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“RAVEN’S LAND”: THE EARLY INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF THE CROWSNEST & WATER-TON LAKES

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Abstract

Most knowledge about the Raven’s Nest People has tended to be predominantly speculative. To address this situation, this paper proposes a hypothesis that although still speculative, presents a probable explanation, even a compelling one, about the ancestral origins of the Raven’s Nest Indigenous People. Further research and the gathering of stories including the oral history of the Raven’s Nest People will still have to be sought, from Elders of the Crow Nation, and other Indigenous tribes that frequented the region of the Crowsnest Pass, however, it is

hoped that this paper will provide the necessary foundation to advance further research. The paper will conclude with a summary of the research and theories about the demise of both the Ktunáxa and the Raven's Nest Peoples.

Archeological excavations in the early 1970's at Crowsnest Lake and sites along the Crowsnest River has revealed atlatl points that indicate an exceptionally long historical presence of Indigenous Peoples in the Crowsnest Valley dating from several thousands of years BCE. (Reeves, 1973. p. 57.) These archeological sites were primarily used as "kill sites" for the hunting of buffalo, and as primary processing sites for butchering and even the manufacture of "hoof glue" from buffalo phalanges. (Ibid, p. 44.) This paper is interested in the early Indigenous History of the Crowsnest Pass and Valley, the adjacent Elk Valley of present-day British Columbia; and, the Waterton Lakes, including nearby Chief Mountain. I include the Kootenay Lake region and the Tobacco Plains to the south of northern Montana, U.S.A., for geographical context within the traditional territory of the Indigenous Peoples that historically used this area, namely the Ktunáxa.

The geographical region of the northern Canadian Rockies will focus on the pre-colonial Indigenous history of this region known as "Raven's Land;" from the mid 17th century CE, just prior to contact; until the early colonial era of the mid 19th century CE, culminating with in the battle at Crowsnest Mountain in 1853 CE. The reasons for deciding upon this historical battle and event will be made obvious later. I have included in the appendices two maps of the historically contested territorial limits as approximations of these boundaries, with their overlapping tribal claims to assist the reader.

I am interested in three tribal groups that had a presence in this area including: the Ktunáxa (or Kutenai) both Upper and Lower tribes; the Crow Nation; and the Blackfoot Confederacy (predominantly the Piikani and Kainai). My discussion here is concerned with the ancestral origins of the Ktunáxa; and the "raven people" mentioned by the ethnographer James Teit, whom I call at times as the Raven's Nest People. It is my assertion that this later clan, the "raven people," were a clan of the Crow Nation, hence, the necessity for a lengthy discussion of this topic. Mythologies associated with these ancestral origins, as well as creation stories and the significance and importance of tribal names, are discussed first to provide context; since the significance especially of Indigenous tribal names for these two Indigenous Peoples features prominently in their identity, along with the changes

in tribal affiliations and consequent movement and relocation.

The term *ktunáxa*, refers to the unique Indigenous linguistic language of the *Ktunáxa*; while *Ktunáxa* is Indigenous Peoples name for themselves, and most accurately refers to the ancestral tribe and subsequently the *Ktunáxa* proper that were situated near modern-day Ft. McLeod, Alberta (Turney-High, 1969, p. 11.), namely the Upper tribe of the Kutenai; and the Lower tribe of the *Ktunáxa* that frequented the Kootenay Lake region and the Tobacco Plains. I distinguish between these two tribes as: *Ktunáxa* (or Upper Kutenai), and Kutenai (or Lower Kutenai). Discussion of this significance between the two will follow, making the distinction more obvious.

Résumé

La majorité des connaissances à propos de la communauté autochtone de Raven's Nest tendent à être principalement spéculatives. Pour remédier à la situation, cet article propose une hypothèse qui, bien qu'elle soit elle aussi spéculative, se montre particulièrement probable, voire convaincante, quant aux origines ancestrales de cette communauté. Des recherches plus approfondies et la compilation de récits, incluant des récits oraux de la communauté de Raven's Nest, doivent encore être faites auprès des anciens de la Nation Crow et d'autres communautés autochtones qui fréquentaient la région de Crowsnest Pass. Toutefois, il est à espérer que cet article offrira un fondement nécessaire à l'avancement de cette recherche. L'article se terminera par le résumé de la recherche et des théories concernant la disparition des peuples *Ktunáxa* et de Raven's Nest.

