



Gifts of the Land ***Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan*** **Grade Nine Social Studies**



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grade Nine Social Studies, Unit Four, Culture: Our First Nations Roots
<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/midlsoc/gr9/94overview.html>

LESSON PLAN ONE: CLASSROOM INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will explore the physical and spiritual importance of the resources of land, water, and forests to Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Copies of Fast Facts information (at the end of resource package).
- *Living off the Land in the Early Twentieth Century: First Nations Subsistence in Saskatchewan* by Janet Mackenzie, and *Renewable and Non-renewable Resources and Northern Aboriginal Communities: Impacts and Initiatives*, a joint WDM-SICC research paper by Lua Young, are available at <http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/>.
- The Northern Saskatchewan Heritage Site: <http://www.kayas.ca>.
- *Métis Seasonal Cycles*, by Darren R. Prefontaine, Patrick Young and Todd Paquin, is available on the *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* at <http://www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php/15>.



First Nations women and children in a camp with meat drying above them, circa 1905. Saskatchewan Archives Board S-B6793



Gifts of the Land

Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan

Grade Nine Social Studies

PROCEDURE

1. Prepare to teach by reviewing the Fast Facts at the end of the resource package, as well as the research documents listed above.
2. Introduce the topic of Aboriginal resource use by asking students what they know about the importance of natural resources to Aboriginal people. What kinds of resources were traditionally used by First Nations? How were these resources used? What value do First Nations place on Mother Earth and her resources, and how does it guide their use of resources?
3. Distribute copies of the Fast Facts information and give students time to read through the points. Discuss with students what they learned about Aboriginal resource use by reading the Fast Facts information that they had not been aware of before.
4. Write the following quote by Elder Jimmy Myo, Moosomin First Nation, on an overhead or on the board, and share with students to introduce the assignment:

When the Creator first put Indians on this land, He gave him everything that he needed, lands to live on, He gave them trees, animals and from there to make his own clothing and to make their shelters and to eat. And He also put there good medicines that would heal all kinds of illnesses and those medicines were true and they were all good medicines.

The Creator has given the Indians a lot of powerful things. And everything that He has given to the Indian is all meshed into a way of life. (Cardinal, Harold and Walter Hildebrandt. *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000.)

5. Students should support their ideas with examples. Refer students to the references listed in the Resources and Materials section. Most of the information they are seeking should be available in these sources.

ADAPTATION AND EXTENSION

1. Refer to Bill Barry's *People Places: Saskatchewan and its Names* to discover how Aboriginal naming of natural resources has influenced the naming of several Saskatchewan cities, towns, and landmarks. (i.e. moosomin, kinoosao)
2. Prepare traditional foods from Saskatchewan ingredients like pemmican or wild mint tea.



Gifts of the Land

Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan

Grade Nine Social Studies

LESSON PLAN TWO: AT THE MUSEUM

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will explore the contents of a discovery box and tour exhibits in the Museum.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Materials and information sent to you in your Museum tour confirmation package.

PROCEDURE

1. Prepare to teach and to tour the Museum by reviewing the resources listed. Divide your class into groups before the visit. Select other staff members or parents to lead the groups. Advise the group leader about what they will have to do.
2. Students will visit a Western Development Museum in Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Saskatoon or Yorkton. The entire class will assemble for a welcome and orientation.
3. The class will be divided into two, three or more groups depending on the class size. Students will interact with



The Gifts of the Land - Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan discovery box includes examples of how First Nations people utilized and depended on the bounty of the land.

- artifacts, replicas and photographs located in a discovery box. A leader's script included in the discovery box will spearhead discussion.
4. The class will tour pertinent exhibits in the Museum using a tour handout to guide their exploration. This handout may be a question-and-answer sheet or scavenger. A tour script for the group leader will be sent to you with confirmation of your Museum tour booking.

