters and trappers from this group may travel westwards to the middle course of Bell and Eagle Rivers (137°W) near the foothills of the Richardson Mountains, south to the headwaters of Eagle and Porcupine Rivers (66°N), north to the end of the marshy Crow Flats (68°N) and west to the Alaskan border (141°W), this western limit has only been respected in recent times. This large area of over 10,000 square miles lies at the northern end of the Cordilleran region's interior system (Kimble and Good, 1955: 318). It is a hilly country, separated from the Arctic Ocean to the north by a chain of coastal mountains (British and Barn Mountains). Access to the Mackenzie Delta is rendered difficult by the Richardson mountains, (an important obstacle to the toboggan driver). North-west of the settlement of Old Crow on the Porcupine River extend the rounded hills of Old Crow Range, while the southern part of the country is occupied by the Keele Range. Lone Mountain (64°23'N 139° 00'W), standing isolated in a flat country, is an important land mark, especially for the winter traveller.

Flat and marshy areas covered with lakes and swamps are numerous in the region. The most important of these, Crow Flats, lies north of Old Crow Range and the middle course of Porcupine River. It extends from approximately 138° 45'W to 141°W and from 67° 45'N to 68° 20'N, and constitutes a very important trapping, hunting and fishing area, occupying as it does a central position in the different Vunta Kutchin annual cycles. A similar, but much smaller swamp area, of secondary importance in the subsistence economy of the people, is located immediately south of Old Crow settlement. Between the lower course of Eagle River and the Porcupine is a third major flat with marshes and innumerable lakes, the most important of which is the large Whitefish Lake. Here were the preferred hunting sites of a distinct Kutchin tribe, the Taku Indians.

In this land, large rivers, and streams of lesser importance, are numerous. The Porcupine River crosses the area in a westwardly direction, collecting the waters of the lesser streams before flowing into the Yukon River in Alaska. This orients the country towards the Pacific drainage system. Bell River is an important tributary of the upper Porcupine, while Old Crow River connects the Porcupine with Crow Flats.

The climate of Northern Yukon may be described as extremely cold and rigorous. Old Crow at latitude 67°35'N is north of the Arctic Circle; permafrost is found two feet below the surface. At Old Crow the sun is below the horizon from December 9 until January 3; in summer, days are long, and in June, the sun never sets in. This is one of the coldest inhabited regions of the New World. At Snag, in Central Yukon, the lowest surface temperature in North America, -81°, was recorded on February 3, 1947. Meteorological records are lacking for Old Crow, but Dawson City, the nearest station, has a January mean temperature of -19°, and a July mean of 60°F, (Kendrew and Kerr, 1955: 168). Freeze-up at Old Crow occurs during the first week of October, or soon after, on the larger rivers, and break-up takes place around May 20th. There are no records pertaining to precipitation in Northern Yukon, the average is 11.8 inches a year for Dawson City, with an average snow depth of 14 inches in January. Vunta Kutchin informants state that heavy snowfalls occur in the western part of their country, between 138°W. and the Richardson Mountains. An increase in temperature in recent decades has been noticed in the Yukon (Kendrew and Kerr, 1955: 178).

The Vunta Kutchin country is situated on the northern limits of the subarctic taiga vegetation zone. Spruce trees are widely spaced, and trees in narrow bands follow the river beds. Caribou moss covers the hilly regions, and various high grasses render summer travel difficult in the muskeg. Older informants insist that important changes in vegetation have taken place within a century. They remember their ancestors saying that no large trees grew in ancient times, and that the vegetation consisted mainly of shrubs, grasses, lichens and very small trees.

CHAPTER II

GAME DISTRIBUTION

Various species of mammals, birds and fishes are of central importance in the hunting-trapping economy of the Vunta Kutchin.

Caribou

Caribou are still abundant in the Old Crow area. Today, as in ancient times, they constitute a substantial part of the native food supply.

The map in Murie (1935: figure 14) showing the distribution of Alaska-Yukon caribou in the 1930's indicates a considerable concentration in the mountainous area north of Crow Flats, and along the upper Porcupine and the headwaters of Peel River. This is the Stone caribou subspecies, Rangifer arcticus stonei Allen. "To the northward from Porcupine River, in Canadian territory, caribou are found in the Old Crow River region and on to Herschel Island" (Murie, 1935: 64). Concerning its winter range Murie states: "the caribou occupy the territory along the Porcupine, all the way from Rampart House, on the Alaska side, to La Pierre House in Yukon Territory, and according to some reports, all the way to the head of the Porcupine" (1935:66). Referring to the migration of the herds, Murie writes: "The distribution and migration of caribou in the Porcupine region confirms observation in other localities that although there is a migration it may be complicated by minor and counter-movements. Furthermore, when the trek is over, it is difficult to say clearly just where the herd has gone, for the reason that animals are still scattered here and there over much of the entire range. In fact, much of the territory occupied by the northern herd is so far removed from ordinary travel that it has been extremely difficult to gather sufficient information with which to work out the entire migration route, and data are available for only a rough outline" (1935:66). And further: "The route of migration of that part of the herd on the Canadian side, may be traced eastward by Rampart House, along the Old Crow Mountains, and southward by the high lands bordering the Porcupine River into the upper Peel River country and Nahanni Lakes. (...) Other reports also appear to point to a southerly migration in fall. In August 1926, caribou appeared at Old Crow Mountain (...) and apparently from the North. They probably followed the mountains surrounding Old Crow River Basin, for few had been seen in the basin itself at this time. It may be said then that there is a local migration in August, and that the main run

occurs in October along the route indicated. It is clear that there is free communication among the caribou, a connected distribution, all the way from the headwaters of the Porcupine and Peel Rivers in Yukon to the Brooks Range in Alaska." (Murie, 1935:68-69).

Information regarding caribou distribution secured at Old Crow from Indian hunters corroborates Murie's descriptions. At the turn of the century, caribou are said to have been abundant along the upper Firth River where collective drives were organized. The herds apparently moved west or south in September and October. In both traditional times and at present the largest caribou concentration along the middle Porcupine River occurs in autumn, from late August, to early October. The herds may move west along Old Crow Range and cross the Porcupine below Old Crow Village, or continue west across lower Old Crow River. Considering this latter movement, the narrows called "Canyon", southwest of Schaefer Mountain, are considered an excellent caribou hunting ground in autumn. Or the herds may move south from the Barn and Richardson Mountains, and at about the same season cross the Porcupine above Old Crow village. The best hunting places are said to be along the Porcupine between Driftwood River and Salmon Cache, at the mouth of Berry Creek. The caribou may cross the river rapidly, or move along its bed for a while; they are then easily hunted by the Indians. Informants agree that there is a northward movement of caribou in late autumn, around the end of October, the herds again crossing the Porcupine in the area of Driftwood River or below Old Crow Village. It is said that when a substantial herd is on the move, cows and calves travel in front, followed far behind by the adult bulls. Caribou Flats does not seem to lie on the path of these migratory herds, although in spring some hunters manage to kill a few caribou near the northern or western part of the Old Crow River basin. Further, despite the existence of numerous caribou trails in the bush, no regular migration routes seem to be followed by the herds. Informants affirm that the caribou may or may not pass over a given trail. It is also said that lonely bulls may spend the summer in the hilly areas, including Old Crow Range. Such animals are easily spotted and killed. In winter a caribou concentration occurs around Lone Mountain, south of Old Crow village. Hunting camps are established in this hilly region in mid-winter, and from then on the hunters roam over a vast area in search of small herds. It is further said that caribou of a larger size than the northern herds come from the south in autumn. These are referred locally as the "Dawson bunch", and may belong to the subspecie Rangifer arcticus osborni Allen. Along the upper Porcupine River, above Salmon Cache, caribou are said to be

plentiful, especially in winter. The principal caribou concentration in this vast area in the winter of 1960-61 occurred around Whitefish Lake, between Eagle, Bell and Porcupine Rivers.

The information secured regarding any possible changes in the numbers and location of caribou is conflicting. Some hunters affirm that caribou have always been, and still are, plentiful in the area. Others believe the herds have decreased during the last thirty years. Still others say that in the past there have been consecutive years when the herds failed to cross the area, giving the impression that they have simply vanished. They have always reappeared later, however. In the absence of any scientific ground or air surveys over a number of years, and since local informants fail to agree on any sharp decline of the caribou population, it is reasonable to assume that the northern Yukon is one of the few places in Arctic Canada where caribou are still abundant, and where no major quantitative changes in caribou distribution have taken place during this century. There is no doubt, however, that great changes in caribou numbers and location may occur from one year to the next. In 1944-1945, the Old Crow hunters declared 1305 caribou killed. Two years later, in 1946-47, the local RCMP game statistics indicated only 465 kills. Such a great variation over a relatively short period can be explained only on the basis of the herds' shifting migrations. In the following years the caribou returns again increased, indicating that the total availability of the caribou over the larger area has not necessarily changed.

Moose

Informants agree that the Old Crow area is not good moose country. The Porcupine may be considered as a boundary area for moose distribution in the Yukon (Rand, 1945:77). Some moose are found among the swamps and lakes immediately south of the Porcupine, below Old Crow village, east of lower Bluefish River. The northern shores of the Porcupine are hilly, and not heavily forested; this is not the ideal habitat of the moose: "The broad flats near the river with their heavy forest, broken at frequent intervals by open swamps or grass-bordered lakes, as well as the flanking ranges and detached groups of mountains, with their sheltered canyons and open, park-like glades alternating with thick chumps of trees, furnish all that moose desires", (Rand, 1945:77-78). Better conditions for moose are found in certain areas along the upper Porcupine River, particularly at its junction with Johnson Creek. There, moose are reported to be abundant.

In the spring of 1939, one woman at Johnson Creek village tanned 21 moose skins. Similar conditions appear to exist further up the Porcupine; around Whitestone village a good hunter was reported to make an average kill of 40 to 50 moose yearly. These substantial returns may be contrasted to the 7 moose killed in the summer of 1961 in the Old Crow area. Very few moose are found in Crow Flats.

Northern Mountain Sheep

Mountain sheep are found in small numbers on the rock hills and alpine pastures in the mountain areas near the headwaters of Porcupine and Miner Rivers. They are white or lightly brown in colour, and are probably the Ovis dalli dalli Nelson subspecie. Informants agree that they spend the summer high in the mountains. In winter, they descend near the valleys where they can be hunted. One hunter reported once having killed 10 in a single locale. Considering their limited distribution, they do not seem to have played an important part in the native diet. There are numerous hunters whose traditional hunting grounds lie in the western part of the Venta Kutchin country, and who have never seen a mountain sheep.

Bears

Black bears Ursus americanus Pallas and grizzly bears Ursus horribilis Ord are found in many parts of the Vunta Kutchin country. The first inhabit the forests and bush-covered areas, the second stay near the edge of timber and on the mountains. It is said that some follow the caribou herds. The Indians complain repeatedly about bears destroying caches. They are killed whenever encountered, which is usually along the large rivers.

Wolves

Timber wolf, Canis lupus Linnaeus is common throughout the area. Wolves may be seen alone or in packs following the caribou herds. The wolf is considered the most powerful and aggressive predator in the bush, and will attack any animal in sight, including even bears and men, when hungry. Single wolves may be frequently heard howling at night near Old Crow village.

Wolverine

Wolverine are reported from many timber areas, but are considered to be more abundant in the more densely wooded parts of upper Porcupine River. They are unrivaled as destroyers of caches, both permanent and temporary, and traps, and are trapped and killed whenever possible, although trapping wolverine is considered to be a difficult matter. It is

said that wolverine are less numerous today along the bed of the middle Porcupine River, than in former times.

Porcupine

Alaska porcupine are common in the more densely wooded areas of the Vunta Kutchin country, particularly along the upper Porcupine River. In the Old Crow area they have been intensively hunted for their tasty flesh, and have become very rare.

Hare

Snowshoe rabbits are found in large numbers in the area, usually in the lowlands, in the bush along streams. Their numbers seem to follow a more or less regular cycle over a number of years. Informants assert that rabbits are plentiful at certain seasons, and almost absent at others. Rabbits occupy an important place in the native cuisine, and are intensively snared by both women and young boys.

Muskrat

Northwest muskrat is a very important fur bearer in the local economy. It is found in numbers in many lakes all over the Vunta Kutchin country. By far the greatest concentration of muskrat, comparable to that in the Mackenzie delta, the richest muskrat trapping area in Canada, occurs on Crow Flats. Of the life habits of the Mackenzie muskrats, Porsild writes: "In such lakes, rats do not depend on burrows in the lake banks, but make houses on floating "rafts", or on the ice itself. Large numbers of "push-ups" are seen on all lakes frequented by rats. Often the "push-ups" are very large and undoubtedly sometimes take the place of regular muskrat "house" or "lodge", and are kept open throughout the winter. For this reason it is important for the rat that an abundant snowfall covers the lake and the push-ups." (Porsild, 1945: 17).

The information collected regarding possible annual variations in the availability of the muskrat is ambiguous. Porsild mentions a mysterious disease that killed many rats in the winter of 1933-34. Local Indian informants asserted that prior to the last decade trappers did not practice any conservation measures, and made an effort to "clean-up" their "ratting lakes". This intensive trapping apparently drastically diminished the numbers of muskrat in the devastated areas, and usually several years were needed for the species to multiply. There was thus

a seven-year muskrat cycle, marked by peak returns every seventh or eighth year. Curiously enough, game statistics tend to confirm this theory. During the trapping year of 1938-39, 30,084 muskrat pelts were collected at Old Crow. In 1942-43 a low 10,965 was recorded, and in 1945-46 again a high of 22,405 was noted.

Field investigations conducted in 1957 at Crow Flats by J.E. Bryant indicate no clear connection between intensive trapping of muskrat and prolonged decrease in numbers. Bryant writes: "It was also noted that on lakes which were normally trapped fairly intensively every year, but which last year (1956) were not trapped because they harbored too small a population to make trap-setting worth-while, the age structure compared favorably to that on lakes which had been heavily trapped last year. In such cases, it appeared that natural mortality (from unknown causes) acted in the same (or similar) manner as intensive trapping to stimulate reproduction success." (1957:13-14)

Marten

Marten trapping is an important activity in the Old Crow area. Within this general area, certain particular regions are specially suitable to the Alaska pine marten Martes americana actuosa Osgood. The majority of marten traplines are situated in the southwestern portion of the country, among the hills immediately south of the middle course of Johnson Creek with Sharp mountain in the middle, west of Whitestone Village, and in the mountainous region between Eagle and Porcupine rivers. These areas are locally referred to as "great marten country". Some trappers run marten traplines east of Bluefish River down to Salmon Fork River near the Alaskan border, while others travel among the hills east of Driftwood River. In general the hills around the heads of Porcupine, Eagle, Canoe, Miner Rivers and Cody Creek are the best marten trapping districts, and all are situated in the southeastern portion of the Vunta Kutchin country.

In many parts of Canada, the marten has been greatly reduced in number. Old Crow informants assert that after intensive marten trapping certain areas become "cleaned-up". It is necessary then for the trapper to cut a new trail, and let the marten reproduce in the old trapline area. For a number of years prior to 1961, the country around the upper Porcupine river had not been intensively trapped, and the Indians held the opinion that marten should be particularly abundant there. Rand indicates that at the beginning of this century individual trappers in the

Whitehorse area might take up to 250 marten in a season (Rand, 1945:23). Marten are not so abundant in the Old Crow area where, during the period 1938-48 the highest catch was 272 marten (1941-42) by 38 trappers.

Mink

Alaska mink, Mustela vison ingens Osgood, is another fur bearer commonly trapped by most Old Crow Indians. Following certain changes in settlement patterns to be described below, the economic importance of the mink has increased in recent years. Rand writes: "The mink lives where land and water meet; as active on land as a weasel; as much at home in the water as an otter. In winter the mink spends much time under the ice, hunting in the air space that usually forms when the water sinks from the early winter level where ice formed. Sometimes mink prey extensively on muskrats, but the extra value of their fur in general compensates for this" (1945: 28). The greatest concentration of mink occurs at Crow Flats, especially along its northern and western limits. The availability of both muskrat and mink at Crow Flats make of that area the best trapping grounds of the Vunta Kutchin today.

No information has been collected on any important decrease of the mink population at Crow Flats. Important fluctuations in the annual catch do exist however. In 1938-39, only 20 mink pelts were exported from the area, while in 1945-46 the annual catch amounted to 176 minks.

Beaver

Traditionally, beaver were an important source of food for the Vunta Kutchin Indians. With the introduction of the fur trade in northern Canada, this highly valued fur bearer was subjected to intensive trapping and hunting. Because of its sedentary habits, the beaver were easily caught with steel traps, or killed with a gun. As in many other areas, the beaver in the Vunta Kutchin country drastically decreased in numbers. Elderly informants asserted that in traditional times beaver were numerous at Crow Flats, the marshy area south of Old Crow, and all around the middle and lower course of Porcupine River. At present no beaver is to be found in these regions, and its habitat seems restricted to the lakes and lesser streams near the head of the Porcupine. Even in these remote lands they are not abundant. While in 1941-42, 146 beaver pelts were exported, none were registered at Old Crow in 1945-46. Recently, following a number of years of sporadic, less systematic hunting and trapping, 46 beaver pelts were sold at Old Crow in 1960-61. All of these

came from the upper Porcupine. The hunters were unanimous in saying that beaver are scarce, and slow to reproduce.

Lynx

A few decades back the Canada lynx played an important part in the native economy. Trappers affirm that at certain times lynx, feeding on rabbits, were exceedingly numerous, particularly in the more densely wooded areas along the upper Porcupine. One winter, it is said, a white trapper caught over 100 lynx. Game statistics for the Old Crow area years 1938-48 indicate a maximum catch of 108 lynx in 1941. Trappers unanimously assert that lynx are very scarce now. No lynx pelts were sold in 1960-61 at Old Crow.

Otter, Fox, Weasel, Squirrel

These fur bearers are of lesser economic importance. Although weasels may be caught in numbers in some years, the low price of the pelt makes weasel trapping unrewarding. Similarly, a few colored foxes are taken yearly (1 only in 1960-61), together with a few otters and squirrels (respectively 2 and 22 in 1960-61).

Fish

To a considerable degree man and dog rely on fish for their subsistence. Numerous species are caught in the area, some seasonally, others throughout the year.

King salmon are highly prized for their large size and tasty flesh. They are caught in small numbers (in a season a family will rarely get more than a dozen) along the Porcupine, usually in deep water with strong currents. New Rampart on the Alaska border and a location 40 miles upstream from Old Crow on the Porcupine, are considered very good king salmon fishing locales. The first king salmon reach Old Crow during the second week of July, and the run continues for a few weeks.

Dog salmon is much more important economically, the very name indicates its importance as dog food. They are caught in large numbers, and a good fisherman can easily gather several hundred during a season. It is not uncommon for a single net to yield 20 to 30 large dog salmon a day during the peak period of the run upstream. In 1960 one man, using a number of nets, caught over 1000 dog salmon. Dog salmon can be caught all along Porcupine River; apparently they avoid the lesser

streams. The dog salmon in its run upstream reaches the Old Crow area around the middle of August, although intensive fishing starts with the beginning of September. It continues until early winter, when fishing is conducted with nets placed under the river ice. Two other salmon species are known in the area. They occur infrequently, and seem of lesser importance.

Arctic char is caught in early winter at a certain place called Fish Hole along firth River (68°43'N 140°51'W). At this particular locale, the river does not freeze in early winter and whole schools of arctic char gather there. A few years ago seven men netted over 1000 arctic char in two days.

In many lakes, rivers and creeks, whitefish, grayling, loche, sucker and jackfish abound. For these species, autumn is considered the best fishing season. Old Crow River is particularly rich in fish in late summer and autumn, and it is along this river that most of the fishing camps are situated.

Birds

Many kinds of birds are known to the Vunta Kutchin Indians. L. Irving (1959) has collected the Kutchin names of 91 birds at Old Crow. Although most of these are of no economic importance, a number are hunted, particularly ducks, ptarmigan and loons. They constitute a welcome variety in the somewhat monotonous diet of the people. Waterfowl are particularly abundant in the Crow Flats basin. W.E. Stevens writes: "The Flats are, without question, the most important waterfowl breeding grounds in the Yukon Territory. Recent surveys by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, based on an area of 1,970 square miles, show a waterfowl breeding density at Old Crow of 87 birds per square mile". [1]

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1 Personal communication from W.E. Stevens, Acting Chief, Canadian Wildlife Service, October 3, 1961.

CHAPTER III

OUTLINE OF THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE

In this chapter a brief sketch of the traditional material culture and social organization of the Vunta Kutchin will be presented. This will be in part a summary of Osgood's monograph on the Kutchin (1936). Osgood collected his data in the summer of 1932 at Fort Yukon, Alaska, mainly from a single informant, Charlie Crow, a Vunta Kutchin born at the mouth of Old Crow River who was then about 80 years old. Considering that Osgood has already summarized, in separate sections, most of the old literature on the Kutchin explorers' and traders' accounts will not be mentioned here unless relevant. Osgood's descriptions will be complemented with information collected at Old Crow in the summer of 1961 from three elderly informants: Moses Tizya, Big Joe Kay and Johnny Moses.

The Kutchin Athapaskan speaking Indians, occupy a huge inland area in the northwestern part of the North American continent. Their country extends from Chandalar and Birch Creek Rivers in Alaska eastwards across northern Yukon to the Mackenzie Delta. "Kutchin", an Athapaskan word meaning "dweller", is applied to eight tribal groups localized by Osgood (1936: 13):

1. Yukon Flats Kutchin (Kutcha), southeast of Fort Yukon, along Yukon River, Alaska.

2. Birch Creek Kutchin (Tennuth), southwest of Fort Yukon, along Birch Creek, Alaska.

3. Chandalar River Kutchin (Natsit), all along Chandalar River and to the east, Alaska.

4. Black River Kutchin (Tranjik), along Black River, mostly in Alaska.

5. Crow River Kutchin (Vunta), along Old Crow River and the middle and lower course of Porcupine River, mostly in Yukon Territory.

6. Upper Porcupine River Kutchin (Tukkuth), along the Upper Porcupine, Yukon.

7. Peel River Kutchin (Tatlit), along Peel River and down to Fort McPherson in the N. W. T.

8. Mackenzie Flats Kutchin (Nakotcho), south and south east of the Mackenzie delta.

The Hudson's Bay Company census of 1858 indicates 1274 Kutchin or Loucheux Indians trading into the following posts:
Peel River and La Pierre House, Fort Yukon, Fort Good Hope (Osgood, 1936:15, reproduced from Dawson, 1889:205B-207B).

Material Culture and Subsistence

Hunting and Fishing

Traditionally the Vunta Kutchin practiced a number of caribou hunting methods. Some of these were communal enterprises, necessitating the co-ordinated efforts of a number of individuals. Others involved only single hunters.

Driving the herd into enclosures was the principal caribou hunting method. Osgood has described the traditional caribou enclosure or surround: "Posts about four feet high are set up in the ground to form an enclosure roughly circular in form. Between these posts, poles and brush prevent the caribou from escaping except through narrow openings about eight feet apart in which snares are set. One side of the surround is open and from this entrance stretch out two lines of posts ever widening like the mouth of a funnel. This projecting line of posts is not a fence, strictly speaking, but a series of poles set up six feet high and hung with moss to represent men so that caribou which have entered the trap will be afraid to run in any other direction except that which leads to the snare-set enclosure. Some of these surrounds are so large that the inner part is a mile and a half in diameter". (1963:25).

Elderly informants at Old Crow located the traditional caribou surrounds of the Vunta Kutchin along the hills immediately north of Crow Flats. The principal surround was situated south of the Firth River, at 68°38'N 140°48W, and was owned and operated by a man called Thomas as late as the end of the last century. Despite the fact that for a long time the people had been using guns, Thomas' relatives still considered this traditional hunting method as profitable. The opening of the surround was about 30 yards wide. The corral had an oval shape, was very large, and was covered with hundreds of snares made of caribou skin babiche. Such a surround, called hintlit'thelrit, was built with poles obtained usually from the timbered valley nearby. Each surround was owned by a single individual, an elderly and experienced hunter, who was not necessarily the tribal chief. The hunting season was in September-October, when the herds were crossing the area and moving south or west. The people were scattered in small groups along the hills, each (separate) group attending to a surround under the leadership of the surround owner and organizer of the hunt. As soon as the

herd approached, boys, men and women tried to run behind the caribou, imitating the cry of the wolf, and attempting to drive the herd towards the opening of the surround. Just beside the opening a few men armed with bows and arrows and spears lay in ambush, trying to wound some caribou as they crossed the entrance. Once the herd was in the surround, spear hunters went in action; this is contrary to Osgood's description. Most of the caribou, however, were caught either in the external ring of snares, or in the snares placed inside the corral.

The butchering of the animals took place nearby, and the meat was stored in caches called va^{h}, built on high pegs, with a pointed roof. The surround owner was also the proprietor of the game killed. It was under his supervision that the sharing of the meat took place.

Not all caribou hunting groups were equally successful in their pursuit of game. The less successful, after exhaustion of their supplies, assembled near the lucky group and participated in the consumption of the meat.

In winter, somewhat different caribou hunting methods were employed. The people after having followed the migrating caribou, lived in the wooded country south of the Porcupine River. There the herds did not migrate extensively, but usually moved within a restricted area. After a small herd had been located by scouts, a number of hunters encircled the caribou, gradually narrowing the circle. The frightened animals could not cross the ring of bowmen. They were killed one after the other with bone pointed arrows. On other occasions during the cold season, a rough, temporary surround of snares (tez^{h}ul·t^{h}el.) was made in the forest. The caribou were again driven into the surround, and caught in snares.

To complete the enumeration of the collective hunting methods, mention must be made of caribou hunting with spears at the crossing places. This is a technique similar to that employed by Eskimos in the tundra. The people, standing near their birch bark canoes, wait for the caribou at their habitual river crossing places. As soon as the animals show up, they are driven into the river, where they are quickly pursued by the fast moving canoes, and speared in the water with bone tipped lances.

An interesting individualistic method is employed during intense cold, when noises are easily heard in the taiga, and when there is some ground fog. The isolated hunter holds, in one of his hands, a dried caribou head with antlers on. He rubs two spruce sticks against the antlers, trying to imitate the noise the caribou makes when rubbing his

antlers against a tree. The caribou appear to be attracted both by the smell of the skin, and by the noise of the two sticks. They move nearer to the ambushed bowman who kills one with an arrow. It is said that only very skilful hunters are successful with this method. Rubbing sticks has to be carried on for over an hour or so, and requires considerable patience.

Finally, snares were often placed across the trails habitually used by the caribou in the forest. The snare was tied to a horizontal tree branch crossing the trail at a suitable height from the ground. This is a simple technique, involving little effort.

Old Crow informants readily asserted that, in traditional times, moose hunting was a difficult activity, necessitating great skill and endurance. The Vunta Kutchin then relied more extensively for their subsistence on the caribou, moose being of secondary importance. The moose is not a gregarious animal like the caribou, and was hunted with individualistic methods. The easiest way to get a moose in summer was by placing snares around the lakes favoured by the moose, or by lying in ambush around these places with a bow and arrow and a spear. Birch bark canoes had to be frequently used in this hunt. Moose hunting in winter, in cold and clear weather was a very hard task indeed. The moose could hear, from a great distance, the approaching hunter walking on the snow. One method of attracting the moose was by rubbing the shoulder blade of a moose against some willows. The most reliable winter method was by running down the moose. Osgood writes: "When the hunter comes upon the fresh moose trail in the snow, he follows it by making wide semi-circles to the leeward until such a time as the trail disappears, which indicates that the moose has checked its course. Then the hunter doubles back in smaller semi-circles to locate his game." (1936:26)

Mountain sheep "rank third in importance as food animal. They are killed in all seasons. The hunter often stalks them with bow and arrow, generally approaching them from above as they always seek refuge by adeptly climbing upward into the rocky security of their natural habitat. Snares, tied securely to boulders, also serve to capture these animals". (Osgood 1936:27)

Bears have traditionally played a relatively important role in the subsistence economy of the Vunta Kutchin. Osgood mentions that bears may be shot with bows and arrows, pulled out of their holes in winter and clubbed to death, snared and speared. Old Crow informants agreed that hunting bears with traditional weapons required rare courage. When

stabbing bears in winter a heavy club (ticih^{r}a), made of moose horn with sharp points all around, was used. After the bear had been wounded with the bow and arrows, the hunter took his spear (to^{h}) which was about 6 feet long and had a large steel blade, knelt down and placed its butt on the ground, and pointed the blade towards the throat of the charging bear.

Rabbits were snared in numbers around the camp, porcupine clubbed and speared, and deadfalls probably set for wolverine and other animals. The extensive use of deadfalls took place later, with the advent of the fur trade. Osgood mentions that pitfalls were dug around camp to catch foxes and wolverines. Sharp-pointed bones were placed in the bottom of the hole (Osgood, 1936: 33). Spring, before breakup, was the preferred season for hunting muskrat on Crow Flats. The people looked for muskrat runways in the snow, and caught them with hoop nets. Muskrat were also shot with blunt pointed arrows.

Game birds were usually killed with the bow and arrow, mainly in spring, while in winter ptarmigan were caught in snares.

The fish trap was the most important technique associated with fishing. Osgood has described the fish traps built by both Peel River and Crow River Kutchin. Information on Vunta Kutchin fish traps obtained at Old Crow closely parallels Osgood's descriptions of a device called by him the sluice-trap. (1936:73) A V-shaped weir of stakes and willow poles was built from one bank to the other, with an opening at the point leading into the sluice. "When the fish enter the sluice in sufficient quantity, a man closes the entrance with a dipnet, and the fish are driven with sticks to enter either the dipnet or the basket at the other end" (Osgood, 1936:74). Such traps, called k'i, were built in autumn, along the tributaries of the Porcupine River and other lesser streams. The last ones were seen along Old Crow River about 40 years ago. Building a sluice-trap was a collective endeavour, many families camping together for this purpose, and forming a fish camp (k'i • Kutchin.) Before construction work started, the men assembled to discuss the exact location of the trap, and the distribution of tasks. Usually over 100 stakes were required for such a weir, and sometime two sluices were constructed. The fish was shared among all the participants, and the size of each family was taken into consideration. The catch was placed in special wooden caches, about 10 feet long and 3 feet wide, lying on the ground. There was no fish trap superintendent: construction work, actual fishing and sharing were done through common agreement. Considerable amounts of fish, up to 2000 fish in a single night, were taken in this manner.

Osgood also mentions that willow bark gill nets, three-pointed leisters, toggle-headed spears, fish scoops and dipnets, caribou bone fish hooks and gaff hooks, were all employed by the Crow River people. These are implements usually associated with individualistic fishing methods.

The Kutchin avoided eating raw meat. Drying was considered the best way of preserving both fish and meat. Meat was preferably roasted by hanging a piece on a stick thrust in the ground near the fire. Caribou heads, a delicacy, were suspended on a tripod over a fire. Boiling was done in the following manner. A round hole was dug in the ground, and lined with a clean caribou skin. Water was then poured into this container with the meat, and hot stones heated on a fire put in to bring the water to the boil. Traditionally, the Kutchin relied mostly on a meat diet, vegetable foods (wild onions, wild rhubarb, juice of young spruce bark, berries) being of secondary importance. Fire was obtained by striking two stones together.

Shelter, Travelling, Dress

According to Osgood, the Vunta Kutchin used to build several types of semi-permanent dwellings in traditional times. The moss-house (ko) was made in early autumn, and occupied until mid-winter. The house was square in plan, and made of split logs, erected vertically. A ridge piece in the middle supported the roof of trimmed poles, which were covered with earth. The fireplace, supported by a square frame of poles, was built in the centre of the house. The existence of such a house type is related to a relatively permanent camp site: "The moss-house during the fall and part of the winter is generally occupied by two families who often return to the same house the succeeding year". (Osgood, 1936:53) Whether such a relatively permanent and elaborate structure was part of traditional Vunta Kutchin culture is difficult to ascertain. It is true that log cabins have been in use along the lower and middle Porcupine for a long time. It is not easy to envisage, however, how such a dwelling could be constructed without the help of iron tools and, how it can be related to the migratory pattern of life in ancient times. Elderly informants from the upper Porcupine band, the last few remnants of the Tukkuth tribe presently residing at Old Crow, emphatically denied the existence of log cabins in their old country as late as 1908. And even at this time the Tukkuth had iron tools and guns. The writer is of the opinion that the log cabin was introduced among the Vunta Kutchin in the area as a result of the earliest activities of the fur trade and the introduction of iron tools and guns, which allowed for a certain stabilization

of the migrating groups.

The nivaze or semi-spherical skin tent was the most important and most typically Kutchin shelter in winter. A number of thin spruce poles, painted red and properly bent, constituted the frame, which was then covered with a number of bull caribou skins, tanned with the fur on them. Tukkuth informants asserted that the nivaze was relatively large and comfortable shelter, occupied as a rule by two families. In order to make it warmer, snow was piled all around it with the help of the wooden snow shovel. In travelling, this tent was easily carried on sleds, together with the poles. In summer, untanned, waterproof skins were used, together with light willows as a frame. The summer version of the nivaze was called ditrije.

Osgood mentions a number of secondary dwellings including caribou skin covered tipis, brush covered lean-to shelters for travellers, and snow houses. Snow houses are still in use in the area. The traveller will find a large bank of drift snow against the slope of a hill. He will then dig a hole in the snow, proceeding horizontally, and using the snowshoe as a shovel. This temporary snow house is called zo^{h}kan.

For water travel the Vunta Kutchin relied mostly on the akit^{h}ri, the birch bark canoe. Osgood has described in detail the canoe building methods of the Crow River Kutchin (1936:61). Elderly Old Crow informants asserted that traditional birch bark canoes were little different from the flat-bottomed canvas covered vessels used at present. They could easily carry two canoemen in a kneeling posture. Interestingly enough, because of the relative scarcity of good size birch trees on Crow Flats and along the northern part of Porcupine River, no bark canoes could be made in these areas. These the Vunta Kutchin obtained from the other Kutchin groups located along the lower course of the Porcupine and around Fort Yukon, or made while on a downstream journey. A birch bark canoe was a valuable craft, "and the people were careful to keep them clean, allowing no blood to stain them" (Leechman, 1954:6).

The Vunta Kutchin did not build large canoes for the transportation of groups of people, as the Peel River Indians did. Because of the relative scarcity of suitable birch trees in their country, they sometimes covered their canoes with caribou skins. These did not last very long as caribou skin, when wet, rots quickly. During their group migrations in spring down Old Crow River, and along the Porcupine, the Vunta Kutchin would

build either rafts or moose skin boats. The last moose skin boat was constructed in 1939, with 8 moose skins sewn together with caribou sinew in such a way as to make this cover waterproof. The Tukkuth Kutchin, during their annual migration from the headwaters of the Porcupine down to Whitefish Lake, relied more extensively on the moose skin boat.

Snowshoes, sleds and dog packs were used in land travel. Osgood has described the snow shoe technology in detail (1936:77-82). The Vunta Kutchin used, and still use, two snowshoe varieties, the hunting shoe of a length equal to the wearer's height and used on fresh snow, and the trail shoe, much smaller, which is employed for packing down a trail. The frame is made of birch or spruce, and the netting from babiche. The aboriginal sled was eight to ten feet long, with two runners of birch wood curved up at both ends. Sleds were pulled mostly by women, and only occasionally by men or dogs. Woven lines of tanned caribou skin colored red were used with the sled. Dog packs were employed in summer. These consisted of "two pouches with a common back which is thrown across that of the dog" (Osgood, 1936:64). A specimen collected for the National Museum of Canada is made of caribou leg skin which is resistant to wear. Finally, the great importance of human packing should be stressed. Human packing was an essential activity in summer and frequently informants, referring to the eminent men of the past generations, described them as "good packers".

Precontact summer garments included a tanned caribou skin shirt with a belt and no hood. Trousers and footwear of the same material were connected in one piece. Moose skin soles were used, and both sexes wore headbands. In winter, similar garments were employed, the skins, however, having their fur turned inwards. Instead of a hood, men wore a fur cap. Old Crow informants affirmed that women's parkas had skin fringes, while those of the chiefs and of wealthy individuals had marten coats, decorated with porcupine quills for ceremonial purposes. Some hunters and children used to wear plaited rabbit skin garments. Blankets made of caribou fur, lynx fur, and plaited rabbit skins were widely used.

For containers, the Vunta Kutchin used wooden plates of various sizes, birch bark baskets and skin bags. Among the tools used in manufacturing Osgood mentions stone adzes, stone hammers, awls made from porcupine or beaver incisors with wooden handles, and bone and stone blade knives.