Au début des années 1970, des excavations archéologiques au lac Crowsnest et sur des sites le long de la rivière Crowsnest ont révélé des pointes de lance dards (« atlatl ») qui indiquent une présence exceptionnellement longue des communautés autochtones dans la vallée de Crowsnest, datant de milliers d'années avant notre ère (Reeves, 1973, p. 57). Ces sites archéologiques étaient principalement utilisés en tant que lieux d'abattage pour la chasse au bison, en tant que lieux principaux de dépeçage des bêtes, ainsi que pour la fabrication de la « colle de sabot » à partir des phalanges de bison (*Ibid.*, p. 44). Cet article s'intéresse au début de l'histoire des communautés autochtones de Crowsnest Pass et de la vallée de Crowsnest, attenante à la vallée Elk de ce que l'on nomme aujourd'hui la Colombie-Britannique, ainsi que des communautés de Waterton Lakes, incluant Chief Mountain. J'inclue la région de Kootenay Lake et de Tobacco Plains au sud du Montana du nord, aux États-Unis,

pour mieux contextualiser la géographie du territoire traditionnel des communautés autochtones qui utilisent historiquement cette région, soit les Ktunáxa.

La région géographique du nord des Rocheuses canadiennes se concentre sur l'histoire autochtone précoloniale de la région connue sous le nom de Raven's Land, de la moitié du dix-septième siècle de notre ère, tout juste avant le contact, jusqu'au début de la période coloniale à la moitié du dix-neuvième siècle, culminant avec la bataille de Crowsnest Mountain en 1853. Les raisons du choix de cette bataille et événement historique seront expliqués ultérieurement dans l'article. En annexe, j'ai ajouté deux cartes territoriales dont les limites sont historiquement contestées à titre d'approximation de ces frontières, ainsi que pour situer les revendications territoriales concurrentes afin d'aider à la compréhension de lecture.

Je m'intéresse à trois communautés qui étaient présentes dans la région : les Ktunáxa (ou Kutenai) ; la nation Crow ; et la Confédération des Pieds-Noirs, principalement les communautés Piikani et Kainai. Je concentre mon propos sur les origines ancestrales des Ktunáxa ainsi que sur la communauté de Raven's Nest mentionnée par l'ethnographe James Teit et que je nomme le « peuple Raven ». J'estime que cette communauté tardive, le « peuple Raven », appartenait à la nation Crow. En ce sens, il est nécessaire d'avoir une longue discussion sur le sujet. Pour placer les enjeux dans leur contexte, j'aborde d'abord les mythologies associées à ces origines ancestrales, de même que les récits de création et que la signification et importance des noms tribaux. Il faut noter la signification identitaire particulière des noms tribaux pour ces deux communautés autochtones, les changements d'affiliation tribale et les mouvements et relocalisation subséquentes.

L'appellation « ktunáxa » fait référence à l'isolat linguistique unique du peuple Ktunáxa, alors que « Ktunáxa » réfère au nom des communautés autochtones, et plus précisément à la tribu ancestrale puis au peuple Ktunáxa situé près de ce que l'on nomme aujourd'hui Fort McLeod, Alberta (Turney-High, 1969, p. 11), soit le peuple Upper Ktunáxa et le peuple Lower Ktunáxa qui parcourait la région de Kootenay Lake et les plaines Tobacco. Pour faire la distinction entre les deux peuples, j'utilise les noms de Ktunáxa pour le peuple Upper Kutenai et Kutenai pour le peuple Lower Kutenai. Afin de mieux circonscrire cette distinction, je vais développer la signification des deux appellations plus en détails dans l'article.

The Raven's Nest: Seeking Ancestral Origins.

In the area just east of the Alberta-BC border is a region considered by the Ktunaxa to be ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa territory or homeland) and associated with the traditional land district of qukin ʔamakʔis (Raven's Land) which includes Kuʔwiaʔki (the Crowsnest Pass), as well as the Michel Creek and Elk Valleys. (Candler, 2019, p. 2).

It was in this region known as "Raven's Land" that the Raven's Nest Indigenous People historically inhabited. The Crowsnest Pass valley region (now referred to as the Crowsnest Pass of southwestern Alberta and southeastern British Columbia) have been an enigma for historians and scholars since so little is known and understood about this "lost tribe" of Indigenous People. There are no oral histories or stories that were recorded historically about them. It should also be mentioned that the Crow Indigenous Peoples have been considered historically misunderstood from the first contact with European explorers and settlers. According to Morton "even more mysterious are the Crow Indians who came to the fort [York Fort] in 1716 and never returned." (Morton 1973 p. 135.) It is even more mysterious that nothing further was recorded about this chance encounter along the shores of Hudson Bay, far from the territorial home of the Crow; a precursor or foreshadowing of the lack of historical record about the Raven's Nest Peoples.

