

Clash of civilizations shatter way of living

On the central plains of North America the native people owed their survival to a shaggy beast known as the buffalo or bison. The tribes that lived in what is now Canada were named the Assiniboine, Cree, Gros Ventre, Peigan, Blood and Blackfoot.

Interestingly enough they spoke four different languages but they lived, hunted and shared other similar customs.

In the time before the Europeans arrived they had little difficulty securing food and other necessities. The buffalo herds roamed the Great Plains in the millions. Estimates vary but there might have been 40 to 50 million. Sustenance was based on buffalo meat. The hides made shelters also known as tepees or tipis. Their clothing was made from buffalo hides. Sinews supplied thread and string. The buffalos stomach material could be made into water bottles. Generally the plains Indians adapted very well to a hostile environment.

To guard against hunger and possible starvation during the brutal winters the Plains Indians ate an incredible, concentrated food - pemmican.

They used various animal meats but of course the buffalo was the best. Dried by sun and wind or over a slow fire , the meat was pounded into a powder that was flavoured with dried fruits and berries. Melted buffalo fat was added to this all purpose food. It was a comprehensive, mixture that supplied them with the needed ingredients to sustain them during the long, hard winter months.

One essential element introduced by the Europeans was the horse.

It gave them mobility so that they could wander farther and faster. It altered their way of life. Hunting the buffalo was greatly enhanced.

Their way of life was unique but the clash of civilizations would shatter it forever.

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