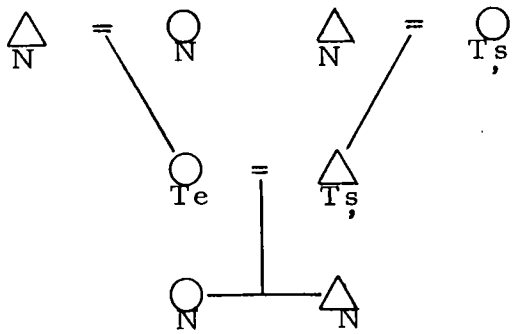
Social Organization

Osgood refers to the existence of three matrilineal clans among both the Peel River and Crow River Kutchin. Kirby, the missionary who travelled among the Yukon Flats Kutchin during the middle of the last century, wrote: "Irrespective of tribe, they (the Kutchin) are divided into three classes, termed, respectively, Chit-sa, Nate-sa, and Tanges-at-sa, faintly representing the aristocracy, the middle classes, and the poorer orders of civilized nations, the former being the most wealthy and the latter the poorest. In one respect, however, they greatly differ, it being the rule for a man not to marry in his own, but to take a wife from either of the other classes. A Chit-sa gentleman will marry a Tanges-at-sa peasant without the least feeling infra dig. The offspring in every case belong to the class of the mother" (1864:418). Similarly, Jones, writing during the same period, recognized the exogamous character of the three clans, adding: "It used to be customary for a man belonging to one of these castes to take a wife from one of the others, but this has fallen into disuse" (1866:326). Hardisty (1866:315) also mentions the three clans, giving at the same time a highly improbable explanation regarding their origin.

Tsitsia, natsai and tendjeratsia are the names of the three clans. All authors agree about their matrilineal and ideally exogamous characters. According to Osgood, the Crow River Kutchin define tsitsia as "the one under the other fellow"; for natsai there is no apparent meaning, while tendjeratsia is interpreted as "those in the middle" (1936: 122). While among the Peel River Kutchin, tsitsia and natsai were associated respectively with the wolf and the crow, no similar identification was to be found among the Crow River Kutchin (Osgood, 1936:122). Moreover, with natsai is associated the idea of superiority or traditional priority. Tendjeratsia is supposedly regarded as somehow inferior.

First, it can be noticed that the Kutchin clans are not localized social units, but cut across the different tribal groups. Thus they may be considered as sibs (Murdock, 1949:47). Elderly Old Crow informants, without being able to interpret precisely the sib names, considered tsitsia and natsai associated with the wolf and crow respectively, tsitsia being further identified with the ideas of strength, superior ability and hard work. The wolf and the crow are the central figures of many beliefs and folktales. Tendjeratsia means "half and half" or somehow "middle way". This

category of people does not constitute a sib, but are the descendants of sib endogamous marriages. Considering that even in traditional times, according to our informants and to Jones (1866:326) sib exogamy was not rigorously observed, the category of tendjeratsia was a convenient way of classifying the descendants of endogamous marriages. If a tendjeratsia girl married a man of a different sib affiliation than that of her parents, her children will belong to her parents' sib.

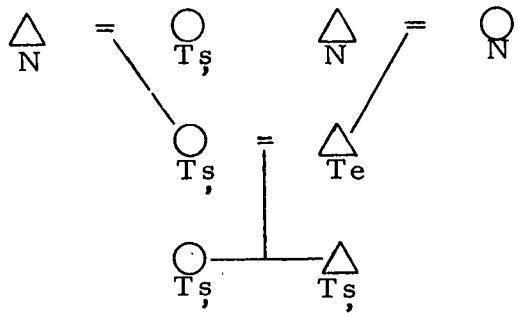


N: natsai

Te: tendjeratsia

Ts,: tsitsia

Precise sib affiliation was recovered at the third generation. The same mechanism operated when a male tendjeratsia married a woman from the opposite sib.



In this way, the descendants of tendjeratsia were constantly absorbed in the sib structure, and this tended towards a sib-moiety system. This tendency towards a dual division of Kutchin society was clearly felt by Osgood: "I have at times, during my conversation with members of the Peel River Kutchin tribe, felt that there is a bilateral division of clans among them -- that is, two clans more closely related in contrast to the third" (1936:107), and Slobodin has a note on it (1959:77). The mechanism described above confirms Osgood's expectations.

Concerning the interpretation of the term tendjeratsia as "half and half", elderly informants asserted that, in traditional times, major feasts saw the tribal assembly divided into two groups according to sib affiliations, with tsitsia on one side and natsai on the other. The feast was always given by members of one sib to the members of the opposite sib. Tenjeratsia were rigorously barred from speech making, the reason being that their sib affiliations were unclear; one was a sib member only if his mother and father were of different sibs. Tendjeratsia were not included in the sib-moiety system, and therefore could not offer a speech to the "other" sib. Neither could they receive a ceremonial speech. Informants said: "You don't make a speech to tendjeratsia because that would be just like talking to yourself". Speech making during a ceremonial activity was thus clearly related to the dual structure of society. The barring of tendjeratsia as a category of people from ceremonial activities certainly lowered their social position. This, however, did not apply to particular tendjeratsia individuals, who could achieve eminence through wealth, war exploits, ability in hunting, etc. However, tendjeratsia could not become tribal chiefs, since these were often sib headmen at the same time.

The functions of the sib-moieties were numerous. By dividing each tribelet into two exogamous halves, albeit of unequal importance, a system of widening social relations existed because through matrilineal descent and marriage an individual became related to a number of people in both sibs. Thus the moiety system was a factor of increased social cohesion within the tribal unit. Further, when a traveller in traditional and post-traditional times reached a distant group, he could rely on the help of the local sib members. An elderly informant said: "when a man travels in distant countries and other natsai find out that he is also natsai, they will help him, give him food, tobacco. Then maybe a natsai will invite him to stay..." Thus sibs were instrumental in establishing peaceful relations between members of different tribes but of the same sib. They were a factor of social cohesion transcending the tribal unit.

The obvious sib functions of establishing a uniform matrilineal descent system and regulating marriage through exogamy extensions need no elaboration. The association of the sib-moiety system with certain ceremonial activities has been noted as being of central importance. Not only were potlatches organized on the basis of the dual division of society, but also moose feasts involving a number of exchanges and interactions between opposing sibs; these will be described later.

Osgood noted the importance of sibs in war: "Each clan has a war chief or leader and when one group (primarily a clan) contemplated war, another clan group may be prevailed upon by material payments to join with them" (1936:88). Old Crow informants confirmed this. As one informant put it: "If a war party from a distant country came here and killed a natsai, the tsitsia here will not be concerned about it. The natsai, however, will try to form a revenge party. If they need the help of their tsitsia band fellows they will have to pay them. The natsai group will be organized by the natsai chief, but the war party will be led by both natsai and tsitsia chiefs." Two conclusions may be drawn from this testimony. First, war activities were closely associated with the sib-moiety structure, and second, within a tribe each sib had a chief who acted as war leader when the opportunity arose.

There is further evidence regarding inter-sib fighting. The following story is told: "Oltih was a chief. He used to take the other people's wives rather brutally and keep them. One day he took the wife of another man, and left with her on a raft to go to Fort Yukon where he traded, particularly for clothing. They came back in birch bark canoes acquired at Fort Yukon. The other husband then asked him: why don't you give me a piece of clothing in exchange for my wife? Oltih replied: "I have not travelled so far in order to give any stuff to you". The other man then just waited for a favourable moment, and one day, near a lake, killed Oltih with an arrow, while a second man finished him off with a war club. Oltih was natsai, and the man who killed him tsitsia. This provoked a war between natsai and tsitsia, and many people died in the fighting. When in the old time a chief was killed, his death was followed by fightings between natsai and tsitsia." This information is to be considered with caution, since it may imply not only inter-sib warfare, but more probably blood revenge fencing between families and kindreds.

There is no reliable information regarding the possible influence of the matrilineal sib-moiety system upon residence patterns. Only one informant asserted that, in old times, the young couple resided with the wife's parents. Further there is no evidence on the influence of sibs upon economic activities, except in ceremonial gift giving and ceremonial commensality. It does not seem that sib chiefs were caribou corral owners at the same time, or that sib members necessarily constituted a co-operative unit in the field of food acquisition or food distribution. Further, there is no indication that this sib-moiety structure was associated with cross-cousin marriage, which has not been recorded in the area. The influence of sibs on kinship terminology will be discussed later.[1]

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1. See Appendix 1 "The Origin Myth of the Natsai sib."

Several authors mention the existence of social classes among the Kutchin. Wealth was the main criterion for class differentiation. Dentalium shells and, later, beads with monetary value were a concentrated form of wealth. The way of life, the daily routine of a wealthy man differed little from that of the rest of the people. (Osgood, 1936:108 and 123). He hunted, fished, built implements, but avoided packing. A poor man might hunt, pack and perform various services for a rich individual, and was repaid with gifts, appropriate advice, and the possibility of borrowing things. The upper class individual showed a paternalistic attitude in this case.

Slaves constituted a third, and still lower category of people. They were prisoners of war from other Indian tribes and apparently were treated very well. They worked for their captor, and were expected in time to integrate in the tribe by marrying a local woman. An attempt at escape made by a slave was punished by death. A female slave was taken as a wife, and her position was, in general, not socially inferior to that of the other women in the tribe.

There were several categories of chiefs among the Kutchin. Each tribal unit had a chief who naturally could not be a tendjeratsia. A chief was always from the wealthy class, and had organizational abilities and other superior qualities. An aura of prestige and glory surrounded him, transcending sib lines. A chief had many wives, and the stories connected with chief polygamy are numerous. It is said that Sahniuti, one of the last western Kutchin chiefs had more than 10 wives. Osgood describes the functions of a Peel River tribal chief: "The paternal role of the chief is an important aspect of the culture, for it is he who generally decides the place to hunt, or to build a fish trap, and gives advice as well on social and material difficulties. He loans tools to those who need them and acts as host to visitors, giving the first meal to all newcomers" (1936:108). Osgood's data on Crow River chiefs corroborate this, and he further notes that chieftainship is usually inherited patrilineally if the son possesses the necessary qualities. "The office of chief is not formalized, not verified by any council or ceremony. A man is a chief because he is at the top of the prestige ladder (...). The chief has a directive power in the activities of the group as a whole and points out certain things to be done. For instance, on a hunting expedition he may say, So and so is the best runner -- let him lead; it is going to be cold, let us move quickly" (1936:123).

In addition to these tribal, political chiefs with definite organizational responsibilities, wealthy individual owners of caribou corrals acted in certain circumstances as economic chiefs. These may be considered as a separate

category of headmen. The existence of sib chiefs who were leaders on the warpath at the same time has also been mentioned. Finally, Shamans exercised leadership on numerous occasions, and often superceded the prerogatives of the other headman: "A chief may be able to control a shaman, and sometimes a shaman is more powerful than the chief" (Osgood, 1936:109). Unfortunately there is no reliable information on whether one individual could acquire the prerogatives of these several categories of chiefs, thus becoming a tribal, economic, war and shamanistic leader simultaneously. Osgood believes that war (sib) chiefs were different from tribal chiefs (1936:129). Old Crow informants however repeatedly stated that traditional tribal chiefs were also shamans at the same time. It is essential, however, to note that in relation to a number of essential activities (subsistence, war, relations with the supernatural) the traditional Vunta Kutchin recognized definite forms of indigenous leadership. The tribal-band units, the sib-moiety structure and the class system provided the social framework for the exercise of chieftainship.

Writing on the subject of marriage and family life, Osgood (1936) describes three ways of getting a wife. 1) Boys and girls have several premarital experiences. Among his sexual partners the boy will probably choose a hard working girl. He will try to convince her to marry him. Later the girl tells her mother (Kirby (1864) and Hardisty (1866)also note the role of the mother in marriage arrangements), and if everybody agrees, the young couple takes up common residence without any ceremony, and they are considered as married by the community. If the girl becomes pregnant during the premarital liaison, her lover feels obliged to marry her, and if he is already married, she may become his second wife. 2) A man may choose as his future wife a girl 5 or 6 years old. While waiting for the girl to grow up, he will take up matrilocal residence, watching the girl's education. Such unions are considered most successful. 3) A man looking for a wife will hang his lower garment on a tree along the trail. A mother with a daughter of marriageable age will take the garment as a sign of acceptance. The suitor will take up residence with his parents-in-law for a certain period. If everything goes well, the girl's father will present the young man with some necessities, and the couple will be able to start on its own.

For the Peel River Kutchin, Osgood (1936) mentions the practice of wife stealing. The lover provokes the husband to a fight, and if he succeeds in winning he gets the woman, although the husband may take revenge. Apparently, the Crow River people never practiced wife stealing. Old Crow

informants described two additional ways of getting a wife in traditional times: through promised marriage by parents of children of different sex, and through shamanistic techniques.

Polygamy was practiced by the wealthy, chiefs and shamans included. The first wife remained in a superordinate position. Although polygamous families were naturally patrilocal, there is no conclusive evidence concerning residence rules among the poorer Vunta Kutchin. Osgood indicates a tendency towards patrilocal residence: "Patrilocal residence normally results but circumstances cause frequent variations from the pattern" (1936: 142). While one Old Crow informant maintained that in traditional times the young couple resided near the girl's parents, other informants denied this. It seems more proper to assert that, like so many other northern peoples, the Vunta Kutchin lacked precise unilateral residence rules. Their choice of residence was probably influenced by a multiplicity of personal, economic and purely social factors, and tended towards camp bilaterality and household neolocality. The fact that a poor suitor might reside matrilocally for a certain period, helping his future parents-in-law, points towards a possible prevalence of matrilocal practices among the lower class compensated by the patrilocality of the polygynous rich. Polyandry apparently was a very rare occurrence, the second husband using his sexual rights only in the absence of the first. Wife-exchange was restricted to the scao partners, (a kind of blood brotherhood) and was not very frequent. The husband could kill his wife's lover, or abandon his family. The children always remained with the mother. A woman could also leave her husband, although divorce appears to have been very rare.

There is very little information on the extension, composition and precise functions of the basic socio-economic units among the traditional Vunta Kutchin. Certainly the nuclear family in its many aspects, reproduction, sex, socialization and economic collaboration, was such a unit. It is within the family that the division of labour according to sex acquired its maximum significance. In the field of food acquisition, however, the nuclear family rarely behaved as an autonomous unit. The collective hunting and fishing techniques previously described indicate that, in these spheres of activities, the family was part of larger co-operative groupings. Neither was the family a residential or commensal unit. Osgood mentions that shelters were usually occupied by two families (1936:110). Old Crow informants explicitly confirm this, saying that the two families may or may not be closely or distantly related, and that each occupied one side of the shelter. The household members always constituted a (commensal) unit. This assumes the necessity of sharing food.

Osgood mentions that, the tribe under ecological pressure in winter, subdivided itself into distinct multifamily band units, highly migratory within a certain range: "At certain periods at least, the tribe cannot live together because a limited range of territory will not furnish sufficient food and therefore the tribe breaks up into hunting bands to utilize a greater surface area in their economic pursuits" (1936: 111). The winter band thus constituted an autonomous socio-economic unit. During certain periods in summer and autumn, with decreased ecological pressure, bands congregated into larger tribal groupings near fish weirs and caribou drives.

Big Joe Kay described the traditional annual cycle of the Vunta Kutchin as follows. In late summer and autumn the people hunted caribou in the corrals on the mountain slopes north of Crow Flats. After freeze up, the southbound migration began with the people travelling together. They crossed the Porcupine, and continued caribou hunting with bows and arrows in smaller bands in the wooded areas south of that river. In spring, before break-up, the people left the forests and moved back north to Crow Flats. There they looked for muskrat runways in the snow, and caught the muskrat with hoop nets. After break-up, fishing, using several methods, started, together with duck hunting from birch bark canoes. It was possible for the people to congregate in larger groups during a good season. This outline corroborates the previous descriptions of general traits.

On the matter of councils, Osgood writes that, before assembling a war party, elderly men would form a council to discuss the question of war. Among the Peel River people, young men do not speak, but elderly women have the right to do so. During such councils the war leader is chosen.

Of partnership, Osgood mentions two kinds; a temporary hunting partnership between two men of different sibs involving a certain rivalry in the pursuit of the game, and a permanent form of a kind of blood brotherhood (scao) associated with material assistance, the obligation of blood revenge, and the right to exchange wives.

There is no precise information on property rights among the Vunta Kutchin in traditional times. The individual ownership of dentalium shells and caribou surrounds has been mentioned. Writing on the Peel River people, Osgood noted a limited ownership of fishing and hunting territories; continuous occupancy of a fishing site or a hunting ground entitled the social group to exploit the area year after year. In case of interrupted occupation, another group may move in. There seem to be no definite territorial ownership rights. Stealing of personal material objects is said to be extremely rare. "Inheritance of property is normally from father to the oldest son"

(Osgood, 1936: 115). This assertion is supported by an example of trapline inheritance, obviously belonging to a later period. Little is known of inheritance rules of movable property in traditional times.

Ceremonials, Religion, War

Information collected among the present Old Crow people on traditional potlatches (tukutɕ^{h}in) corroborates Osgood's detailed descriptions. A potlatch was organized only following the death of an individual. While Osgood writes that the potlatch giver is generally a close friend of the deceased and of another sib, Old Crow informants asserted that the potlatch organizer was a near relative, usually a brother of the deceased, and thus always of the same sib. For several months the people gather the goods to be distributed at the potlatch, and cache food along the trails for the visitors from distant lands to use. The potlatch clearly emphasizes sib distinctions, as members of the bereaved sib gather the gifts, organize the potlatch, and distribute the various goods to the people of the opposite sib. Moreover, the disposal of the dead of one sib is the duty of the opposite sib.

The Vunta Kutchin celebrated a number of other feasts on the following occasions. A father gave a feast a few weeks after the birth of his first child, and later when a son killed his first big game. The arrival of the first king salmon was also marked by a communal celebration. The moose feast was, however, the most important of these festivities. Old Crow informants asserted that a moose feast might be organized for the birth of a child, or the first big kill of a boy or on other occasions. When a man of one sib killed a moose, he would give it to another man of the opposite sib who was known to be willing to organize a feast. At such a feast the moose meat was cooked by the relatives of the feast giver, who stood near the feasting ground, and told the visitors where to sit. The sibs were separated, and occupied two rows facing each other. The meat was equally distributed on the dishes people brought with them. After the meat had been consumed, an elderly individual from the opposite sib to that of the feast giver made a speech exalting the virtues and exploits of the feast giver's patrilineal ascendants. If the speechmaker made an error harmful to the prestige of the opposite sib, the offended sib immediately looked for an opportunity a few days later to arrange for another feast, during which the negligent speechmaker was presented with a very large dish covered with a huge pile of meat. The very size of the meat gift produced the effect of hurting, of bringing down, of diminishing the prestige of the receiver. The antagonistic effect of the exaggerated gift can thus be clearly perceived. With such an under-

standing of the gift, we can better understand an interesting detail about the potlatch among Vunta Kutchin, noted by Osgood: "A very important factor in the gift making at the potlatch is that an equivalent of one half the value received must be returned at some convenient time" (1936: 127). It seems that this partial gift return has a compensatory effect related to the damaging nature of the more substantial gift. Needless to say, this aspect of ceremonial gift giving (not to mention the ceremonies themselves as well as many other traits) indicates a strong North-West Coast cultural influence upon the northern Kutchin.

The Old Crow people still retain a number of traditional religious beliefs at the present time. Since most of our information on native medical practices, interpretation of dreams and shamanistic behaviour is of a later period, a detailed account of these beliefs and practices will be given in the chapter dealing with the contemporary Old Crow culture. Here we can only briefly summarize the data collected by Osgood. The Crow River Kutchin appear as highly "animatistic",[1] holding numerous beliefs in spirits and Nakani beings (brushmen). There seems to be two classes of shamans: good and evil. Supernatural power is acquired through dreams in association with an animal, and a man becomes a shaman without reference to his own will. Shamans have no drums, enjoy a high social prestige, and may accumulate wealth as a result of payments made by patients. Besides curing, the shaman may "call the game", and find lost objects. The supernatural help given on the warpath by the shaman should also be mentioned. There are numerous instances of malevolent magic which will be described later.

Old Crow informants attested that, in traditional times, the Vunta Kutchin were rather peaceful people when compared with the rest of the Kutchin tribes. While the elderly informants knew about the fights between the Mackenzie Delta Eskimos and the Peel River Kutchin, they suggested that the mountains separating the coastal Eskimos from the inland Vunta Kutchin were an obstacle to contact, and also to war, between the two nations. Concerning past hostilities with Indian tribes, the immense distances that separated the Vunta Kutchin from the people of Southern Yukon and Central Alaska made war a rare occurrence in these northern lands.

The war club was the preferred weapon in fighting. It was made of a large moose horn with sharp points all around. While fighting against the Eskimos the club was used to smash the snowhouses. The heavy spear, about 6 feet long, and the knife, were also used. It is said that for the Eskimo wars the Vunta Kutchin used very big and strong bows. An arrow shot from such a bow was easily capable of passing through the body of an enemy. Apparently,

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1. For a definition of this term see Lowie 1958: 133 - 134

shields were not employed.

Elderly Old Crow informants had heard of only a single case of fighting with the coastal Eskimos in traditional times. The hostilities started with the Herschel Island Eskimos killing two Vunta Kutchin boys who crossed the mountains on a trading journey with the Eskimos. The Indians found their bodies, and prepared a war expedition for the following year with the help of the Tukkuth tribe. The warriors found a group of Eskimos near the ocean, and killed many people. They then moved to Shingle Point, where they met another Eskimo band, and killed a few more of their enemies. After the massacre the two nations made peace, and told everybody to stop fighting. This story is well-known by the elderly Old Crow people, and is told with numerous variations.

On the subject of wars with distant Indian tribes, it is said that the enemies behaved like brushmen, killing the men and capturing the women. They raised children with these, and thus increased their numbers.

A group of warriors from the Tanana country reached Crow Flats one year, and killed a rich Vunta Kutchin, stealing his dentalium shell necklace. Then they ran away. The Vunta Kutchin formed a war party, and followed them down river. One night, when the enemy warriors were sleeping in a circle around a fire, they were surprised by their pursuers, and all killed with the exception of a single man who knew about the forthcoming disaster through a dream, and who, therefore, camped separately.

The last time an enemy war party reached the Vunta Kutchin country was around the 1870's. For some time previous warriors from the Tseta tribe had been roaming over the country. The local people knew about the presence of the enemy, as they had seen them here and there. The people had assembled at the place called Howling Dog where Archdeacon MacDonald was preaching. One day the enemy surrounded an open air religious assembly held by Archdeacon MacDonald, who said: "Don't shoot first!" Nothing happened, despite the evil intentions of the enemy. The reason given was that the Vunta Kutchin had a powerful shaman who managed to steal the enemy's ammunition by magic. The particular shamanistic technique used for this purpose will be described later.

Summary

It is worthwhile outlining here the essential traits of the Vunta Kutchin descent system. The Kutchin have been classified by Murdock as patri-Iroquois, on the basis of their cousin terms of Iroquois type, matrilineal

descent, patrilocal residence with tendency towards bilocality, general monogamy with low incidence of polygyny, independent nuclear families, matrilineal extension of incest taboo (1949: 244). Murdock refuses to recognize any clans or moieties among the Kutchin. As far as clans are concerned, Murdock has given a particular definition of the clan as a localized unilineal descent unit, and this definition does not fit the Kutchin data. Murdock has given no place to the sib in his tables of social organization. In the literature, Kutchin sibs are never described as moieties, and we are, therefore, faced with the strange absence of unilineal descent units in Murdock's interpretation of the Kutchin system. On what elements then is Kutchin matriliny founded?

When the different factors influencing Kutchin descent are closely examined, a complex picture emerges. An effort has been made here to describe traditional Kutchin sib-moieties as distinct matrilineal social units cutting across tribal divisions, and closely connected with ceremonial activity, war, and, to a certain degree, with leadership. In the all important field of economic collaboration, the sibs do not seem to have played an important role, except in the precise, concrete tasks concerning the preparation of ceremonies. The lack of economic basis for the Kutchin matri-sibs is easy to understand when the general subsistence economy of these people is considered. For their livelihood the Kutchin depended on the skills and endurance of the male hunter and fisherman, who later became an efficient trapper. The whole subsistence economy was centered around him - he killed the caribou, the moose, the waterfowl, the muskrat, he built the fish weirs, he supplied the family with food. This is not to underestimate the woman's contributions. For she cooked the food, collected berries and other edible plants, reared the children; she was the mistress of the home. When older she could influence her husband's speeches if he was a chief, and could speak at the council meetings. Nevertheless her role as food contributor was minor. The dominant position of men in the essential field of subsistence, and also in ceremony and war helps to explain the patri-inheritance of both wealth and office (the capable son of a chief becoming himself chief), the practice of limited polygyny, the tendency towards patrilocality noted by Osgood, and the fact that during a feast a speaker will be concerned with the feast giver's patrilineal ascendants. All these factors make matriliny appear as somewhat superficial, non-integrated or imported among the Kutchin. Under the institution of named matri-sibs, one finds strong elements, deeply rooted in the economic organization of the Kutchin and giving a marked patrilineal orientation to the culture.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF CHANGE

The Euro-Canadian Agents

The fur trader and missionary were by far the most important intrusive agents determining socio-cultural change among the Vunta Kutchin. Each one in his own field profoundly influenced the traditional way of life of these northern people. It should be noted, however, that the different interests and aims of the two agents made of the fur trader a factor of relatively undirected change, while the missionary imposed not only a new religion, but a whole new code of behaviour related to such basic institutions as marriage and the family. A consistent programme of controlled, directed cultural transformations resulted from the activities of the missionaries.

According to local tradition the first imported item, iron spears of Russian origin, among the Vunta Kutchin came from a distant country, downriver in Alaska. They reached the upriver country through the transactions of three Indian chiefs who acted as intermediaries.

Elderly informants from the now extinct Tukkuth Kutchin tribe relate the story that one of their ancient chiefs, named Hatodaiu, used to travel along the Mackenzie to a distant southern country where white men had established a trading store. This was apparently before the Peel River store was opened. Hatodaiu got iron tools from the traders, and, once back in his country, exchanged these for furs from the other Indians. It is possible that this tradition refers to the Fort Good Hope post opened in 1805, and moved further north in 1823 (Slobodin, 1959: 23). In 1840, John Bell established a Hudson's Bay Company post on the lower Peel River, and Alexander Hunter Murray built Fort Yukon at the mouth of the Porcupine in 1848. It is possible to conclude that around the middle of last century both the Vunta and the Tukkuth Kutchin had established contact with these posts, and had begun trading, primarily for iron tools and guns. Murray, writing in 1847-48, states explicitly that a number of Vunta Kutchin traded at that time at the Peel River post: "La région située aux environs de la rivière Porcupine, surtout au nord de celle-ci, appartient aux "Vanta-Kootchin" (gens des lacs) dont le nombre est de 80 hommes environ. "Letter Carrier", leur chef, et peut-être le tiers de sa bande vont toujours trafiquer a la rivière Peel depuis que le fort y a été érigé" (Murray, 1910: 93).

While in later years the Tukkuth people continued trading in Fort McPherson on the lower Peel River, the Vunta Kutchin became increasingly dependent on the lower Porcupine establishment.

After Alaska was purchased by the United States from Russia in 1867, the Hudson's Bay Company removed its western post upriver, first to Howling Dog, then to Old Rampart, and finally to New Rampart on the Canadian side of the international border. The New Rampart (Rampart House) establishment was closed in 1894. For some time, the Hudson's Bay Company operated another post at La Pierre House on the Bell River, and this was supplied from the Mackenzie. Little information is available on the activities of this post except that only guns, ammunition, tea, tobacco and some iron tools could be obtained there, but no imported foodstuffs. Around the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century the Vunta Kutchin were actively trading with the whalers at Herschel Island. The preferred routes in winter were along Firth or Blow rivers. In 1906, D. Cadzow, a private trader, opened a store at Rampart House, and naturally attracted all the Vunta Kutchin trade. Even some Eskimos travelled to Rampart House. After this period, a number of Europeans, and even some Indians actively traded in the area. The white people were usually trappers or adventurers who soon discovered the possibility of acquiring a fortune through the fur trade. Such was O. Schultz, who came into the country as a trapper, and in 1912 built the first store at Old Crow, in association with another white trapper named B. Johnson. These partners supplied their store with merchandise from Fort Yukon, using a large powered boat. In the 1920's this store was closed following a sharp decline in the price of the muskrat skins. Two local Indians then tried their hand at trading, with limited success. One was accused of perpetually stealing merchandise, and this native partnership ended. Meanwhile, another trading association was formed between two whites and an Indian. Following many adventures and disagreements these partners found themselves heavily in debt, and Blackfox (pseudonym), the Indian, remained to pay the debts after the whites disappeared. Later Blackfox moved his establishment to Whitestone village for a number of years, only to come back to Old Crow where he still manages the principal store (which he purchased, with the stock, from the Northern Commercial Company.) Meanwhile, between 1925 and 1935, two brothers named Jackson traded at La Pierre House. They abandoned their post in 1935 in order to set up a new store at Old Crow where they remained until after the war. In 1956, a Frenchman working for an entrepreneur at Fort MacPherson opened a small trading post which is still in existence. All these traders brought their merchandise by boat from Dawson City or Fort Yukon.

The Vunta Kutchin have belonged to the Anglican Church for about a century. The first missionary to visit Fort Yukon was Rev. W.W. Kirby in 1862. Archdeacon Robert McDonald, who usually resided at Fort McPherson, was very active in missionary work in the area, and travelled widely among the Kutchin. He adapted a system of syllabic writing used in translating religious books. A church existed at the beginning of this century at Rampart House, and another was built at Old Crow in 1926. Indian ministers were trained at an early date and two of them, Amos Njootli (1911-1920) and Julius Kendi (1929-1941 and 1946-1949), served among the Vunta Kutchin. They were preceded and followed by a number of European missionaries.

A third agency in the area was the local detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Established before the end of the last century at Rampart House, it was moved to Old Crow in 1928. It has been of somewhat lesser importance to the general acculturation of the Indians. The policemen patrolled the area, enforced the liquor laws and looked after minor criminal cases, as well as keeping vital and game statistics. Their functions became very important in a later period when Family Allowances and various forms of government relief were distributed to the Indians.

Changes in Subsistence Activities

The introduction first of the muzzle loading gun, and later of the rifle profoundly changed the big game hunting techniques of the Vunta Kutchin. Caribou hunting techniques during the last 30 to 40 years reveal an elimination of entire traditional complexes, a mingling of ancient and new traits, and the introduction of entirely new methods. The highly efficient and simply operated rifle gave increased control over the herds, and gradually led to the abandonment of the traditional surrounds along the mountains north of Crow Flats. At the end of the last century, some fifty years after the Vunta Kutchin first obtained guns, the caribou surrounds near the head of Firth River, owned by an Indian called Thomas, were still in operation. The people had guns, but not much ammunition, and the vast circle of snares was still a good place to get large meat supplies. After the turn of the century, and the opening of D. Cadzow's store, the caribou drives were entirely abandoned. For some time, however, the placing of individual snares for caribou along the trails habitually followed by the migrating herds was continued. Needless to say, the bow and arrow and the spear for big game hunting were quickly forgotten.

The rubbing sticks and other individualistic techniques previously described were still continued, however, although no dried caribou heads are carried.

The method of hunting caribou from canoes at the crossing places was continued under a different form. In autumn, when the caribou herds arrive in the country on their southbound migration, and are ready to cross the river individual hunters or small groups of two or three men occupy favourable points along the Porcupine at a distance of several miles from each other. As soon as the caribou enter the water, the hunters paddle as fast as they can, and shoot at the swimming animals. This is an essentially individualistic technique, despite the possibility of two partners collaborating.

Until about five years ago, large gatherings connected with caribou hunting took place in autumn, north of Old Crow. When the herds reaching the top of Old Crow mountain were seen, towards the end of August, the people started preparing for a meat camp (sihtra). On the same evening as the herds were sighted an informal meeting was held, and various aspects of the projected hunt discussed. The hunters, accompanied by some boys of 12 or 13 years of age, left early in the morning, one after the other. No women accompanied them. The hunters followed the trail to a place called Fireplace, situated $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Old Crow, and waited for all the men to gather. From then on they travelled together, without dogs and carrying their rifles, knives, teapots and food. The hunters made an effort to surround the slowly moving herd, forming a vast ring of men with a diameter of about one mile. This strategy was directed by the older and experienced hunters. When it was felt that the herd had been properly rounded up, the hunters on one side start shooting. The herd moved quickly in the opposite direction, where the animals were met by another volley of bullets. This went on until all or most of the caribou were killed. Every hunter remembered each animal he had shot, and considered his kill strictly individual property. The butchering of the game took place on the spot, after a lengthy meal of roasted meat. Although some hunters who killed only a few caribou might return to the main settlement, the bulk of the people stayed at the meat camp where they were joined by their families, bringing tents, utensils and the inevitable dogs with them. The hunting of caribou was continued intensively if the opportunity existed. The meat was dried in open racks, and brought down to the settlement. The meat camp usually did not last longer than two or three weeks.

When a hunter, alone or with a partner, meets a caribou herd on the mountain where there are no trees, a different autumn strategy is employed. The hunter first kills the leader of the herd, and the animals stop, then move backwards. Then a few caribou in the rear are killed, and this makes the caribou stop again. The aim is to surround the herd with a ring of dead animals which the live ones hesitate to cross. Then the rest

of the herd is easily exterminated. Employing this strategy, a single hunter once killed over 80 caribou. This gives some idea of the efficiency of the rifle.

In winter, when meat supplies are low, single hunters, or preferably hunting partners, and sometimes larger groups of men, travel on the trails of the wooded areas south of the Porcupine, where small herds of slowly moving caribou are to be found. The taiga around Lone Mountain is such a favourable hunting ground in winter for hunters from Old Crow. The hunters make camp, and roam over the country on snowshoes until a herd is located, and a few caribou killed. The caribou, cut into large pieces are loaded on the toboggan and brought to the settlement. The hunters rarely spend more than two or three days in the bush.

Until about ten years ago, meat camps were also regularly organized in mid-winter. After Christmas the people's meat supplies usually become depleted, and small groups of two or three hunters on toboggans will start hunting caribou around Lone Mountain. If a major kill is made, they go back rapidly to the settlement for their families, and soon men, women and children set up a large meat camp near the place where the caribou carcasses were left, or at a locale where better firewood is available. The people remain in this tent camp for a month or longer, usually until ratting time comes. The hunters are constantly on the move, looking for more caribou. They travel on snowshoes, without toboggans to a maximum distance of eight to ten miles from the camp. If a hunter encounters a small herd of caribou, he will try to kill them all, leaving the carcasses to be brought in the following day. If the herd is big, however, the hunter comes back, and informs the rest of the men. On the following day, a large dog team expedition is organized.

It should be noted that the vast majority of trappers do not miss an opportunity to shoot caribou when on the trail. Small herds are also decimated in spring when they move north across Crow Flats; the Indians engaged at that period in trapping muskrat do not fail to kill any caribou moving through their territory.

In brief, caribou hunting has been greatly simplified, individualized, and to a certain degree intensified, following the introduction of the rifle. This process is very similar to what has been already observed among the Eskimos. The complex collaborative forms involving traditional weapons have been abandoned, and the single hunter with his rifle is capable in all seasons of travelling to where caribou may be found and of killing

a score. He is often accompanied by other hunters who want to benefit from a particular game concentration. This, however, does not involve any extensive organic collaboration between hunters under an organized leadership (with the possible exception of the techniques used at the meat camp, and now abandoned). Rather the group is composed of autonomous hunters, each of whom accomplish the same acts.

With the help of a rifle, killing a moose also became a relatively simple activity. Where before the moose had to be ambushed near a lake after a long watch, and killed with a bow and arrow or a spear, in later years canoemen travelling along a river or on a lake can shoot any moose they see. No collaboration between hunters is necessary in moose hunting. Running down a moose in winter has been entirely abandoned.

Similarly, bear hunting ceased to involve any outstanding skills or great dangers. After the rifle had replaced the spear, any bear could be shot from a safe distance. The hunting of mountain sheep was also simplified. In recent years a single hunter met a few wild sheep on a mountain, and easily killed ten.

Thus simple shooting with a rifle replaced a number of complex traditional techniques employed in relation to the different species.