It is known that an epidemic of disease, probably smallpox, completely decimated the "raven people" in the winter of ca. 1736 (Manyguns [e-mail] September 11, 2018).i. Manyguns notes that "the Blackfoot also recorded suffering many losses in the 1736 epidemic in their winter counts. Losses for all the tribes in the area were severe." (Manyguns. [e-mail] 2018). This pandemic is thought to have been spread from the Crow tribe to other tribes in the Kootenay region adjacent to the Crowsnest Pass, with only a few scattered survivors among the Salish tribes such as the Flathead and Kalispell. (Teit 1930. p. 315) ii However, other historical accounts suggest that the pandemic swept eastward in 1737 from the Northern Rockies and adversely affected various tribes in the northern Great Plains including the Plains Cree. (Ewers 1973 p. 20.) Indeed, "so many people died that they could not be buried and the dogs ate them"; as recounted by Michel Revais, a French trapper and hunter, commenting on the 1736 outbreak in the Elk Valley and Kootenay region that devastated the Ktunáxa and Raven's Nest Peoples. (Teit 1930. p. 316) Many of those infected tried sweat baths and bathing in cold water; however, all died. (Teit 1930. p. 316) This commonly referred to incident about the demise of the Raven's Nest Indigenous People is one of the only known historical details mentioned about the "raven people," and seems to interestingly point to the fact that the Raven's Nest People were a tribe or clan of the Crow Nation, the same people that bore the brunt of the 1736 epidemic

and suffered the greatest loss of life.

Other historical accounts muddy the waters though on this point such as Thomas Flanagan's suggestion that the Raven's Nest People were "...a band of the Kutenai [that] lived in the Crowsnest Pass region [and] were decimated by smallpox shortly after the introduction of horses." (Flanagan 2001 p.54). Flanagan seems to imply that horse blankets that were infected with disease may have been the root cause of this epidemic. Furthermore, Flanagan asserts that the name of Raven's Nest is a Blackfoot name. (Flanagan 2001 p. 34).

Despite this though, most scholars have indeed previously assumed that the Raven's Nest People were a tribe of the Interior Salish whose ancestral origins are from what is now interior British Columbia, such as the Fraser Valley region. (Field [conversation] 2018) However, it should be noted that in 1736 the Kutenai had not yet acquired horses, and therefore, Flanagan is in error on this point since Teit notes that in the early 1700's the Blackfoot tribes had started an aggressive war to acquire horses, and that the Shoshoni and Salish had horses but the Kutenai did not. (Teit 1930 p.317) Flanagan's assertion that the Raven's Nest acquired horses as a tribe of the Kutenai seems to be disputed by Teit's earlier research findings. Although a Crow tradition (recorded by James Bradley) claims that they obtained their first horses from the Nez Percé, it is more probable that the Crow first acquired horses from the Comanche (from an earlier account by Lewis Morgan). (Ewers 1955, p. 7). In the early 19th century, the Crow from the Middle Yellowstone had a flourishing trade in horses as intermediaries acquiring horses from the Shoshone, Nez Percé, and Flathead. (Ibid, p. 7).

Furthermore, Teit, an ethnographer, notes that the Salish tribes south of the Kootenay region (known as the "camas people") referred to a local regional tribe of the Crow as "the raven people," and the tribe of the River Crow as "the blue or green people." (Teit 1930 p. 301-302). Since the modern contemporary tribes of the Crow are sub-divided into the two principal tribes of the Mountain Crow and the River Crow (Lowie 1912) it now seems that quite likely the Raven's Nest People were a sub-tribe or clan of the river Crow (located on the Yellowstone River, Montana) rather than the Mountain Crow (located near the Little Bighorn Mountains, Montana) since the River Crow's geographical proximity is closer to the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

It has comparatively more ethnographic information and details of the tribal names of the River Crow; it seems quite probable that "the raven people" were more closely affiliated with the River Crow. One further note is that Teit's historical analyses is not as far removed as Flanagan's from the historical era in question, and Teit provides an extensive analysis of many other tribal affiliations and details of their common nomenclatures among the various Indigenous Peoples that lived in the Crowsnest and Kootenay regions.