LESSON PLAN THREE: WHEN A MUSEUM VISIT ISN'T POSSIBLE

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will gain an understanding of how Aboriginal people helped early settlers to survive in a harsh new environment by sharing their skills and knowledge of the environment.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- *Indigenous-Settler Relations* by Christa Nicholat is available at <http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/>
- Local histories from your community
- Script-in-hand dialogue from *Winning the Prairie Gamble* – a play commissioned by the Western Development Museum, and written by Geoffrey Ursell and Barbara Sapergia in celebration of Saskatchewan's 2005 centennial (appendix one)



A weir built for traditional First Nations fishing. Saskatchewan Archives Board R-A25779(3)



Gifts of the Land

Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan

Grade Nine Social Studies

PROCEDURE

1. Get students thinking about what life was like for First Nations people prior to the arrival of Europeans. Review how they survived. What resources did they use from the land, water, and forests? How did they utilize these?
2. Review *Indigenous-Settler Relations* by Christa Nicholat and any information gathered from local histories.
3. Imagine that you are a new settler to Saskatchewan. Brainstorm all of the things you would need to survive in your new environment (i.e. food, shelter, clothing, medicine). How could Aboriginal people be of assistance in obtaining some of these things? How would their knowledge of the land and its resources be beneficial to you as a new settler? Reciprocally, what might you have that you could trade or give to your new Aboriginal neighbours? What kinds of barriers might be in place to impede your communication (language, the pass system required to leave reserves)?
4. Perform the script-in-hand excerpts from the *Winning the Prairie Gamble* play by dividing the students into as many groups as necessary, depending on the class size. Allow students some time to review the script, discuss the characters, gather simple props and practice the scene prior to performing it. The first excerpt introduces the main First Nations and homesteader characters – Thunder Dancer and Dugald MacDonald - and their first meeting which impacts the rest of their lives. The second excerpt takes place several years later.
5. In the first excerpt, discuss why Dugald agreed not to plow up the Healing Hill. Why was the Healing Hill so important to Thunder Dancer and the rest of his community? In the first excerpt, what kind of relationship did Dugald and Thunder Dancer establish from the onset of their first meeting? (Their relationship was born of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance.)
6. In the second excerpt, Dugald and Agnes' baby is gravely ill with the Spanish Flu – a deadly epidemic that hit Saskatchewan and the rest of the world in 1918, brought home from the trenches by troops returning from the First World War. By May 1919 when the epidemic had subsided, the number of Saskatchewan deaths reached 4821. What saved Helen's life? How do you think Far Hills Woman knew what plants to gather to help Helen? (Through years of experimentation and observation, First Nations developed an intimate knowledge of what plants to gather to treat their ailments, where they could be found and the best seasons for collecting them. This traditional knowledge would have been passed down through the generations, and Far Hills Woman would have learned this knowledge from an Elder.)
7. Thunder Dancer was concerned that he get back to the reserve before the Indian Agent knew he was missing. Why was this so? (Thunder Dancer did not have a pass to leave the reserve. The pass system was supposed to be a temporary measure to discourage First Nations from joining the Northwest Resistance back in 1885, but it continued as late as the 1930s in the Treaty 4 area. First Nations required permission from the Indian Agent and a pass to leave the reserve.) How would the pass system affect how First Nations were able to practice their traditional lifestyle, as they believed was guaranteed under Treaty?

ADAPTATION AND EXTENSION

1. Visit a local museum. Go to www.saskmuseums.org to check out museums and heritage sites around Saskatchewan. Museums like the Royal Saskatchewan Museum in Regina and Wanuskewin Heritage Park north of Saskatoon offer artifacts, photographs, and information on Aboriginal resource harvesting and use.
2. Consult local histories, or interview an Elder on the topic of Aboriginal-settler relations. Do they know of any stories about First Nations or Métis people assisting new settlers, or receiving help from Aboriginal people when their family settled in Saskatchewan?



Gifts of the Land

Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan

Grade Nine Social Studies

LESSON PLAN FOUR: CLASSROOM WRAP-UP

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students will participate in a web-based quest to answer a series of questions about natural resource use and Aboriginals in today's society.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Access to the Internet and school library

PROCEDURE

1. Explain to students that traditional knowledge of the “old ways” and respect for Mother Earth and her resources continue to be important to Aboriginal people today. Aboriginal groups share the view that transmitting traditional knowledge and the practice of traditional ways like hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping are essential to the preservation of culture, and the well being of their people. However, industry related to resource harvesting and extraction, the sometimes difficult and tenuous establishment of Aboriginal Rights in a given territory, access to traditional areas, and pollution and environmental degradation are just some of the issues their ancestors did not have to deal with before widespread settlement occurred.