A similar transformation took place in fishing technology. Nets were introduced into the area before the end of the 19th century. However, the net did not displace the fish trap immediately. Forty years ago fish traps were still built on Crow River. With the continuous importation of netting twine, the fish trap was entirely abandoned, together with the leister. In recent years fishing, with individually owned nets is a strictly individualistic activity conducted usually by a single man. A man may simultaneously set several nets and visit them once a day, or twice a day when fish are abundant. Fishing with nets may continue under ice long after freeze-up. The net is also employed in winter for catching Arctic char at the place called Fish Hole on Firth River. Because of currents, Fish Hole does not freeze in early winter, and the open water apparently attracts large schools of Arctic char. A net is set in a semi-circular shape, and the fish driven towards the net by volleys of stones thrown into the open water. This method is said to be highly efficient, and allows hundreds of Arctic char to be caught in a matter of hours.

Hoop nets continued to be used as well as ordinary nets. Hoop nets were well suited for fishing along small creeks that are not too wide or deep; they were set for the night and checked in the morning. They were very easy to set, and were in constant use by migrating families. With the present concentration and stabilization of the population at Old Crow where only large rivers flow, hoop nets have been abandoned.

Fish hooks were also occasionally employed. The best places for fishing with a hook are the mouths of creeks, where the fish prefer to congregate in search of food. In late summer fish eggs are usually thrown into the water to attract the fish, and fishing then proceeds with a baited hook hanging from a long stick. In winter, at the same places a hole is cut in the ice, and a baited hook plunged in. Fish wheels are not used on the Canadian side of the Porcupine. This technique is successful only in muddy waters found only along the lower part of the Porcupine.

Comparing the net with the fish trap, several informants asserted without hesitation that the fish trap was a highly efficient structure, but that still larger amounts of fish could be caught with the net over an extended period through several seasons. The total catch with the net was more evenly distributed in time. Moreover, the abundant dog salmon along Porcupine river could not be caught with the fish traps, and this is possible with the net. Thus the fishing net not only regularized and intensified the fish supply, but brought new species under man's control.

The recent socio-economic history of the northern Indians in Canada has been entirely dominated by the fur trade. As the Indians became accustomed to imported goods such as rifles, and ammunition, woollen clothing, iron tools, tea, tobacco and a few foodstuffs, their reliance on the trading post increased. The fur of certain animals was the only marketable resource of the Northland, and soon became the object of systematic pursuits by the Indians. Marten, mink, lynx and later muskrat pelts were traded for the all important supplies or "necessities", without which life is unbearable in this harsh environment. Trapping gradually became the central activity of the Indian. It superseded subsistence hunting, transformed residence patterns and migration cycles, and greatly influenced leadership forms, communal life, and even family organization.

Among the Vunta Kutchin the fur trade, as in many other parts of the North, developed within the framework of the "debt" system. The

trapper has a private account at the store, and is allowed to buy goods on credit up to a certain amount, usually before starting on the trapline. Ideally the trapper uses his "outfit" acquired on credit to sustain himself while in the bush. He pays his debt with the pelts he has collected on the trip. He then starts borrowing again for the next journey. The system aims essentially at binding the trapper to a particular trader in a symbiotic relationship. The trapper and his family are protected from hardships, since they can always get credit at the store. The trader becomes assured of a certain amount of fur in his store. Needless to say, through this form of patronage, the trader is placed in a superordinate position, and easily controls his clients by arbitrarily changing the limit of the debt allowed.

Three species of furbearers were and still are of central importance in the trapping economy of the Vunta Kutchin: marten, mink and muskrat. In daily speech, the Indians distinguish between trapping muskrat, and trapping for "fur", which covers all other furbearers and especially marten and mink. The pursuit of these three main species requires very different activities, taking place in different areas.

Systematic ratting within the framework of the fur trade among the Vunta Kutchin did not start until the beginning of World War I. Before that time, the Indians caught muskrat for food with hoop nets. The flesh of the muskrat is considered excellent dog food, and is also appreciated by humans. About 1906, the trader D. Cadzow apparently brought in the first steel traps used for ratting. For the next 10 years or so ratting was not a remunerative activity. With the rise in muskrat fur prices in 1917 things changed. "It was not until 1917 that the price rise began to affect the lowly muskrat, but when it did, the result was spectacular. From forty cents in 1914, the average price of large muskrat rose to seventy-five cents in 1917, to nearly one dollar in 1918, and to $1.50 in 1920. After a slight setback in the postwar slump, market prices continued to rise slowly until 1929," (Slobodin, 1959: 61). Muskrat prices continued to rise, with many fluctuations, to an all-time high of $4.50 in 1945, and then dropped sharply the following spring to $3.00 (Slobodin, 1959: 65). During the last forty years muskrat trapping has become the most important activity in the fur trading economy of the Vunta Kutchin.

The ratting season begins with the staking of the rat houses over the innumerable lakes of Crow Flats, the main muskrat trapping area of the Vunta Kutchin. This usually takes place in December, before Christmas, before the rat houses are covered by heavy snow. In March, actual trapping

begins, each hunter concentrating on the rat houses he has staked previously. In the cold weather of March and April the unbaited traps are placed inside the rat houses. A man may use up to 45 to 50 steel traps at that season, but often the number of traps is much fewer. Only one trap is placed in a rat house, and only continuous rat houses are controlled. The trapper, on snowshoes checks his traps once a day, and collects the muskrat for three consecutive days. On the third day, he moves all his traps to a different part of the frozen lake, and again starts checking and collecting. If the lake ice supports 200 rat houses, the trapper has exhausted its resources in twelve days and has to move to another lake. It takes an average of one and a half hour to visit a dozen traps. If he is successful, and the muskrat abundant, the catch may amount to one muskrat a day per trap; usually it is somewhat less. Muskrat trapping is considered very hard work. Despite the fact that the trapper camps near the lakes he has staked, he has long walks between rat houses. Thus it is only the best, most hardy trappers who use such a large number of traps at that season. The poorer trapper is satisfied with fewer traps.

About the end of April and the beginning of May, it is no longer necessary to open the rat houses, place the trap inside, and cover it again. At this season the rat houses begin to melt, and the steel traps without bait are placed just in front of the rat holes, on the flat ice. Muskrat are even shot with a .22 rifle as they run on the ice. That is the best period for easy muskrat trapping and shooting.

After break-up, things change again. The small canvas canoes are portaged to the lakes, and the rats are shot in the water near the shore, with a .22 rifle. This is considered good sport, and in a few hours large numbers of rats may be killed. One capable hunter in a sheltered bay killed 25 rats in a matter of minutes. Spring is thus a busy time for the Vunta Kutchin. The days are long, and the husband may spend long hours in the canoe shooting muskrat, while the womenfolk are busy stretching the skins and drying the meat. Hard work is also involved, however, especially when the muskrat lakes are far away from the camp, and numerous portagings of canoes and muskrat are necessary. Frequent bad weather with strong winds may render canoeing very dangerous.

Informants agreed that a steady trapper may get over 1000 muskrat in a season. This is, however, rarely achieved. Frequent bad weather and other factors considerably lower the muskrat returns.

Mink is another valuable fur bearer. Crow Flats has been in recent years the best mink trapping area. With the beginning of the trapping season in early November, the trapper first breaks trail to his cabin or tent on Crow Flats, which serves as the central point of his trapping trips. The trapper places a number of traps along the main trail leading to his camp, near the lakes usually inhabited by mink. Starting from his cabin the trapper may open one or more side trails, and also place traps along them. These are usually short and straight, or oval in shape. A piece of caribou skin dipped in cod liver oil is used for bait. From then on the traps have to be periodically checked. It is essential that the traps be visited and reset as frequently as possible, because wolverines may destroy the trapped fur bearer. Although ideally the traps should be visited once a day, they are frequently only checked three times a week when the trapper is camping on Crow Flats. When he is residing at Old Crow, at a considerable distance from his trapping grounds, more than three visits a month are rarely made. Trapping mink may be continued till the end of February.

Instead of placing their traps along a long trail, some men use the following trapping method. A tent is pitched on a small island in a moderately large lake. The traps are placed along the beaches of that lake, or on other nearby lakes. A number of short trails connect the camp with the trapping areas, permitting frequent trap checks, and a few trappers avoid using bait. They walk across the lakes, looking for mink dens, near the lake shore, under the ice. The dens can be located by a small hole in the ice with many tracks around. The trap is placed just in front of the hole, and on top of some dry grass to prevent it freezing to the ice. Grass is also put on top of it so it will not smell. The mink gets caught by stepping on the trap. A large number of traps are used for mink. While some trappers may employ no more than 60 traps, often checked, others, who visit their traps less frequently, use 100 or more.

The best marten trapping grounds are located in the southeastern part of the Vunta Kutchin country, along the upper Porcupine and its many tributaries. While for mink and muskrat the traps are set near lakes, in the marshy lowlands, the marten trails usually cross hilly and forested areas. The marten apparently have the habit in winter of crossing the top of the hills, and it is along hills that traps are set for them. Considering the distribution of the marten population, the Johnson Creek and Whitestone settlements, near the head of the Porcupine and now abandoned, are well situated for marten trapping. Until a decade ago these villages were inhabited

by marten trappers, who tended to neglect the other fur bearers. From the Bluefish settlement, a marten trail runs south to Salmon Creek, while the trappers of Lord Creek camp and Salmon Cache camp take trips south of their establishments. The average marten trail is of considerable length, depending on the energy of its owner. While some are no longer than 30 to 40 miles, others average easily 100 miles. Breaking such a long trail is a time consuming occupation. It takes eight to ten days to break a relatively short trail, and two to three days for a checking trip. The trappers of Johnson Creek used to spend up to three weeks setting the traps, and eleven days checking them. Only a few days were spent in camp between trapping trips. An average of 150 to 200 steel traps are used by each trapper. The bait consists of rotten caribou, fish or weasel meat. It should be noted that almost all marten trap lines in the area are straight, and not circular in shape as they are in some parts of Alaska. Local informants consider the straight trap line much more convenient; it is admitted, however, that the circular line allows for more regular checking. In case of weekly checking, for instance, the traps at the beginning and the end of the trail are visited exactly a week after the previous visit, while in the case of a straight line the traps at the end of the trail are checked only a few hours after they have been set, on the return journey of the trapper. The advantages of the straight trail are considered obvious. It allows distant trapping grounds around the Upper Porcupine to be reached quickly, it avoids the overlapping of trails, and it allows the trapper to have two or more trails starting from his settlement in different directions which he uses in alternate years to allow the marten to reproduce. A straight trail covers a larger area and allows for a better choice of the hilly areas frequented by marten. It should be noted also that side trails, (branching off the main trail) are cut in the taiga.

Until a few decades ago, a traditional type of deadfall called tashanhia was used for marten. It has been described by Jones: "It consists of two long sticks of wood, the end of one held above the other by a short upright piece, the lower end of which rests on the end of a short horizontal twig carrying the bait. An enclosure of brush or twigs is built up behind the bait, so that the only access to it is between the logs. When the bait is touched the horizontal twig is disturbed, the upright is thrown down, and the upper stick falls, crushing the animal. The short logs laid over the stick serve to secure sufficient weight to kill the marten" (1866: 322). This deadfall was slowly replaced by the steel trap.

Other fur bearers of secondary importance are trapped by the Vunta Kutchin. In the not too distant past, a deadfall similar to the one described above, but much larger, was used for wolves and wolverines.

Part of a caribou neck or a bear head were used as bait. Some squirrels are also caught by placing small unbaited traps on their trails. During the years immediately preceding the 1930's, coloured and cross fox skins fetched good prices. For some time they were intensely trapped by killing a caribou and then leaving it to rot; fox traps were set all around the decaying animal. About twenty years ago or so high prices were paid for lynx pelts. In the more densely wooded areas around Johnson Creek and Whitestone village, where lynx are relatively abundant, traps are set with a particular bait. A piece of caribou tail skin, with a very smelly part of the beaver's intestines attached, is used to attract the lynx. In the other areas, a lynx trail has to be found first, and a steel trap without bait placed on it, or strong circular snare attached to a horizontal stick. Sometimes a small enclosure of dry willows is erected, and a rabbit skin with the head hanging on a stick placed in it. Two feet in front of this structure a trap with no bait is set. The lynx is caught on the trap as it jumps at the rabbit skin. Finally some weasels, whose skins are of little value, get accidentally caught in various traps. Beaver were trapped or shot with some success along the upper Porcupine until recently. Apparently, until about 25 years ago, there were numerous beaver lodges on Crow Flats. The beaver there have been completely destroyed, following intensive and indiscriminate trapping. Traps for beaver are set under the ice in front of the beaver houses in early spring. The beaver runways under the ice are first located with a crooked stick and then two traps with willows as bait are attached to two sticks, and placed in their path. Sometimes beaver snares are set right in the beaver house.

Finally, mention should be made of the illegal use of poison in trapping. The Indians frequently accuse the white trappers, once numerous all along the Porcupine, of this dangerous practice. It is said mink were plentiful along the Porcupine in older times but have been completely destroyed with poison. That is the way, some believe, that a number of white trappers enriched themselves in a short time.

With the introduction of the fur trade, considerable changes took place in the material culture. In the middle of the last century some imported clothing had already been substituted for the traditional skin garments in summer. The characteristic lower garment, consisting of combined trousers and boots, was replaced by imported cloth trousers, and modern type moccasins decorated with porcupine quills or beads. The caribou skin shirts quickly fell into disuse, and imported woollen shirts, coats and locally tailored parkas cut from blankets were preferred. Before the end of the last century, when most of these changes took place, the caribou skin clothing still in use was abundantly decorated with beads

purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company posts. The women carried long strings of beads hanging down over their parkas, while the men's caribou skin shirts were profusely decorated with strips of bead work across the shoulders. Clothing of woven rabbit skin for children was in general use until quite recently, together with lynx fur blankets. Simple, undecorated caribou skin parkas and trousers with the hair outside are still used by trappers.

Important changes took place in the type of dwellings constructed. It is assumed here that among the upper Porcupine Kutchin, the moss house or log cabin was introduced after the fur trade, and the ensuing population stability, at least in winter, developed. The log cabin, however, did not immediately displace the round-domed, caribou skin-covered shelter. This continued in use until the beginning of this century, when it was gradually replaced by the canvas tent used by whole families in summer and by trapper-hunters only in winter. Elderly informants asserted that the French-Canadians employed by the Hudson's Bay Company used to build special fireplaces of clay in their log cabins. These clay fireplaces were wide in their lower part with gradually narrowing clay chimneys. They were built in a corner, and called "lasini" (from the French la cheminee) by the Indians.

In the field of transportation the changes were substantial. The toboggan came in with the fur trade. It was made of birch wood, and the thin planks were polished with a crooked knife. No nails were used in toboggan making; the planks were lashed together with babiche lines. With the advent of the toboggan, the ideal transportation device of the trapper since it permits the transportation of relatively heavy loads, came by the multiplication of dogs. In traditional times the Kutchin had very few dogs, and sleds were usually pulled by women. With systematic trapping, more than eight dogs were frequently harnessed together in a single dogteam. This ensured the trapper of considerable mobility; a team of seven dogs can easily pull a load of three caribou. When breaking trail, the hunter, on his small or "trail" snowshoes, walks in front of the team. On other occasions the driver usually sits on the toboggan, except when going uphill, or after a fall of fresh snow.

Large dogteams, however, necessitated increased supplies of dog food. These were produced by the recent technological changes. With the repeating rifles, more caribou and muskrat were killed, and with the net more fish caught. Thus increased game returns allowed for an increase in the size of the dogteam. Large dogteams, however, are a relatively recent phenomena. Elderly informants, when describing their youthful

trapping experiences today, mention the skin toboggan ("tifreiwiltho") made of the leg skin of the moose and about four feet long, which was pulled by the trapper himself. That was the time when no dogteams were used on the trap line, and when the trapper could walk along his trail, on showshoes for a month, alone, carrying only tea and tobacco with him living off the land.

The two runner sled was not abandoned however. Although the traditional type with both ends curved up disappeared, it was replaced by a generalized type of western Arctic sled, with two handles at the rear, used exclusively in late spring on wet snow. Dog packs of traditional design continued to be used right up to the present time.

The moose skin boat was entirely abandoned. The wooden boats, now found frequently in the area were first introduced by the white traders and trappers. For a considerable period now, they have been made from planks cut with a whip saw from large logs by the Indians, and are called thrihtcho locally. They are flat bottomed, and mainly used for carrying people during the caribou and moose hunts, and rarely for fishing. Some boats have been brought in from down river (a picture of a plank boat appears in Leechman, 1954: 22). Outboard engines for these boats were imported before the war, but came into general use only about fifteen years ago. The carrying capacity of these boats is considerable, and up to 25 caribou or two cords of wood may be loaded on a larger vessel.

The canvas canoe is an indispensable craft to the fisherman. Apparently it is very similar in design to the traditional birch bark canoe, with the difference that nails replace the lashings and imported canvas is substituted for birch bark. The canvas canoe, called "thri", is very light and can easily be carried over the shoulder, as distinct from the Eskimo kayak, which was portaged on the head. It is thus ideally suited when frequent portages are necessary. In the past and present nearly every man has owned one (for a picture see Leechman, 1954: 17). The canvas canoe is used for shooting muskrat, net fishing, caribou hunting at the crossing places, moose hunting on lakes, beaver hunting and even for collecting wood. For intensive caribou hunting in autumn, motor powered boats have been preferred in recent years. In windy weather, the canoe is dangerous, as it overturns easily. It is usually used by a single man, sometimes accompanied by a child.

Finally one should mention the innumerable iron tools and other hardware brought by the fur traders. Iron knives, steel needles and files,

imported hammers and saws replaced the locally made tools. Matches allowed fire to be easily made, and pots and pans replaced the old bark, wooden and skin containers.

Changes in Social Life

The intrusion of fur traders, missionaries and policemen, all in markedly superordinate positions in relation to the Indians, not to mention the numerous white trappers and adventurers, produced marked changes in the social life of the Vunta Kutchin.

The five categories of Kutchin chiefs had functions which were deeply rooted in the social, economic and religious organization of the tribes. Besides tribal chiefs, economic leaders (caribou surround owners), sib headmen, war leaders and powerful shamans were in influential positions. The main result of both the fur trade and missionary activity was to destroy the very base upon which these traditional forms of leadership rested.

The arrival in the area of powerful European agents with specific functions rapidly interrupted all war-like activities between various local groups. The last enemy war party penetrated into Kutchin country in the 1870's. The newly established intertribal and interethnic peace ended the function of war chiefs. Previously it was noted that war activities were intimately connected with the sib structure of the tribes. The new peace thus affected one of the main raisons d'etre of the sibs, producing a rapid loss of awareness concerning sib membership and homogeneity, sib exogamy and functions, etc. War making was one of the main prerogatives of the sib leaders. With the disappearance of war, and the loss of sib functions, sib chieftainship itself quickly became an institution of bygone days. The introduction of rifle hunting and trapping, bringing to an end hunting at the caribou surrounds, ended the functions of the economic leader, owner of the caribou fences. The position of the shaman, was vigorously attacked by the missionary's activity of christianization. Shamans, however, continued to be active well into the first decades of this century. A first analysis of not too ancient cases of shamanistic behaviour indicates that shamans did lose active social leadership traditionally connected with migration in search of game and war. They retained the powers of curing, malevolent magic, fabrication of luck charms, and a number of techniques connected with sex, marriage and divination. In other words, they ceased to have an influence on the group as a totality, while continuing to operate as part of a dyade, as for instance in a curer-patient type of relationship.

We may note one exception, that of an Anglican catechist who was also a shaman. It is difficult to determine to what extent his social functions and prestige as a catechist were strengthened by his shamanistic abilities.

Finally, according to local informants, tribal chiefs of the traditional kind disappeared soon after the Hudson's Bay Company established posts in the area. Around the middle of the last century Oltçi (tsitsia sib) and Tetcukavitak (natsai sib) were the last of the Vunta Kutchin tribal chiefs.

The above descriptions, indicating the disappearance of most forms of traditional leadership, are in close harmony with the findings of Dunning in a number of settlements among the Northern Ojibwa: "This indigenous leadership waned in the face of the growing prestige and power of the external non-ethnic leader" (Dunning, 1959: 118). Additional information collected at Old Crow revealed, however, that the historic facts are considerably more complex, producing the emergence of new forms of native leadership related to the symbiotic interactions between intrusive agents and dependent Indians.

The Hudson's Bay Company, in its early activities in the area, established the practice of dealing with the tribal chief only, instead of entering into transactions with all hunter-trappers. These tribal chiefs were different from the traditional tribal leaders, in the sense that they were appointed by the Company for the specific purpose of acting as middlemen and promoters of the fur trade. One of the main functions of these trading chiefs in the early period of contact was to provide the trading post with a supply of caribou meat and waterfowl. The trading chief, and a number of the men of his tribe, regularly hunted for the European traders, and was remunerated for his efforts. Further, the trading chief was responsible for encouraging his people to trap, mostly with deadfalls. He collected the fur, brought it to the post and received various imported items in exchange, such as guns, powder and lead, tea, tobacco, some clothing, etc. These he distributed to the Indian families who remained in the bush. Acting as middleman, the trading chief helped to integrate the whole tribe in the exchange circuit of the fur trade. All the successive Vunta Kutchin trading chiefs who traded at Old Rampart and later upstream were of the natsai sib. The trading chief was under obligation to visit the trading post regularly. If he failed to do so he was replaced by a more reliable man. According to local tradition, there was a succession of four trading chiefs in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company among the Vunta Kutchin. It was only gradually, as the trapping activities and the trading habits became firmly established, that individual trappers began trading personally at the post. The trading chief, however,

continued to receive a bulky annual present from the Company when he arrived at the post; this present was then redistributed to the families. Assak was the last of the trading chiefs of the Tukkuth tribe. He used to trade at Fort McPherson, with his people, arriving there before the Mackenzie supply boat reached the settlement. As soon as the boat arrived, he was given a present of 100 lbs of flour, 50 lbs of sugar, and some rice and other food. With these foodstuffs, a feast was immediately organized in which all the Tukkuth Kutchin present participated. One summer, Assak failed to reach Fort McPherson, and from then on the custom of present giving was discontinued.

With the departure of the Hudson's Bay Company from the Ramparts, the trading chiefs also vanished. They were individuals of considerable power and prestige, as one informant put it: "They were very strong men, they ordered people around, including the Company men". For a time the Vunta Kutchin found themselves with no leaders. Only later, in this century, and under instructions from the Indian Affairs agent did the Vunta Kutchin start to elect band chiefs. There has been a succession during the last forty years or so of a small number of capable men, starting with Big Joe Kay, and including Old Chief Peter Moses, and later Charlie Peter Charlie, down to the present band chief. They were elected by band assembly, and aided by two councillors. They acted essentially as links between the Canadian administration and the band. Orders issued by the Indian Affairs agent were sent first to the local RCMP detachment, and then transmitted to the chief, who informed the band assembly. More important however, the band chiefs used to have some legal functions, judging minor conflicts over trapping rights, loose dogs, uncontrolled drinking, and marital problems.

The position held by the trading chief in relation to the Euro-Canadian trader, and the band chief in relation to the Indian Affairs agent, was duplicated in a different sphere by the Indian catechist serving under the Anglican minister. It should be stated, however, that several categories of Indians drew authority and prestige from the presence of the Anglican mission among the Vunta Kutchin. The activities of the two accredited Indian missionaries, first at Rampart House and then at Old Crow, have been mentioned already. There existed, however, a category of locally recruited minister's helpers. These were usually trained by the ministers themselves, and performed various functions in the church, including holding services in Athapaskan and preaching. Their religious activities were important in winter and spring when the people lived in small isolated groups away from the main settlements. They interpreted the teachings of the missionary to the people, preached the gospel, tried to enforce the observation of Christian

norms, and conducted prayers. They drew considerable prestige from their activities. In one case, a catechist was also a band chief for a number of years; he was also an excellent hunter and packer. Thus considerable moral and political authority was concentrated in his hands. There are examples of him judging marital cases with positive results. The Métis descendant of a missionary famous in the area during the period of initial contact stands in a category apart. Because of his fluent knowledge of English, his association with church activities, and his leadership capabilities he was considered as the true leader of the people for a number of years, besides being the elected band chief. When Euro-Canadian visitors came to Old Crow, he took it upon himself to speak on behalf of the group. Being well informed of happenings in the surrounding world, and because of his connections with the local agents, he was able to have a strong influence on public opinion. He may thus be considered as a "talking chief" and an organizational leader in important events. The construction of the new church at Old Crow in 1950's was an achievement for which he was mainly responsible.

Finally, the trading activities of Blackfox, a local Indian, have already been noted. Not only does he control credit, but his advice is frequently sought by Indian and Euro-Canadian alike on a variety of matters.

It is clear that, following the disappearance of the traditional chiefs, a new type of leadership emerged. Some Indians and a few Métis either formally, through the exercise of specific function, or informally, through the prestige that these functions bestowed, were in possession of certain authority, and were clearly capable of influencing the acts and thoughts of others. Harsh orders were avoided in the typical local manner, and calm persuasion was most frequently used. It is clear that these embryonic forms of native leadership were exercised within the framework of the symbiotic relations linking the Euro-Canadian agents to the local society. The Native leaders were always subordinate to their Euro-Canadian masters. Only in the case of Blackfox do we find a truly independent leader. Thus final decisions in most cases rested with the Euro-Canadian agents who may be considered as the true power holders in most community affairs. In no case should the functions of the Indian intermediaries be forgotten for they were clearly part of the community power structure.

From the beginning of the acculturation process the Anglican missionaries have had a profound and continuing influence on native religious and social life. There is no local tradition referring to the conversion of the Vunta Kutchin to Christianity, except that it was done quickly and with no

hesitation. The missionaries vigorously denounced all heathen beliefs and practices, particularly shamanism and the more exotic dances, and consistently preached the basic Christian dochotomies: God and Devil, Paradise and Hell, Good and Evil, etc. The Indians were taught to read the Scriptures and to pray. When living in isolated trapping camps the people saw their beliefs and practices controlled by the local catechist. During the summer period, with all the people settled around Rampart House, and later Old Crow, church attendance was at its maximum. All the evidences show that the Indians believed sincerely in the new religion, and were submissive to the missionary. They did not, however, abandon their native beliefs. Up to this day brushmen haunt the imagination of the people, together with monsters, giants and dwarfs at Crow Flats. There is an active commerce in luck charms, and dreams receive a spiritual interpretation. In a period of crisis, sickness, etc., the help of the shaman is sought. Despite some attempts to explain the traditional myths with elements drawn from the Bible, both religions persist to the present day -- although the old form is modified.

If the suppression of intertribal warfare and the loss of traditional sib chieftainship were instrumental in the decay of the sib-moiety system, (Murdock, 1949: 67) the new norm of Christian marriage ignoring sib exogamy, and the progressive neglect of ceremonialism gave it the coup de grace. There is no evidence that missionaries intervened repeatedly in native marital choices. Increasingly, however, in the judgment of the people, a couple was to be considered married only after a church ceremony. And in the church, sib exogamy did not count. Considering that the traditional culture made provisions for endogamous unions, sib affiliations soon lost any influence in mate selection. Thus a small number of endogamous marriages had already taken place before the turn of the century. Characteristically enough these involved individuals close to the Anglican church.

Previously we noted that numerous ceremonials closely expressed the sib-moiety structure. After the end of the last century, the government forbade the potlatch ceremony with its associated excesses. Although funeral feasts continued to be held, these consisted of a single communal repast, accompanied by moderate gift giving. The moose feast in summer no longer featured the alignments of sibs in opposing factions; husband and wife of different sibs sat together. Speech making at the end of the feast continued, without involving, however, the aggressive meat giving to a negligent orator. The first salmon feast was abandoned entirely. Despite the persistence of certain elements of sibship in recent feast making, the impression gained was that ceremonials in recent years do not occupy the place they did in

traditional social life, and that modern feasting is no longer closely associated with sib alignments. The cumulative effect of all these factors rapidly caused the sib-moiety system to decay remarkably, as noted by Osgood in 1932 "the younger generation does not even know the clan names" (1936: 172), and Slobodin in 1946: "They (the sibs) are now obsolescent" (1959: 77).

The missionary influences were responsible for changes in a number of ceremonies associated with certain physiological events in the life of an individual. The taboo against sexual intercourse following childbirth disappeared, as did the compulsory confinement in a special shelter of a girl reaching puberty, as well as the numerous associated practices. The three traditional ways of disposing of the dead (cremation, abandonment, interment in an elevated cache) gave place to Christian burial. The traditional practices of infanticide and of killing old people disappeared. Actual cases of physical murder became very rare, and are almost unknown in recent years, although killing with magical means may be practiced at the present time.

Most of the missionaries' efforts concerned the local sex mores and family life. In this field, on the surface at least, considerable changes took place. First, the polygyny of the wealthy and powerful, involving common residence of multiple wives, was eliminated as was the infrequent polyandry. Further, the institutionalized wife exchange based on the traditional scao partnership was abandoned. There was consistent preaching against premarital sex experiences and adultery. The missionary aimed at making of the family a stable social unit, and in this he largely succeeded. Until about twenty years ago, not a single case of permanent separation was recorded. Temporary separations of a few days or weeks following various marital quarrels during the separation the wife slept in the cache for some time took place. There is a case, in the 1930's, of a separation for one year. On the whole, this prolonged period of intense missionary influence was characterized by considerable family stability. This certainly does not signify that repeated extramarital affairs did not take place. On the contrary there are numerous examples of adulterous behaviour. This, however, does not prejudice the family as an institutionalized social unit.

The missionary's purposeful efforts succeeded in establishing Christian baptism, church marriage and burial in lieu of the traditional rites de passage. He further consolidated the family as the basic kinship

unit, and as the only one. Within the framework of Christian practice, new forms of relationships appeared, including godparenthood, binding an infant to one or preferably to two usually non-related godparents, and "sponsorhood" between a married couple, and the individuals who sponsored the marriage. Godparents and sponsors are addressed as father and mother, and the relationship continues through life although it gradually decreases in functional importance. Interesting enough, during the early acculturative period, when these specific relations were introduced in the culture, godparents and sponsors had to be of the opposite sib. If the baby was a wolf, the godparent had to be a crow. This was an effort to interpret the new institution within the framework of the sib system.

There is little precise information on extended kinship relations of that period. Simon A.'s testimony refers to a characteristic traditional relation between grandparents and grandchildren: "When I was a child I used to stay with my grandfather (his father's father. Simon is over 40 years old at present). When we camped together I used to leave my father's tent, and move to my grandfather's place. He would give me food and talk to me nice about the old life, about fighting with the Huskies, about people who make medicine, about the old stories and about willow-man. All the boys in those days were that way. They used to like their grandfathers very much". Further inquiries revealed that grandfathers used to teach boys how to hunt, and would show them the best hunting areas in the country. Similar relations existed between MoMo and DaDa, between MoFa and DaSo.

In the important field of subsistence activity, despite the existence of numerous unstable trapping and hunting partnerships, the family tended to behave as the basic socio-economic unit in all seasons. All pelts were strictly individual property. This was also true of the big game returns, despite frequent meat gift giving. The social importance of the family as a distinct unit was easily visible in its rigorous neolocality. Not only families resided in individual dwellings, but elderly people and bachelors stayed in separate houses or tents.

In summary, the following major acculturative trends that emerge during this long period of transition can be noted. It is easy to notice either the complete disappearance or marked decay of a number of traits and institutions. The traditional distinction between social classes, based on caribou surround and dentalium shells ownership, has ceased to exist. There are certainly some better trappers today, but their position does not make them socially distinguishable from the others, and no patron-client relationship can be established between the two categories. Numerous

social customs and various ceremonial activities have either been abandoned or transformed. The sib-moiety structure has completely decayed. Following the fur trade and missionary activity, the family has been stabilized, and tends to emerge as the basic socio-economic unit during all seasons. Some extended kinship bonds do persist, together with the establishment of new sets of dyadic, artificial kinship relations. Following the participation of the people in numerous church activities, the whole tribe tends to form a religious unit. The atomizing tendencies resulting from the fur trade are compensated for to a certain degree, but in a totally different field and by the integrative efforts of the missionary.

Changes in Annual Cycles and Residence Patterns

In the following paragraph the annual cycle of the Tukkuth Kutchin band at the beginning of this century will be described, based on information provided by Old Paul Porcupine, who was a boy at that time. In 1901 the Tukkuth apparently heard about the Dawson gold rush, and during the following years they regularly visited Eagle for trading purposes.

In spring the people left their toboggans near the present day location of Whitestone village, and awaited break-up while busily engaged in the preparation of moose skin boats. These were small craft with canoe style pointed ends, and were covered with four moose skins. All the people who had been staying above Whitestone gradually arrived there, and, after break-up, the whole band slowly descended the Porcupine to Whitefish Lake near Bell and Eagle rivers. After a short stay at the lake, the band travelled to Fort McPherson, across the Richardson mountains. There the people awaited the arrival of the Mackenzie steamboat. Immediately after the supplies were unpacked, the grand time of feasting and trading began. Robert, the last of the Tukkuth chiefs appointed by the Hudson's Bay Company received a bulky present of imported foodstuffs, and organized a feast that lasted for several days. The men traded the few marten skins they brought with them and got tea, tobacco, powder and lead. Trading finished, the people returned to Whitefish Lake in July along the same trail. From there, in August, they slowly ascended the Porcupine to the Tritka Mountains to hunt caribou and moose with muzzle loading guns. They dried the meat and placed it in caches. After the first fall of snow in late September, the men travelled down to Whitestone village to get the toboggans, harnesses and winter clothing left there the previous winter. After freeze-up, the whole band, pulling toboggans loaded with dried meat, moved to the head of Peel river. There they set up camp in their round, caribou skin covered shelters (the Tukkuth did not have log cabins at that time). The men at that time had very few steel traps, and

these they set for foxes at a short distance from the camp. This was also the period for intensive mountain sheep hunting. About the end of October or during November a few men started on the long trading journey to Eagle. They loaded their toboggans with mountain sheep meat, moose and caribou skins, fox skins, and various articles of local manufacture such as mittens, moccasins, etc. All these articles were for sale for cash to the white people at Eagle, and imported supplies were bought with the money. In late November or December the band split into three groups for the rest of the winter.

In the year 1908 the following people remained near the head of Peel River:

- Peter Onehand, his wife Sarah (daughter of Kenneth), four small children.
- Big Charlie, his wife Ellen, six children, some grown up.
- Chief Robert, his wife and one son staying at the time with him, the others having married in the tribe.
- Garlen (son of Chief Robert), his wife Lise, one small boy.
- Big John, his wife Luisa (daughter of Chief Robert).
- Julius Kendi, his wife Basis (daughter of Chief Robert).
- Charlie Çikiviçi, his wife Karlen.
- Kenneth, his wife Rya, a boy and a girl.
- Alfred Charlie, his wife Alice.

The following moved to Miner River:

- Cuma, his wife Lisa (daughter of Chief Robert), two small children.
- Steven, his wife Lisa (daughter of Kenneth), one small boy.
- Natzoti, his wife Alice, six children, some grown up.
- Andrew Tibia, his wife Mary, three small boys.
- Alver Vitçayk, his wife Rya, one small girl.
- Thomas, his wife Sanarankha (sister of Chief Robert).
- Jose, his wife Mary, five children including informant.
- Charlie Liar, his wife Rya.
- Charile Tsiki, his wife Sarah.
- Alver Tsiki, his wife Rubina.

The following moved to Whitestone River:

- John Nukon with his mother Jean.
- Ben Katzer, his wife Sarah.
- William Katzer (father of Ben), his wife Karlen, five children.
- Jose Belam, his wife Sarah, two small children.

According to this list, the whole Tukkuth tribe in 1908 consisted of 23 families, including the household of a mother with her adult son. The first group included nine families made up of nine couples with fourteen children. The second group consisted of ten couples with eighteen children, and the third of three couples with seven children, not including John Nukon. The small number of children may be explained as follows. First, there were several elderly couples with adult descendants married in the tribe, for example Chief Robert with three daughters and one son, who do not appear as children in the list. Second, there are elderly couples with adult descendants married outside the tribe, for example, Charlie Cikiviçi with one son and two daughters married outside. Third, infanticide may still have been practiced at that time. Fourth, some children were probably omitted by our informant. The list indicates a total of 85 individuals unequally divided into three groups. This number is remarkably close to the Vunta Kutchin total for the middle of the last century, as indicated by Murray. There is no exact information concerning the kinship composition of the groups. The married descendants of Chief Robert and Kenneth were to be found among both the Peel and Miner rivers groups. The informant asserts that the composition of these three groups was unstable, people freely deciding to change groups in the following years. There was a tendency for near relatives to camp in different areas, so if the hunting of one person was unsuccessful he could rely on the accumulated supplies of his relatives elsewhere. Finally, these families do not represent households or commensal units, since two families shared a single caribou skin shelter.