This would all tend to suggest that the Raven's Nest Indigenous Peoples or "raven people" were a clan of the River Crow, despite my previously held assumption that they may have been a clan of the Mountain Crow. It is interesting to note that the name Raven's Nest (*kakakíw wuchístun*) is a Cree name and was used to refer to Crowsnest Mountain as Raven's Nest Mountain. (Holterman, 1985, p. 37).

To further understand whether the "raven people" could be a clan of the Crow, it is important to note the linguistic meanings of Crow names for themselves such as *apsáruke*, with this referring to "a bird that no longer lives in their country." Could this be a metaphorical reference to the Raven's Nest clan that no longer exists as a people? Furthermore, could this reference to "a bird" that no longer lives in their (i.e., Crow) territorial or ancestral lands refer to a clan that lived at the periphery of these ancestral lands? (i.e., the Crowsnest Pass), a region that no longer lies within the contemporary territorial lands of the Crow Peoples. An alternative explanation for the term *apsáruke* could be that it is a reference to a mythological spirit-being associated with the creation stories of the Crow and now lost in the ethos of an ancient time and the residual memories of people.

Another name that denotes the Crow, and one the Crow often call themselves is: "Children of the Large-Beaked Bird" (*Apsaalooke*) (Lowie 1922 p. 268), with the apparent suggestion that this implies a large-beaked bird such as the crow, and quite likely also the raven as well. Both birds are of the same family of birds and seem to have been used interchangeably by the Crow tribes themselves, but also historically by other tribes to refer to the Crow Peoples.

There is an amusing story that further illustrates these historical ambiguities:

Presumably, when the French were the first to arrive in the region now known as the Crowsnest Pass, prior to the Seven Years War (1756–63), before French influence began to wane, and the English were to become increasing predominant in the eventual exploration and settlement of this region; early French trappers and explorers referred to this region of the West as The Raven's Nest, probably in accordance with the prevailing indigenous naming of this mountain region. However, after the English arrived, they mistranslated the French word for "raven" (*corbeau*) and instead used the English word "crow," since in 1805, the French-Canadian explorer and trader, Francois La-roque, referred to the Crow Nation as *gens de corbeaux*: People of the Crow. (McCleary, 2016 p. 20.) It therefore seems probable that the Crowsnest Pass region was historically called: the Raven's Nest Pass.

It is also interesting that early explanations and use of the name "Crow" does not specifically mean or imply singularly to the

bird “crow;” but rather “anything that flies” and can therefore mean any other bird including eagles, hawks, ravens, magpies, and even the condor. (Denig 1961 p. 139.) Indeed, early mention of the Crows by that name was made by the fur trader Jean Baptiste Trudeau in 1795.

According to Thomas Laforge, a settler adopted by the Crow in the mid 19th century CE; the word “ab-sar-o-ka” means “forked-tail bird” thus resembling a blue jay or magpie. The name Crow may have been given when the first traders asked them their tribal name, the informant then pointed happenchance to a nearby crow. The name among settlers and traders was then passed along as being “Crow.” (Marquis, 1928 p. 109). To emphasize the point just previously made, Pretty-shield, a Crow Medicine Woman, definitively claims that she, nor any Crow she knows, are knowledgeable of the meaning of their tribal name. It was given to the Crow by Esahca-wata (Old-man-coyote) and that the Crow were created by Magah-hawathus (Lone-man or Man-alone) who also gave the Crow their distinct language. (Linderman, 1972, p. 25-26). So, the linguistic conveyance of meaning for the name of the Crow Nation is convoluted and vague, except that the Ktunáxa best describe the Crow appropriately in an ambiguous way, as simply: “the Bird People,” a people they rarely met yet seemed to understand astutely. (Turney-High, 1969, p. 29). Just as Indigenous individuals often have several names to commemorate events during their lifetime; it should not be considered unusual for Indigenous tribes to have several names that bestow a variety of meanings and beliefs.

