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Gwich'in First Peoples in Canada



Block-maker, Olive Itsi, has created a colourful sample of the famous Delta braid used to trim the body, front or sleeve bands of traditional Gwich'in parkas and other clothing. These patterns are created by tightly sewing together overlapping, narrow layers of bright fabrics, further defined with strips of contrasting colours to form secondary and tertiary geometric designs. This is a time-consuming art; in this sample alone, there are 55 layers, plus the additional pieces used to form the patterns.

History:

The Gwich'in were originally called the *Takudh-Kutchin*, which translated into "people with the slanted eyes" in English. They are sometimes classified as Sahtu Dene, and were called "Loucheaux" by French fur traders. Historically, the Gwich'in were made up of many independent families whose activities depended on seasonal migration to take advantage of the natural food resources. Their traditional territory covered about 10,000 square miles of land surrounding the Crow, Yukon and Porcupine Rivers. The main centre of activity is now at Old Crow, Yukon, the most northerly year-round settlement. There, people call themselves "the people who live among the lakes."

There are approximately 7,000 Gwich'in in scattered towns in northeast Alaska and northwest Canada. The interior subarctic environment is characterized by long, cold winters and very short, warm summers. Bands traditionally reflect several native cultures, including the southern Dene bands, British Columbia coastal natives, and the West Arctic Inuit.

Gwich'in means 'people of the caribou,' an appropriate name for people who relied on the caribou for a major part of their spiritual, cultural and economic survival. No part of the animal was wasted. The caribou is still highly esteemed, and it is believed that 'the caribou knows a little of what man is thinking and man knows a little of what the caribou is thinking.'

Legends teach the importance of not wasting, cooperation and sharing. Many Gwich'in who live in the area of the 130,000 strong Porcupine caribou herd have been instrumental in affecting legislation to protect the herd and its habitat for long-term conservation.

The first Dene member of the territorial council (forerunner of the NWT legislative assembly) was Gwich'in chief John Tetlichi (1967), and Wally Firth was the first northern native MP (1972). The community of Tetlit Zeh (formerly Fort McPherson) is home to the graves of the "Lost Patrol," four RCMP officers who lost their way and starved to death in 1911.

Copied from <http://www.quiltofbelonging.ca/listing.php?Listing=1090>

The photo and text are from: <http://www.invitationproject.ca/region.php>



Dowsing

On Saturday nights, Mother washed Amelia's hair so that it would be clean for Sunday School. Every other evening, they sponge-bathed in the sink, conserving the cistern's water for the massive cast-iron bathtub with the claw feet and ornamental taps.



Water dictated their schedule. Well water was for drinking and food preparation. Water for any other purpose came from the cistern. If rain came unexpectedly, then they rushed home to turn the water-spouts in. Other times, they had to stay home until the cistern had filled and then turn the spouts out. Insufficient rain meant that the car went unwashed, the lawn dried up, flowers had to be watered by hand, and the bathtub water would be shallow on Saturday night.



Every Saturday morning, they used the wringer washer. When it rained, the laundry had to be hung indoors.



Mother thought the mangle was hard on clothes and wanted an automatic washer and electric dryer. Grandma said the clothes wouldn't look or smell as clean.

Mother wanted an apartment in town, with town water. Grandma said it was a waste of money. Mother looked at her red, chafed hands and sighed.

One week there was no rain. That Saturday morning, Mother's hand was hurt in the mangle. When Mother

mentioned an automatic, Grandma said they used too much water, and that Mother needed to be more careful. Mother was very quiet, going into the den to use the telephone. Later, Amelia heard a car door slam.

When the rain came, in sudden angry torrents, more rain than they had seen in weeks, Amelia knew that Grandma would be the one to wash her hair on Saturday nights.

by Carrie Elaine Chapple (copyright, 2009)

The Web of Life

Our friend Paul Allaire sent this:



The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.
Chief Seattle, 1854



Louis Riel Day

Louis Riel Day is celebrated each year on the 3rd Monday in February in Manitoba. This is a partial image of a poster that is available from the government of Manitoba at

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/riel/index.html>



Recipes from Carrie's Kitchen:

Salmon Spice Rub:

- 1/4 cup black pepper
- 1/4 cup all spice
- 2 cups brown sugar

Rub well, being sure to get spice rub into all the crevices. Then smoke, preferably over a mix of alder and cedar. Some people like to add salt but I think it is better to add it later, if desired. I usually eat my salmon with rice and seaweed so my salmon doesn't need salt.