The men in these isolated, small groups spent the rest of the winter intensively hunting caribou, and occasionally setting a deadfall or steel trap for marten near the camp. In spring, before break-up the people started again on the journey to Whitestone, and from there travelled to Whitefish Lake and Fort McPherson.

The main characteristics of this annual cycle are easily noticeable. Trading had become an established activity, and supplies had to be periodically purchased at the store in exchange for furs. The traditional forms of leadership had disappeared, giving place to the formalized chieftainship instituted by the Hudson's Bay Company. Guns had largely replaced snares in caribou hunting. There were still few steel traps, and there is no indication of individually owned trap lines of any length. Trapping appears to have been a marginal activity at the turn of the century, the caribou chase and the necessity for trading at distant posts being the primary factors

determining the extension and direction of the migration route. In summer and autumn the tribe acted as a unit, splitting up into segments in winter only.

The following cycle, which took place at the beginning of the century, shows a mixture of traditional and new patterns. It illustrates the increased mobility of the people, and some intensified trading.

Elias married at Fort McPherson that year. After his marriage he borrowed five dogs from the missionary, and with his wife returned to Herschel Island in spring time. He then moved south across the mountains to the caribou corral of Thomas, where some people had been hunting caribou. Soon after break-up he descended to Crow Flats, where he spent the summer fishing with fish traps set across creeks. In September he moved north again to the caribou corral owned by Thomas. About a dozen families had camped together there and hunted caribou with snares. They did this even though they had guns, in order to save ammunition. Elias spent the winter in the mountains, trapping foxes, wolverines and wolves. There was plenty of dried caribou meat. Most of the people who had been hunting at the corral moved away, and only Elias' father remained with him. They had several steel traps, and exchanged their furs at Herschel for some imported foodstuffs. They did not have canvas tents, and continued to live in caribou skin dwellings. With spring approaching, Elias with his wife moved first to Herschel, and from there carried the mail to Fort McPherson, and returned shortly after to Thomas' corral where they found some other families, busily hunting caribou. Elias killed over 70 caribou that spring, mostly with his guns. From the corral he went with some friends, to Dev Lord Creek to trap marten. In summer he again crossed the Richardson mountains to Fort McPherson to await the arrival of the steamer there. His trading for tobacco, tea, matches, ammunition and clothes completed, he went to Lapierre House where a raft of logs was made, enabling him to descend the Porcupine to Old Crow. There he fished for dog salmon with nets, and in early fall shot many caribou at Crow Mountain. The women at Old Crow were busy making caribou skin dwellings for the approaching winter. That summer D. Cadzow arrived at Rampart House and opened a trading post. From then on Elias's migrations were centered on the new store.

With the establishment of trading stores in the Vunta Kutchin area, first at Rampart House and later at Old Crow, Whitestone village and Lapierre House, the relative importance of trapping in the local economy increased, and the people became firmly involved in the fur trade.

The nineteen forties and the early nineteen fifties, saw the local population distributed in a number of very small settlements all along the Porcupine, from Rampart House to Whitestone village. The Porcupine served as the main line of communication in summer, boats of various sizes transporting people and goods between trading store and settlements.

Each small establishment was composed of one, two, or sometimes more families living in individual log cabins. From the settlements, a number of trap lines ran in different directions. The location and composition of each camp is given below, starting from Bluefish River and continuing upstream along the Porcupine. It should be noted that the composition of each settlement was never definite. There was a certain amount of movement between camps for varying periods of a year and longer. In general, informants clearly identified themselves with a particular locality where they habitually resided in their own cabins, prior to their permanent concentration at Old Crow. White trappers who married native women are included in this enumeration.

Near the mouth of Bluefish River, on the Porcupine, lived the Frost family. For some time the Frosts resided on Crow Flats, near Schaefer Creek, in a cabin purchased from a white trapper. For a number of years Mrs. Frost's mother and father stayed with them.

They spent the spring ratting on Crow Flats. About June 15, at the end of the ratting season, they descended Old Crow River in canvas boats to Old Crow where they stayed about two weeks, busily engaged in trading. With their supplies, they moved to Bluefish camp, and for the rest of the summer they rarely visited Old Crow again. Summer was the season for fishing and collecting berries. Nets were placed in the Porcupine and in Horsehoe Lake, just behind the camp, where jackfish and loche abounded. Moose were hunted during special trips to the lakes in the area of 140°15'W, 67°20'N-67°30'N. Bears were shot along rivers. During September, dog salmon were intensively fished. In late summer toboggans and snowshoes were made. This was the season for intensive caribou hunting, as the herds frequently crossed the Porcupine near the camp. The hunters moved by canoe along the river, ready to shoot the caribou on the beaches. There were years, however, when the large herds did not cross the area. In November, the trapping season started.

Two marten trap lines ran south from Bluefish camp. The first (F_1 on Map 1) was relatively short. It was operated by Mr. Frost and his two sons, and involved a two-day trip. This trap line was visited only

four or five times before Christmas, and never after Christmas, in order to avoid complete depletion of the game. The second trap line (F_2 on Map 1) was first established by Mr. Frost, who showed it to his sons. They then operated it alone. It was considerably longer, leading straight south to Salmon Fork river. It took two to three weeks to set up the traps, which were checked only twice in winter, before and after Christmas. Caribou and moose were frequently hunted along the trail. Each brother used about 75 traps, and remained the owner of the marten caught in his traps. The Frosts attach a definite feeling of ownership to their trap lines, and after they moved to Old Crow in 1950 they have sporadically continued the exploitation of their trap line.

Old Robert Steamboat, Old Kwatlatchi and his son Elias, Old Peter Moses, Old Tizya with his sons Moses and Jacob, Neil MacDonald, Archie Linklater and Old Bruce Resided at Old Crow settlement.

Old Robert Steamboat trapped mainly on Crow Flats for mink, lynx and foxes. Elias' trap line ran to the headwaters of Driftwood River: he trapped for marten, lynx and foxes. He rarely stayed on the trail for longer than a week, and his family always resided at Old Crow. Peter Moses trapped south in the direction of Bluefish River, mainly for marten. Old Tizya with his sons Moses and Jacob preferred to trap on Crow Flats for foxes, mink and lynx. Archie Linklater and Old Bruce's trap lines were very long, extending in a southwesterly direction towards the headwaters of the Porcupine.

Dev Lord, a white trapper, with his sons, and Sarah Abel and her descendants resided near the mouth of Dev Lord Creek. Later, one of Sarah Abel's daughters married a son of Dev Lord. This was the traditional site of the Abel family. Sarah Abel, with her son Albert, lived in a frame tent, while all married couples lived in individual log cabins.

Pete, a son of Dev Lord, was an outstanding trapper, equally able at trapping muskrat, mink and marten. His mink trap line, starting from Dev Lord settlement ran north to Little Flats, the southern part of Crow Flats, (see L_1 on Map 1); it was a three-day journey. The first day Pete Lord travelled to his camp on the trap line (marked X on L_1, Map 1); on the second day he visited the traps situated to the west of the trail camp. On the third day he returned home along a different route. He usually checked the traps once a week, and more frequently in stormy weather, as minks like moving after a snowfall. The period before Christmas yields better results than the period after, when the mink prefer to stay under the snowbanks.

For marten trapping Pete Lord alternated between two trails. One winter he used the marten trap line running first to Sharp Mountain, and then to the middle course of Johnson Creek (see L_2 on Map 1); the following winter his trail passed first through the mouth of Driftwood River and from there directly south (see L3 on Map 1). The two trap lines were roughly of equal length. Pete Lord set his marten traps immediately after November 15th, checked them twice before Christmas and more often after the New Year. It took him fifteen days to set the traps, and about ten days for a checking trip.

Pete Lord hunted caribou intensively in autumn, especially in late September, when the herds cross the Porcupine, and the animals are fat. He avoided hunting caribou along the trap line. Immediately after the hunting season, Pete Lord cut his winter supply of wood. He made an effort to engage in one activity at a time, either hunting, trapping or wood cutting. That way he felt he could obtain better results.

At Salmon Cache, near the mouth of Berry Creek, Moses Tizya resided for a number of years with some of his descendants. Moses Tizya is the only Indian who lives in the bush, away from Old Crow, at the present time.

Around the middle of September, Moses leaves Old Crow where he camps all summer. As he does not have a boat, he uses somebody else's canoe. During the second half of September and in October he hunts caribou along the river beaches, and cuts driftwood for home use. This is also the period of intensive fishing; in a matter of weeks Moses can catch over 1000 fish with two nets. While most of the fish are kept frozen, and placed on an open rack, some are dried in the cabin. In the middle of November, Moses starts trapping marten with the help of his five dogs. His trap line runs in a northwesterly direction towards the middle course of Driftwood River. It takes him four days to set his 70 traps, and three days for a checking trip. He has a tent set up along the trail where he spends two nights. He visits his traps once every ten days. Moses finishes trapping marten around the end of February. Secondary activities in winter are hauling driftwood with the toboggan, and fishing with a net under the ice. Moses may occasionally kill a moose in the bush, or a bear. At present bear meat is not eaten by humans, but is used exclusively as dog food. The bearskin is a highly esteemed mattress. Moses's wife snares rabbits, and occasionally some ptarmigans may get caught in the snares. Moses returns to Old Crow at the end of February for a short

stay of a week or two in order to get a new outfit. In early April the family leaves for Crow Flats for the ratting season, where they stay until June 15th, at which date they return to Old Crow in the canvas boats. Moses spends the summer resting at Old Crow. In September he again starts on his journey up the Porcupine with a new outfit which is usually worth less than $200. Moses concludes: "Life in the bush is good. I have everything I need, I never starve, I live near the fur, wood and caribou".

About 25 years ago, two elderly brothers, Old Peter Charlie and John Charlie, lived at Johnson Creek village. Two of Old Peter Charlie's sons were nearing adulthood. These two, Lazar and Charlie, got married later. They remained at Johnson Creek village with their families, and their unmarried siblings. John Charlie's mother-in-law, old Margaret Blackfox, and Peter Charlie's mother, Ellen, were still alive and living there. When Fanni, daughter of Moses Tizya, married Charlie Peter Charlie, Moses Tizya also took up residence among the Charlie family for a certain period. Clearly, the core of this camp was composed of two elderly brothers, their descendants, and some affinals.

Johnson Creek village was situated in the best marten trapping area, and this activity, as well as the usual caribou and moose hunting and fishing, was highly developed there. Three main marten trap lines converged on this village. Old Peter Charlie's trail ran to the southwest, while John Charlie's trap line lay south. Charlie Peter Charlie and his brother Lazar jointly operated a long trap line leading to the headwaters of the Porcupine (see C on Map 1). Lazar and Charlie set about 500 traps in November during a three week trip. A trap checking journey lasted, on the average, eleven days. They remained no longer than a week between trapping trips. The setting of the traps was done under the direction of their father, who would walk on snowshoes in front of the toboggan telling the young men exactly where and how to set the traps. Checking traps was done by Lazar and Charlie alone, and in summer the traps were not removed. The trail usually followed the top of the hills, such places being particularly abundant along the upper Porcupine.

At Whitestone village, another stable alignment was to be found, consisting of John Nukon and his sister's husband Old Paul, together with their descendants, among whom were two sons and a married daughter of John Nukon. Blackfox, the Indian trader, also operated a modest store there for a period of three years, before moving to Old Crow. Other people,

distantly related or unrelated to this group remained there for varying periods. John Nukon was an outstanding trapper, and apparently built the first cabin there in 1940 after his return from Eagle. He owned a large motor boat, and carried his own supplies to Whitestone village. Charlie Thomas was his son-in-law. In 1941, at the age of 21, Charlie Thomas left his parents at Old Crow, and established himself in his wife's father's locality, in order to learn from the superior skills of John Nukon.

The summer was spent travelling to Alaska by boat for supplies. About September 1st, they would reach Whitestone village. September was spent in tents, at a fishing camp 15 miles downstream. In early October they moved to the main settlement, and started getting ready for the winter, making toboggans, snowshoes, and harnesses. In November they started trapping marten. There were several trap lines running from Whitestone village. Three of them were: Iniktrail (see W_1 on Map 1), Mason Hill Trail (see W_2 on Map 1) and Cody Hill trail (see W_3 on Map 1). Charlie Thomas never trapped marten on his own. He always had a partner, but never the same one for two consecutive years. He used about 80 traps, and it took him one week to set them, and four days to check them. His partner and he had two toboggans, and travelled together. Sometimes they divided the fur evenly, sometimes each partner collected the catch of his own traps only, and kept the furs for himself.

In February a trip to Old Crow was made to get supplies usually under 200 lbs. in weight. In March some beaver trapping was done, and this sometimes continued through April, depending on the availability of the game. In early spring, the group moved to the ratting sites at Crow Flats, descending old Crow River on June 15th, and then proceeding by boat to Alaska.

The settlement patterns of the Vunta Kutchin have undergone profound transformations under the increasing impact of the fur trade. The necessity of trapping furbearers had obliged the local population to live in small, isolated settlements all along the Porcupine River. A number of marten trap lines converged on each settlement. The kinship composition of the camps was varied. It might consist of an elderly father with his adult sons, married or unmarried (Bluefish and Salmon Cache camps). The core of the camp might be composed also of an alignment of two elderly brothers with their descendants (Johnson Creek village), or of an old man and his brother-in-law and their sons and daughters (Whitestone village). The annual cycle reveals a pattern of caribou hunting and fishing in autumn, marten or mink

trapping in winter, ratting at Crow Flats in spring, and a collective journey in summer to Old Crow settlement. The reliance on imported foodstuffs increased to the point where they replaced caribou meat, in the case of the Whitestone villagers.

The fur trade rigidly governed most of the winter and spring activities, and the collective journeys of the people. The individual family tended increasingly to behave as an independent economic unit in the fields of subsistence hunting, trapping and fishing. It also formed the only commensal unit in all seasons. The numerous hunting and trapping partnerships, all of them highly unstable, did not constitute lasting forms of organic collaboration, or a higher and more complex type of economic integration.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY OLD CROW CULTURE

The Population

In the summer of 1961 the total population residing at Old Crow numbered a little over 198 individuals. This figure includes both Indians (about 140) and Metis (about 50), but excludes the transient Euro-Canadian agents. Females (about 103), slightly outnumbered the males. On Figure 1 the pyramid of ages indicates that about 60% of the total population is under 20 years of age; this may show a very low life expectancy. The presence of a large number of infants in the population of Old Crow is the result of a drastic decrease in the infant mortality rate in recent years, combined with a high birth rate. This suggests a considerable change in the demographic structure of the population. Because of the lack of data on the total population of the Old Crow area in past decades, it is impossible to calculate the changes in the past demographic composition of the people exactly.

Figure 1

Population Pyramid for Old Crow

Summer 1961

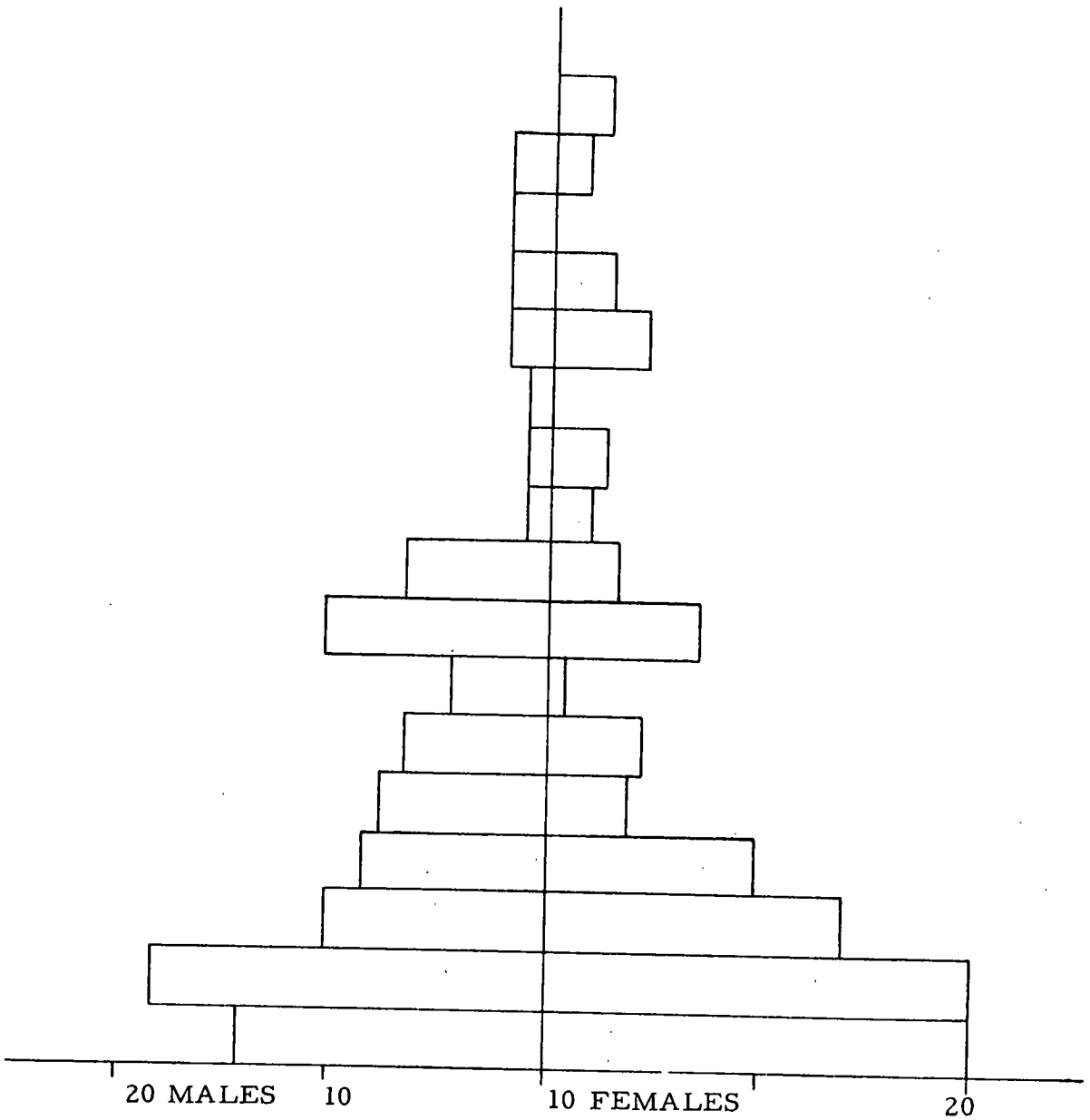
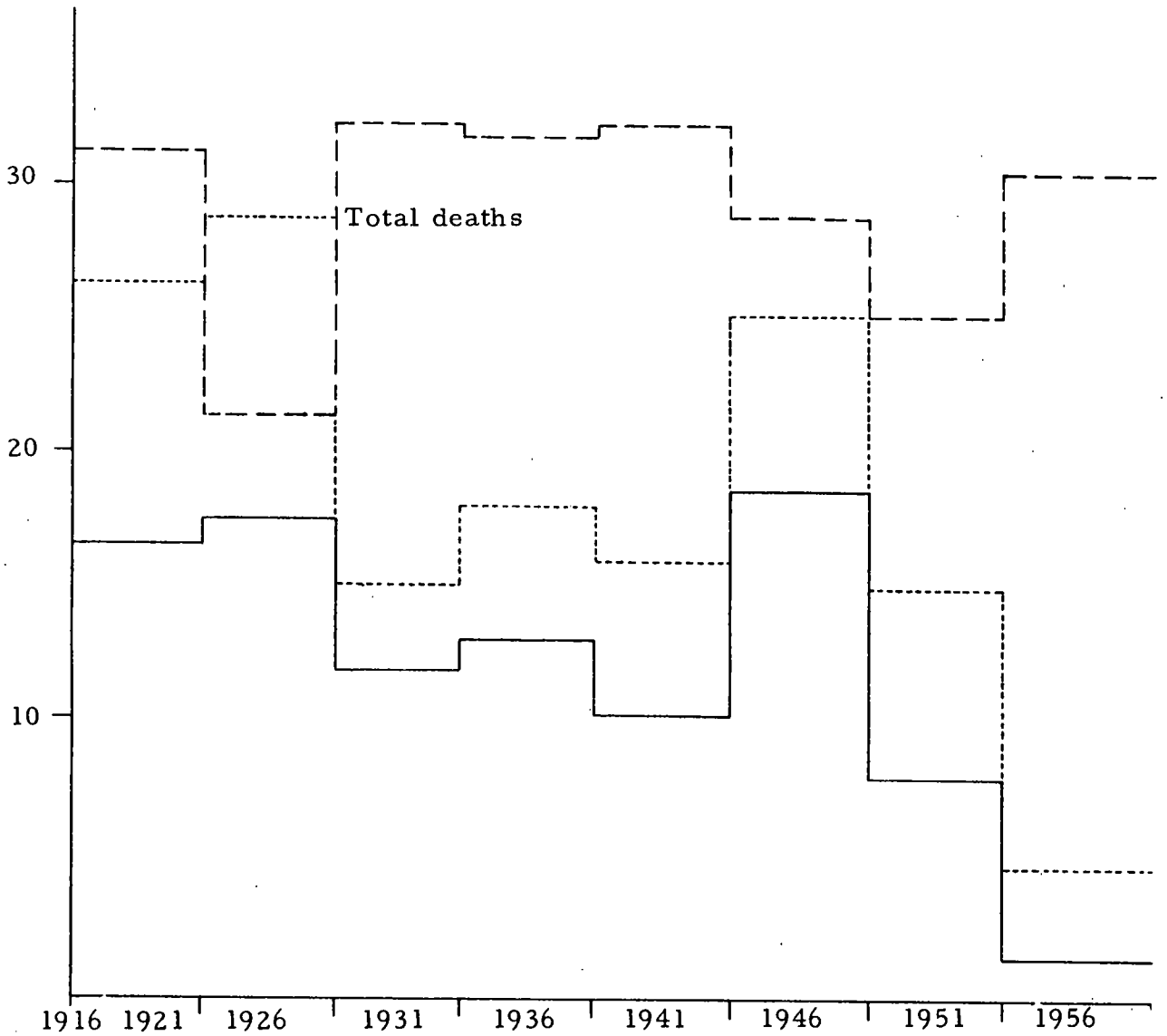


TABLE I

Population of Old Crow, by Age and Sex
Summer 1961

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
-4	14	20	34
5 - 9	18	20	38
10 - 14	10	14	24
15 - 19	8	10	18
20 - 24	7	4	11
25 - 29	6	5	11
30 - 34	4	1	5
35 - 39	10	7	17
40 - 44	7	4	11
45 - 49	1	2	3
50 - 54	1	3	4
55 - 59	1		1
60 - 64	2	5	7
65 - 69	2	3	5
70 - 74	2		2
75 - 71	2	2	4
+80 -		3	3
TOTAL	95	103	198



Total deaths

Deaths of infants and adolescents under 20

Total births

Figure 2

Deaths and births 1916 - 1956

Old Crow area

TABLE II

Deaths and Births Old Crow Area
1916 - 1955

Years	Total deaths	Deaths of infants and adolescents under 20 and	Total births
1916 - 1920	27	17	32
1921 - 1925	29	18	22
1926 - 1930	15	12	33
1931 - 1935	18	13	32
1936 - 1940	16	10	34
1941 - 1945	26	19	29
1946 - 1950	15	8	26
1951 - 1955	6	2	31

Figure 2 and Table II indicate the changes for the period 1916-1956 in the total numbers of deaths, deaths of infants and adolescents under 20, and total deaths for the Old Crow group. Birth and death rates have not been calculated, because of the lack of information on the total populations in the past. Two trends, however, stand out clearly. First, there is a very high mortality rate of infants and adolescents. This may be explained mainly by the greater vulnerability of the children to tuberculosis, which was probably one of the main causes of death in the past when hospital facilities were not easily available. Second, there has been a sharp decrease in the death rate in recent years (6.3 per thousand population for the period 1951-1956), and a relatively high birth rate (32 per thousand for the same period). The presence of a nurse at Old Crow during the last decade, regular X-Ray checks, a generous hospitalization program, and the introduction of the Family Allowance system are among the main factors contributing to a lowering of the infant and adult mortality rates.

Changes in Residence Patterns, Economy and Intercultural Relations

The Influence of Euro-Canadian Agents

Of all the Euro-Canadian agencies, the Federal Day school at Old Crow has had the most profound impact on native ways in recent years. For a long period the Anglican school at Carcross attracted Indian boys and girls from the Yukon. A small number of children from Old Crow have benefited in the past from a prolonged stay at Carcross. Other youngsters were sent to school in Dawson City. There they had the opportunity to get an elementary education, and to learn to read, write and speak English. Before 1950, no systematic effort was made to establish a proper schooling system for all the Old Crow children. Missionaries were active as teachers mainly in summer, when the people gathered at Old Crow. In 1950 the first school was opened at Old Crow, operating in a log cabin until 1960, when a new building was erected.

The establishment of a Federal school at Old Crow acted like a magnet on the people living in the area. The families rapidly abandoned their winter settlements along the Porcupine River, and settled permanently at Old Crow. In 1960-61 only one family spent the winter away from Old Crow. This concentration of the people near the school was a result of the parents clearly realizing the advantages of an education for their children. Considering that this relocation interfered to a great extent with the traditional trapping and hunting activities of the "Indian way of life", it amounted to the choice of a

different culture, and of a desire to live like the white man. Elementary school is taught in the morning and early afternoon, with the participation of all school age children at Old Crow. The curricula and text books adopted are those of the Province of Alberta. The school acts also as a centre for adult education. Some school-teachers have conducted English reading and writing classes for adults in winter. Educational films are sometimes shown in evenings. School-children are generally not allowed out late at night, and at 10 p.m. the community bell signals bed time for children. The school system thus introduces a certain routine among the younger generation.

High school is taught at the large Federal school at Inuvik, N.W.T. Each summer, parents are invited to submit the names of their children willing to spend a year or more at the Inuvik residential school to the school authorities. Usually not all applications are accepted, and a careful selection is made according to past achievements, potentialities, etc. About the first week of September, the "Inuvik kids" leave Old Crow by plane, and only come back for the summer vacations in the following year. Such a long separation, involving the exposure of Old Crow children to intense Euro-Canadian influence, is bound to produce lasting effects on the local culture.

The presence of a school-teacher in Old Crow has other important aspects. The living room of the school-teacher attracts numerous visitors, children and adults, every day. During these visits, questions about various aspects of Euro-Canadian life are asked and thus, in an informal manner, social tea parties are transformed into adult education courses. The knowledge the Indians have of the outside world is extremely limited, and he listens eagerly to the school-teacher's explanations. The school-teacher thus has the important role in structuring the Indians' perception of Euro-Canadian behaviour, since they watch carefully how cooking, cleaning, washing are done in the school-teacher's apartment.

The presence of a school at Old Crow has a direct and indirect bearing upon the local economy. The school administration employs two native helpers, to keep the heating system functioning, and to do general maintenance work. The school complex, consisting of two classrooms and two apartments for the school teachers, is heated with wood, and a number of local people supplement their cash income by selling firewood to the school administration. Indirectly the school system influences native economy by keeping in the classroom grown-up boys who, in the traditional setting, might have been direct helpers to their fathers. Although these boys do not accompany the

elders on the marten trap line, they do shoot muskrat on Crow Flats in May and June. For these boys and girls, a supplementary summer course is given in July and August.

Considering that all courses in school are conducted in English, this undoubtedly has disseminated the knowledge of the English language among the local people. A number of Indians and Metis, however, spoke English long before the establishment of the school at Old Crow. A number of students had the opportunity of learning English at the Carcross school, over forty years ago. The presence in the area of a number of white trappers with whom the Indians came into frequent contact constituted another opportunity for learning English. In the past, during the good trapping years, over twenty white trappers have been active in the area. They have given their names to rivers, creeks, lakes and mountains, and some of them married Indian women. The white trappers never learned Athapaskan, and spoke English only in their homes. As a rule their numerous descendants today speak only English. Regarding literacy in English, the adult Indians who have not been to school have learned to read and write by concentrating on the inscriptions found on cans. It should be noted that most Indian children today have only a very limited knowledge of Athapaskan, and address their parents in English. In the community at large, Athapaskan is being gradually displaced.

The nurse is another important Euro-Canadian agent. For the past few years the missionary's wife, a registered nurse, has acted in this capacity. During the summer of 1961 a new nursing station was completed at Old Crow, and the appointment of a nurse was imminent.[1] As was shown in the preceding section, the presence of a nurse at Old Crow coincides with a marked decrease in the local death rate. The two factors can thus be closely related.

All cases of illness are reported to the nurse. She encourages patients to report as soon as possible, and not only after a worsening of the patient's condition as is frequently the case. All medical services, including medicines, are administered free. The nurse also frequently visits the families, enquiring about the general state of health of the people and giving advice on matters of hygiene, child rearing, etc. The people clearly realize the advantages of having a nurse in the community, and, with a few exceptions, generally follow her instructions. Faced with a difficult case the nurse consults by radio with the resident doctor at Inuvik hospital. If a doctor is needed, there are two alternatives. Either the patient is evacuated by plane to the hospital at Inuvik, or the doctor comes to Old Crow. In this latter case the doctor visits all patients at

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[1] This nurse, from the Department of National Health and Welfare, arrived in Old Crow in the fall of 1961.

Old Crow, including minor cases and elderly people.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police establishment consists at present of two constables and a special constable, a young man of Old Crow. The activities of the constables are multiple and varied. Their prime responsibility is the enforcement of the law. Despite the fact that Old Crow has the reputation of being a remarkably peaceful community, a number of criminal or illegal acts are brought to the attention of the policemen. Cases of theft seem rare, and usually a very small number of individuals are involved. One young man in particular has the reputation of repeatedly stealing various things, especially fish from other people's nets. An old man was recently caught one night stealing firewood. Thefts of fur bearers from the trap line are extremely rare, as the traces left by the thief's snowshoes will make it easy to identify him. Not all cases of theft are reported to the police, and all thefts of brew pots are carefully concealed. Thefts of brew pots, especially in summer when they are set in the bush, occur quite frequently. Some thefts of local meat also remain unreported. Interference with trap line rights constitute another category of litigious cases brought to the attention of police and the justice of the peace.

Indians are not allowed to drink alcoholic beverages, and the making of home brew is rigorously forbidden. Despite these legal restrictions brew pots are frequently set up at Old Crow, as in many other localities in the North. Indians can obtain hard liquor from the Metis who are allowed to import it. Drinking is an all important activity at Old Crow, and involves endless controversies with the police. Almost every night several drinking parties are organized in different houses, and simultaneously the policemen patrol the village in case any violence breaks out. The police also pay frequent visits to the circle of poker players that forms every night.

The second most important function of the police at Old Crow is the distribution of relief. The amount of relief has generally increased in the last decade, although it may temporarily diminish at some periods. People in difficulties who believe they need relief, ask assistance from the chief constable, who carefully examines the case, and makes a decision. Generally speaking young and healthy heads of families and single men are barred from relief. There are two categories of relief - permanent and temporary. Some elderly widows and physically incapacitated individuals with no incomes are eligible for the first category, while some younger widows, abandoned wives, fathers of large families in temporary difficulties, and sick people are helped with temporary relief. Almost anybody can demand relief at any time,

and since numerous relief applications are rejected, tensions frequently arise between police and natives. Those who have received relief would like to get more, while those who have none would like to get some, and the police are obliged to consider only the serious cases. It may also be noted that the local police detachment has nothing to do with the administration of Family Allowances, as these cheques are received from the central administration office.

The chief constable also acts as intermediary between the Indian Affairs agent at Inuvik and the local band chief. The constable receives instructions from Inuvik, and discusses them with the band chief before their submission to the band meeting. The constable frequently makes announcements related to administrative questions at the band meeting. In his capacity as local agent for Indian Affairs Branch, the constable supervises projects initiated by the Indian agent, and makes the necessary payments related to these projects.

Since taxes are paid on all furs exported from Old Crow, the constable keeps a rigorous control of all fur exports. He is also in charge of vital and game statistics. Each birth, death and change in marital status is registered at the barracks. When applying yearly for new trapping licences, the people have to report the total amount of game they have killed during the past year.

The constables frequently patrol the area in winter, visiting campers in the bush. These patrols were more frequent in the past, when the population lived in trapping settlements along the Porcupine.

Numerous other activities are performed by the police. They control radio communications with Inuvik and more distant posts by keeping a schedule every night. They help the nurse whenever epidemics occur, and obligingly give advice on mechanical matters. The detachment is also an important buyer of firewood from the Indians.

The multiplicity and variety of functions performed by the constables make them very important figures in the life of the community. They are in a position of authority, hold considerable power, and may develop paternalistic attitudes inviting submissiveness by the Indians. They emerge as non-ethnic community leaders, capable of initiating and controlling action. In the case of disaster, the people report spontaneously and immediately to the constable, and wait for further instruction.

The Anglican missionary is in charge of religious activities. He conducts services in the new church built in 1950's, and is assisted by an Indian catechist. He teaches Sunday School and frequently advises his parishioners on religious and ethical matters, usually in an informal setting. His wife is active in the different auxiliary groups for women at Old Crow.

The other relatively permanent Euro-Canadian residents at Old Crow are two Catholic missionaries. The Catholic mission was established in the early 1950's. There are no Catholics among the local Indian population. These two missionaries do not seem to engage in proselytizing, and are busy organizing a successful ski-club.

A French trader opened shop in 1956 and has remained in Old Crow ever since. Only a small part of the total trade passes through his store. A retired prospector has taken up residence at Old Crow where he makes iron stoves for local use. His stoves are highly appreciated by the Indians.

Other Euro-Canadians make irregular visits to Old Crow. Indian Affairs, R.C.M.P., and Northern Affairs Officers from Inuvik, the Anglican and Catholic bishops from Whitehorse, and many other visitors may choose to spend a few hours or a few days at Old Crow, at almost any time of the year.

Communications with the outside world at present take place primarily with planes. Once a month a light plane brings the mail from Dawson City. More frequently, chartered planes from Inuvik or Dawson transport government officials for a short stay at Old Crow. The annual supplies of the Euro-Canadian agents, and the local store's merchandise come by boat from Dawson City by way of the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers; this river boat is a flat bottomed motor vessel pushing barges. Depending on weather conditions up to four round trips between Dawson City and Old Crow may be undertaken during a summer.

When the intercultural relations described in the previous section on the transitional period are compared to the ones prevailing at present, some striking differences appear. Thirty years ago or so the trader, missionary and policeman were the only Euro-Canadian agents in the area. Because of the specific residence patterns at the time, actual contact with these agents took place only occasionally, and usually in summer. At present, Euro-Canadian agents have multiplied, and the local population remains in

contact with them throughout the year. The setting is thus created for a continuous and growing influence of government initiated programs on native affairs. In the fields of social control, schooling and economic activity, government agents increasingly appear as the main initiators of cultural change.

Hunting

Contemporary Old Crow economy is characterized first by important subsistence activities such as caribou and moose hunting and fishing, second by the slowly decreasing trapping of fur bearers, and thirdly by various government activities which provide income. To these sources of income may be added Family Allowances and various relief benefits.

Autumn is by far the most important caribou hunting season for the Old Crow people. In the past, large meat camps were organized on Crow Mountain at the end of August or the beginning of May, when large caribou herds were moving to the southeast. The last meat camp took place five years ago, and there has been no attempt to organize a later temporary migration of the Old Crow people to the mountains north of their permanent settlement. In recent years Crow Mountain has continued to interest the people as a caribou hunting site, but only in a limited way.

Around the beginning of August, the people begin to watch the mountains with telescopic lenses, hoping to see wandering caribou. Small groups of boys may climb to the top of Crow mountain to look for caribou. On August 29th, 1961, a huge herd was seen on top of the mountain. Although the people became excited, no hunting party was formed, despite the fact that the caribou were only five miles from Old Crow settlement. The people waited for the herd to move south, and to reach Porcupine River where the caribou could be more easily killed, and the carcasses dragged in the water to the settlement.

After the first snowfall, which enables dog teams to move about, caribou hunting on Crow mountain is considered more seriously. At that season the caribou carcasses can be loaded on to the toboggan, and more easily hauled to the settlement. At the end of September 1960, after a large herd had crossed the mountain, numerous hunters with toboggans decided to stage a hunt. Failing to form a circle around the herd in the traditional manner, they lay in ambush all along the caribou migration route, and killed a large number of animals. Some were butchered on the spot, and brought to

the settlement; others were left to be moved later. This never happened, and the carcasses became the prey of scavengers. This may be an indication of the abundance of game in the area, and the present attitude towards hunting of the natives.