Two First Nations trappers bringing in furs from spring trapping, Lac La Ronge, SK, circa 1950. Saskatchewan Archives Board R-B6593

2. In this wrap-up lesson, the students will engage in a webquest activity to explore issues surrounding Aboriginal people and natural resources in today's society. Students can carry out the webquest activity individually or in small research groups depending on your preference.
3. Direct students to <http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/TraditionalResources/> to access the webquest page. The webquest introduces the topic, outlines the task, lists pertinent resources and explains the process.
4. As a wrap-up, discuss the questions as a class.

ADAPTATION AND EXTENSION

1. Survey your students. If any of them have a connection to someone who still harvests the natural resources of the land in a traditional way, invite them to the classroom to discuss their work. Contact Aboriginal organizations near you to assess the potential of a class visit from someone. Or, invite a Métis or First Nations Elder to discuss his or her perspectives on natural resource use among Aboriginal people, and the spiritual connectedness they have to the land. For protocol, consult www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca/docs/native10/F_L_Objectives.html#IE.



Gifts of the Land

Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan

Grade Nine Social Studies

RESOURCES

- *Living Off the Land in the Early Twentieth Century: First Nations Subsistence in Saskatchewan* by Janet Mackenzie, and *Renewable and Non-renewable Resources and Northern Aboriginal Communities: Impacts and Initiatives*, a joint WDM-SICC research paper by Lua Young, are available at <http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/>.
- The Northern Saskatchewan Heritage Site: <http://www.kayas.ca>
- *Métis Seasonal Cycles*, by Darren R. Prefontaine, Patrick Young and Todd Paquin, is available on the *Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture* compiled by the Gabriel Dumont Institute at <http://www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php/15>.
- Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre's Ethnography Site: www.sicc.sk.ca/heritage/ethnography/index.html.
- Museums Association of Saskatchewan: <http://www.saskmuseums.org>.
- Visit www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/aboriginal_res/ for Aboriginal-themed lesson plans.
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: <http://www.inac.gc.ca>.
- Funk, Jack ed. *...And They Told Us Their Stories*. Saskatoon: Saskatoon District Tribal Council, 1991.
- Cuthand, Stan. "The Native Peoples of the Prairie Provinces in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada*, ed. J.R. Miller. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
- Cardinal, Harold and Walter Hildebrandt. *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000.
- *Atlas of Saskatchewan*. Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1999.
- *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2005. *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* is available online at <http://www.esask.ca>.
- Waiser, Bill. *Saskatchewan: A New History*. Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 2005.
- Barry, Bill. *People Places: Saskatchewan and its Names*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1997.

FAST FACTS

- Aboriginal people have a unique relationship to the earth's resources.
- As the original inhabitants of what is now North America, First Nations people occupied all of Canada prior to the arrival of Europeans.
- Engaging in various life-supporting activities ranging from hunting and gathering to agricultural societies, each nation's system of territoriality, governance and occupancy was intimately linked to its particular relationship to lands and resources.
- Believing that the richness of the earth had been provided by their Creator, Aboriginal peoples assumed a role of stewardship and pursued their activities guided by principles of respect and responsibility to the land and natural resources.
- Tobacco was and is used as a means of giving thanks. Before and after killing an animal such as a deer, a hunter will often say a prayer while holding the tobacco in his left hand (the one



Gifts of the Land *Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan* **Grade Nine Social Studies**

closest to his heart) to give thanks to the Creator and to the animal for giving up its life so that the hunter can feed his family. Tobacco is also placed on the ground and a prayer is said as an offering when picking medicines to give thanks to Mother Earth.