There is yet another story that may provide a better explanation for the subsequent naming of the Crowsnest Pass, a name that is thought to have originated from a legendary battle in the shadow of Crowsnest Mountain. It should be noted also, that “the Blackfoot people have significant ancient stories of the Crow’s Nest pass, namely the story of Scar Face and when he was given the sweat lodge to bring to the people. The Crow in the Crow’s Nest mountains showed him where the Creator’s Lodge was to be found. These are ancient stories that predate the sweat lodge use by the Blackfoot people.” (ManyGuns [e-mail] 2018).
 iii According to the Blackfoot Record of the Warriors this battle occurred in 1853 though iv, more than one hundred years after the Raven’s Nest People had ceased to exist as a people. The battle is said to have taken place after a war party of Crow warriors had stolen several horses from the Blackfoot further towards the open plains to the east, and afterwards had attempted to make their escape towards the west through the Crowsnest river valley, arriving at the base of a mountain. The Blackfoot were able to pursue the Crow war party that then took defensive positions in a “nest” or natural hollow. The Blackfoot eventually defeated the Crow warriors with none of the Crow living to recount their battle. The Blackfoot then named the site Maisto Kowa or Crow’s Nest, to commemorate their victory over the Crow. This battle is often described as the

legendary "last stand" of the Crow, no doubt because this battle represented the last attempt by the Crow to exert any presence in this region.

An alternative explanation could be that this war party of Crows was attempting to flee to the territorial lands of their allies the Kutenai where they could find a safe haven from Blackfoot. Nevertheless, it appears that many Crow may have been living around the Crowsnest Pass although of a different clan than that of the Raven People, since it is recorded that many Crow died in 1805; as recorded in a "winter count" by Bull Plume (northern Pikanni). (Manyguns 2018 p.7).

Monica Field has referred to this epic conflict as being the Crow's *Masada*, and was indicative of their willingness to fight to the last man. Field's comment raises an intriguing question; why did the Crow flee to the west when their present territorial lands were towards the east and south along the Little Bighorn River and mountains? One plausible explanation may be that this Crow war party may have been intending an attempt to advance and re-establish a presence in a territorial region where their ancestral relatives, the Raven's Nest People formerly lived in the recent past. This affinity to the land in the region of the Crowsnest as an ancestral land would also explain their resolve to collectively fight to the death with no survivors.v Linda ManyGuns (Siksika/T'su Tina) has also noted that, "many nations were moving west [at this time sic] due to the loss of animals. [These animals sic] were hunted and eaten without any concern for sustainability for the animal populations by settlers [and this] further forced the people to move to find food, which also impacted decisions about where to find a place to live."vi It is therefore quite probable that some clans of the Crow Indigenous Peoples may have been moving westward to find a more suitable place to live when they were forcibly confronted by Blackfoot. This may also suggest that the presence of Crow Indigenous Peoples in the Crowsnest Pass in the mid 19th century may have been due to an economic necessity of survival, and not necessarily due to an ancestral sense of attachment to the land of this region.

Admittedly, most of this hypothesis was based upon the ethnographic study of James Teit in *The Salishan Tribes of the Western Plateaus* (1930) and his claim that the Historical "raven people" lived among the Northern Kutenai People in the Elk Valley near present day Fernie and Sparwood, British Columbia in Teit's study is entitled: . Further recent research has revealed additional insights into the probable origins of the Raven Indigenous Peoples. Recall that my assertion is that the "raven people" were a clan or sub-tribal group of the Crow Nation (Apsaalooké). I will now further elaborate upon this idea.

The traditional territory of the two major tribal divisions or groups of the Crow Nation were the Mountain Crow (Ashalaho) that lived near the Bighorn Mountains (including the Bighorn, Rosebud, Tongue, and Wind Rivers); and River Crow along the Yellowstone

(Yellowstone Basin including the Milk and Missouri Rivers) (Bolen 2012 p.15). The River Crow eventually migrated further west to include territorial lands along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains of Montana. (Bergon, Ed. by 1989 journal entry August 23, 1805) In 1804, Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark expedition referred to the River Crow as "the Raven Indians," and recorded this Peoples population. Lewis also noted that The Ravens was also the name of a militant society, vii most likely of the Crow. This indicates that the Crow Nation historically was also often called Ravens. In fact, the tribal names of Crow and Raven were used interchangeably. The Index of the Journals recording the expeditions of Lewis and Clark has a citation for "Raven Indians" and directs the reader to "see Crow." In addition, the Crow Elder, Medicine Crow has stated that in Crow legends, and oral creation stories, that "The character of Raven was sometimes interchanged with Crow." (Bolen 2012 p. 185) It is therefore apparent that the Crow Nation was known historically by several names, and that these tribal names were used to refer to the same Indigenous Peoples, most notably among these were Raven and Crow. Finally, many names of Crow Elders such as Medicine Crow (also known as Sacred Raven) (Bolen 2012 p. 85) bear reference to both the raven and the crow, and therefore the Crow had many tribal and personal names in their lexicon for their Peoples that included the raven and the crow. (Bergon Vol. III p. 236)