Hunting along the Porcupine is the most important caribou hunting method among the contemporary Old Crow people. The news of the arrival of the caribou herds in the Porcupine area upstream from Old Crow may be brought by a logger or by a traveller journeying along the river. Immediately the men get ready, pick up supplies, form partnerships and leave for the hunt. The average hunting unit consists of two to three individuals in a single motor boat or canoe. These hunting units spread themselves all along the Porcupine, from Caribou Lookout to the mouth of Dev Lord Creek, at an average distance of two miles from each other. The hunters usually occupy promontories in order to control the largest possible section of the river. Fires and temporary shelters are set, and canoes and rifles kept ready. A hunter will rarely leave the unit he started with on the hunt and join another, and the hunters seldom move from their positions. Some units, however, may decide to travel all along the river, constantly searching for caribou, and occasionally stopping at camps for a snack. A constant watch is kept on the beaches along the river. As soon as caribou are seen moving in the water, the hunters jump in the canoes and move towards the swimming animals. An effort is made to kill all caribou - males, females and calves. These are shot, preferably in the water, but also on the beaches while trying to escape the steady rifle fire. The actual shooting technique is very simple. The caribou, when on the shore, are shot from the boats from a distance of sixty to one hundred and twenty meters. If they try to run along the shore and escape, a few shots are fired in front or to the side of them. The scared caribou think a wolf is menacing them, and immediately seek protection in the water where they become an easy prey for the hunters. When in the water, the caribou are shot at from a distance of six to fifteen feet, and, when ammunition has been exhausted, they are sometimes hit with an axe. The carcasses are attached by the horns to the boats, and dragged in the water to the temporary shelter. If the caribou are few, they are butchered right there, over some green willows on the beach. First a cut is made on top of the neck, the spine broken, and the head cut off. Then skinning proceeds, as long straight cuts are made across the belly and along the limbs. Then the stomach is opened, and the contents removed and washed; the stomach contents are not eaten. The butchering completed, some fresh meat is rapidly prepared for a snack. The most highly esteemed part of the caribou are the ribs, and these are

roasted by the fire. The head is cut in four parts, and boiled with the kidneys. Some elderly men still drink the blood of the caribou, considering it as a source of strength and a medicine against sickness. The leg sinews are eaten raw. Shooting, dragging the animals in the water, butchering and cooking are carried on in an atmosphere of great excitement, intense concentration and haste.

A multiplicity of factors may influence the composition of these hunting units. Kinship, relative age, boat ownership, or a particular friendship may determine the constitution of such temporary partnerships. During the hunt of August 8, 1961, the hunting units were made up as follows:

1) D.N. was invited by the Catholic missionary in the large mission boat.
2) G.F., a young married man, and E.L. about 20 years old, who were unrelated, and E.L.'s younger brother, still a boy, used G.F.'s boat, and outboard motor. E.L. shared gasoline expenses with G.F.
3) L.C. took his father-in-law, the elderly J.M. and his young son in his boat. J.M. did not share gasoline expenses because he had no money. J.M. and his boy took their small canvas canoe on the boat, and continued hunting alone upstream.
4) D.F. went with A.C. They are not related but are frequently partners on many occasions.
5) P.T. went in his boat with a borrowed engine, together with A.J. and A.A. None of the men, in their late thirties, is related.
6) Young R.N. used his father's boat with J.R., an able hunter about 40 years old, and a young boy, all unrelated. J.R. pays all gasoline expenses. J.R. and R.N. share game returns equally.
7) A.T., a young man, used his brother's boat, and took young A.P., who is not related to him.
8) P.B. in his canoe gave a ride to two old men, both unrelated.
9) Old B.J. went alone.
10) K.N. paddled his canoe all along the river with his young son.

It is clear that most of the hunting units are composed of non-relatives, although preferably young boys between the ages of 14 and 17 join their fathers or older brothers. Individuals of similar age seem to form hunting partnerships more frequently. Gasoline expenses are usually shared, and the sharing of game returns involving a variety of arrangements is possible. Either each hunter keeps for himself the animals he has shot or, more frequently, members of a hunting unit share the game equally.

The sharing of caribou meat seems to be governed by the following rule. Whenever caribou are abundant in the area, and can be hunted by any man willing to do so, sharing tends to be restricted. When caribou are plentiful, each hunter will tend to remain the proprietor of the exact number of caribou he has killed. This does not hold if there has been a preliminary agreement involving boat use and gasoline expenses within the small hunting unit previously mentioned.

When caribou are few, there is a tendency to maximize sharing at different levels. At the end of July 1961 no caribou had been seen in the area for several weeks, and the desire for fresh caribou meat throughout the settlement was great. Two men logging in the Bell River area killed six caribou on their way down to Old Crow. As soon as these were brought to the settlement two caribou were allotted for general distribution to all the people in the settlement, and the two hunters kept the other four. The hunters' relatives and friends benefited from additional gifts.

This major caribou meat sharing rule is applicable to the period immediately following the hunt. Later, after the meat has been dried, needy families may receive some food gifts from more fortunate near relatives. This pattern of sharing takes place at a different level.

It should be further noted that caribou hunting in autumn takes place almost exclusively along the Porcupine, upstream from Old Crow, and not downstream. This is done in order to facilitate transportation of the caribou, which are dragged to the settlement with the help of the river current. This is another indication of the great numbers of caribou in the area at certain seasons.

The large autumn supplies of caribou meat are exhausted by mid-winter. Small hunting units are again organized, and with the help of toboggans, the hunters roam around Lone Mountain in the search of game. The herds are small at this season, and hunting is difficult, involving long trips on snowshoes. Usually such hunting parties rarely stay in the bush longer than three to four days, and game returns are much smaller. In autumn, along the river, two lucky hunters may kill up to eighty caribou in a couple of days, while winter hunting results only in the killing of a few animals.

Some caribou are also shot in spring at Crow Flats when the people are trapping muskrat. It is rare, however, that more than ten caribou

are killed in this season by a single hunter.

Informants unanimously declared that several decades ago, caribou meat was much more generously shared. "In the old times, meat was shared at any time in winter, all over the camp, right after the sleds reached camp". It should be noted, however, that during the transition period, the settlements along the Porcupine were much smaller, consisting usually of relatives, and sharing was thus much easier within such a small social unit.

The possibility of obtaining rations and relief is considered to be the main factor restricting sharing. A number of elderly people and widows are considered well supplied with imported food obtained as relief, and thus are put out of the sharing circuit. If one of the widows wants to obtain some caribou, she will give a box of ammunition to a young man, who will bring her one or two caribou. Other informants openly admitted their dislike of sharing dried meat at any season. One informant admitted: "I never share dried meat. If a relative asks me for some, I will give a little, just for a meal". Similar reluctance to sharing caribou meat applied during the winter hunts. "In winter when the men go caribou hunting in the bush, if one man kills five caribou, and the two others kill nothing, he may give one caribou to the others, or just feed their dogs in order to continue hunting. When there is no fresh meat in winter, and a party of two men who have killed a dozen caribou comes back, they only give some to relatives and neighbours. In winter a man who has no meat has to go out and hunt. People don't share".

It should be further noted that some women also hunt caribou. These are usually widows who either take a short trip to Crow Mountain when the herds are there, or who occasionally shoot caribou when at fishing camps along Old Crow River. Some women who run short trap lines in winter always carry rifles with them, and occasionally men kill a caribou on the trail.

Almost all parts of the caribou are utilized. Grease is obtained from the bones. The process has been described by Leechman: "Bone grease is made from caribou and moose bones. After the meat has been cut off, the bones are left for one day, which allows them to dry a little. If the bones were left for two or three days, the bone grease made from them would taste too strong to be pleasant. A caribou skin from which

the hair has been removed is laid on the ground, and an anvil stone is placed in the middle of it. The bones to be broken are placed on the anvil stone and are smashed with the back of an axe into little pieces, as big as finger nails. In the old days stone hammers were used for this. The broken bones are then put in a kettle with a little cold water and placed on the fire. As soon as the water comes to a boil, cold water is added (snow in the winter time) so as to keep the water simmering rather than boiling hard in order to allow the oil and grease rendered out of the bone to float to the top; this they would not do if the water were to boil vigorously. The grease is skimmed off and put in a separate vessel" (1954: 8-9).

The caribou meat may be eaten freshly cooked, dried or frozen in winter for later consumption. For drying, the meat is cut in narrow strips and hung in the open cache on long horizontal poles. In winter, some meat drying may take place over the stove in the log cabins. After the meat has been properly dried, it is hung in the cache. This is a rectangular structure made of spruce logs with a pointed roof, elevated two or three feet from the ground, and standing on four poles as a precaution against rodents. The dried meat may be cooked, in which case it is put to soak in water for a few hours, and then boiled, or it may be pounded and the meat powder eaten as it is. It is also used for pemmican, when mixed with bone grease. It should be noted that the viscera of the caribou are also eaten. They are first washed, and their contents thrown away, and then boiled. Elderly informants mentioned that, in the past, the caribou stomach with the green contents was placed on top of the fire or stove to dry, and the fermented contents eaten mixed with caribou grease. The head may be either cut in four, and boiled or skinned then roasted on the fire with the help of a willow stick stuck through the nostrils. The liver and kidney are preferably eaten fried.

It is important to note that considerable amounts of caribou meat are used as dog food. It is only when the meat supplies have been exhausted that imported corn meal is given to the dogs. This greatly contributes to the rapid exhaustion of caribou meat supplies.

The caribou antlers may occasionally be used for the manufacture of handles of various tools. With the growing importation of ready made tools, this utilization of the antlers is declining.

The caribou skins are used for a variety of purposes. In all households, the beds are covered with sleeping skins of caribou, generally

untanned. At present, no blankets and sleeping bags are made of caribou skins. Tanned caribou skins are used in the manufacture of some winter clothing for trappers (both parkas and trousers) and for children. Around camp in winter, both men and women prefer to dress in imported clothing. Tanned caribou skins with the hair removed are frequently employed to make moccasins, dog whips and throngs. Babiche is used in the manufacture of snowshoes. A number of caribou skins, however, remain unused and are placed in the cache. Caribou skins are rarely sold. Since little value is attached to them, they are given away whenever a friend or relative asks for one.

Moose hunting may be considered a secondary activity at Old Crow. Whenever loggers and fishermen along Old Crow and Porcupine rivers encounter a moose, they chase it and shoot at it. During the summer of 1961 a party of oil prospectors was operating a helicopter in the vicinity of Old Crow. Whenever the pilot spotted a moose in the area, he communicated the news to the Indians who immediately organized a hunting party. It is extremely rare to see a party formed for the specific purpose of moose hunting without the game being located first. During the summer of 1961 only two such parties were formed for short trips, and both were unsuccessful. Moose hunting may be thus considered a declining activity in the area, even though moose hunting is open all year round. Moose hunting in winter has the same casual character; it is then complementary activity to trapping. During the whole summer of 1961, only six moose were killed by the Old Crow people. It should be noted that in past years, hunters living along the upper Porcupine, where moose are relatively more abundant, easily killed several dozen moose in a season.

While caribou meat is considered individual property, and caribou meat gifts are only made in summer during periods of scarcity, moose is always shared throughout the whole settlement of Old Crow. This is done in a ceremonial manner during the moose feast.

There are always individuals in the community willing to give a feast. Fathers may like to celebrate the birth of a child, or the first successful hunt of a boy, travellers who have been away for prolonged periods would like to give a feast in order to renew relations with the community at large, and feasts are frequently organized by the elected band chief in honor of a Euro-Canadian, such as the bishop or the teacher.

The moose killer, however, is never the moose feast organizer. If the lucky hunter is a member of the crow moiety he gives the moose to a man of the wolf moiety whom he knows intends to give a feast, and vice versa. The moose is butchered near the household of the feast giver, with the participation of several women and men. Stoves are brought outside, and the meat is cooked in large kettles using the feast giver's firewood. The actual feast takes place in the evening at the community hall. A table is placed in the middle, and the people sit on benches all around. The meat, together with some other food such as bread, cookies and coffee is equally distributed to all people present and the absent ones are not forgotten. As a rule, the size of the shares is in proportion to the number of individuals living in a single household. All six moose killed during the summer of 1961 were thus ceremonially shared. In case two moose are killed at the same time, the first is eaten during a feast, while the second is divided throughout the camp. Killing a moose thus makes a commensal unit of the whole settlement for a brief period.

The utilization of the moose is similar to that of the caribou. The large horns are not used in any way at present. The moose head and legs are preferred roasted on fire. The skin is always tanned and the hair removed. More resistant than caribou skin, it is used in the manufacture of moccasins and soles.

Fishing

Fishing is an activity of central importance in the contemporary Old Crow economy. The different fishing techniques presently employed at Old Crow are no different from the methods described previously for the transitional phase. Large fishing camps are no longer organized in the area. Nets are individually owned and cared for. Folding and preparing the net for use, placing it in the river, collecting the fish a few hours later, removing the net and drying it are operations carried out by the net owner. The fish caught in a net are considered strictly individual property, and are consumed in the household of the fisherman. Fish may be given to a neighbour or to a relative after a successful catch, but there is no acknowledged obligation to do so. On the contrary, elderly informants consistently compared communal sharing of fish caught in former times in the fish traps, to the contemporary individual ownership of fish returns. Only king salmon seem to constitute an exception. Very few king salmon are caught in the Porcupine, usually about the middle of

July. King salmon are large fish, and it is considered good to give a piece to relatives.

At present, nets are placed along the Porcupine and Old Crow river at a maximum distance of three miles from the settlement. In periods of great fish abundance, such as the dog salmon run in September, an individual may use several nets, and visit them twice a day. Both canoes with outboard motors and small canvas canoes may be employed in checking fish nets. During the second half of August, and the beginning of September, families, single individuals or partners may decide to set up a small fish camp upstream from Old Crow, along the Porcupine or Old Crow River, a few miles from the settlement. Their duration depends on several factors - the availability of fish and also of caribou, the desire to continue preparing home brew in the bush away from the watchful eye of the policemen, etc. Widows may establish such fishing partnerships for short periods of a few days or even for a few weeks; they usually combine intensive fishing with occasional caribou hunting near their fishing camp. These fishing partnerships may involve different arrangements between partners. Some may share the catch equally. Others may be based upon the continuing residence at the fishing camp of one individual, while his partner residing at Old Crow, may be in charge of regularly bringing supplies to the camp. In this arrangement, the principal partner will only have to feed the dogs of the other.

Considerable amounts of fish are consumed fresh, usually being boiled. The viscera and heads are used as dog food. Whenever large amounts of fish are caught, in autumn, extensive drying of fish in open racks takes place. The fish are split in two, cleaned, their heads cut off, and then hung on horizontal sticks. After the drying process in the open rack has been completed, the fish are placed in the cache for later consumption.

It should be noted that, with caribou meat, fresh and dried fish is the principal source of dog food.

Not all men fish with equal intensity. During the summer of 1961 some of the best huntertrappers tended to neglect fishing, placing nets only during the peak season. Elderly men, however, continue fishing regularly throughout the summer, often with poor results. These old men are considered in the community to always have fish. Others "don't have time to fool with nets". Whenever middle aged fathers have grown-up sons, these are usually the active fishermen in the family, leaving their fathers free for more important tasks.

Other Subsistence Hunting Activities

Bear hunting is decidedly a minor activity in the Old Crow area today. Whenever a bear is encountered on the trail it is inevitably shot at. No porcupine hunting expeditions are ever organized in the region. When travelling along rivers the people may encounter a porcupine on the beach. It is then shot or killed with a stick. The meat is considered a delicacy, and is eaten boiled. The quills are thrown away, as traditional porcupine quill work has been forgotten in the area.

Occasionally a wolf will be shot. The fur is sold, and the carcass left in the bush; it is not given even to dogs. Wolf meat is considered good food for wolverines. In the summer of 1961 not a single bird hunting expedition was organized.

This terminates the brief survey of contemporary subsistence hunting in the Old Crow area. In its essential aspects it is not very different from the various hunting methods employed during the transition phase. Its relative importance within the global economy, however, has changed.

Trapping

Trapping is under government control. The Old Crow people can trap only within their group trapping area which was established by government officials about a decade ago. This area is a vast expanse of land delimited on the west by the international border between 65° 30' N. The northern limit of the trapping area runs roughly from the international border at 68° 50' N to the Yukon - N.W.T. border at 68° 00' N, and includes the whole of Crow Flats. The eastern limit follows the Richardson Mountains from the Yukon - N.W.T. border at 68° N. south to about 136°W. - 65° 30' N. The southern limit runs along 65° 30'. The Old Crow people have refused to have their individual trap lines registered, as is frequently done in other parts of the North. They have preferred the freedom of establishing and shifting trap lines within a large area where no outsiders are allowed to trap, and have established a definite system of trapping divisions within their territory.

All trappers are obliged to obtain trapping licenses from the R.C.M.P. detachment; this is done in summer. The trappers give information at this time about their total annual catch of furbearers and game. Trapping licenses are issued free to Indians, and the police control all exports of fur from the

area, and regulate the fur taxes. The police perform other functions connected with trapping. They investigate any alleged cases of the use of poison in trapping, follow various conflicts over use of trap lines, and control the application of seasonal limits on trapping.

Muskrat trapping is the most important trapping activity in Old Crow area at the present time. The contemporary ecology and technology of muskrat trapping is essentially similar to that of the transitional period.

Prior to the 1950's the people trapped muskrat at different places every year. There were no local restrictions on staking push-ups. A trapper could exploit the furbearers of practically any area on Crow Flats. Since a trapper did not identify himself with a given trapping district, the largest possible number of furbearers was collected without any thought of leaving some for reproduction. Further, there were endless arguments between trappers as to who was going to trap where. The police and the band chief had to intervene in order to assess alleged rights over various sectors. There were, however, a number of trappers who preferred to exploit one area continuously, thus establishing a certain right over it. Such was the case of Peter Lord, one of the best trappers at Old Crow. He continuously trapped muskrat at x4 from boyhood, without interference from other trappers (Map 2).

In order to bring to an end the endless quarrelling over the shifting of muskrat trapping sectors on Crow Flats, the local police persuaded the people to choose permanent trapping areas and to stabilize their claims. This was done in the late 1940's and early 1950's with the cooperation of all the trappers. Since then, most of the trappers have returned to their now traditional muskrat trapping sites. Some outsiders may join a trapper on his grounds, but this is done only with the permission of the latter, and usually within the framework of a trapping partnership.

On Map 2 are indicated the muskrat trapping sectors, with their corresponding main camps at Crow Flats. Although at present there are 47 trappers holding trapping licences at Old Crow, only a little under 20 sectors are indicated. This is explained by the fact that frequently father and son, two brothers or other near relatives trap muskrat together. Moreover, some of the widows holding trapping licences usually camp on Crow Flats with a family.

(x 1) Old Chief Peter Moses' main trapping camp is situated on the southern shore of Schaefer Lake.

(x2) Donald Frost's camp, established after his marriage, lies on the northern side of Schaefer Lake. The two brothers Alfred Charlie and Andrew Charlie, Johnny Ross and Joan Njutli, also stay there. The presence of Joan Njutli here is explained by the fact that she is Donald Frost's mother-in-law, while the Charlies are friends of the Frosts.

(x3) Charlie Peter Charlie's camp is on the eastern side of Schaefer Lake.

(x4) This has been Peter Lord's camp for a number of years. Usually Charlie Abel, his brother-in-law stays with him, but for the last two years Charlie Abel has been logging, and has neglected ratting. Charlie Abel's brother Albert and their mother Sarah also stay there. In the past Sarah has trapped regularly, except during the last three years.

(x5) Philip Joseph's camp lies south of Timber Creek. Despite the fact that Philip Joseph had only one leg, he was a good trapper. He has been away from Old Crow for the last three years. His sister Mary Rufus continued trapping there.

(x6) John Kendi's trapping camp is at the eastern end of Crow Flats.

(x7) Big Joe Kay's camp lies on Old Crow River. He is old now, and tends to neglect trapping; he stayed there with his son-in-law Robert Bruce. In 1961 the camp was occupied by Abe Peter, adopted son of Robert Bruce, and his partner Robert Linklater.

(x8) This is Neil MacDonald's camp. He traps here with his grandsons Norman and Erwin.

(x9) Peter Charlie, an elderly man, traps alone here with his wife.

(x10) Lazar P. Charlie's camp. In the past he used to trap with his father-in-law Johnny Moses.

(x11) This was originally Old John Charlie's camp, but he is now deceased. John Charlie had an adoptive son, Peter Benjamin,

who continued trapping in this sector before he became a special constable.

(x12) Jack Frost's camp. This cabin was built by a white trapper named Schaefer. After his death Jack Frost took it over.

(x13) Paul Benkassi's camp. During the spring of 1961 there were not enough muskrat in this sector, so he moved to x18.

(x14) Elias Kwatlatchi's camp. His daughter Mary Kassi, an active trapper, stays here.

(x15) The Thomas family with three adult, unmarried sons trap here. Their sector is situated between Get Out of There Creek and Potato Creek.

(x16) Charlie Thomas' camp.

(x17) This cabin was built by a white trapper. After his departure Peter Tizya acquired it.

(x18) A camp where Steven Frost usually traps. His brother may occasionally join him.

Most of these camps consist of permanent log cabins or frame tents. Stoves, ice chisels, shovels, rat-stretchers, rat-traps, ice scoops are left at the camp.

Ratting is generally considered hard and rewarding work. The men trap or shoot the muskrat. They bring the muskrat to the camp where they are skinned by the womenfolk. The skins are put on stretchers to dry, and the carcasses cleaned and also dried. There is thus a definite division of labour along sex lines: the men trap and bring the furbearers to the camp, and from then on all work in relation to the muskrat catch is done by the women.

A number of muskrat trapping partnerships are established every spring. These usually involve young single men who are not bound to a given sector, and can shift their spring residences at Crow Flats. Trapping partnerships are established for one season only, although they may be renewed the following spring; this, however, is rarely done. The productivity of single trappers is generally inferior to that of the husband-

wife working teams. This is because a single trapper has to skin, stretch and dry the pelts all by himself, and this is a time consuming activity. Muskrat trapping partners usually share the pelts collected equally.

Until a few years ago, the trappers with their families remained at Crow Flats from the beginning of March until the middle of June. Since the school has been established at Old Crow, a number of families prefer to remain in the settlement until the end of April. This has considerably shortened the muskrat trapping season. Moreover, some trappers have entirely neglected muskrat trapping, during the past two years, preferring logging as a main source of cash income. The main reason for this recent change in occupation is that logging, unlike trapping, involves only a short absence from the settlement. During the spring of 1961, out of 47 registered trappers, 25 did not engage in muskrat trapping. Muskrat trapping shows signs of becoming a declining activity in the area.

Crow Flats is also the best mink trapping area near Old Crow. The trappers usually follow certain trails, and place their traps within a given sector. The following is an outline of the main mink trapping trails at Crow Flats, used by about a dozen active trappers.

t 1 - This trail follows the main trail leading from Old Crow to Elias Lake; from there it crosses Schaefer Lake north to x 17 on Old Crow River. At x 17 there are two cabins, one owned by Charlie Peter Charlie, the other by Peter Tizya. Recently Peter Tizya trapped there with his nephew John Tizya. From x 17 each trapper operates a sideline.

t 2 - This trail was covered for the first time last year by John Joe Kay on the invitation of Charlie Peter Charlie, the two acting as partners.

t 3 - From Elias Lake this trail reaches camp x 8 to the northeast. It is used by two young men - Erwin Linklater and Abraham Peter. The latter travels still further to x7 across Old Crow River.

t 4 - Before the beginning of logging in the area this trail, leading from Elias Lake to x 16 across Esan Lake, was used by three of the four Thomas brothers. The fourth brother, Charlie, is a marten trapper. The steadiest mink trapper in the family is Abraham; for

a number of years he has used the same trail leading to his muskrat ratting camp. He chooses one of his brothers as partner. One year it will be Jerome, the following year Phares. Isak usually stays home to take care of their elderly mother, a widow. When Phares travels with Abraham, Jerome may establish a partnership with another man on a different trail.

t 5 - This trail runs first along t 1 to Schaefer Lake and then across Old Crow River to x 18. It is used by Gordon Frost, although he did not trap mink in 1961.

t 6 - The main trail of t 6 runs in a northeasterly direction from Old Crow settlement to Whitefish and Wolverine lakes. It is used by Steven Frost and Robert Netro who travel to x18 where they meet Gordon Frost. At Blackfox Creek Charlie Abel, another trapper using this trail, moves west to his camp near Old Crow River. Isak Thomas is sometimes a partner of Charlie Abel.

t 7 - Lazar Charlie's trail to his camp at x10.

A woman, Mary Kassy, accompanied by her two children traps along t 1 between Old Crow and Elias Lake where she has her camp. She traps alone, without the help of a partner. Supplies from Old Crow are brought to her by various trappers using t 1.

At least eight trappers place traps along the main trail t 1 from Old Crow to Elias Lake, and a number of trappers do the same along t 6 up to Wolverine Lake. There is a definite feeling of individual trap line ownership, however, concerning the trails near one's camp and the sidelines. As one informant puts it: "One day J.R. placed his traps on my trap line. I removed them and gathered them in a pile. I am going to do the same to anybody who put traps on my trail, especially on the sidelines. I am going to report him. I use my trap line steadily, year after year. If I don't use it for three or four years, even then I won't let anybody else go there. If somebody asks to use my trail, and we reach an agreement, that is all right, I grant him permission to trap on my trail. But not without my permission".

It is generally felt that a partner is necessary for mink trapping. Although some mink trappers travel alone, the majority trap in pairs. Brothers rarely trap mink together; only a single case of brothers collaborating

was noted. One partnership consisted of a man trapping with his nephew, and another of a man trapping with his wife's sister's husband; all the other partners were unrelated or very distantly related. There were two cases of brothers trapping separately. Partners seem to trap more efficiently than single men. If a trapper falls ill, his partner will continue to visit the traps. Trappers frequently complain about isolation and loneliness on the trail, and sincerely desire a companion. Working in pairs facilitates the carrying of supplies to the trapping camp. The following arrangement was described by Peter and John Tizya for 1960. They travelled together to the mink trapping grounds in November. After setting the traps on the sideline, John returned to Old Crow a week later to pick up supplies; Peter remained in the camp to check the traps daily. This is necessary in order to prevent the furbearer in the trap being destroyed by wolverines. After John's return from Old Crow, John and Peter trapped together for another week before John travelled again to the settlement for supplies.

Other partners, like the Thomas brothers, prefer to stay and travel together for supplies. Mink trapping is most intensive during the months of November and December, when there is still dog food remaining from the autumn caribou hunts. After Christmas, with the exhaustion of the caribou meat supplies, mink trapping is gradually abandoned, and the people have to start hunting caribou.

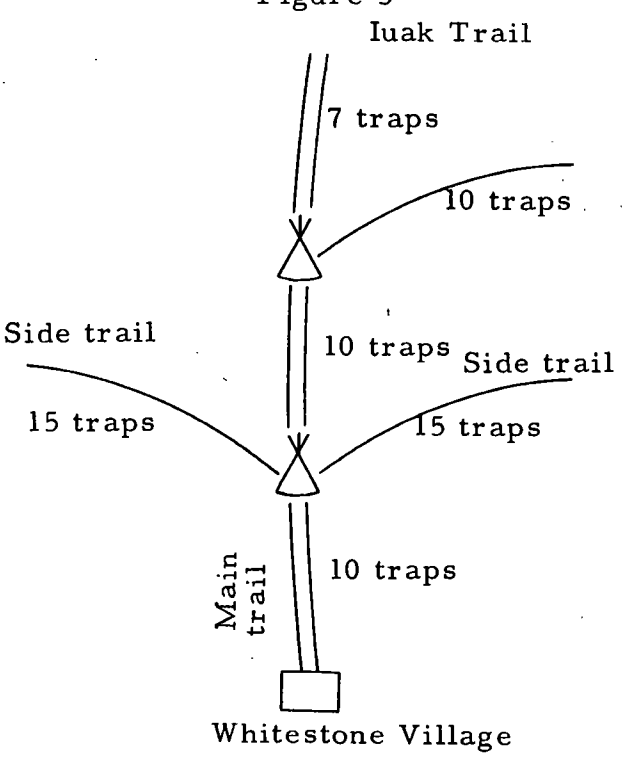
The number of men actively trapping marten is considerably smaller, compared to the number of mink trappers. In recent years Charlie Thomas, Peter Lord, Moses Tizya, Donald Frost, Gordon Frost, Lazar Charlie and Old Peter Charlie have trapped marten more or less intensively. Among these, Moses Tizya is the most systematic marten trapper, and the only one residing in a trapping camp in winter. These trappers in recent years have preferred to return to marten trapping along the traditional trails used by them before the concentration of the people at Old Crow. The following describes a marten trapping expedition organized in 1959-60 by Charlie Thomas and his brother Phares Thomas.

Charlie Thomas's traditional marten trapping grounds lay near Whitestone village on the Upper Porcupine. Charlie and Phares first obtained a $150 outfit on credit from the local trader. Their supplies consisted mainly of flour, sugar, tea, tobacco, lard, butter, salt, beans, instant potatoes, baking powder, pancake flour and dog food. They left Old Crow settlement on November 1st with two dog teams. After nine days travelling they reached Whitestone village, and set up camp at Charlie's

cabin there. They didn't see any caribou on the trail, so immediately after their arrival they had to spend five days in hunting until they killed a moose. They did not set snares for rabbits. After the hunt they started setting traps along Inak trail, northwest of Whitestone village. This trail bears the name of the Indian who first cut the trail in 1930. On the first day they placed only 10 traps along the main trail, then set up camp in a tent. On the second day they left the dogs at the camp, and the two trappers branched off in opposite directions to cut sidelines. Each one carried 15 traps, a teapot and a lunch. On the third day they continued along the main trail with the dog teams, and set 10 traps. At the end of the third day they again set up their tent. On the fourth day Phares opened a new sideline with 10 traps, while Charlie continued along the main trail with the dog team and 7 traps. Both of them came back to the camp at night. The following day they returned to Whitestone village. After a rest of a day or two they started setting traps on a second trap line, called Mason Hill trail; this trail is relatively short, and usually takes only two or three days to break. Three days are necessary for a visit to the traps along Inak trail with dog teams. The two brothers returned to Old Crow at the end of February with a catch of about 50 marten worth $15.00 each and 3 wolverine worth $40.00 each.

Informants agreed that anybody who breaks the trail first can trap there. Other people can also set traps along the main trail, usually with the permission of the first occupant. The upper Porcupine area, however, is very little trapped at present, and there are several unoccupied trails. The sidelines that have already been broken are strictly personal property, and no one else is allowed along them.

Figure 3



Some other furbearers of lesser economic importance, including lynx, squirrel, weasel, beaver, and wolverine are occasionally trapped. About twenty or thirty years ago the price of a lynx pelt was relatively high, reaching $30 or $40. The people living along the upper Porcupine engaged actively in lynx trapping, and it is said that John Nukon, an outstanding trapper, caught over 100 lynx one year. At present the lynx is not worth more than $5, and not a single lynx was caught in 1960.

Squirrels are rarely trapped. When a weasel gets caught in a trap, it is given to the children who trade it for $1. Wolverine pelts may reach relatively high prices, because they are in great demand by the Eskimos along the Arctic coast, and wolverines are therefore more actively trapped. After break-up some hunters may travel in canoes to the upper Porcupine to shoot beaver. More than ten beaver are rarely killed by a single party. The beaver meat is considered a delicacy, and is eaten boiled, while the pelts are either sold or used locally for trimmings.

Trapping of furbearers in the Old Crow area is governed by an alternation of mink, marten and muskrat trapping. Whenever one of these species tends to decrease in numbers, the trappers increase their efforts to catch other furbearers. Today the marten is not intensively trapped along the upper Porcupine. The people expect marten to increase in the years to come, and already project successful marten trapping trips in the future. There has been in the past, as there is today, a certain specialization of the trappers in marten or mink trapping, although some trappers exploit both species, and some others have abandoned marten for mink trapping.

With the appearance of other activities such as logging, it is useful to examine the game statistics for Old Crow (Table III) to see if there has been a decrease in trapping.

Table III Game Statistics for Old Crow

	1938/39	39/40	40/41	41/42	42/43
muskrat	30084	19688	13858	11120	10965
marten	97	97	234	272	199
mink	20	54	83	173	65
beaver	21	5	36	146	94

	43/44	44/45	45/46	46/47	47/48
muskrat	15137	15920	22405	18996	14940
marten	205	183	113	132	200
mink	68	123	176	70	117
beaver	40	50	---	2	---

	1957/58
muskrat	36311
marten	218
mink	5
beaver	47

	1960/61
muskrat	21017
marten	110
mink	247
beaver	48

Source: R.C.M.P.

The same is true for mink and marten. It is possible to conclude from Table III that, despite the introduction of the Family Allowances, the increase in relief, and pensions, and the appearance of other economic activities, the trapping of furbearers continues to occupy a central place in Old Crow economy.

On the subject of trapping partnerships it is necessary to underline their unstable and shifting character. Enduring partnerships lasting several years are extremely rare, and partnerships are frequently characterized by bickering and tensions. As an informant puts it: "When two men start on a fur partnership, if one has 5 dogs and the other 7, at the end of the partnership there is usually some arguing between the two on account of the extra dog food used by the man with 7 dogs".

Logging

The Old Crow people cut wood for domestic use and for sale. Strangely enough, the people do not cut wood for domestic use in summer, when it is easy to float the logs on the river. All firewood to be burnt in the house stoves is collected slowly in winter according to what is needed at the time. No

substantial stock of firewood is maintained near the dwellings. Wood cutting is man's work, although some women may help with the handling. The men usually have to travel four or five miles upstream before they reach a convenient timber area. There they cut the wood, and load it on a toboggan which can carry about one sixth of a cord. The logs, of varying length but usually about 8 feet long, are placed near the dwelling. Whenever firewood is needed, either men or women cut the logs into smaller pieces. An average log cabin needs from 15 to 20 cords of firewood to be properly heated. During periods of intense cold, fire is kept in the stoves almost all night. The men consequently have to go out almost every day to fetch firewood. Before leaving for the trap line, the husband may collect some wood to be used during his absence.

Cutting wood for sale is an important activity in contemporary Old Crow economy, as the following table shows:

Table IV Estimated Amounts of Firewood sold locally in Old Crow

- Federal Day School	150 cords
- RCMP Detachment	25
- Indian Agent	60
- Trader	30
- Anglican Mission	15
- Various	10
TOTAL	290 cords
Value @ $30 a cord	$8, 700

It should be added that an additional $5. is charged for cutting the logs into stove-size lengths. Some longer logs are also sold to the Indian agent for building houses for pensioners.

The wood for sale is usually cut in cord size in winter, when there are no mosquitoes, and stored at the shore of the Porcupine or Old Crow river, upstream from Old Crow settlement. Only a small amount of the prepared cords are pulled to the settlement in winter with the help of the school tractor. In summer, when the water level is high after rainfall, rafts of varying sizes are constructed, and the logs are floated downstream. During such long voyages a small tent is usually set up on top of the rectangular rafts. At night, the raft is attached to the beach, and the raftsmen sleep in the tent. A canoe with an outboard motor is firmly attached to the back of the raft, and helps to direct it.

There is considerable variation in individual income derived from wood cutting. It took 15 days for S. and P. to bring 40 logs to the settlement in winter - 3 days to fell the trees, 5 days to clean the wood and cut it, and 7 days to haul it in on toboggans. It was very hard and intensive work that paid the two men $1, 200 or $600. each for a little more than two week's work. C. and J. sold 129 logs to the Indian agent in summer. It took them one week to cut the logs, one week to haul the logs to the bank, 3 days to make a raft, and 5 days to float the raft to Old Crow. They were paid $0.30 a foot for the logs, and received $350. each for three weeks work. C. and R. spent about 10 days logging upstream. They brought back 15 cords of wood and each earned $225..

Logging is generally conducted by two partners working together. Partnerships are formed for a single trip only, although they may be renewed. Two partners can achieve more than if they worked singly, and there is the obvious pleasure of sociability. Loneliness is resented by all Vunta Kutchin, and people frequently expressed preference for working in partnerships even if they don't get along very well. A number of recent logging partnerships consisted of men of similar age. Whenever individuals of different ages form a partnership, this is done through the initiative of the elder person who selects a young man capable of carrying the heavy logs. If the young man does not work hard enough, the partnership is not renewed. Usually the canoe and engine of one of the partners is used, although the gasoline expenses are always equally shared.