- Harvesting of resources is not a thing of the remote past. Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan today are still well acquainted with their traditional territories.
- Communicating with the Creator for guidance and inspiration, keeping healthy, finding game, gathering plants and plant material, fire-making, making shelter, trading for minerals, goods and resources from beyond one's territory, and indigenous knowledge received from parents and grandparents were essential to survival.
- Gathering also included the mining or collecting of minerals. It was an essential aspect of life. Clay was used for pottery, chert for stone knives. Stone was needed for net sinkers, boiling stones and ceremonial artifacts.
- At the lakeshore and on the riverbank, sometimes while *en route* to another gathering ground, Aboriginal people collected a variety of useful plants. Wild mint, for example, grows profusely in damp areas and was collected in large amounts and dried for the winter supply of tea.
- Prized for their varied flavour, quantity, time of ripening, nutritional quality and availability across the province, berries have long been an essential part of Aboriginal harvesting activities. Types of fruits and berries included saskatoons, raspberries, dewberries, strawberries, gooseberries, blueberries, dry ground or low bush cranberries, chokecherries, rosehips and bearberries.
- Many varieties of plants were gathered for their medicinal properties. Aboriginal peoples were both knowledgeable and experienced in treating potentially dangerous ailments, from cuts to fevers to uncontrollable bleeding. Leaves, barks and roots were collected and either used fresh or cleaned and dried for future use by those who knew intimately their environment and just where and when to find the correct remedies. Cloudberries and pitcher plants, for example, only grow in bogs. Poultices, healing teas, drum songs, singing and chants - all were part of the science of traditional healing.
- Plant materials such as spruce and birch branches and boughs were used as poles and shelter material.
- Whatever was needed for domestic and subsistence use was made from materials harvested from the environment: sphagnum moss diapers and baby powder from rotted wood; old man's beard moss and birch bark for tinder; the inner bark of red osier dogwood and the leaves of bearberry [kinikinik] for tobacco; rotten wood, often mixed with conifer cones, for smoke tanning hides; willow bark for netting; spruce root thread for sewing bark. Other objects made included baskets, utensils, hide stretchers, canoes, toboggans, harnesses, and children's toys.
- The Cree word *posokanacy* means "punk hills." Punk is the dry wood or mosses growing on trees that First Nations carried in fire bags. Good punk could literally mean the difference between life and death. The punk found in the hills south of the Quill Lakes was prized since it would ignite at the slightest touch of a spark, hence the name, "Touchwood Hills."
- Nut Lake, northwest of Kelvington, and Nut Mountain to the southeast, both come from the Cree word *pākan* or "nut," a reference to the hazelnuts harvested by First Nations people living in the area.
- First Nations tapped maple trees for the sweet syrup derived from their sap. The sap was collected, boiled down to extract the sugar and the remaining syrup was poured into greased containers to be enjoyed as a special treat.



Gifts of the Land *Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan* **Grade Nine Social Studies**

- The tall, straight, and narrow trunks of the Lodgepole Pine were ideal for use as tipi poles. In Saskatchewan, Lodgepole Pine is found only in the Cypress Hills area in the southwestern part of the province. Elders would sometimes use them to make backrests. First Nations people also made travois from the Lodgepoles, lashing two of them together, crossing them above a dog's, and later a horse's, shoulders. A willow platform was made between the poles, behind the animal's tail, and loaded with tipi covers and other heavy gear.
- For Woodland First Nations, the birch bark canoe was an essential mode of transportation for engaging in hunting, trapping, fishing, and simply navigating the extensive network of waterways criss-crossing the province's northern half. Birch bark was sewn together using larch or spruce roots over a framework of soaked willow branches. The thick, sticky sap of conifers was used to waterproof the canoe and seal up the seams.
- It was through hunting and trapping that Aboriginal families gained the necessary fat and protein to survive the inevitable stresses of a subsistence lifestyle in a northern climate. The hunter had a special relationship with the hunted.
- Bison, deer, elk, moose and caribou were hunted and many smaller animals were snared or trapped.
- The buffalo was essential to the survival of First Nations on the plains. Buffalo have often been referred to as a "travelling supermarket" because they provided almost everything that these people needed for survival. Because of its important role, bison held a special and sacred place in the spirituality, artwork, song and belief systems of First Nations. Every part of the meat was eaten. It could be prepared in a number of different ways: roasted on a spit over a campfire, boiled in a skin bag, or cut into thin slices and hung to dry to make jerky or pounded into flakes and powder for pemmican. The tongue was considered a delicacy, and the kidneys, marrow, and nose were eaten fresh. Sausages were made from strips of meat and fat seasoned with wild onions and herbs such as sage. Bone grease, an important source of fat, was made by boiling down the bones. It was added to soups, stews and pemmican. The following non-food products derived from the buffalo were used:
 - Tail** – medicine switch, decoration, fly swatter, whip
 - Hooves** – rattles, source of glue when boiled down
 - Hair** – headresses, saddle pad filler, to stuff pillows, rope, ornaments for weapons
 - Horns** – cups, spoons, ladles, containers, toys and to adorn headresses
 - Fat** – cooking oil, soap making, mixed with dried buffalo meat to make pemmican
 - Dung** - odourless source of campfire fuel, baby powder
 - Skull** – ceremonies
 - Hide** - moccasins, cradles, winter robes, bedding, shirts, leggings, belts, gun cases, dresses, gloves, pipe bags, pouches, dolls, tipi covers
 - Brain** – hide preparation
 - Stomach** - buckets, cups, dishes, cooking pots
 - Bones** - knives, arrowheads, shovels, scrapers, winter sleds, war clubs, and game dice
 - Rawhide** - containers, shields, buckets, moccasin soles, rattles, drums, drum sticks, ropes, saddles, horse masks, knife cases, stirrups, headresses
 - Bladder** – containers
 - Sinew** – thread, bow strings, snowshoe webbing