Although it now seems more certain that the Crow Nation were also called "Raven Indians," the question remains as to whether the "raven people" mentioned by Teit in his study were indeed a clan of the Crow Nation? Once more the journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition shed some light on this proposition. According to the oral history of a Crow Elder named Cold Wind conveyed to Lewis during his travels, a Crow Chief of the No Vitals band settled in the early 17th century near present-day Cardston, Alberta; and along the White Bear River (I.e., Milk River) in southern Alberta with approximately four hundred people from this band. (Medicine Crow 1992 p. 20- 21). It is unknown "...how many moons or winters..." that this band inhabited this region before travelling further south to the Great Salt Lake. Chief No Vitals was succeeded by his protégé Running Coyote. (Medicine Crow 1992 p. 21) and formed his own clan that ventured further westward from what is now known as the Cardston area. Herman Viola of the Smithsonian Institute notes that Running Coyote led a "seceding faction of the ancestral tribe out west about 1600 - 1625" and was the first Crow to drive buffalo over an embankment; a hunting technique used along the slopes of the foothills near the eastern or leeward side of the Rocky Mountains. The chronology of this story is interesting since it is the same historical era when the "raven people" were thought to have lived among the Northern Kutenai. Recall that Teit notes that the "raven people" were decimated entirely by disease in 1736. (Teit 1930 p. 316). Was this small

clan, the so-called "*seceding faction*" led further westward by Running Coyote indeed the "raven people" that dwelled among the Kutenai? Historical records do not provide definitive answers to this question, although it does seem to be a compelling possibility, especially since the Chief No Vitals band lived near Crowsnest in the southern Alberta region at Cardston. It is conceivable that the clan led by Running Coyote journeyed westward to the Kootenays of British Columbia and frequented the Crowsnest Pass. Running Coyote is thought to have been the first Crow that used the hunting technique of stampeding buffalo over a precipice, in the mid 1600's C.E. (Medicine Crow, 1992, p. 87). It is quite probable that Running Coyote learned this buffalo hunting technique from the Blackfoot, from observations of Blackfoot buffalo hunts. Was the Running Coyote clan also the "raven people" clan? It should be further noted that the Crow Elder and Chief, Plenty Coups, noted that it was a traditional practice of the Crow Nation to send a clan to serve as an outpost at the territorial limits of the traditional Crow territory to monitor the movement of other tribes within the territorial lands claimed by the Crow and as a means of seeking peace with Crow adversaries. (Linderman, 1962 p. 48). For example, these "outpost clans" would occasionally grant opposing tribes permission to hunt in Crow traditional territory. (Linderman, 1962 p. 48.) This is especially noteworthy regarding historic Crow relationships with the tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy; a traditional Crow enemy; that increasingly sought to aggressively challenge Crow territorial claims during this era. This poses the question whether the No Vitals clan represented a "secessionist clan" or an "outpost clan." In either case, Chief No Vitals and his protégé, Running Coyote, abandoned the Cardston area as an outpost due to this becoming increasingly untenable in the face of increased aggression and pressure from the Kainai and Pikanni tribes.

There is, however, a further explanation that is most convincing and most probable; told by the Crow Elder Joseph Medicine Crow, that tells a story of Chief No Vitals who presumably received a vision that included the Chief being given sacred seeds from the Sacred Waters, that were to be planted in a "promised land" towards the west (an exodus of about four hundred people) (Medicine Crow, 1992, p. 23), with Chief No Vitals clan setting out in search of such a place. (Galloway, 2003, p. 63). In No Vitals dream he was instructed to plant the sacred pod of seeds he received in the "high mountains" towards the west, with the use of these seeds only being fully revealed after they were planted. (Medicine Crow, 1992, p. 19). No Vitals was also warned that this would be a "perilous journey." (Ibid, p. 19). Instead, Chief No Vitals used a quarrel over meat amongst women of his clan and a rival clan as a "pretext" to leave and depart westward, not revealing the details of his vision. (Ibid, p. 63). If this tale is to be believed, then Chief No Vitals' clan was neither an "outpost clan" or a "secessionist clan," but only a "presumptive secessionist clan."