Wage Employment and Cash Income

Wage employment, temporary or permanent, is an important source of income to only a small number of individuals. The school employs two men for general maintenance work, the R.C.M.P. detachment employs a local special constable, and the trader periodically hires the services of one or more men for work in the store. In recent years the Indian Affairs Branch has become an important source of temporary employment for the construction of houses for pensioners. Occasionally, government or other parties may employ one or more individuals as guides and general helpers.

A number of Old Crow men and even women have left the community in recent years, attracted by the possibility of wage labor in the towns of Inuvik, Whitehorse and elsewhere. It should be noted that other factors, such as marital dissatisfaction, also influenced their departure. Some young men have also spent various periods working at Inuvik, but they were

usually dissatisfied with living conditions there. As D. put it: "I couldn't stand it there, it was very rough. People drink all the time, and fight. And construction work was very hard. I stayed six weeks, got $600, and saved $500 - real good!"

The various social benefits derived from government are more important sources of income than wage employment. These include Family Allowances, old age pensions, permanent relief to widows, abandoned mothers and cripples, and temporary relief to people sick or otherwise incapable of making a living by themselves. The relief rations consist mainly of imported foodstuffs to the value of $33 for a house head, $22 for a wife and $18 for children under the age of 14. The existence of a generous relief system considerably influences the economic behaviour of the community.

Recently the Indian Agent has attempted to stimulate activity in the area by importing a mechanical saw for cutting logs, for communal use. This was done with the aim of changing construction patterns in the settlement. All native houses at Old Crow are built with round logs. Holes are often visible where the logs meet, making the cabins difficult to heat. With the introduction of a mechanical saw it is hoped that squared logs will replace round ones, and provide material for better housing. During the summer of 1960 two modern dwellings using squared logs were erected under the supervision of Euro-Canadian builders. The project was to be continued the following summer, and controlled by the band chief. By the end of the summer of 1961 little headway had been made, despite the fact that most of the work was subsidized by the Indian Agent. Only one individual made an attempt in 1960 to build a modern type house with squared logs on his own initiative, and without outside financial help. He erected a part of the walls, but according to all evidence, soon abandoned his plan.

Recently some Indians have received fishing nets free from the Indian Agent, as part of a programme to stimulate fishing in the area. While the people are usually careful with their personal nets, the nets obtained free were neglected. Some were carried away by strong river currents, others left under the ice to freeze and then rot.

Trading

Since the economy of the Old Crow community depends to a considerable extent on imported goods, trading is an activity of great importance.

There are two stores at present in Old Crow. The principal store, and by far the largest, is owned by an Indian who holds considerable prestige in the community. It is housed in the usual log structure, and is surrounded by several large warehouses. Trading is conducted every day at regular hours, and attracts numerous onlookers. As in other northern localities, boys and girls, men and women, curious about other peoples' purchases, hang around in the store. Any immoderate buying is immediately commented upon. Trading thus provides an opportunity for informal gatherings. The second store is owned by a young Frenchman, and its stock of merchandise is very limited.

A great variety of goods is to be found in the main store: - clothing, footwear, dry goods, fishing, hunting and trapping equipment, imported foodstuffs; prices are high. The following are the prices of some essentials:

Table V Prices of Some Staples at Old Crow

25 lbs. of flour	$7.50
10 lbs of dog meat	3.25
1 lb. sugar	0.35
1 lb. tea or coffee	2.00
1 package cigarettes	0.50
1 lb. butter	1.50
1 lb. lard	0.75
1 lb. can tobacco, about	2.50
1 gallon gasoline	1.75 to 2.00

The high prices of the various goods are due to the high cost of river transportation along the Yukon and Porcupine rivers. Small amounts of fresh foods (onions, eggs, apples, potatoes, etc) are imported on the barges. These are in great demand, and last only a few days. The Indians then revert to flour and canned foods.

Most of the trading is conducted within the credit system, Old Crow being one of the few places in the North where this pattern has survived up to the present day. Trappers, and often their wives, each have personal accounts with the store. The amount of credit allowed for each individual generally depends on his capabilities for repayment. Good "rustlers" (efficient trappers) may obtain over $1,000. credit, usually in winter and spring with the hope that the debt will be cleared by the end of the ratting season. Trapping outfits are obtained on credit. The trader, an Indian himself, knows his clients extremely well, and makes an effort to keep the

debt of each one within certain limits. The trader is considered, however, to be very liberal with credit. Despite his knowledge of the working capacities of the people, and local economic conditions, the trader may be temporarily fooled by some individuals. They will tell him they have wood already cut for sale, and would like a cash advance on it. When they get the cash, the trader discovers they have done no logging at all.

One remarkable feature of the credit system is that the debt of each individual is considered a secret. Father and son, husband and wife have different accounts, and frequently do not know the exact amount of the other's debt. Despite this general secrecy, various rumors circulate about the debt a person has at the store. Store clerks have the reputation of talking freely on the subject.

Various goods are traded among the people themselves. Two elderly Indians specialize in the manufacture of snowshoes. The large, hunting snowshoes are sold for $25 a pair, the smaller, trail variety cost $18. Some men make canoes for sale; these cost $20. Women frequently sell moccasins and boots, parkas and other clothing items to the boys. For making a parka $10 is charged, and the client provides the material. It is believed, however, that such transactions reveal a more personal and intimate relationship between the young man and the dressmaker. Tanned caribou skins are sold for $5 to $10 each, depending on their size and quality, and frequently beaver pelts used for trimmings change hands. In recent times, however, even local food is being bought and sold. Two elderly men occasionally sell some fish, charging $1.00 for a large fish. In periods of caribou scarcity, some fresh caribou meat may be sold or exchanged for ammunition, lard, flour or tanned caribou skins. This usually takes place immediately after the first caribou hunts in spring or autumn. The standard price is $3 for a caribou ham. Sometimes even costly items, such as outboard motors, are traded among the people.

Because the trading store carries only standard items, any special purchases have to be made outside. This is done through the mail order catalogue, and this form of purchasing is steadily growing. Smaller items are brought in by the mail plane, while more substantial goods, such as cooking stoves, are freighted in on the barges.

While the borrowing of tools, utensils and other small items may easily take place between neighbours and relatives, borrowing of larger

goods such as canoes, outboard motors or power saws is infrequent, and involves only very close relatives and friends. There is considerable hesitation about lending money. Old P. said: "I needed some small cash yesterday, and tried to borrow some from R. who has been working all year round and has lots of cash. I told him I would return the money next Wednesday when I get my old age pension cheque. He said no, I have no money. That is the way people are around here. Real mean they are, they never help you." Even between close relatives, borrowing money is accompanied by considerable shyness: "My married daughter came here yesterday. She stayed here for some time but didn't say anything. She wanted to borrow $15 from me but wouldn't dare ask for it. The same evening she sent one of her boys with a note. I lent her the money."

Domestic economy is characterized by a division of labour along sex lines, although there are numerous activities that can be carried out by both men and women. In general, most of the household work and child rearing is conducted by the women. Most houses at Old Crow are one room structures, although there are a number of dwellings with rooms attached at the back. Figure x3shows the plan of an Old Crow dwelling:

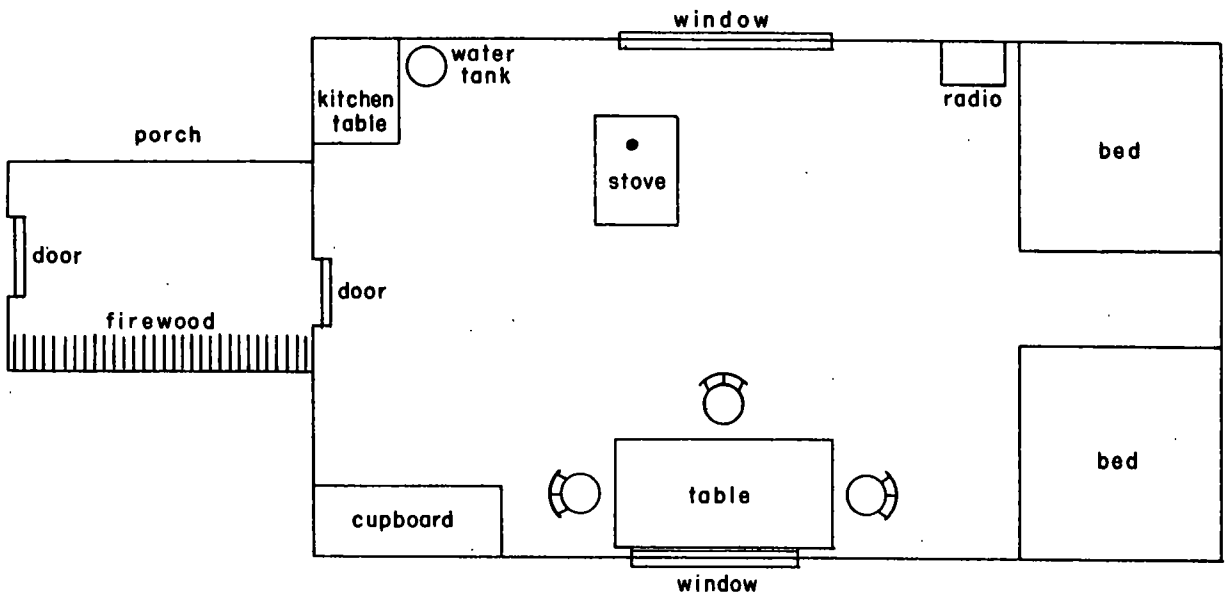


Figure 4: Plan of a Typical Old Crow Dwelling

hardly the case with the Old Crow people. In the summer of 1961, a crew of local workers was hired to do some construction work on a nursing station at Old Crow. Remuneration was good, and there was practically no absenteeism among the natives. Even when the caribou herds reached the area, and all the unemployed people went hunting, the workers remained on their job. Only one man with a large family asked permission to go on the hunt for a day. Two other men who were temporarily employed at the store at a modest wage continued work. Jealousy was shown by those who wanted to replace the workers in the construction yard. Concerning the prestige of a worker, the following example may be illustrative. Mrs. L. had very little money during the past winter. She looked humble, and according to people, was very easy to get along with. Recently she became cook for a work party. Complaints were heard that Mrs. L. had become "high tone", refused to associate freely with people, made display of ostentatious purchases, etc.

The easy life of the worker is frequently commented upon: "D. is getting over $400. a month. What is he doing? Nothing! Nothing at all! Cuts a little wood, cleans a bit and the rest of the time he sits around and fattens himself. Real easy life!" The knowledge of the technician is highly admired. J. has returned recently from technical school. He knows how to drive a caterpillar and repair an engine, and is regarded with respect in the community. The desire to acquire technical skills is also present. The Euro-Canadian foremen at the construction work were greatly satisfied with the technical competence of the local workers, and with the speed with which they learned new skills.

There is a constant preoccupation with money at Old Crow. Prices for store goods, wages of workers, fluctuating fur prices, individual earnings from trapping and logging, relief income are endlessly commented upon in a business-like manner. Money matters are one of the favourite topics in evening discussions. In traditional times, an individual's prestige was related to his hunting capabilities; now it is his cash earning capacity that attracts admiration: "P. used to be worth $5,000! He is a very good trapper. Now he is a little bit tired and not as good as when he was younger".

Trapping is considered purely as a money-making activity. Successful trapping during a period of low fur prices is considered a

The floor of the house is made of long planks with a whip saw. The windows are imported, but the furniture is locally made, and the stove is made of a gasoline barrel. At Old Crow there is today a retired white prospector who specializes in making such stoves. Such stoves cost about $40. In most houses battery radios and sewing machines are to be found. It should be noted that even at the present time, a number of elderly people prefer to spend the summer in tents pitched near their houses.

Women cook, clean the house, sew, and wash. They also cut wood for the stove. There are a number of women, usually widows, who have toboggans and dog teams, and obtain their own wood supply. Some of these women carry out male tasks, such as mink and muskrat trapping, fishing and, occasionally, caribou hunting. Almost all women pick quantities of berries, and place traps for rabbits. Butchering caribou and moose is man's work, as is construction work, canoe, snowshoe, and toboggan making, and any work with tools. The men prepare breakfast. They always get up first, light the stove, cook, and only then does the rest of the family get out of bed.

Economic Values

The Vunta Kutchin live in a land of plenty. The natural resources of the area are particularly abundant considering the number of people living there, and their way of life. This natural wealth is particularly striking when compared to conditions prevailing today in many other parts of Northern Canada. The useful fauna includes large caribou herds, moose, rabbits, various furbearers, numerous fish species and waterfowl. Unlike most of the areas in which Eskimos live, timber is abundant and can be employed both for construction and for heating. Despite the amount of natural wealth in the area, the Old Crow economy is not of the simple subsistence type, and the economic values of the people resemble those of money makers.

Of all economic activities, salaried work is the most highly valued. During the summer of 1961 numerous informants repeatedly expressed their desire to become salaried employees, and to receive regular pay cheques. Old Crow is considered a "bad place" because no opportunities for salaried employment exist there. Frequently informants plan to leave the settlement, and move to more "prosperous" places. In many northern localities, the Indians are known to be somewhat "unsystematic" and "unreliable" workers, incapable of holding a job long enough, but this is

waste of time. People comment, not so much on the number of furbearers caught, but on the income derived from this activity. One obtains the impression that the people are ready to abandon trapping for a more lucrative activity at any time. This partially explains the recent success of logging in the area. Logging is a relatively simpler activity procuring regular cash income, and it has no seasonal variations. Whenever a man is in need of cash, he can leave the settlement and bring in a few cords of wood for sale. Logging is easily adaptable to the changing cash needs of the people. Trapping, on the other hand, is characterized by highly variable fur prices, greatly fluctuating numbers of furbearers, and important seasonal limitations. This helps to explain the lack of desire for trapping.

Despite the fact that people are money conscious, there is little evidence of a tendency to amass large sums of money. It is said, however, that people always have some cash with them, even when they claim they do not. Older people are believed to save money. "P. keeps his money in a tobacco tin. There are lots of $20. bills. Maybe he has over $300. there." Some younger men have bank accounts in Dawson City. It should be noted here that cash transactions are relatively rare at Old Crow. The fur trade and relief income involve only bookkeeping transactions at the store. Whenever an individual requests cash, he is given some reluctantly by the trader. Hence the high valuation of cash at Old Crow, where it is mainly used during poker games.

People do not work in order to become "rich", and to see a bank account grow. They pursue a remunerative activity in order to acquire certain goods they desire. While the necessity of obtaining imported foodstuffs, ammunition, clothing and hardware is almost constant, a particular effort is made to gain the money for the purchase of a boat, an outboard motor, a radio, a power saw, and other prestige items. Whenever a worker was asked why was he on a job, he replied " I want to buy a ... " and, with the probable exception of a few elderly individuals, money is spent with considerable speed and easiness. People showed pleasure when purchasing large amounts of foodstuffs at the store, under the eyes of astonished and jealous onlookers. A person who acquires a substantial new item, such as a power saw, shows considerable pride. He becomes the envy of his neighbours. There is also the temptation to join the nightly poker game where one may lose substantial amounts of

money. All this explains why people "can't keep money".

Money consciousness has not brought about the development of any new economic activities, or the emergence of intrepreneurial skills. This is due mainly to the fact that the people's knowledge of outside economic developments is very sketchy, and no attempt is made to explore them, and to benefit from them through the establishment of new enterprises. The fur trade and logging remain activities introduced into the area from outside. Only one individual has had a vague plan in the past for establishing a coffee shop at Old Crow. He did not implement his project, explaining that there was not enough money in the village to warrant this. The entrepreneurial capabilities of the Indian trader have been noted already. He learned his trade from white merchants, and his activities remain within the context of a well-known, almost traditional occupation.

The standard of living of the Old Crow people is low when compared to southern Euro-Canadian standards. The trader estimated the total community income at from $40, 000 to $45, 000 in recent years. About half of this amount comes from the fur trade, while the other half comes from government sources and includes logging, wage labour, relief, pensions, family allowances, etc. Since there are about 40 households in Old Crow at present, the annual cash income is about $1000 per household at present. For example, C. has a wife and two children, and earned $657, during the first half of 1961 (excluding family allowances). This sum was made up as follows:

- three cords of wood for the school:	$ 90.
- stockpile for the Indian agent:	$ 350.
- muskrat trapping:	$ 102.
- salary for clerical work in the store:	$ 75.
- beaver trapping:	$ 40.
	$ 657.

C. seems satisfied with his condition, and has the reputation of being a good "rustler". He would certainly like to increase his income, but doesn't know how to go about it, except by intensifying his present efforts.

Systematic work in order to save money and increase one's standard of life is extremely rare. There is a middle aged trapper

at Old Crow who, according to others and to himself, has made such an effort: "All my life I had 'bad luck'. When I was younger and stronger, I did save some money in the bank, about $4000. My mother then became sick and I had to evacuate her by plane to Fort Yukon; she had a tumor in her head. She was then removed to a different hospital south. All this cost me $3, 500. There was no hospital help for the people then, we had to pay everything. After the death of my mother I started working hard again. I managed again to put some money aside. Then I fell sick myself from tuberculosis, and had to stay one year in hospital. That is the way things have been all my life. My children also have been to hospital, and my wife is there now. I try to plan my work, and save some money and just when things look bright, something bad happens. I lose everything and have to start all over again. All my life I had bad luck". In reality an individual's inability to raise his living standards substantially above those of the others can be explained on different grounds. As soon as a capable and hard working man acquires more money and goods than his neighbours, numerous pressures are exerted immediately on him. First, public opinion will oblige him to be more liberal with gifts to his neighbours and relatives, including his wife's circle of relations. If he economizes, a wave of gossip will label him "stingy". The wealthy man will also be strongly tempted to distribute local meat widely, and to increase his prestige. Finally, many women would be willing to gratify him sexually, with the expectation of obtaining some material rewards at a later date. "P. is certainly capable of organizing his life. However, he cannot do so because of his wife. He gives a lot of food to his mother-in-law, and thus supports her whole family. He distributes meat generously after successful hunts and feels big. As soon as P. tries to get ahead, the others pull him down".

No description of Old Crow economy would be complete without assessing the function of the relief system within the economy of the settlement. The recent establishment of government relief under various forms has enormously impressed the people. Here is an endless source of getting something for nothing, a possibility unheard of in the past. It should be noted that family allowances, permanent and temporary relief, pensions, etc., are believed to have been received solely through the initiative of the Indians. This is part of a widely held opinion that the Indians manipulate the whites, and control the government, and that they obtain almost everything they ask for. Thus numerous informants

agreed that the school and nursing station were built at Old Crow through specific requests made by the Indians: "I wanted a school here, I wrote to S. about it, and we got it. I had enough of hunting moose only in summer, complained to A. and now we are allowed to hunt moose all year round. Same with the nursing station". Besides expressing vigorous ethnocentrism and feelings of ethnic superiority, such beliefs have an impact on life and work attitudes. First, there is evidence of greatly diminished food anxiety: "Government can't let me starve" is a frequently heard opinion. Second, all imaginable efforts are made to obtain relief. Sickness, numerous children to support, failures in trapping, etc., are used as reasons in relief requests: "D., who seems to have a wounded hand, wrapped in a cloth, is just pretending in order to get relief. Last winter he brought in a lot of wood for sale, but didn't save anything, and bought foolish things. He didn't buy an outboard motor or a boat and now naturally he can't hunt. Now he pretends he is sick". There are two classes of white men in the eyes of the local people, those who give things and those who don't. The first are good, the second bad. A "good" policeman is a generous relief giver, a "bad" policeman is one who economizes on relief. Efforts will be made to blacken the reputation of a "bad" policeman (gossiping, informing the higher officials on the policeman's alleged misconduct in the village, etc.) in order to have him replaced by a more generous one. Thus, relief becomes a central factor in intercultural relations.

With the relief system, the Indians gradually adopt an overly submissive attitude towards government officials, compensated by a covert feeling of manipulating the whites. There is a general feeling that one shouldn't work too hard, since the possibility always exists of getting relief. Informants planned to ask for the introduction of mothers' allowances, with the hope that the husbands would also benefit indirectly from such help: "Why not, they give money to the children, they should give some to the mothers". The observer remains with the impression that too generous relief is the principal cause of the passivity, carelessness and desire to get by, so noticeable among the Old Crow people.

There is evidence, however, that receiving relief determines feelings of ethnic inferiority among some informants. In order to better understand these sentiments, one should remember that in traditional times gift giving within the context of the potlatch and moose feast was an antagonistic act aiming at diminishing the prestige of the gift receiver.

Some aspects of this trait have persisted up to the present time, and explain the ambivalence with which presents are sometimes received. One example may illustrate this point. C. was one of the writer's best informants. He came regularly to his cabin every night, and enjoyed talking about things past and present. Slowly, a warm relationship developed between the two. The writer never gave any presents to C. for the information received, despite the fact that C. had a large family, and was frequently in need of goods. One night the writer decided to give two large cans of meat to his informant, stating: "Your children will like that meat". During the following week C. failed to show up, and avoided the writer. Some time later C. came again, holding two large cakes: "These I can give you now, so I can visit you". The writer's gift had placed the informant in an inferior position. The gift had to be returned in order to normalize relations.

Receiving relief has to be analysed in a similar perspective. The needy Indians feel incapable of rejecting the government's gifts and often solicit them. At the same time, there is a feeling that they are definitely placed in an inferior position, their pride hurt in the same way as the meat receiver who committed an error at the moose feast. As an elderly informant puts it: "Relief is going to kill us, but we are going to take it."

Changes in Social Organization

Sib-moiety Structure and Kinship

The traditional Vunta Kutchin moiety structure described in Chapter III has almost entirely disappeared. Some central notions pertaining to the moieties are still mentioned on various occasions. First, even elder informants well acquainted with what being a crow or a wolf means hesitate to allocate certain individuals to the one or the other section. They have to proceed with some elaborate genealogical reckonings before they can ascertain the moiety affiliation of some people, and even then there are disagreements. Concerning these marginal cases the following comment is made: "They don't care themselves. They don't know to what race they belong". Other middle aged and elderly individuals, however, are readily recognized as natsai or titsia.

Here is a list of the natsai (crow):

Moses Tizya and his wife.
Paul Porcupine's wife Elizabeth, and her children.
Kenneth Nukon and his wife.
Sarah Abel and her descendants.
Mary Thomas and her sons.
Niel MacDonald, a Metis.
Elias Kwatlatchi.
Sarah Belam and her descendants.
Robert Bruce, a Metis.

The titsia (wolf) comprise:

Old Paul Porcupine.
Helen Bruce.
Sarah Belam.
Big Joe Kay and his wife.
Peter Moses and his wife.
Old Peter Charlie and his wife.
Joe Netro and his wife.
Clara Frost and her descendants.
Peter Benjamin.
Annie Fredson.

This list contains several cases of moiety endogamous marriages of elderly people. Moiety exogamy was not respected in some marital unions made several decades ago. During the summer of 1961, when younger people were talking of marriage, no mention was ever made of moiety affiliations. It is possible to conclude that matri-moiety exogamy has ceased to influence marital choice.

There is still some rivalry today between the two moieties concerning the relative numbers of their members. In recent years the crow moiety has been numerically inferior to the wolf section. When a wolf tendjeratsia married a crow woman and had thirteen children by her, some elderly crow people congratulated themselves on these new additions to their group.

The alleged superiority of the wolf members is still mentioned in joking relationship between elderly people. P. a wolf, is proud of the superiority and vigour of the wolf people, and takes pleasure in

repeating to M. a crow: "titsia strong, kill moose, give it to natsai. Natsai lazy, bum for grub, don't hunt good, just bumming around". M. replied: "You married a natsai though!"

Remarkably enough, moiety affiliation still plays a role in the contemporary moose feast. During the summer of 1961, whenever an aboriginal moose feast not involving Euro-Canadians was organized, the lucky hunter always presented the game to a member of the opposite moiety, who gave the feast according to the pattern previously described. A speech maker of the moiety opposite to that of the feast giver lauded the patrilineal ascendants of the feast giver. Despite an obvious lack of interest in moiety affairs, especially among the younger people, some important traits of moiety organization still persist at Old Crow.

It should clearly be remembered that for all practical purposes, the Old Crow people may be considered as truly bilaterial in most matters of kin behaviour. No recent evidence of matrilocality, special services to one's wife's parents or preference for one's sister's children in matters of inheritance could be traced. People consider they are allied equally to both their father's and to their mother's sides. The composition of work groups indicated no preference for alignment with maternal relatives. Moiety matriliny seems thus unrelated to real life conditions.

Kutchin kin terms have been collected by both Osgood (1936: 116) and Sapir (cited in Osgood, 1936: 136). The kinship type, as revealed by terminology, has been summarized by Slobodin: "Kutchin kin terminology is of Spier's Mackenzie Basin type (1925: 76-77), and is thus an example of Murdock's Hawaiian type (1949: 223): that is, brother and sister terms denote cousins. There is no differentiation between parallel and cross cousins. The system is bifurcate collateral; there are separate terms for Fa, FaBr, MoBr, MoSI, and FaSi, (1949: 141). There is a single term for child of sibling, distinguished from son and daughter. Collaterality is denoted in this relationship, but not sex or bifurcation. Relative age distinctions are made in egos and the parental generation" (Slobodin, 1959: 72). A complete kin terminology has been collected at Old Crow. Considering that it is the same as Osgood's, it is not reproduced here.

The godparenthood and "bestmanship" mentioned in the previous chapter are still considered important relationships. The mother of a

newborn child will select the godparents of her baby among her more influential or "wealthy" friends. These may be a couple, although a single individual, man or woman, may be chosen. A one generation difference is considered a minimum prerequisite. Godparents should not be relatives of the child, and are chosen among the local people. No "foreigners" are accepted, although there is a case of an RCMP constable becoming the godparent of an Indian child. Some individuals of high repute may become godparents of several children.

Godparenthood is a continuing relationship through life. At first, the godparent is expected to make presents to the baby (soap, some clothing, etc.), and to perform various services such as carrying water for washing the baby. The parents of the child are not forgotten, and they receive meat gifts, some firewood, etc. Later the godfather continues to take an active interest in the godchild, instructing him (if a boy) in hunting and trapping techniques. Whenever the boy has some clothing to be mended, and his mother is busy elsewhere, he will ask his godmother to do it. The boy recognizes clearly this relationship, and will present his godparents with meat when he returns from the hunt. The godchild addresses his godparents as mother and father, and they address the godchild as son or daughter.

A similar although less intense relationship exists between a married couple, and the "best man" who has sponsored their marriage. The two are supposed to help each other constantly. A clear preference for influential people is shown when choosing a "best man". In the past, only a single individual could act as "best man" but now married couples act as such.

In traditional times, a godfather had to be of the opposite moiety to the child, and the same applied to the "best man". In recent times this custom has been abandoned.

There are numerous joking relationships in contemporary Old Crow social culture. These mainly involve a man and his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. A man may joke also with his cousin's wife (if she is of the opposite sib), and, by extension, with the husbands of all women of his moiety. There is a case of a woman joking with her husband's mother's brother. These patterns of joking clearly involve

moiety affiliation, and frequently concern sexual matters. There are cases, however, where a joking relation is established with cousins of the same moiety. No specific pattern of joking between cross-cousins or between grandparents and grandchildren has been observed. Finally, there are no avoidance relationships at Old Crow.

Adoption is a widespread practice among the Old Crow people. An adopted child is called trininodjik, although the usual kin terms are employed between him and his adoptive relatives. The couple who wants to adopt a child always makes the proposal to a pregnant woman or to the mother of a newly born baby. Usually children of relatives are preferred. Illegitimate adopted children vastly outnumber the legitimate. When the mother accepts, she is usually presented with a gift of money and meat. The baptism of the child takes place soon after the transfer is accomplished, the adoptive mother choosing the godparents, and in some cases acting as godparent herself. Adoption forms have now to be signed at the RCMP detachment. It is said that the child remains in the moiety of his or her real mother, although informants expressed disagreement on this point. Older people greatly desire to adopt children who will help them later on, and frequently do so.

Adopted children are considered the same as natural children, and boys and girls behave towards their adoptive parents as they would towards their natural parents. The link between natural mother and child is severed, and the boy or girl later treats the real mother with a certain distance. There are no known cases in recent times of a natural mother trying to get her adopted child back. In traditional times, however, informants remembered adopted children who were returned to their real mothers following careless behaviour and negligence on the part of the adoptive parents. During the summer of 1961 the gossip circulated that J. wanted her small daughter, who had been adopted by C., back. When this question was raised with an informant, he remained baffled: "This is impossible, C. won't give the kid back, his wife looks after the kid very well, all day she is running after the kid. C. may ask $2000 if he gives the kid back. After the kid has been adopted the real mother can do nothing". The real mother, however, is always careful about the baby she is giving in adoption, and watches the behaviour of the future adoptive mother. The following case may illustrate this point. J. promised her illegitimate child to E., before the baby was born. J. went out to maternity hospital, and when she came back E. was late in meeting the plane, despite

the fact that she ran fast. J. thought E. was not interested in adopting the baby any more and refused to give up the child. Finally J. agreed to give the baby temporarily to E., and to pay for the food, with the agreement that she could take the baby back whenever she so desired.

Sex and Marriage

As is the case with all societies, sex is a domain of central importance in the life of the Old Crow people. It directly or indirectly influences most of the social alignments, even in the field of economic activity.

The sexual life of a local female may be summarized as follows. A girl has her first intercourse around the age of thirteen. This is a central experience in her life, and is usually arranged with the collaboration of her parents in the following manner. The girl's father watches the more promising boys. He selects a boy he believes will become a valuable son-in-law. The opportunity is created, usually with the collaboration of the boy's parents, for the boy and the girl to meet in private. The boy "rapes" the girl who apparently offers resistance. In several cases this is a traumatic experience for the girl, who remains at home for several months, avoiding public meetings. It should be noted that word quickly spreads around that such a thing has happened. After this period of isolation and shyness, the girl again joins her circle of friends, and is rapidly involved in numerous sexual experiences with boys and adult men. At the age of 16 or later she gets married, usually to the man who first "raped" her. A period of marital fidelity begins until pregnancy occurs. The young woman then knows that she has nothing to fear, and initiates one or more affairs. Extramarital relations are continued through life, usually increasing in frequency after the age of forty or so.

The concentration of all the people inhabiting the area in a single locality, Old Crow, has greatly increased the opportunities for pre- and post-marital promiscuity. In the trapping camps, such sexual experiences occurred between travellers along the Porcupine and camp women. The short summer period, when all the people were gathered at Old Crow, was the best time for amorous adventures. Now, when the whole population resides together, the best conditions exists for what the people

call "fooling around".

Here are a few cases of young girls having intercourse with boys they married later. K. was 13 when it happened. The boy's mother went to the communal dance where K. was also present. The old woman asked K. to go, and get her some clothing from her house. K. went to the house only to find the boy waiting for her there. He immediately tried to have intercourse with her: "I fought for some time, but he was stronger than me. This was arranged by his mother and another old woman". Later K. married the boy. F. had her first intercourse at a similar age. It happened on the mountain when berry picking, with the consent of the old women. L. arrived when the berry picking was in progress. The women left the two alone, and L. took advantage of the situation. The girl apparently offered some resistance. Later L. married the girl. P. was travelling in a distant country where he had intercourse with a very young girl. When she reached marriageable age, the girl moved to the camp of the boy, and married him.

It is clear that such experiences usually take place following certain amount of planning by the parents. The examples indicate that mothers are active in arranging such meetings. Informants, however, asserted that fathers were also influential in this. It is important to note that marriage usually follows at a later date. There is a case where a young girl was raped by three boys without any arrangement by the parents, and remained unmarried: "It happened one autumn night in the grass near the village. The girl fought a long time but the three were stronger. After that the girl felt very badly. I saw her next day, she looked very bad. She stayed home for several months".

Boys and girls frequently engage in teasing. They form bands hanging around the store or along the river, and endlessly tease each other, the girls being not at all shy in this. One favourite game is for the girl to steal a boy's hat, and throw it away, or keep it in her hands, and the boy, excited by this mark of favour, pursues the girl, both running around, and engages in rough-housing. Thus certain preferences between individuals arise, and after dark they meet in a house, or preferably in the bush. It is said that most such meetings between young boys and girls involve genital play only, and that coitus occurs only when both are intoxicated. These unions are unstable, and may last a few days or more. The best season for such outdoor activities is early autumn,

when nights are longer and the weather still warm. If a boy falls in love with a girl who refuses to remain faithful, he goes in the bush for a few days, logging, and when he returns looks for another partner.

After marriage, the teasing and rough-housing pattern is abandoned, although some young wives may still be seen teasing the boys in the store. Extra-marital relations are a frequent occurrence. Our cases indicate that such relations are generally initiated by the women and controlled by them, although male informants denied this - "if you want to have a woman, you just keep going after her". The dance in the community hall is an occasion for people choosing sexual partners, and evening brew parties in some friend's house may provide the same opportunity. The question of age does not seem to play a significant role. There are cases of middle-aged women inviting adolescent boys to their houses, and of middle-aged men having prolonged relationships with girls. Light skin is considered an attraction in women, and Metis girls are thus considered particularly attractive. The best period for a woman to engage in extra-marital relations is when her husband is on the trap line. A husband is generally informed about the preference his wife has for a certain man, since in such a small community people are constantly watching each other, and gossip has an important function in this respect. The husband will try to learn about the presumed lover's intentions, and will often postpone his trapping or logging trip until the lover has himself gone on the trap line. Love affairs have thus a direct bearing upon economic behaviour, restricting the period of absence from the settlement. The husband may also have a relationship with some woman, and be unwilling to leave the settlement. One remains with the impression that this small community is like a large glass house, where people are constantly observing each other, and endlessly gossiping about each other's sexual behaviour.

Relationships may be of varying duration and significance. There is first the passing affair during a brew party, or following a dance. There are numerous cases, however, of enduring relationships resulting in the birth of one or more illegitimate children. All such cases are well known in the community. There are a few examples of "romantic" relationships, kept in deep secrecy, and usually not leading to intercourse. It should be noted that all such relationships do not involve common residence, despite the fact that several women reside alone. There is only one case

of a middle-aged women residing with her lover in a relatively stable union.

Relationships of this kind involve an exchange of gifts. The man gives meat, and articles of clothing, including dresses. The woman usually gives something she has made herself: - moccasins, parkas, beaded belts and tobacco pouches. The significance of such gifts is easily recognizable, and that is why women rarely make them, and then only in the case of enduring relationships. Often, at the end of an extramarital affair the woman will burn the gifts she has received. If the woman feels abandoned, she will try to enter the house of her lover during his absence, get the presents she has given him and burn them, thus showing her dislike for the whole affair.

There is some evidence that with the appearance of wage labour in the settlement, and the introduction of cash, the favours of some women may be obtained with cash payments or other gifts. This raises the problem of prostitution in the settlement. In most cases, gifts are a sign of a mutual affection. Several informants, however, mentioned that men with money can easily have intercourse with a number of females. The sum of $5. was indicated as sufficient for a casual meeting. Such practices may be frequent, although there is not much evidence to say for certain. It is certain, however, that such relations, albeit brief, lack the anonymity characteristic of prostitution, and can hardly be considered as such.

A consistent effort is made to keep these relationships secret. When women walk in the village, they never turn their heads, so that hidden watchers can't accuse them of looking at men. An adult individual will not speak about his or her extramarital relations except in a moment of rage or tension. Precautions are taken to conceal a lover's visit when it takes place late at night. Such relationships develop in a play atmosphere, and individuals remain proud of having skilfully avoided being seen by a jealous husband or wife, and of having left no recognizable marks in the snow, etc. All these precautions are taken because an extramarital affair is not only the concern of the pair of lovers, but sometimes involves numerous relatives and affines. An example will illustrate this. A. and B. are two elderly women who have disliked each other for a long time. A. has several sons, one of whom, C., had married B.'s daughter D. E. is young girl. E. has had relations with all A.'s sons. During the last

few years, however, she has been the mistress of C. This relatively stable relation with the married C. has enjoyed the protection of E.'s father who sometime has even established a partnership with C. A.'s other daughter-in-law backs A. in her fight against B. and her daughter D. This complex situation produces a number of shifting alliances. At a certain moment the two rivals D. and E. have fought, and had to be separated by the police. In a phase of intense resentment, D. left her home and went to sleep in the cache. Unable to end her husband's attachment to E., D. decided to take a lover. The husband C. became very jealous, and fought with the lover until intervention of the police, etc. It should be noted that A. encouraged her son C.'s relation with E. to the point of housing the two. Recently C. showed signs of abandoning his family, and of failing to provide his wife and children with the necessary essentials. It is clear that such an affair is enmeshed in a complex network of relations involving relatives, affines and non-relatives. All combinations seem impossible, and may lead to shifting alignments. Village life is made up of such happenings, widely commented on in gossip circles, as well as of the daily routine and chores.