Gifts of the Land *Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan* **Grade Nine Social Studies**

- The best time to hunt for bison was during the late summer and autumn season, after the animals had spent the summer grazing. Before the arrival of guns and horses, several different methods were employed to hunt and kill the animals including the bison pound or corral, and the bison jump. Bison hunts were extremely labor intensive and involved the whole group working together communally to achieve success. Many kill sites were used for thousands of years.
- **Bison Pound or Corral** – The bison pound or corral as it is sometimes known, was an enclosure constructed out of poles, brush and hides, often at the base of slope to prevent the animals from escaping. Drive lanes constructed out of rocks and brush converged at the pound. There was a strong spiritual element to the hunt. A holy person prayed and meditated, and only once they gave the word, were buffalo runners sent out to drive the buffalo into the pound. The buffalo were driven down the drive lanes and into the pound by the buffalo runners who lured the animals by wearing buffalo robes and yelling and waving erratically. Once inside the pound, the animals were killed by hunters waiting with spears and arrows.
- **Bison Jump** – Bison were driven down similarly constructed drive lanes and over a steep cliff by buffalo runners. Hunters at the bottom of the cliff finished off the kill. Buffalo jump sites can be found at Wanuskewin Heritage Park north of Saskatoon, Val Marie, Gull Lake and Minton.
- After European contact, when horses and guns became available, they were employed in the hunt. Specially trained horses, also called buffalo runners, were used. These horses were fast and had great stamina. After the kill, extra meat could be packed on the horses for transport.
- Bones, horns and teeth of various animals were used to make tools, ornaments and games. For example, needles, knives, spears, scrapers, fish hooks, arrowheads and hoe blades were made from bones and antlers, and beaver teeth made excellent cutting tools. The metacarpal bones of deer were fashioned into dice for gambling games, deer and bird bones were made into musical flutes, and teeth and small bones were made into jewelry.
- Arrows were made of wood and bone, with quartz, chert or flint arrow heads. Axes were made of ground stone, adzes made with beaver incisors and knives of bone or flaked chert.
- From hard rocks, First Nations people fashioned stone mauls, arrowheads, knives, clubs to be used in warfare, and chokecherry and dried meat mashers. Clubs and hammers were made from round stones, which were grooved around the middle to hold handles that were sometimes encased in rawhide. A soft, grayish rock, similar to the red pipestone found in Minnesota, was made into pipes. Pipes were used in ceremony, in guest lodges, and by the people generally.
- Some stone materials were highly valued because they were excellent for making tools, but were not naturally found in Saskatchewan. First Nations had established trade networks through which they could acquire these goods. Knife River flint from present-day North Dakota was traded to make knives and arrowheads due to its excellent flaking qualities which produced a sharp edge. Obsidian, a volcanic glass with good flaking qualities, was acquired from present-day Wyoming and British Columbia.
- First Nations used a number of trapping methods to catch animals and fowl. Snares with different size nooses were used to catch many different kinds of animals including rabbit, gopher, lynx and moose. Male prairie chickens are known to “dance” to attract a mate. Their heads were ensnared when they bent down during this ritual. Deadfall traps were constructed to crush the skulls of animals who tried to retrieve a piece of bait like wolves, badgers and coyotes. Larger animals were trapped using pitfall traps which were essentially deep holes covered over with brush.