Fry Bread Variations:

You can add in any of the following (or combinations, according to your personal preference)



Savoury:

- cheddar cheese
- onion
- bacon
- ham
- Sweet apple
- blueberries

You can serve savoury ones with a bit of chilli sauce or salsa. The sweet ones should have a little extra sugar in the dough and can be shaken in a bag with sugar and cinnamon.

Indian Tacos:

Take some good-sized pieces of fry bread. Top with (in order):

- refried beans or a bit of vegetarian chili (can use pinto beans, black beans, whatever strikes your fancy), spread thinly over the fry bread
- cooked ground meat (beef, deer, or moose) mixed with taco seasoning (you can make your own seasoning if desired, thereby avoiding MSG)
- grated cheese (you want everything to stick together)
- Place under broiler just long enough to melt the cheese. (The meat and beans should be warm before assembly). Top with any or all of the following:
 - shredded lettuce
 - either diced tomatoes or salsa
 - sour cream
 - green onions
 - olives
 - more cheese if desired
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Jean Cadieux, Voyageur



Kris Cant is one of the volunteers who are vital to the operations of the OMFRC. Kris is the seventh great granddaughter of Jean Cadieux.

In the early days there came to the region of the Upper Ottawa –to Allumette and Calumet—a voyager by the name of Cadieux. He was more than an ordinary adventurer, for not only could he fight and hunt with the most expert, but he could make sweet songs, words and music, and sing them, too, in a way that was good to hear. So thought, at any rate, a pretty Indian maiden of the Algonquin Ottawas, whom he won for his wife. Their wigwam stood near to the Great Fall of the Calumet. After the season's hunting, Cadieux and his Indian friends were preparing to go to Montreal with their accumulation of furs, when, of a sudden, the alarm was given of the approach, through the woods, of a war party of their deadly enemies, the Iroquois. There was but one means of escape. The canoe was to be committed to the cataract, while someone remained to hold the Iroquois at bay. Cadieux and a single Algonquin remained. The Iroquois finally withdrew, but not before the Algonquin was killed. Cadieux, left alone, wandered for a time in the woods until he became exhausted. Returning at last to Petit-Rocher, and feeling his end approach, he made for himself a grave, and set up a rustic cross to sanctify his departure. His friends, returning to search for him, found him in his grave, partly covered with leaves and branches, the cross beside him, and his hands closed on his last song, "La Complainte-de Cadieux."

The Lament is still sung by the French-Canadians, and the

grave of Cadieux is still an object of veneration.—Author's Note.]

Cadieux, Jean, legendary French Canadian VOYAGEUR of the 18th century who lived in the Ottawa River region. When his cabin was attacked by Indians, he sent his family down the rapids in his canoe and stayed behind to prevent pursuit. The Virgin Mary is supposed to have guided the canoe through the rapids, which were generally portaged. Pursued by the Indians through the forest, Cadieux gradually weakened; he dug his own grave, erected a cross above it and composed a ballad about his misfortune, which he wrote in blood on birchbark; it was found by those who came to look for him. The ballad is well known in French Canadian tradition.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Author NANCY SCHMITZ,

The above is an excerpt from:

<http://www.levillee.net/ancestry/jeancadieux.htm>

See the 'Passing of Cadieux' in next month's newsletter.

Black History Month

Black History Month is a remembrance of important people and events in the history of the African [diaspora](#). It is celebrated annually in the [United States](#) and [Canada](#) in [February](#).



The Buxton Museum is located on A.D. Shadd Road near the church. It was built in 1967 to commemorate the Buxton Settlement and its people. It is a source of pride for the people of Buxton as it tells our story and houses our treasures.

Most people are unaware of the rich history shared by Blacks and the aboriginal peoples of North America. If you have the opportunity, visit the Buxton National Historical Site and Museum to find out more. The museum and

site is rich in history and is also an excellent site for family research.

If you are able to visit the museum, introduce yourself to the Assistant Curator, Spencer Alexander. Spencer is an invaluable contributor to our Newsletter and has a keen interest in aboriginal issues.

For more information visit

<http://www.buxtonmuseum.com/>



Is Your Membership Coming Up for Renewal?

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E-MAIL:
info@omfrc.org



If it is, call 1-613-332-4789 and you can do it right over the phone in just a couple of minutes.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.omfrc.org
www.aboriginalstatus.org

New Submissions!

We are always looking for new interesting submissions to add to upcoming issues of the OMFRC Newsletter. If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter please call or email us! We'd be happy to consider it for an upcoming issue.



Educational Funding

If you are looking for funding as an aboriginal student, the following website should be the place where you start your search. Apply early in the year – funds may run out.

<http://www.ammsa.com/community-access/scholarships/>