It is possible to state that extra-marital relations often take place between certain "extended" families. There is evidence that most of the men and women of two "extended" families have had intercourse at various periods with each other, but without neglecting their other partners. This preference may be related to a certain social stratification within Old Crow society. It is possible to state that "upper class" families try to find sexual partners within their own circle, the same being true of "lower class" people. No cases of wife-exchange have been recorded.

Certain individuals, men or women, seem to take pleasure in extra-marital relations. There is no evidence that they accept payments for this, although some lovers may find a hiding-place in their houses. Because of the atmosphere of secrecy, which forbids lovers to communicate freely, letters are often written. These are carried by younger siblings, and are carefully hidden.

Parents do not react violently to the loose behaviour of their sons and daughters. There is no evidence of serious restrictions being imposed on the young girls. On the contrary, one mother encouraged the promiscuity of her 14 year old daughter. No evidence could be gathered on the existence

of abortion practices or of homosexuality. Certain individuals have the reputation of being considerably more promiscuous than others. Informants readily admitted that all men and women, boys and girls, have had "illicit" sexual relations at some period in their lives at least, with the exception of a single married woman who had the reputation of "not being interested in these things". One young woman, married and in her middle twenties, admitted having had intercourse with over 40 individuals in her life, and she was not considered as particularly promiscuous. This would suggest that most women have had such relations with most of the men at Old Crow.

Travelling to other communities provides an opportunity for additional sex experiences. Women in the neighbouring settlements have the reputation of "teasers". Informants complained that Old Crow women who have travelled to these settlements have learned the habit of making promises to several men, and thus creating the opportunity for fights.

All girls regard marriage as an ideal to be realized some day. On New Year's day a young Euro-Canadian bachelor distributed sheets of paper to the local girls asking them to note their dearest wishes. All mentioned marriage first.

Girls marry rather young. Between 1915 and 1956, 38 marriages took place in the church. Of these, five were between widows and widowers, usually of about the same age. The age distribution of the other marriage partners is as follows:

Table VI - Age Distribution at Marriage

Women		Men	
Ages	Number of Individuals	Ages	Number of Individuals
15	1	19	2
16	6	20	10
17	3	21	3
18	9	24	3
19	5	25	6
20	5	26	2
21	3	27	3
23	1	33	1
		34	1
		36	1
		39	1

Source: Anglican Mission Parish Record.

The great majority of girls (28 out of 33) married between the ages of 16 and 20. Men generally tended to marry at a more advanced age, 15 boys having married between the ages of 19 and 21, and 14 between the ages of 24 and 27. The fact that the age bracket between 21 and 24 is not represented in this census is explained by the small number of cases involved. The four oldest men, all of whom have married young girls, were "old bachelors". There is no evidence of any changes of marriageable ages in recent years.

It was noted previously that a number of marriages were arranged by the parents themselves who provided the opportunity for a "rape". Other cases suggest different factors influencing marital choice. It is felt to a certain degree that pregnant girls should be married as soon as possible, and pregnancy thus becomes a causative factor of marriage. S., a girl became pregnant. She said publicly that N. was the father of the baby. N. married her, despite the fact that people said that somebody else was responsible. When F. was 12 years old, P. asked her mother to promise F. in marriage to her son L. The family of F. were Metis and F.'s mother haughtily rejected P.'s offer because P. was an Indian. Later F. became very promiscuous, and became pregnant. F.'s mother remembered P.'s offer, and gave her daughter to P.'s son. Some cases of pregnant girls involved in the past the direct intervention of the band chief, as catechist in the Anglican church, or the local constable. When A. a young girl became pregnant, G. a strong-willed band chief, called the boy and the girl, and told them to put things straight and get married. It should be noted that marriage projects and many extra-marital relations are often accompanied by magical practices.

The Old Crow people do not seem to recognize any distinct residence rule. Informants asserted: "When young people get married, they don't have to stay with their parents. Nobody will advise the young people where to stay, they just go where they want". Most of our cases concerning residence after marriage point towards a rigorous neolocality: "When I got married here at Old Crow, both my parents and parents-in-law stayed here at the time. I moved into a separate tent with my wife. Later I never stayed with my parents". This is a typical statement, and there are a few exceptions showing bilocal residence during the first few months of married life. It should be noted that material conditions at Old Crow presently favour neolocality, a number of bachelors occupying single houses because of the present availability of houses. Whenever one of these bachelors decides to get married, the girl has only to move to her husband's residence.

The Family

The family is the only basic social unit among the Old Crow people today. It usually consists of the father, mother and children. Some households, however, are of a different composition. Six houses are occupied by single men, four of whom are young adults, and two elderly widowers. Eight households consist of single women (widows and separated women) most of whom are middle aged and have children. Six houses are occupied by a woman with some other adult relatives (an elderly father, adult son or grandson), while two other dwellings house elderly couples whose children reside elsewhere. Thus twenty-two or more than half, of the households have a composition differing from that of the usual family. The separate residences of single men and of unattached women are an important characteristic of Old Crow society. The distribution of children by household is indicated here in Table VII.

Table VII Distribution of Children by Household

Number of Children	Number of Households
1	4
2	2
3	2
4	6
5	3
6	2
7	2
10	1
12	1
	23

Eleven Old Crow families have three to five children, while ten families have less than three or more than five. Only two families have a very large number of children.

Residence alignments (in the settlement) indicate a certain preference for close relatives such as parents and married descendants, and for adult siblings. Thus the Frost "extended" family, consists of four households - the mother and the unmarried descendants, one married son, a second married son, and a married daughter. These households are grouped together at the western end of the village. At the centre of the settlement, another similar arrangement is found again numbering four households - the elderly parents residing alone, a married son, another married son, and a single, unmarried son. The Thomas "extended"

family resides at the eastern end of the village; one house is occupied by the elderly mother with three adult sons, two houses by two married sons and a frame tent by a single son. There is thus evidence for close relatives preferring to reside together. The rest of the population seems, however, to be somewhat irregularly distributed, inheritance of houses appearing to be a major factor determining location of a family within the settlement.

The members of the household constitute the only basic economic and commensal unit at Old Crow. Regular economic collaboration characterizes household activities.

At the age of 12 or 13, boys start helping their father. They accompany him on hunting, fishing, and trapping trips, but do not participate in logging, which is considered very heavy work. At 16 they may look after the fish nets, and thus become useful to the household economy. Girls begin helping their mothers at a very early age. Six year old girls already know how to sweep floors, and two years later they begin to wash dishes and some clothing. More important, girls frequently have the responsibility for younger siblings, either in the home or outside. They thus become the indispensable assistants of their mother.

All these complementary functions make of the family a co-residential group, a center of economic collaboration, and the social unit where children are reared. It is within the family that the sex desire is most readily satisfied.

Similar functions bind together the household members who do not form a family in the strictest sense, although there are considerable variations in the tasks performed. In the case of the elderly couples, the man fishes intensively, this being considered a relatively light task. He also does some caribou hunting along the river, but no logging or trapping. Their income is supplemented by old age pensions, but they frequently complain about the difficulty of carrying firewood. Single women residing with adult sons experience lesser difficulties, since the sons assume all the tasks usually performed by husbands. The situation of women residing with an elderly individual is different, and leads to a confusion of roles. M. is 40, and her father E., who is over 70, stays with her. M. has three small children, and is separated from her husband. Her house was built recently with the help of Indian Affairs Branch. E. receives the old age

pension of $55.[1] monthly, and M. gets relief worth $60. E. is too old to hunt caribou efficiently or to trap, and therefore M. hunts caribou whenever possible. Last autumn, when the herds were on Crow Mountain she killed four caribou. The government help they receive, averaging a little over $110. a month is not sufficient to cover their needs in imported goods, and M. therefore does some mink trapping in winter. Last year she caught 16 mink worth over $20 each. In spring, she goes ratting, and last spring got over 700 muskrat. In summer she is active in picking berries. Her father E. fishes steadily in summer, and in early autumn, and prefers to camp alone at a good fishing site about 10 miles up river. There he also tries to shoot some caribou crossing nearby, and in this way killed three caribou last year. His heaviest work consists in gathering firewood. In summer he collects driftwood along the river shores, and brings it home in his canoe. In winter he carries dry willows or larger sticks on his toboggan. When M. is away the children remain home, and E. takes care of them. Even when M. is home, he always has his eye on the children. It is clear here that a woman is carrying out a number of specifically male tasks, and that the reverse is also true. In the case of either men or women residing alone without the presence of other adults, this confusion of roles may be complete. Thus the single men, in addition to hunting and trapping, have to cook, wash, clean, etc. Single women with children usually receive some relief, in addition to gifts from male friends in exchange for sexual favours.

These simple economic, reproductive and child rearing relations are valid for most, but not for all the Old Crow household units, and it is impossible to generalize on standard dyadic relationships between family members. During the summer of 1961, the writer made substantial efforts to discover established patterns of interaction within the family that were valid for most of them. The survey produced a picture of family organization marked by great variations.

The behaviour of family members in relation to each other is marked by considerable reserve. "B., a young man staying with his parents, is not at all shy. He likes talking a lot on any subject with considerable freedom. With friends he frequently laughs and jokes.

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1. The old age pension has since been raised to $65. a month.

Some boys were talking and joking in my house, B. was among them. Suddenly, his father entered the room, visiting. B.'s behaviour changed radically, he became as if frozen on his chair, and for the rest of the evening said very little". The writer had the opportunity of frequently observing this distance and reserve between parents and adolescents. Similar behaviour also takes place between husband and wife. A Euro-Canadian agent, after a stay of over four years at Old Crow during which she daily visited local families, observed: "Husbands and wives are extremely cold in their behaviour towards each other, and show no marks of affection. It seems there is only one couple here who is different in this respect from the others. One evening I walked into S.'s house and found him and his wife sitting together and holding hands. This is the only example of affection I observed between husband and wife during my stay at Old Crow". During the summer of 1961 the writer spent most of his evenings visiting in T's tent. T., an elderly man, resided alone there with his wife. Personal interaction between the two was reduced to a minimum, the wife being occupied with various household duties in a corner and around the stove, while the man rested in the rear of the tent. Any conversation between the two was brief, and involved matters of immediate concern. When other informants were asked why T. and his wife did not communicate frequently, the following answer was received: "They don't talk to each other, that is the way people are around here". A similar situation was observed between a mother and her three grown-up descendants occupying a single household. One informant said: "In F's cabin, they don't talk to each other. The son doesn't talk to anybody, and the woman doesn't do much talking either".

Some warm relationships were observed between kinsmen and affines outside the immediate family circle. A father complained about the indifference of his single, adult son. Later it was discovered that this son was constantly helping his married brother's children, frequently visiting their house, playing with them, and making various gifts.

In the previous chapter we noted the relationship binding grandparents to their grandchildren. In a weakened form this relationship persists today. T. accused his son-in-law of being a poor provider and manager. Consequently he took it upon himself to feed his grandchildren regularly. T. had other grandchildren with prosperous fathers. They also frequently took a snack at their grandfather's house. C's daughter had an illegitimate child, whom she gave temporarily to C. to look after.

When the mother later expressed the desire to have her baby back, C. showed great reluctance, and said she was willing to keep the child. This was the only case noted of a grandparent willing to rear and educate a grandchild. Informants readily agreed that in the past such cases were much more frequent.

Some elderly individuals, residing alone, seem to maintain a warm relationship with a married descendant. M. was staying in a house alone, near his married daughter. Despite the fact that they did not visit frequently, the daughter frequently offered cooked food to her father, and the latter in return gave her and her children some of the fish he caught. M. always spoke warmly about his daughter.

There is a case, and only one, of a group of brothers collaborating and helping each other. The T. family once lived in Alaska, at Old Rampart. They came to Canada some time ago. Soon after they moved, the father died. B., the elder brother, then 24, was married and could not help much. The second brother, C., who was in matrilocal residence at Whitestone village at the time of his father's death, took over and provided for the mother and his three much younger brothers. The T. brothers have their dwellings near each other at present, and frequently work in partnership. Some of them are often seen together, walking around the village.

Some sons-in-law recognize a meaningful relationship with their wife's parents, and from time to time give them presents, usually of meat. One case of a son-in-law cutting firewood for his parents-in-law was observed. P., a particularly generous man, is known to give substantial amounts of caribou meat after each successful hunt to his mother-in-law, S. The latter has two adult sons who have the reputation of being inefficient hunters. The people regretfully remark that P. is feeding the whole family.

The economic aspects of kinship relations outside the family seem to depend to a large extent on the economic capabilities of the individuals involved. The people at Old Crow hold the opinion that there are two categories of husbands - "good rustlers or managers" and poor providers. It was observed that the families of the latter are involved in a larger number of economic exchanges with relatives, and usually the poor provider receives more than he gives. The good manager tends to be economically independent and self-sufficient.

The subject of inheritance may be of some importance in ascertaining descent rules. The movable property of an individual, male or female, is not considered of great importance in inheritance, since almost all people own similar objects. A deceased individual's clothing is burned, following traditional custom. His more valuable property, such as guns and toboggan in the case of a hunter, is given either to the son or to the son-in-law, depending on the relationship between the deceased individual and his possible inheritors at the time of death. The same is true for a woman and her daughters or daughters-in-law. It seems that inheritance of this kind of property follows some general and tacit agreement, and depends also on the individuals present at the death bed. No information was collected on formal wills.

Houses are highly valued property. Information on the origins of the ownership of 30 houses was recorded (Table VIII)

Table VIII - Origins of House Ownership

House built by owner, usually soon after marriage	7 cases
House bought or partially paid for	7 cases
House inherited by a man from his father	3 cases
House inherited by a man from his mother	1 case
House inherited by a woman from her mother	2 cases
House inherited by a woman from her husband	3 cases
House inherited by a man from his sister	1 case
House inherited by a man from his grandmother	1 case
House built by a man for his parents-in-law	1 case
House built by a man for his parents	1 case
House built with the help of Indian Affairs Branch	3 cases

Table VIII indicates that almost half of these houses were either built by their owner soon after his marriage, or purchased from another individual. Only eleven houses have been inherited, and there were three cases of men inheriting from their fathers, and three cases of men inheriting a house from female relatives. Five houses have been inherited by women, two from mothers and three from husbands. It is clear that house inheritance practices are truly bilateral, and cannot be correlated with moiety matriliny. Houses are usually owned by men, with the exception of the households characterized by the absence of a husband.

The negative, disruptive aspects of family interactions will be considered in three aspects - relations between husband and wife, between parents and descendants and between siblings.

During the summer of 1961, a great number of cases illustrating husband-wife reserve and distance and outright indifferences and even hostility (often expressed in crisis situations) was observed. One informant described the A. family in the following terms: "For over 10 years the A. family have not been talking to each other. She has several illegitimate children. They rarely fight, but hate each other all the same". Other informants said: "B. is a man with no regular conduct; he will have relations with any woman at any time. He has had several illegitimate children by several women. His wife does the same. She has had several affairs, her house is very poor, and there is almost no furniture there. You can see only what is strictly necessary to life there. Her husband does not look after her, he abandons her. One spring she was pregnant. It was very cold, she was sick, her children were crying, there was no food in the house but her husband didn't care, he was fooling around all the time". "C. and his wife didn't get along at all. Married for a long time, they were constantly fighting. The sons got mixed up in the fightings, one backed the mother, the other the father. Finally, they started separating for various lengths of time": "D. and his wife have been fooling around a lot and fighting all the time. His wife had a lover and several children by him. She was giving food all the time to the man, and paying his debts at the poker game. D. had enough, and complained to the police. Nothing happened; the police could not act."; "For over three years E. has not been looking after his wife, he is after that other girl all the time. He does not give money to his wife. She has other affairs but looks after the children well. They fight a lot". Under the influence of alcohol, latent tensions are more easily verbalized. The writer visited the F. family during a brew party. After a short initial period of excitement and gaiety, F's wife began accusing her husband of all sorts of shortcomings and evils. The monotonous and repetitious accusations lasted several hours: "This man is bad, he is mean, he is never home, I always cook good food for him, and after he eats quickly he is out again. He always thinks about other women, he is no good. I want to divorce, I want to go away, anywhere, if I didn't have children I would have left a long time ago..." The husband's reaction was at first indifference, then an attempt to defend himself, which further provoked his wife. The writer left before the fighting which followed.

Cases of marital strife could be endlessly discussed. Neighbours, relatives, and friends were very often willing to describe cases of marital strife in great detail. One informant summarized the situation as follows: "No husband gets along well with his wife here. All husbands don't look well after their wives. C. is the only man here who looks well after his wife." It should be noted that C's wife is the only woman at Old Crow whom informants agreed had no extra-marital relations during her married life. Since all of the cases of marital strife noted involved elements of sexual promiscuity, it seems possible to correlate these two factors.

Relations between parents and descendants, married or not, also show signs of ambivalence and strife. A. is a girl studying at school. She has an old father L. who has been sick for some time. P. a friend of A., remarks that her father L. might die someday. A. replies: "Nice well die, I will come back here for holidays".[1] Other informants described L. as a man who has not taken any interest in his sons or daughters in recent years. At several periods in the past he abandoned his family altogether. L. was repeatedly asked at different times what his sons were doing, and always replied that he did not know. B. a young man, dislikes his parents who always quarrel. B. says he had enough of his parents' fights, and now doesn't care about them. C. is a girl, daughter of D, and is considered promiscuous. D. has been absent from the settlement for a few days, staying at a fishing camp. When she returned a violent quarrel broke out, the mother accusing the daughter of making brew in the house during her absence and of stealing clothes. The girl, after violently insulting the mother said: "I always knew I did not have a mother", and left the house to stay with a friend. Informants added that relations between the two had been strained for a long time. E. is a girl, who had been absent from the settlement for several years. Returning for a visit, she refused to stay at her parents' house and resided in the home of a female friend. The people commented that this was the result of long strife between them.

These cases constitute only a fraction of the total evidence assembled regarding inter-generation tensions in family circles.

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1. This expression is somewhat vague, but it indicated indifference.

Numerous instances of indifference, lack of collaboration and outright strife between siblings were also recorded. The A. brothers seldom collaborate. Their houses are nearby, but their partners come from other families. A. B., the youngest brother, will never ask one of his elder brothers for a boat ride, the loan of an outboard motor, or any other service. After a successful fishing trip, A. B.'s partner asked him to give a fish to his sister who needed fresh food. A. B. refused, and kept all the fish for his dogs. An enterprising individual, L., decided to invite A. C. and A. D. to form a logging partnership. The three left for the bush. After a few days A. C., for no apparent reason, started feeling uncomfortable, said that he was bored, and was working for nothing, and abandoned the partnership. G. and H. are two adult sisters. The first lives alone with her children, and obviously needs the help of another person. Despite this, she persistently quarrelled with her sister, until H. left the house and went to stay with a friend. All the assembled evidence concerning tensions and indifference between siblings involve adult individuals, married or not. The impression gained from this survey was that, with few exceptions already mentioned, married siblings behave as members of independent family units, and are rarely concerned with what the other brother or sister is doing.

The numerous cases of extra-marital relations and of women residing alone would seem to indicate that illegitimacy is common at Old Crow. Reliable informants were asked to indicate the genitors of most children living in the settlement. It became quickly apparent that in most cases the people knew precisely who was the real father of whom. There was almost no disagreement on this subject among informants. This identity of judgment was explained by the opinion expressed that people should know who their real genitors were, in order to avoid incestuous relationships. In some cases, informants hesitated, stating that with the more promiscuous women, it was often difficult to ascribe paternity without the risk of error. People know that a child is illegitimate but remain uncertain as to who is the father. The men who had relations with such a woman do not talk about it, and it is only on the trap line, when alone with a partner, that they are willing to speak. And there have been cases of women who will designate somebody else as putative genitor. This results in certain hesitation concerning the real fathers of some children. Informants readily admitted that this is a real calamity in the community, and that ignorance of fatherhood may lead to incest in the future. With these possible sources of error in mind, informants

considered that 39 out of 94 children and young people at Old Crow were illegitimate. This figure includes children born of unmarried and married mothers, and widows. This may indeed be considered a very high illegitimacy rate. It should be noted, however, that in the family circle no distinction is made between legitimate and illegitimate children. Later in life the genitor is disregarded by the young people who consider as father the household head who provides for them. The biological link is thus completely superceded by the bond of social fatherhood. On numerous occasions a certain fear of incest among both men and women was noted. Elderly informants asserted that the Old Crow people behave like "dogs", and that they are too inbred. Half joking, half serious, one said that it will be a good thing to see white or Eskimo women settle in the village so that the danger of incest will be totally eliminated. This fear of incest does not apply at present to moiety endogamy, but to possible sex relations between parents and descendants, between siblings, between first cousins and even between second cousins. A., a young man, said: "I cannot do much with B. (a girl) because her father and my father's mother are brother and sister". Informants considered a well known relationship between two second cousins, which resulted in the birth of illegitimate children, as incestuous. This case provoked open condemnation. Other instances involve a boy and his Fa Mo Br Da, a boy and his Mo Br Da. People condemned these relationships also. More important were two cases involving siblings; in one case children were born. Informants privately admitted that the siblings in question behaved like "dogs", although the first pair of siblings had the same genitor but different mothers. Despite that, they said there was no excuse for such behaviour, since everybody knew they were brother and sister. The second case was even more sordid, involving legitimate descendants of an elderly couple. Despite this strongly negative reaction by the informants, no evidence was collected of a possible ostracism or of other sanctions taken by the community towards the incestuous pair. Moreover, during the summer of 1961, a rumour persistently circulated that a father and his daughter, and a mother and her son, were committing incest. The father in question had repeatedly defended his daughter in some complex issues involving a third party, and had shown her marked favours including gift-giving as well as exhibiting ill-concealed affection. In the second case, a mother and son resided together, and on numerous occasions the mother had shown profound attachment to her son, including the practice of magic to keep him away from certain women. This evidence

was considered adequate for some informants to conclude that incestuous relations were present. It should be noted that the fear of incest is so prevalent, that any show of affection that contrasts with the usual reserve and distance between family members may be interpreted as a sign of potential incest.

The numerous cases of extra-marital relations may point towards a certain brittleness of the marital tie. There are a number of recent husband-wife separations to support this assertion. Only one case of a prolonged separation over one year was recorded. It involved A. who was married against his will to a very young girl, B., when the latter became pregnant. This marriage took place on the insistence of the local policeman and of some elders. After a certain period of cohabitation, A. separated from B. for one full year. A. then called a meeting of the elders, including the chief and the two councillors. The people assembled in the house of the chief, and A. again explained the reasons why he didn't want to marry B., and the factors leading to separation. The elders then spoke "widely", encouraging A. to cohabit with B. Following this insistence A. again took up married life with B.

The first case of permanent separation took place about two decades ago. The spouses had offspring. An extra-marital relation by the wife led to separation. Later she became chronically sick. Husband and wife occupied separate houses, and the two never visited each other. The second case of separation occurred not too long after the first. Soon after marriage, the wife, A. found out she could not stay with her husband B. She said she felt separated from him by a malevolent spirit. A. accused B's mother of black magic, and decided to part from her husband. It should be noted that both A. and B. were noted for their sexual laxity. In another case, C. was married to D. Both had many extra-marital relations, and C. had several illegitimate children. In time D. had become deeply attached to a widow, who decided to leave the settlement. D. followed her, and separated from C. They divided their belongings under the supervision of the policeman. In yet another case, it is said that E. simply had enough of his wife D. and that she was tired of him. Both had constant extra-marital relations, and they decided to take up separate residence. E. seems to have no "bad feelings" against his wife, and visits her from time to time.

The above are examples of permanent separations. During the summer of 1961, several cases of potential separation were observed. A. and his wife B. did not get along together. Both had numerous extra-marital relations. A. was a poor provider, his wife was in constant need of essentials, and the house was dirty and run down. A. obviously did not care very much about his family. One day a plane landed at Old Crow. There was room for extra passengers on it. Without saying anything to anybody, B. packed her belongings rapidly and with her children left her house and her husband in order to go to live in another settlement. No information could be collected as to how long B. intended to stay away. A's parents were worried at the possibility of their son definitely losing his wife.

There have been no cases of divorce at Old Crow. People know about the possibility of divorce, and seem to favour it. They believe that divorce is a costly undertaking, and that over $800. is needed for it. One informant said: "The people here don't have that kind of money. I think they should be able to divorce without paying, so that they can remarry again".

The great variation in family types previously described is the central characteristic of family organization at Old Crow. It is the expression of numerous social and economic factors which need proper analysis. This will be done in the light of a recent contribution by Kunstadter (1961) to the knowledge of the matrilocal family. Basically, two types of families are found in Old Crow at present. One consists of nuclear families composed of a husband-father, a wife-mother and their offspring, and the other of matrilocal families - "a co-residential kinship group which includes no regularly present male in the role of husband-father. Rather, the effective and enduring relationships within the group are those existing between consanguineal kin". (Solien, 1958, quoted by Kunstadter). Our census indicated that twenty households consisted of nuclear families, including two elderly couples with no co-resident offspring. Six houses were occupied by single men, eleven families consisted of separated women and widows with some consanguineal co-residents (children, adult descendants, an elderly father, a grandson), and 3 elderly women resided alone. The men and women in single residence will not be taken into consideration at present, since they do not form families in any sense. The eleven families characterized by the absence of a husband-father fit the

definition of the matrilocal family. In the experience of the writer they are striking occurrences in this part of the North, especially when compared to certain Arctic coast or Hudson Bay Eskimo communities where no similar situation has been observed.

Precise information on past residence patterns is lacking. Informants unanimously agreed that a quarter of a century ago there were no separated couples in the area, and that elderly women did not live alone, but joined a relative's household. Widows were in the habit of remarrying, always with widowers, and even at a late age. Our marriage record indicates a number of widow remarriages, one of them involving a 60 year old woman. The writer gained the impression that the large number of matrilocal families is a recent occurrence in the area.

Kunstadter proposes several general factors influencing the emergence of the matrilocal family in different cultures. First is a demographic factor. "If there were more females than males available for the formation of families, this might lead to the existence of matrilocal families in the absence of contravening institutions such as polygyny or delayed age of marriage for females" (1961: 3). This demographic factor does not apply in Old Crow. There is a certain sex ratio imbalance at Old Crow, but this tends to favour the marriageable males. There are 27 females, compared to 35 males, between the ages of 15 and 40. Further, there is no polygyny and no cultural norm for delayed age of marriage for females at Old Crow. Kunstadter's second and main factor is related to economic organization: "The proportion of matrilocal families in the community appears to be a function of the degree of physical separation of adult males and adult females involved in the division of labour. In order for this physical separation to take place, the group in question must be a part of a larger economic system, and that system, as a concomitant of its complexity, usually will use money as a medium of exchange" (1961: 11). This important factor may apply to the Old Crow situation. Following the integration of the Vunta Kutchin into the Euro-Canadian economic system through the fur trade, which involved money transactions, men were obliged to spend prolonged periods on the trap line, leaving their families alone in the settlement. There is here a situation of temporary physical separation of adult males and adult females, based on the division of labour. One may ask, however, why a similar economy and division of labour in other northern communities

failed to produce a similar result. For instance, the Eskimos at Povungnituk on the East Coast of Hudson Bay are intensive trappers, spending weeks at a time on the trap line. Their seal and walrus hunts keep them away from the settlement at repeated intervals. And yet there is no evidence of the existence of matrilocal families at Povungnituk. It seems that some specific factors operate at Old Crow, and have led to the recent emergence of matrilocal families.

Government relief in its many forms is one such factor. Family allowances are addressed to the mothers, and spent by them. This undoubtedly strengthens the economic position of the housewife, increasing somewhat her independence of her husband, the main cash earner in the family. Further, a number of separated women, and widows with children, receive relief. In cases of remarriage they would undoubtedly lose this benefit. This is a very important factor militating against the remarriage of widows. Further, the confusion of roles previously described, which makes a woman capable of running a trap line, and of shooting caribou, enables widows and separated females to increase their income substantially. The local pattern of receiving gifts for sexual favours further strengthens the economic independence of these women. Finally, six women resided with adult consanguines, usually grown-up sons, who were definitely an economic asset. The writer gained the impression that these matrilocal families were doing rather well, and had substantially the same standard of living as the nuclear families.

The pattern of local sex behaviour, characterized mainly by numerous pre-marital and extra-marital experiences is, in the writer's opinion, a very important factor explaining the existence of matrilocal families. It is in observing the nature of marital life at Old Crow that we can best understand matrilocality in that settlement. The striking fact about extra-marital relations is that very few such cases lead to a particularly violent reaction from any one of the spouses. Undoubtedly there are such reactions, but considering the number of extra-marital relations, they remain very few. Despite the apparent secrecy about extra-marital relations, the local culture seems rather permissive regarding such behaviour. The lack of rigorous social norms and sanctions related to ideal illicit sex activities leads to each individual being the centre of a network of sex relations. This must inevitably influence the nature of the marital tie. Until two or three decades ago, the influence of the Anglican church through its local agents, was sufficiently strong to prevent any actual separations. With the recent loosening of church controls, and

the loss of interest in religious matters, such separations have become possible, without inviting overt or diffuse sanctions. In such conditions, the sexual pattern making for marital dissatisfaction becomes fully operative and determines potential or actual separations. While the sexual pattern explains the initial separation process, it appears that the economic factors previously mentioned stabilize matrilocality of both households of widows and separated females. It should be noted that matrilocal trends, consisting in a weakening of the husband-wife relations, that assure the prominence of the mother-descendants link, are observable in most contemporary nuclear families at Old Crow. Matrilocal families should not be considered a rigorously separate category of households, but as a result of trends functioning among "normal" nuclear families. There is definitely a continuum between matrilocal and nuclear families, and a rigorous separation of the two indicates little more than a simple projection of anthropological conceptual thinking.

The family, or better, the household of varying composition seems to behave as the sole basic socio-economic unit in all seasons. Ceremonial commensality at the community level during moose feasts, meat gifts to kinsmen and affines following successful hunts, and constantly shifting partnerships in subsistence activities do not lessen the functional importance of the household in the crucial field of economic organization. The Old Crow data thus fully corroborate the findings of Leacock among the Montagnais Indians (Leacock: 1954) and the generalizations regarding trapping and social organization of Murphy and Steward (1956). Previously we used the term "extended family" to describe married siblings residing near each other in separate households. Because of the absence of meaningful economic relations between such households, this term certainly does not connote the existence of extended kinship units, and of true extended families. It is only a convenient way of recognizing certain residence alignments.

Community Life and Leadership

Although it may seem more appropriate to begin with a description of the positive side of ingroup relations, the negative aspects of local interaction which constitute such a striking feature of Old Crow communal life will be discussed first. Among all students of the northern Indians only Honigmann has clearly perceived this outstanding

characteristic of ingroup relations among the Athabaskan people. In his study of the Kaska Indians of southern Yukon, Honigmann writes: "Interpersonal antagonism characterizes most of the relations of men in the area, and is even the most prominent feature of interpersonal relations within a tribal district. Despite the ideal attitude commanding a person to mind his own business, the common expression of this latent hostility is through malicious gossip and backbiting... The hypocrisy between even good friends is striking." (1949: 154)

As with the Kaska, ingroup relations at Old Crow are generally characterized by suspicion, hypocrisy, hostility, jealousy and hate. It would be possible to list here a long and monotonous series of examples illustrating the negative aspects of local interpersonal relations, but for the sake of brevity only a few such instances will be presented. It is ideally recognized that individuals should not look into other people's doings. C. had an illegitimate child. Her mother didn't censure her, but simply commented: "one shouldn't mix in other people's business, one should leave them alone to do whatever they want". This norm is overtly respected, except in the case of younger men. Covertly, however, vicious comments are endlessly made. The reason for this overt reserve is simple. Visible hostility, it is said, may provoke a rapid revenge by the magical means dreaded by everybody. Informants proudly announced: "I always talk nice to people". The writer frequently observed such "nice talk" during a friendly visit, but such talk was immediately replaced by malicious backbiting after the departure of the visitor. It is only under the influence of alcohol that aggressiveness is let loose. The desire to avoid quarrels in public under normal circumstances is shown in the following example: A. and B. are two women who have been considered enemies for a long time. The two met outside one day, and A. started insulting B. loudly. B. answered "if you want to fight you better go into a house".

Most sessions with informants ended with bitter remarks concerning various people, or the community, as a whole. A. speaking about his own son, said: "He drinks all the time, now he has set a pot of brew in his fishing camp, he doesn't do any work because he drinks too much, etc." Referring to others A. continued: "The kids who come back from school are spoiled, and the boys don't know how to paddle a canoe, or how to set a fish net. The girls think only about curling their hair, and don't know how to work skins. They are spoiled kids, bad stuff. B. drinks all the time and doesn't look after his family, his

wife goes with any man, and doesn't look after the kids. C. is dirty, his house is full with garbage, and his wife talks dirty all the time, he is stealing fish from other people's nets. D. is stingy, he just is bumming around for grub, and is fooling around with women. E. the poor man, has a bad wife, she buys fancy grub, and fancy clothing and all the money her husband gets she spends on foolish things. She is mean and stingy and very dirty. F. is making medicine all the time against other people. All the family of J. are crazy, have been like that all the time. The old H. are fools and talk dirty too much, their son is stealing stuff all the time, their daughters are real bad, run after men all the time. J. is bad manager, gets lots of grub, and throws it away to show he is big, his kids starve after that, etc. etc." These comments are elaborated upon and endlessly repeated. Some people prefer to criticize the community as a whole: "I am old and nobody gives me meat here. The people here are real stingy. These Rat Indians are real mean. They make only bastards, and care for nothing else. There are bastards all over the place". It was very difficult to discover valid causes for these negative interpersonal relations. Almost any trivial factor was used for vicious backbiting.. One common reason for gossiping was the haughty behaviour of certain individuals, who considered themselves "high tone". As one informant put it: "What makes me mad is that she thinks she is somebody while she is nobody". The writer soon felt that the very social atmosphere was full of suspicion and hostility, making any attempt to discover precise reasons for particular hostile relations very difficult. The only ones excluded from the general criticism were some, but not all near relatives, and the informant's present sexual partner. Any given situation can be utilized to harm somebody, provided it is done in secrecy, and people frequently denounce each other to the police. A. accused B. of making brew. The police searched B's house, and found the brew pot. C. and D. were out hunting in the bush, and D. saw a beaver and killed it, although it was out of season. Both ate it. Several weeks later, back in the settlement, C. reported D. to the police, and D. had to pay a fine. There are other cases involving marital infidelities, hunting moose off season, etc.

While adult men and women frequently indulge in gossiping and backbiting, this is not usually the case with young men who

seem much more spontaneous in the expression of their aggressiveness. On almost every night during the latter part of the summer of 1961, there were fights involving young men. These were fights over girls and, started with a provocation: "You took my girl..." The opponent replies, and a fight ensues. Usually the fighters are intoxicated. Such fights do not last long, and the fighters do not seem to hit hard, so that only minor injuries result. These enmities are of short duration, and it is not uncommon for the opponents to establish friendly relations again on the following day. More important are the fights involving "smart boys". Some young men may adopt haughty attitudes, become scornful of work, refuse to associate with other boys, and walk around the village all day without seeming to see anybody around them. Such behaviour is considered highly unpleasant, and frequently provokes the following reaction. Some stronger boys get together, lie in ambush and beat up the "high tone" individual.

Visiting patterns seem less developed than in some Eskimo communities visited by the writer. Most of the visiting takes place according to age. Elderly people visit other elderly people, and boys are frequently seen together. It also appears that sex distinctions are important, men visiting other men, and women paying visits to each other. Late evening is the preferred time for visiting. Visiting, however, is not a random activity, and usually takes place between either close relatives, or preferably between friends. During the summer of 1961, the writer was in the habit of spending most of his evenings in the dwelling of an informant where the same two or three individuals always visited. Friendships between individuals, as shown by the frequency of visiting, have a periodicity of their own, characterized by periods of higher visiting rates, and periods of lower visiting rates, and even periods of avoidance. Children's visits always follow the pattern set by their parents. When children visit a certain household, it shows that their parents are friendly.