Gifts of the Land *Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan* **Grade Nine Social Studies**

- Fowl were easier prey when they were moulting and unable to escape the water quickly. The birds were hit with sticks in the water or on shore. The meat and any collected eggs were consumed.
- During the winter, muskrats were speared in their huts. Beavers were also caught in the winter by cutting a hole in the ice near their lodge and placing a net underneath it. Trappers would start to break open the lodge and when the beavers tried to escape they were caught in the net. The trappers would then crack them over the head with a blunt instrument to kill them.
- Snowshoes were important during the winter months to pursue animals, maintain traplines and access frozen lakes for fish. The frames were constructed out of birch saplings which were boiled and peeled to make them pliable, and then a network of rawhide was lashed inside the frame to create the webbing.
- Women were responsible for tanning hides. The first and most important step to ensure that the hides did not stiffen up, was the removal of the fatty material adhering to the underside of the skin with a hide scraper. The hides were then worked with a flesher to remove the hair and even out the thickness once they were stretched taut using wooden pegs staked into the ground. Skins that were used for robes, bedding and jackets often had the thick hair left on for protection against the elements. A mixture of cooked brains was then rubbed into the hide to make it water resistant and durable. The brain mixture was left to dry overnight, and was followed by a good washing in water and a thorough wringing out. The hide was dried over a low fire. The hide was then pulled back and forth repeatedly over a smooth log or a rope tied between two trees to soften it. The final step was smoking the hide above a smoky fire.
- Traditionally, nomadic Aboriginal groups used easily transportable tipis or tents, moving seasonally to hunt and gather plants, to find wintering areas and to take part in social gatherings. Tipis were constructed, owned and set up by women. Women erected the circular- shaped tipis by constructing a framework of 15-17 wooden poles upon which a covering of 12-20 hides, usually buffalo, was overlaid and held in place using pegs. Smoke flaps near the top allowed for smoke to escape from the fire that was built within for cooking and heat. The tipi was waterproof, windproof, warm in winter and cool in summer, and portable - all important attributes to support a nomadic lifestyle in a changing climate. The construction and decoration of First Nations tipis held important spiritual meaning. The tipi was more than just a shelter. Tipi poles represented the values of obedience, love, thankfulness, hope, respect, faith, sharing, ultimate protection, humility, kinship, strength, happiness, cleanliness and good child rearing.
- Fish were an important supplement to the diet of First Nations, especially in the spring when food could be scarce. Weirs were constructed by building two converging barriers of logs or stones which forced the fish toward a narrow opening and into nets or baskets. Fish were also speared or were caught using fishing lines and hooks made of wood, bone, antler, or claws. Fish were eaten fresh or split and dried over a fire or in the sun. The Sturgeon Weir reserve belonging to the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and the Sturgeon Weir River are both named for the stone weir, or dam, constructed on the river by First Nations to facilitate catching the giant fish.



Gifts of the Land *Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan* **Grade Nine Social Studies**

- First Nations in present-day Saskatchewan made cooking vessels and containers out of local clay nearly two-thousand years ago. Women were likely the potters in the group. Pots could be made by rolling the clay and stacking the coils, or by forming a vessel using a hand or an oval stone inside and a flat paddle to work the outside. Decoration of the pottery differed amongst groups and numerous decorative techniques were employed from impressing cords or other objects into the clay to pinching with the fingers. Once completed, the vessels were allowed to dry and then fired to make them hard and impervious to water.
- Red ochre, a tinted clay high in iron oxide, was used by First Nations rock painters as a pigment for their paint. The longevity of these paintings is a result of a binding agent called isinglass that was mixed with the paint. Isinglass is derived from the air bladders of fish.
- Colours were derived from many natural substances. For example, a red colour could be achieved by using pussy willow buds, red ochre and the bark of larch trees. Charcoal from fires was a ready source of black colour and blue could be made from duck dung. Many different plant parts were used for making dyes including roots, bark, and fruits.
- Porcupine quills were used to decorate shirts, leggings, jackets, moccasins, and vests, as well as on many non-clothing items such as baskets. Women who did quillwork were highly regarded for their skills. Dyed in various colours, the quills would be soaked to make them flexible and to allow the craftswoman to flatten them between her teeth or fingernails. During the fur trade, glass beads were introduced and gradually began to replace quills for ornamentation.



Gifts of the Land

Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan

Grade Nine Social Studies

APPENDIX ONE

Script-In-Hand Dialogue from *Winning the Prairie Gamble* by Geoffrey Ursell and Barbara Sapergia.

Winning the Prairie Gamble by Geoffrey Ursell and Barbara Sapergia - Excerpt One Characters: Thunder Dancer and Dugald MacDonald

Setting: The scene takes place on top of a hill called the Healing Hill.

“Thunder Dancer puts an offering wrapped in cloth by a rock and then sings Honour song (traditional) to the spirits of the ancestors and the buffalo to the accompaniment of a drum.”