Joseph Medicine Crow continues this story by stating that No Vitals' clan found the winters too harsh near Cardston, and abandoned the attempt to find a "promised land" in the west, by eventually travelling south towards the Great Salt Plains of what is now Great Salt Lake, Utah. This too proved to be undesirable with the hot dry climate, subsequently this clan settled in northern modern-day Wyoming. Joseph Medicine Crow does not mention Running Coyote, however the Crow Elder Cold Wind states that Running Coyote's clan separated from Chief No Vitals' and proceeded westwards. The Running Coyote clan may have remained in the Cardston area for some time though, before proceeding further towards the west since the Elder Medicine Crow suggests that the Running Coyote clan did not begin using buffalo jumps until ~ the mid 1960's C.E.

Historically, the Crow had thirteen distinct clans, while only 10 remain, the other 3 having been lost to warfare or disease. (Old Coyote, 2003, p. 7).

I hope to answer this question and shed further light on the origins of the lost clan of the "raven people" through discussions with contemporary Elders of the Crow Nation, and then finally determine the mystery of the ancestral origins of this Indigenous People of the Crowsnest. Field's comments therefore provide another interesting and compelling reason for further research on this subject, and necessitates that interviews be conducted with Crow and Blackfoot Elders, regarding their oral histories, with the hope that these discussions reveal additional insights and explanations for a lost people: the Raven's Nest or "raven people," as well as additional information on the territorial Indigenous placenames of the Crowsnest Pass and the origins of these names.

Cluny: A Fortified Crow Village in Alberta?

The historic fortified village near the modern community of Cluny in southern Alberta, provides an interesting example of an Indigenous village; situated east of the city of Calgary, and located adjacent to Blackfoot Crossing where a ford in the Bow River provided a crossing; Cluny is somewhat of an historical anomaly on the northern Plains. This village historically featured a trench with a wood-constructed palisade in a semi-circular shape facing northwards, with several pits at each end of the palisade, located on a slightly elevated hilltop; with a slope descending towards the south where the crossing of the Bow River is situated. At the centre of the village was a natural formed hollow or depression where it is thought that horses were kept sheltered. The archeologist Richard Forbis, in a University of Calgary archeological survey in 1977, has determined that the village was first constructed in ~ 1740 C.E. \pm 10 years. (Forbis, 1977 p. 17) Forbis is less certain of the origins

of the Indigenous Peoples that constructed the village, and is rather reluctant to verify the tribal identity of the village builders, although Forbis unenthusiastically does suggest that the village is the work of the Crow Peoples, since it resembles other fortified villages of the Middle Missouri built by the Hidatsa; and that pottery shards found at Cluny also seem to indicate, although not definitively, the same tribal origin.

It is interesting to note that the historian George Hyde has argued that "a trail of broken pottery" in the Hidatsa or Mandan style, can be delineated or traced that corresponds to the western migration from the Missouri River region to the Rockies and the Yellowstone River region. (Hyde, 1956, p. 116). Hyde contends that this trail of pottery shards is attributable to the Crow (the Crow being a tribe whose origin stems from the Hidatsa) since the Crow migrated westward from Missouri in the 1800's. (Ibid, p. 116). There is good reason to concur with Hyde's assertion since the Crow had a distinctive pottery style characterized by "flat-bottomed ware." (Ibid, p. 116). It should be noted that the archeological excavation by Forbis revealed very few pottery shards from the Cluny site that was numerous enough and of sufficient size to allow for the reconstruction of these clay jars, however, of the few that were assembled, none of the earthen jars had a notably flat, pointed or acutely curved bases, and were singularly "globular" in shape. (Forbis, 1977, p. 39). This inconclusive result should not necessarily detract from the possibility that they are Crow, or Mandan (i.e., from an earlier settlement), since these pottery shards were admittedly scarce and undated.