It seems that people strive to establish reciprocity in their relations with others. One day A. remarked about B's dogs. B. replied to A. in the same manner, and later explained to the writer: "If he had talked nicely to me, I would have done the same. But he talked tough, and I did the same". Similarly we can understand the sanctions against the "smart boys", and the gossip about the "high tone" individuals. Such reactions by the community can be explained by the fact that these haughty

individuals place themselves outside the circle of reciprocal behaviour, and assume a degree of wilful marginality unbearable to the common folk. The sanctions are an effort to integrate these individuals into society. The same holds with the generalized gossip pattern and backbiting. At a certain level of analysis, these appear as factors of ingroup hostility. At a different level, they appear as efforts by hidden criticism to express recognition of social norms which may further societal integration. Inter-personal relations, however, remain highly ambivalent. One informant was glad to announce "I have no bad friends here. Lots of people have bad friends here. They think they have a friend, and when they are away this friend is fooling around with their wives". An element of ambivalence is contained in the very term "bad friend". He is the trusted man who may suddenly become an enemy. Partnerships, friendships, visiting companionships, and even marriages are all marked by this ambivalence in relations, shown by alternating periods of confident "togetherness", and fearful avoidance.

In addition to the negative aspects of inter-personal relations, there are a number of positive and rewarding interactions. We noted previously the existence of numerous partnerships established for various activities. Despite their shifting character, short duration and sometime unpleasant ends, they do constitute important collaborative forms. More important are the friendships established between young boys or girls, called tsa. These are particularly stable, and lasting relations beginning at an early age between individuals of the same sex last well beyond adolescence. Such friends are frequently seen together, playing, walking and helping each other. Adults of same sex also frequently establish such friendships, which are marked by exchange of gifts, frequent visiting and work partnerships. No information was collected as to whether these lead to wife exchanges. The examples recorded indicate, however, that such friendships of adults may end rather abruptly: they lack the stability of friendships involving youngsters.

Informal gatherings outdoors, as distinct from household visiting frequently take place during the good season. These, however, mostly involve boys and girls and young adults who hang around the store, or along the river, frequently teasing each other. Adults are more frequently seen outside in late afternoons, talking in small groups. Most of their interaction with non-kinsmen usually takes place in the households under the form of visiting.

Two activities that bring people together are of central importance in Old Crow social life. These are brew drinking and poker playing.

Brew making is a constant preoccupation of the Old Crow people. The following recipe is considered to produce the best kind of drink: 1 lb. dry raisins, 1 lb. beans, 1 lb. barley, 1 lb. rice, 5 small packages of yeast, 5 lbs. sugar. These ingredients are preferably placed in a wooden keg, with some hot water and usually left for 24 hours to ferment, after which time the mixture is considered ready for consumption. Making home brew is an activity forbidden by law. Because the police are constantly aware of this activity, brewing and drinking take place in an atmosphere of secrecy. Home-brewing is about the only source of alcohol for the Indians, who are forbidden by law to drink alcohol. [1] These restrictions do not concern the Metis, who have a Euro-Canadian legal status, and can import liquor from Dawson City by the mail plane.

Brew-pots are set up in some hidden corner in a cache, under a pile of dry meat, or in the bush during summer. Usually only the owner of the brew-pot knows of its existence. Sometimes an individual will give ingredients to another man who is known to be a good brew maker. The latter always keeps some of the brew as remuneration for his work, and for the dangers incurred, and both usually drink the brew together. When the brew is considered to be ready, the contents of the pot, usually not filtered, are emptied into bottles, and these are carefully hidden. Bottles are carried around concealed under the shirt. Before an individual leaves a house with a bottle, he will first look through the window to see that nobody is around, and then only quickly proceed to the place where the brew party will take place.

The people show a real obsession with drinking. Despite all the secrecy surrounding this activity, the impression gained was that people know exactly where a brew party is going on, and who is involved. This knowledge spreads around quickly, and incites jealous comments. Usually the brew owner starts drinking either alone, or with his family. If he shares the pot with somebody else, it is assumed that his drinking

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1. At the time of writing Indians could only consume liguor in taverns. Since February 1, 1963, Indians have been permitted to purchase liquor and consume it in their own homes.

partner will be there. When drinking begins, the door is locked, so that undesirable guests won't come, and the curtains on the windows are drawn. The garbage pail is brought in from the porch. If a police visit occurs, the brew in the mugs is immediately thrown into the pail, and the mugs filled with fresh water so that there is no evidence of brewing. Only one bottle is opened at a time, the rest remaining hidden. At the beginning of the drinking, the participants show nervousness, and awareness of the dangers involved, and frequently look through small holes in the curtains, to see if unwanted people are walking around. After a few drinks, the participants become less watchful, and when somebody knocks on the door they are inclined to let friends in to join the party.

It is said that there are two kinds of drinkers at Old Crow - "good drinkers" who drink slowly, without becoming completely intoxicated, and "bad drinkers", who drink fast, become very drunk, and in this state either start quarrelling and fighting, or simply fall down unconscious. The writer had only one opportunity of observing a "good drinker", the general tendency being to empty the contents of the bottle as soon as possible. Despite this, informants stated that the first stages of drinking are the most agreeable, since that is when one "feels good, just right". The individual can still walk, although he does so with some hesitation. At this stage, especially during daytime, the drinker may choose to go out and visit people. These visits are then serial, the drinker walking without hesitating into several households, and talking profusely, only to return to where he started from and continue drinking.

Honigmann observed the following effects of drinking among the Kaska Indians - recklessness, quarrelling, physical aggression, singing, joking, depression, and the expression of heightened sexuality (1949: 169). The writer failed to notice any singing at drinking parties. All the other effects were observed, with joking taking place only at the beginning. Under the growing influence of the brew, the conversation almost inevitably concerns such aspects of interpersonal relations such as marital tensions, fears of maltreatment by others, cases of extramarital relations, etc. Often one individual dominates the party and monotonously repeats certain complaints he has against another person. If the individual concerned is present at the party, a quarrel leading to actual fighting may ensue. Informants admitted that drinking in the

presence of women is dangerous. As A. puts it: "When there is trouble in a brew party, a woman must be there. When I drink with a man, and see a woman come in, I go out. I know that there is going to be trouble. One day I was drinking with B. and somebody else. Then Cecile walked in and wanted to drink. I stayed, we all got drunk and B. got mad and started beating us". Numerous cases of fighting were mentioned; only few, however, were serious enough to merit the intervention of the police.

When drunk, the young men show a greater aggressiveness and inspire fear in others. Informants asserted that, at a certain time during the summer of 1961, two "smart boys" had been drinking steadily for over two weeks. Speaking about them, Cecile complained: "Last year these smart boys beat my old father with two sticks. They drink bad all the time, and now they want to beat women. When they are drunk they look to beat people. I am real scared to go out at night. I stay here. I hear they want to beat A. I am real scared".

The writer gained the general impression that there is an intense desire among the people to drink for the purpose of becoming drunk. The hidden functions of this tendency is a point beyond the scope of the present report. One may again mention the general reserve and distance in interpersonal relations previously described, and the deep-seated hostilities and suspicions. The state of drunkenness is a condition which temporarily destroys this reserve, and brings the true nature of relations between people to the surface. It is a way - and an important one - for the individual to break down his isolation and to reach the others.

Gambling is another highly important and time-consuming activity at Old Crow. People only vaguely remember the traditional gambling games, and are incapable of giving precise information on them. Traditional forms of gambling have thus been entirely abandoned, and replaced by various card games such as poker and blackjack. Poker playing takes place every night at Old Crow in the dwelling of a bachelor, and the same locale is usually used for weeks or months. The game usually starts in late afternoon, and continues all night until the next morning or noon. It may continue without interruption for two or three days. The players sit around a square table covered with a blanket and swiftly, intensely attentive, exchange cards and chips. There are

always some onlookers around the circle of gamblers, who carefully watch the progress of the game, abstaining, however, from making comments. If, late at night, somebody gets particularly tired, he may sleep on the bed and join the game later. The composition of the gambling group changes constantly as there are newcomers who join and others who leave permanently after a heavy loss, or temporarily in order to visit their families, etc. There is a core of gamblers, however, who stay at the table all night.

The game at the beginning is considered "quiet". Few people participate, the chips are worth 5¢ only, and the game is not very fast. Newcomers will join, purchase chips worth no more than $2, and after losing them, play for $2, and then leave the game. Or they may continue until late at night when the game becomes "tough". The value of the chip increases, and the pots become worth dozens of dollars. People at this stage become intensely preoccupied with the game, and, if left penniless, will start selling various objects: boats, snowshoes, shells, cans, etc. with the hope that they will recover their losses. During a single night a man may alternately win and lose considerable sums, sometime up to several hundred dollars. While some individuals are considered very good gamblers, others are held to be poor poker players. Sometimes a poor player will buy some chips, and give them to a skilful gambler to play with. If he wins, the gains are shared equally, while the loss is sustained solely by the investor.

There is no individual at Old Crow who can make a living only through poker playing. The gainer one day is the loser on the following day. Money won at the gambling table is spent in the same way as any other cash income. Very few individuals seem capable of withdrawing from the game after a modest loss, and only one individual showed the capacity to save poker winnings. After repeatedly winning small sums at gambling, A. said: "Now I can stop working, I can get my outfit now with what I made playing this summer". A's gain, however, did not exceed $200. Informants frequently asserted that if there was more money in the community, the poker pots would be bigger. It is said that at certain periods during the last war, when muskrat pelts were sold for more than $3, each poker chip was worth $5. B. said: "At that time I started playing once with $20. I put the money in a single pot. I got it. I put all the money back again, and made it again. In two minutes I made $470. Another man got mad, and started shouting,

wanting me to stop playing. I told him: "If you shout so much, why don't you leave!" I stopped playing because nobody wanted to play with me." Stories are told about big games during which some men made over $2000. Since purchases at the store do not involve cash transactions, and since it is usually necessary to have cash in order to play poker, gambling becomes the main reason for the people's desire to obtain cash. The writer gained the impression that, as soon as an individual obtained cash from any source, he could be found at the poker table that same evening.

People were very reluctant to comment on their own gambling gains or losses. Losses were concealed in order to avoid being sneered at. The same apparent secrecy and complete absence of boasting characterizes gambling gains. The writer was visiting A. who had made $60 the previous night playing poker. Other visitors were present. The writer asked A. how much he made in the game. A. answered modestly: "Almost nothing, just a dollar". After the departure of the other visitors, A. admitted having won $60. The fear of provoking other people's jealousy, leading to aggressive witchcraft, is the main reason for this concealment.

Individuals who repeatedly win money at the poker table are said to have "luck". This is a mysterious quality that may come into an individual, and make him successful on the trap line or at the poker table. As long as a man has "luck" he should strive to play consistently, putting up big pots and acting swiftly. At the first signs of the "luck" abandoning him, and moving into somebody else, he should become more cautious, and wait for "luck" to come back to him. It is admitted that without "luck" one can do nothing but lose. Some people can purchase luck charms from medicine men who usually live in Fort Yukon. Although nobody will admit having done so, informants asserted that it is possible to guess who has purchased luck charms at the poker table. Continuous gainers, and people who rarely lose money must have luck charms. Hence the need for people to destroy these charms through supernatural means, or to purchase charms themselves. It is admitted that it is essential for a certain "luck" equilibrium to be established between players, in order for the game to proceed.

Feasting and dancing are other important activities drawing people together. Whenever an individual wants to give a feast, and no moose are available, a coffee party is organized instead. The

coffee party giver pays all the expenses involved, which may amount to over $100. This includes big pots of coffee and tea, some macaroni or rice meal, bread and butter and various cakes. The whole community participates in the community hall, men and women sitting separately on low benches, with the children on the floor between them. At the end of such parties, the band chief or one of the elders will thank the party giver in the name of the whole community. After the speech the floor is cleared and people get ready for the dance during which few children remain in the hall. The sexes remain separate, and tend to form age groupings, the most evident of which are those of the young boys and girls. The fiddler and the guitar player provide the music. At first a number of "eight" and "duck" dances are performed, with the active participation of the elderly people. Later most of the elderly individuals find it convenient to leave the hall, and a series of square dances and waltz-like dances are danced by the youngsters and middle-aged people. While the square dance is a group activity, involving co-ordinated movements of numerous individuals, the waltz-like dance is a recently introduced pattern in the area and is danced by couples only.

The dance provides the setting for the realization of sexual choices. If a man persistently invites the same woman to dance, this signifies that he is "after her", since there is constant watching of who invites whom. If a married woman dances "too much", her husband may ask her to stop, and leave the hall, and if the married couple "get along well" at the time, the wife will obey. If there are marital tensions, the wife is expected to continue dancing. In front of the hall there are always boys and girls engaged in teasing each other, and in rough-housing.

In the recent past, the Old Crow people have completed some important community projects. In 1935, through a common effort, the community hall was built. This is a large single room structure, used for band meetings, feasts and dances. In the 1950's a new church was erected with the help of everybody. The construction work was supervised by an elected body of three elders. People used to work and eat together, with the older women preparing food for the communal meals. Some years ago, a local man had his leg amputated. The people quickly collected $250 for a new wooden leg. Informants observed,

however, that in the past people frequently helped each other more on certain occasions. Thus when a man was building a house, he could always rely on help from relatives and friends who gladly contributed, without even being asked to do so. "Now people don't do that anymore, and want to get paid for any work they do". In the past also collective games seem to have been common. Among these, informants mentioned soccer, and a certain game of skill with buttons. These collective games have been entirely abandoned. It should be mentioned that an attempt to organize a co-operative store also failed. The plan for such a store was drawn up by the local missionary some years ago. It was suggested that local fur be brought first to Old Crow, then shipped south for sale, and with the money obtained, a communal outfit for one year purchased. Some people apparently supported this project. Others were afraid that, with the elimination of the debt system, they would not be able to get their food on credit, and would starve. The two white traders at the time opposed the project for obvious reasons, and the missionary had to abandon it. The failure of this project indicates how deeply rooted the debt system is, and demonstrates the consequent paternalistic, superordinate position of the trader.

Formal band organization and leadership are closely associated patterns, and should be described together. The Old Crow people with Indian status form a distinct political unit under the leadership of a chief who is elected for two years, and assisted by two councillors. The chief and councillors are elected by majority vote by the band assembly, which consists of all adult Indian men and women. The band assembly meets irregularly at the request of the chief. Usually the two policemen are present at band meetings, and participate in discussions, especially when matters of intercultural relations are discussed. When the topic for discussion concerns trapping, a trappers' meeting is called that includes all individuals, male and female, who hold trapper's licences.

Matters dealt with at such meetings may be grouped under two headings - questions involving strictly local matters (Indian - Indian relations), and issues concerning inter-ethnic relations. The first category includes topics such as the obligation to keep dogs chained, the hour at which school children should be told to go to bed, repairs to the community hall, etc. Whenever matters involving the Euro-

Canadian administration and services have to be discussed, the local policemen inform the Indian agent of the desirability of organizing a band meeting. The issue is explained to the people by the policeman, and commented upon by the chief. Individuals are free to present remarks and objections. It should be noted that only elders and middle aged men usually speak atmeetings, and that any intervention by young men is considered as inappropriate. Then the assembly proceeds with the vote by raising hands. The subjects discussed are numerous - trapping and hunting regulations, house building projects, government employment opportunities, wood cutting, activities related to government purchases, operation of a mechanical saw as part of a government programme for development, local government activities, school attendance regulations, etc.

Informants frequently commented upon the gradual weakening of the chief's authority, and the increasing limitations on his functions. In the preceding sections it was noted that the chief in the past intervened in matters of marital discord and temporary husband-wife separations. Informants clearly asserted that this would be almost unthinkable today. The activities of a chief a little over a decade ago were described as follows. One of the first things chief A. did was to appoint one of his councillors as a supervisor of dogs. All dogs were to be kept chained, and the owner of a loose dog was fined 75 cents. If a dog was found loose several times, it was confiscated and sold. Once such a dog was sold for $7. This was most effective in getting people to control their dogs. The councillor even used to get up at night to catch loose dogs. Chief A. insisted that all complaints concerning heavy drinking and brew making, infractions of trapping regulations, and fighting be submitted to him first. This pattern worked well, and people used to bring their problems to him. Chief A. in such cases asked his wife to leave him alone with the visitor. Whenever a money-lender was incapable of recovering his cash, he used to talk to Chief A. The latter made efforts to convince the borrower to return the loan, and used to say: "You borrowed money from this man when you were in need. Now the man needs the money back and you have to return it". Some poor trappers did not enjoy the confidence of the traders, and were unable to obtain an outfit on credit. In such cases Chief A. took it upon himself to

guarantee the payment of the outfit by signing the purchase order. When the judge visited the settlement and held court, the chief used to sit on his right, and answer questions asked him by the judge. Band meetings at the time were much less frequent than they are now. Informants remembered that once, during nine months only one meeting was organized. The chief used to invite the policemen to the meeting. Often they didn't come, and they rarely participated if they were present. Comparing the activities of Chief A. to the present state of things, one informant said: "It was just like local government. Now it is all different. All complaints go straight to the police. There are meetings every month. You see loose dogs all around. I guess people like it that way. They like to have a weak chief". There is further evidence that until a decade ago elderly women were much more active at band meetings. "After the chief and councillors finished speaking at the band meetings, the old women would stand up one after another and speak strongly. They used to run things around here".

Recent elections of band chiefs seem to have been influenced, to a certain degree, by the Euro-Canadian agents. Informants complained about the inefficiency, the inability to obtain increased relief, and the submissiveness of recent chiefs who were considered as simple tools in the hands of the local agents. It should be noted, however, that Chief A. had numerous influential kinsmen in the community unlike the recent chiefs, whose families appear as somewhat more isolated.

There are several informal native leaders in present Old Crow society. First among them is the local trader, an Indian. At band meetings his opinion is greatly respected, and generally followed, and informally it is said that "he gives orders to people". Through the credit system he can influence peoples' decisions and control their movements to a limited degree. Here is a recent example. A. heard last autumn that there were possibilities of wage employment at Fort McPherson. He wanted to go to McPherson with his dog team, and to spend a few months working there, but he needed to be outfitted on credit for the long trip. The trader refused to give the credit, believing that A. might leave Old Crow permanently, and that the store would lose a valuable customer and fur provider. A. remained in Old Crow. Whenever important decisions are to be taken at the

band meeting, the trader informally "tells people" what to do. There is evidence that he can successfully influence the vote.

Old Man is another elderly individual enjoying a position of some moral authority in the local society. Old Man's father was a missionary who laboured in the area during the second half of the last century. Old Man has been closely associated with the activities of the Anglican church throughout his whole life. He has the advantage of speaking both English and Kutchin fluently, and usually acts as interpreter at band meetings. Whenever important Euro-Canadian visitors come to the settlement he is in the forefront of the reception committee. He has spent some time travelling and working in southern Canada, seems well informed about various developments in the south, and has thus become the informal interpreter of the white man's doings to his less sophisticated neighbours. People respect his friendly relations and apparent equality with the Euro-Canadian agents. He often says the prayer in church during the service.

It is clear that while the trader's authority is the result of his highly important mercantile functions, Old Man's influence in local life derives from his association with the Anglican church. Trading and religious practices, however, are activities introduced into the area by Euro-Canadians; they are local reflections of a wide national pattern. The informal leadership and authority of the trader and Old Man are thus entirely different from the traditional patterns of leadership described in the first chapter of this report. They are an outcome of a long acculturative process, and can be understood only within the existing network of intercultural relations. The sole difference between Old Man's authority and the band chief's leadership is that the latter functions within a political framework, officially recognized by the Indian Affairs Branch. Both, however, derive their superordinate positions from Euro-Canadian institutions.

There are cases of conflict between the band chief and the informal leaders. Such a case occurred in the summer of 1961, over a choice to be made by the band between two Indian agencies. The two informal leaders decided that certain advantages were to be obtained through joining agency A. The band chief, on friendly terms with the head of Indian agency B. carefully enumerated at the band meeting all the benefits derived by the community from its association with

Indian agency B. When the matter was put to the vote, the band chief alone voted for B. All the people present followed the instructions of the two informal leaders, and voted for A. This case clearly indicates that real leadership rests with the informal leaders.

Informants indicated that the superordinate position of the two informal leaders was decidedly on the decline. In the past, before government money poured into the community, the trader, through the fur trade, closely controlled certain activities of the people. The authority of the Anglican Church was considerable then, and it was not challenged by the recent city influence. The Euro-Canadian agents were few, and the missionary enjoyed a superior status among them. It is within this context that Old Man's superordinate position was rooted. One informant said: "There is no leadership here any more. They follow the white men like sheep; the white men are now leaders here. People can't stand up to the white man". This testimony is supported by facts. The ever increasing intrusion of government agents in the economic activities of the people, in education, sanitation, administration, etc., means a lessening of the 'native' forms of leadership, and a multiplication of Euro-Canadian authority positions.

Religion is another sphere of activity leading to group formation. The native inhabitants of Old Crow all belong to the Anglican Church, and form a local parish under the leadership of a missionary assisted by a native catechist.

Church services are held every Sunday morning in English and Kutchin in the afternoon, with the participation of a substantial portion of the population. Two or three elderly women, and an equal number of elderly men are particularly active in church affairs.

There are three religious associations sponsored by the Anglican Church at Old Crow. The Women's Auxiliary (WA) was founded in 1931 by the wife of the then resident Indian missionary. It holds weekly meetings on Friday afternoons in the old school room with prayers, discussions, community work, etc. For a number of years the WA has had the same president. The principal functions of the WA are the organization of the Christmas and Easter time festivities, the collection of money, the sale of handicrafts, the purchase of gasoline

for the church lamps, and keeping the church clean. It should be noted that the WA works in close collaboration with the missionary's wife. Informants suggested that decisions taken at WA meetings may influence votes at band meetings.

Some years ago, the younger members of the WA became dissatisfied with the older women's leadership, and decided to form a separate organization called Salina Bompas WA, after the wife of one of the first Anglican Bishops of the Yukon. The Salina Bompas WA's functions are the raising of funds for the missionary society, and the annual graveyard clean-up. The WA conducts a study group with different subjects being studied every year. Topics selected in the last few years include missionary work in Japan, Christian activities in Africa, problems of Church Unity, etc. The WA raised funds during the war for the Canadian Red Cross, and later for the Christians in Korea.

There is also a Men's Club affiliated with the Anglican Church. It holds monthly meetings, and elects the two church wardens. The Men's Club provided the organizational framework for the new church construction program in the 1950's.

The Old Crow Ski Club is an important recreational organization. The local ski club was founded in 1956, with the active help of the Catholic missionary who is an experienced ski instructor himself. In 1955, the RCMP constable had suggested the organization of a ski club at Old Crow, similar to the one at Telegraph Creek. The Catholic missionary then explored the local topography with this project in mind, surveying snow conditions, winds, slopes, etc. During the autumn of 1956 the first meeting was held, and the idea of a ski club accepted. Soon after, a second meeting laid down the organizational framework of the club; the whole community was present at this meeting. The leaders aimed at obtaining the active interest and participation of the largest possible number of individuals through the constitution of several specialized committees. The RCMP constable was elected president, and Old Man, the native leader, became vice-president. The directors of the Racing Committee (time keeping for races, hurdles for skiers, etc.), of the Ways and Means Committee (correspondence in connection with fund raising campaigns), of the Ski Track Committee (control of snow conditions on the ski track), of the Entertainment Committee and of the Ski Equipment Committee

were all local individuals, each being helped by two or three advisers. The Anglican missionary became treasurer, a native girl secretary; the RCMP constable was put in charge of correspondence and the Catholic missionary remained as ski instructor. Meetings were held twice a month; executive meetings involved the presence of the officials only, and all the community took part in general meetings held at the end of each month. The ski track was cleared of trees and brush by a collective effort. In late 1956 the first ski equipment arrived, a gift of the Calgary Ski Club. In 1957 systematic ski lessons were given to boys and girls, and to some middle aged men. Some of the better trainees started training the children. The native leaders were closely associated with the new activity, and a considerable enthusiasm for skiing became evident. Even during intense cold, groups of boys and girls practised daily. Soon however, dissension appeared. In the minds of a few individuals, it seemed apparent that skiing associated the people too closely with the Catholic missionary. Religious scruples caused a number of individuals to withdraw from the ski club, and some girls were sent to residential school outside the settlement, in order to avoid skiing. A ban on skiing on Sundays was proclaimed. Despite this opposition, skiing continued at Old Crow, and soon brought numerous trophies to the settlement from various races in Whitehorse and Anchorage. In 1960, a reorganization of the ski club took place. The Indian trader was elected president, and the committee directors all became vice-presidents. No Euro-Canadians occupied official positions in the ski club. An informant said: "Now we Indians run our own business; there are no more white men."

During the summer of 1961, the people's attitudes toward the ski club ranged all the way from negative to positive. The individuals favouring the ski club expressed themselves as follows: "In the old time life was hard and boys were educated "tough". Boys used to get up very early in the morning, and run in the snow, and then only dried meat was given to them. At an early age they had to gain stamina and become capable of strenuous effort in order later to run down the moose successfully. Now boys have an easy life, they get up late and a big breakfast is awaiting them, and all day long they do nothing. Skiing helps toughen the boys. It is like snowshoe walking, it teaches them running, it is a good preparation for the hunting, trapping life." A's son B. is an outstanding skier, winner of several trophies. A says:

"One day I had to pack 80 rats and B. 90 rats. B. walks in front, faster than me. When I catch him later he wasn't even breathing fast. He is real tough on walking. Skiing did that. When B. went skiing cross-country at Fairbanks, there was a big champ running there also. B. run several miles, run real fast, and he arrived there at the line, not tired even, not breathing fast, just sweating a little bit. After he crossed the line he was talking, just feeling fine. The champ arrived exhausted, and he lay down for time."

Skiing may thus be considered as a new activity that fits well within the hunting-trapping pattern of the native culture. It is considered by the people as a substitute for the traditional training of boys that has now disappeared. It develops qualities of endurance and toughness so necessary for the life in the bush. The ski trail is the road leading to success on the trap line. Further, skiing is a competitive activity that puts Indians and Whites on a footing of equality. Except in the bush, the Indian feels inferior to the white man in all activities. Skiing is one field where the Indian can successfully compete with the white man and beat him. That is the significance of the many trophies assembled by the Old Crow boys, and proudly shown to visitors.

Several individuals criticized the ski club in the following manner: "Ski club is good for nothing. I don't know why people ski. I really don't know what they are doing there. They spent lots of money - $27 for boots, $60 for skis. They run all around and get no money; there is no government money in skiing, and I don't know why people are doing it. They get bills all right. It is foolish, there is no money in skiing." This statement is explicit enough, and needs no comment.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Old Crow is in process of changing rapidly. The cultural transformations described in this report touch upon almost every aspect of social life.

The changes that have taken place in the field of material culture and subsistence activities are most easily observable. Through the fur trade, the Euro-Canadians brought into the land of the Vunta Kutchin an array of production and consumption goods - guns, fishing nets, steel traps, metal tools and utensils, canvas tents, clothing, various foods, etc. These items rapidly replaced their traditional counterparts. This process of replacement was not a simple one. It was accompanied by profound organizational changes that sprung from the very nature of the fur trade. One trend was the gradual restriction in size of the main collaborative units. In traditional times relatively large groups had to co-operate while hunting caribou at the corrals or fishing at the river traps. With the introduction of systematic trapping in the area the individual hunter-trapper became increasingly self sufficient in the field of subsistence activities. Armed with his rifle, he could easily kill caribou single handed. Others did join him in caribou hunting, but there was no organic pattern of collaboration between hunters. Riflemen hunted together in order to take advantage of a temporary game concentration, but these groupings were of the mechanical type, with no interdependence of individuals. Fishing still more clearly exhibits these individualizing trends in the economy. The fisherman is the exclusive owner of his nets, and the only benefactor of his work. Trapping is essentially an individual activity. The trapper is the owner of his steel traps, enjoys quasi-ownership rights over his trap line, and remains the exclusive owner of the furbearers caught. Although hunting and trapping partnerships existed, they were not organically founded units.

Recent economic factors in the community include the appearance of new activities, such as logging, and, above all, increased government help. Logging again is an individual activity, although it may be carried on by temporary, unstable partnership. Government help, under various forms, is generally bestowed upon individuals or heads of households. Government sponsored group efforts, such as a mechanical saw, are

beginning. Unfortunately, this project is not, and cannot be, commercially exploited. It is limited to a temporary housing project financed with government funds.

Profound changes occurred in the sphere of settlement patterns after the fur trade era. The ancient band organization, characterized by large summer and autumn groupings, and smaller winter units, gave way to a chain of small trapping camps along the Porcupine River. Each trapping camp was the focal point of a network of trap lines. In spring the people abandoned these winter camps, and spread over Crow Flats to trap muskrat. The whole population of the area was concentrated at Old Crow in the summer for a short period. This was a period of relaxation and festivities. In late summer, the families, carrying their outfits obtained on credit, were already leaving for the winter camps.

The establishment of a Federal Day School at Old Crow, and the decrease in ecological pressure because of government help encouraged all the people to move into Old Crow on a permanent basis; this movement took place about a decade ago. Its consequences were numerous. Some people suddenly found themselves far removed from their traditional trapping districts. The annual migration to Crow Flats continued, but in a less extensive manner. Firewood was more difficult to obtain, and fishing also suffered. Deficiencies in ecological adaptation appeared, and this led to increased government help.

The pattern of intercultural relations was also profoundly affected. In past times, trader and the missionary were the main agents of cultural change. The RCMP detachment had regressive functions mainly related to the application of Euro-Canadian law. In recent years, new government agents have become active in the area, and the older ones have had their functions changed. The RCMP constables became the often generous distributors of government relief, and the agents of Indian Affairs Branch policy. The school teacher occupied a prominent position in local society, and the activities of the nurse resulted in a drastic reduction in the death rate. Within the local power structure, the trader's and missionary's positions became less powerful, and government agents moved to the forefront of social life. This was natural, since the community derived half of its total income from various government sources. The Indians became increasingly attentive to their relations with the various government agents, transferring their feelings of dependence from the trader to the newcomers.

In time, intercultural relations were multiplied, diversified and intensified.

The moiety structure slowly decayed. In traditional times it was associated with intertribal war and potlatching, and with regulating marriage. With the establishment of peace in the area, and the later prohibition of the potlatch by the government, the very basis of this dual organization disappeared, and the exogamous rules that were associated with it became obsolete.

Family organization at present shows a great variability. The evidence collected indicates a certain instability of the marital tie, characterized by reserve and tensions. This was explained by the multiplicity of extra-marital relations, resulting in a high rate of illegitimacy. The weakening of the marital bond led to a number of separations with mothers choosing single residence. The stabilization of the matri-focal households can be explained only by reference to economic factors, especially to increased government support.

Communal life is characterized by interpersonal hostility which becomes more easily visible in periods of drunkenness. In addition to these covert tensions, there are numerous integrative activities and organizations - friendships, visiting patterns, work partnerships, feasts, religious groups, a formal band organization and a ski club. The Old Crow people remain strongly ethnocentric, and, in general, consider their country as a very good place to live. When asked whether they would like to live somewhere elsewhere, informants replied that they did not know anybody out there, they did not know what to do, they felt "nobody". Elderly informants acquainted with modern life in the towns of Southern Yukon where the Indians "did not bother to get married or go to church" still consider Old Crow a "holy place."

Profound changes have transformed local leadership patterns. In traditional times, the Vunta Kutchin had several categories of leaders including tribal chief, war captains, leaders, and economic co-ordinators. Frequently, shamans took important decisions on behalf of the whole community. The introduction of the fur trade in the area, the arrival of missionaries, and the establishment of peace destroyed the very basis of these different forms of native leadership. Soon trading chiefs became active as intermediaries. With the intensification of trading, these also

disappeared. The minor forms of native leadership found today at Old Crow have their roots in larger, intrusive institutions of European origin, namely government, trading, and religion. There is a clear trend for major decisions affecting the community to be taken by Euro-Canadian agents.

Social life at Old Crow appears to be dominated by certain "extreme" preoccupations and activities. Such are the local patterns of sex behaviour, characterized by numerous extra-marital relations, and leading to a weakening of the husband-wife bond, the nightly drinking parties and poker playing sessions, and the widespread interpersonal hostilities and jealousies. Some of these patterns have been observed by Honigmann among the Kaska Indians. Are these trends the characteristic of an atomistic society? Do they constitute part of a process of social disorganization due to culture contact or were they inherent in traditional Athapaskan culture? The writer remains incapable of answering these questions. The answer may be found through research in similar communities in the Athapascan area.

The Old Crow people are convinced that their lot is increasingly improving. Comparing the hardships, hard work and occasional famine of the "old life" to the new situation, one informant said: "Now life is easy, just like holidays all the time". Just look, since I came back from Crow Flats I have not done a thing! Just resting! In autumn I will kill lots of caribou upstream with using my canoe and kicker, easy job. I will have lots of meat. In winter maybe I will go trapping, before Christmas only, but not too much. After New Year, I go cutting wood, but that is not difficult, I got used to it. In spring we go ratting, that is nice time. In summer I rest. We get a lot from the Family Allowances. People even want to get mother allowances! And when we need grub, we just go to the police and get rations. That way no starvations. Since Family Allowances, after war no starvations, and with rations it is real easy. Before that time you had to work for everything. Now we take it easy." The people have the feeling that the time for "good life" has come. This central conception is linked to the abundance of easily obtainable food, and constant card playing and brewing.

While Old Crow adults enjoy the benefits of the "good life" in a leisurely manner with the profound conviction that they are still Indians living the "Indian way," the young boys and girls who have been exposed to more direct Euro-Canadian cultural influence in the boarding schools

are considered to be "mixed up." As one informant put it: "the girls who come from the Inuvik school are really "high tone". They pretend they don't talk Indian and talk only English. It is crazy. That is what is wrong with Indians. They try to be like white men, but cannot work and live like white men. No Indian has studied enough like white man. And now these girls are neither Indian nor White." Youngsters are particularly vague about their future; having little knowledge about education and work according to Euro-Canadian standards they remain incapable of perceiving what their future is going to be.

Some boys commented on how good it would be to have a beer parlour, movies and cars. Most of them expressed the desire to learn some trade and live like white men. The writer asked one of them

Q.: Do you want to learn to be a mechanic?
R.: Maybe.
Q.: What would you do after?
R.: I don't know.
Q.: Are you going to come back to Old Crow or stay away?
R.: I don't know.

Old Crow society is subjected to increasing Euro-Canadian cultural influences, despite its isolation from the major communication centres in the Yukon. The present attitude of the people is to take advantage of some of the new benefits from government welfare programmes while continuing with the "Indian way". How long this trend will last, only future research will show.

APPENDIX I

Typical Bear Stories

a) Charlie Netro was the strongest man in the country, a very good hunter and wrestler. One winter he found the hole of a grizzly bear. He took a heavy stick and stuck it in the ground right in front of the den. When the bear pushed its head out Charlie strangled it by pushing the stick against its neck.

b) Two men were hunting in the Chandalar country. They found a grizzly den in the ground. They waited outside, with their guns ready. They threw their mitts into the hole, so that the grizzly would smell them and come out. The grizzly growled, but didn't move. Then one of the men took his hunting knife and crawled into the hole. The den was long, but the hunter saw the bear sitting on a clean grass platform with her two pups. He saw their six eyes like six stars. When the bear moved forward, he felt first her head, then her body with his hands, found the heart, and stabbed her there with his knife. The bear moved on, and then the pups came forward. He dispatched them in the same manner. When the animals got out of the den, they dropped dead.

This man's name was $C^{h}_{o} \cdot {}^{h}_{o} \cdot {}^{h}_{o}$.

APPENDIX II

Origin Myth of the Natsai Sib

As told by Moses Tyzia (natsai).

A woman from lower Tanana country was very rich in dentalium shells. One winter, she was travelling along Yukon River, together with a band of people, all of whom were rich. There was no food around, so she asked some girls to snare rabbits and ptarmigan. Despite their efforts, all the people starved to death, and she was the only one who survived. When spring came, she left the bush, reached the Yukon River and stayed along the bluff. Now that she was alone, she would take some of her dentalium shells, pound them, and drink them with water. Ground squirrels came out of their holes, and she caught one and ate it. She killed lots of squirrels, dried them in bundles, and grew strong. But she knew nobody in the country. Below the bluff, down the Yukon River lived another band of people. After break-up two boys from this band went up river in a canoe, and saw her standing on the shore. After the meeting she told them what happened to her people, and said that she called herself thananthindaquan (literally "the one eating squirrels' backbone"). The boys took her and the dried squirrel meat to the band downstream. There she told her story to the assembled people, and gave a feast with the dried squirrels. Later she married these two boys, and they had many children. That was the beginning of the natsai people. All her children were natsai, and they spread over the country and peopled it with natsai.

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