THUNDER: It's a song to honour the ancestors. And the spirits of the buffalo - *paskwâwi-mostoswak*.
DUGALD: Buffalo. I've never seen a buffalo.
THUNDER: Imagine, all the prairie as far as you can see from high up on the hill, covered with grazing buffalo. That is why the earth - *askiy* - is so healthy.
DUGALD: Why?
THUNDER: You know. All these *paskwâwi-mostoswak* eat the grass, and then they poop a lot.
They laugh together.
DUGALD: It will be bonny for growing crops, then. I can hardly wait to set my plough into the soil.
THUNDER: (*Anxious*) But you won't farm this hill?
DUGALD: Why not? (*Blusters*) It's my land to do with as I please.
THUNDER: This hill is a sacred place. Healing plants grow here. We've gathered them for generations. To cure all kinds of sickness. They cannot be disturbed.
DUGALD: Och, I see. Weel, we had a place like this in Scotland. My grannie made medicines from its plants.
THUNDER: So you'll leave it alone.
DUGALD: I suppose I will.
THUNDER: Thank you.
DUGALD: Let these plants grow here forever. I won't disturb them. And you can come here any time you want.
THUNDER: Thank you again, Dugald MacDonald. Now I have to get back to the reserve.
DUGALD: Where is it?
THUNDER: My home is a mile or so over that way. I need to get back before the Indian Agent finds out I'm gone.
DUGALD: Why should you care what an Indian Agent thinks?
THUNDER: I can't leave the reserve without a pass.
DUGALD: (*Outraged*) A pass?
THUNDER: No one can leave the reserve without a pass.
DUGALD: What nonsense. But you'll still come here. Pass or no pass.
THUNDER: Yes. When we need the plants.
DUGALD: Good. Stop in for a cup of tea when you do. And bring your wife. I hope we can be friends. I didn't know this used to be your land.
THUNDER: It wasn't exactly mine. It belongs to all of us and all those who come after. Use it well, Dugald MacDonald.
DUGALD: I'll do my best.
They clasp hands.
THUNDER: *ka-wâpamitin*. Goodby.
DUGALD: Fare thee weel.



Gifts of the Land

Traditional Resources in Saskatchewan

Grade Nine Social Studies

Winning the Prairie Gamble by Geoffery Ursell and Barbara Sapergia - Excerpt Two Characters: Reporter, Dugald MacDonald, Thunder Dancer, Agnes MacDonald, Far Hills Woman

Setting: The scene takes place on top of the Healing Hill.

REPORTER: Extra! Extra! November 11, 1918. The Regina *Leader* says the war in Europe is over! The troops are coming home!

MUSICIAN: Wonderful!

REPORTER: Unfortunately, they're bringing back something nobody wants - the Spanish Influenza. There's plenty of people sick with the flu. And it's killed more than 4,000 residents of the province. More than the number of Saskatchewan men who died in France during the entire war.

AGNES enters holding a sick baby wrapped in blanket.

AGNES: There, there little one. You'll be fine. Yes, you'll be fine.

DUGALD leads THUNDER DANCER and FAR HILLS WOMAN in.

DANCER: Dugald, Agnes. This is my wife, Far Hills Woman.

AGNES: Thank goodness you've come. Helen's no better. In fact, I think she's worse. She's scarcely breathing.

FAR HILLS: Let me see *awâsis* - the baby. Poor little one. I gathered something from the healing hill that may help. Come with me.

ANGES hands HELEN over and they exit.

DUGALD: This influenza is bad. Some of our neighbours have died.

THUNDER: And some on our reserve. *nikosis* - my son Joseph had this sickness.

DUGALD: (Hopeful) But he's better?

THUNDER: Yes.

DUGALD: Your father and mother are...?

THUNDER: They're fine. This sickness seems to take the young, the healthy ones.

DUGALD: I know.

THUNDER: Crop looks fine again this year.

DUGALD: Bonnie. Aye, bonnie. And the new Indian Agent?

THUNDER: Not so bad.

DUGALD: Good.

The women return with the baby

DUGALD &

THUNDER: So?

AGNES: She's breathing easier.

FAR HILLS: It helped our son, Joseph. I hope it will help you daughter.

DUGALD &

AGNES: Thank you. Thank you so much.

DUGALD: Thank goodness I didnae touch the healing hill.