Since it is to be remembered that the Crow Peoples ancestral lineage is related to the Hidatsa, and the Hidatsa were historically known to have also constructed fortified villages with partially subterranean pit houses or earthen mound dwellings. Indeed, in an article written by Edmund Morris, and based on an historical account by Fr. Doucet (ca. 1884), that Running Wolf (Crow and scout to Col. Custer) had informed Fr. Doucet that Cluny was a Crow village. (Ibid, p. 7). Part of the uncertainty of tribal identification for the Cluny site is that a contemporary account recorded by the historian Hugh Dempsey in an interview with One Gun (Siksika) who told Dempsey that the village and "... the people who lived here were not related to the Crows. There are two separate tribes of the Crows, but it wasn't either of them." (Ibid, p. 11). One Gun here refers to the two main tribal groups of the Crow: The River Crow and the Mountain Crow; and that in his opinion the Indigenous People at Cluny did not belong to either. It is also possible that an "outpost clan" of the Crow Nation was historically considered to be distinct from the two tribal entities or Peoples of the Crow Nation, although it is more probable that rival tribes like the Blackfoot would have regarded these "outpost clans" as not being representative of the Crow Nation to counter the territorial assertions of the Crow.

A discussion of the idea of "outpost Clans" will follow later in

this article. It should be noted that One Gun's assertion however does not preclude the possibility of a Crow clan residing historically with another Indigenous People and may have lived at Cluny. For instance, the Musselshell clan that left the Crow to live with the Chippewa Cree in what is today central Montana. In addition, I am inclined to consider as more authoritative the historical account of Running Coyote since his account is not as removed from the era as is One Gun's more historically recent statement.

Another plausible explanation for One Gun's dismissal of the Cluny site being of Crow origin, and a theory that is compelling, is that the prehistoric origin for the establishment and construction of the earthen mound or earthwork of Cluny may have been Mandan during the pre-colonial era, and then subsequently in the post-contact era established as a Crow settlement that was modified to be a fortified village. One Gun's assertion that the Cluny site may have been a reference to the first initial founding of this site and the establishment of an earthen mound that may have been originally intended by the Mandan for a different purpose, namely as a sacred site for religious ceremonies and "a seasonal place of pilgrimage." (Smith, 2023, p. 32). This theory is consistent with the idea that earthen mounds were used for ceremonial purposes by eastern tribes including the Mandan, such as the Serpent Mound in Southwold, southern Ontario. (see Smith, 2023) and Lizard Mound. The east-west orientation of the Cluny site also seems to represent a similar design axis of most earthen mounds including Serpent Mound, that references a spiritual connection with the summer solstice that may have had a spiritual significance. (Smith, 2023. p. 33).

Interestingly Serpent Mound was historically constructed with an exterior trench and a double palisade, characteristics of a fortified settlement. However, Matthew Ryan Smith suggests that the trench was used to divert water and the palisade was intended as a "type of protective screen" to obscure ceremonies from those outside the site. (Ibid, p. 32).

It should also be noted that some of these earthen mounds built by eastern tribes have been attributed to the Mandan, Hidatsa, and the Crow. (p. 41). Although it is possible that the Cluny earthen mound was conceived of and used as a sacred site of spiritual significance, used later by the Crow; the Crow may have retained some semblance of this original intent of the Cluny site as having spiritual significance, it is more probable that the settlement evolved into a fortified village established by the Crow, and was intended as an "out-post settlement" with tactical defensive design features such as the palisade and rifle pits at the western perimeter, which best explains the Cluny site. To further explain the focus on the site dynamics and related cultural factors of the Cluny village would also suggest that the tribal affiliation or identity of this village is most likely of Crow origin. The following is a hypothesis, although admittedly some-

what speculative, that hopefully provides a plausible explanation.

It should be noted that the Crow Nation historically used a stratagem whereby a clan of their tribe would be selected and sent as an "outpost clan" to live at the territorial limits or boundary of the territory claimed by the Crow Nation. It is quite possible that such an "outpost clan" of the Crow was sent to the site of Blackfoot Crossing, a place that was used historically to ford the Bow River and was therefore of geographic and strategic importance. Historically, clans of the Crow, namely the No Vitals clan, lived in the vicinity of the modern town of Cardston, Alberta, and therefore it would seem that the southern region of the contemporary province of Alberta was considered by the Crow as their territorial limit. The Crow clan living in the Cardston area would have been historically contemporaneous with the founding of Indigenous village of Cluny in ~1740 C.E. It is also noteworthy that the defensive fortifications that include the trench and palisade faces the north and this strategic design indicates perceived threats of opposing tribes were from the north; with the Blackfoot living predominantly north of the Cluny site. The sedentary nature and design of a more or less intended permanent village would be well-suited as an outpost where mediation and negotiations with rival tribes could be made, primarily to arrange for mutually acceptable passage into Crow territory.

Archeological evidence from Forbis survey suggests that the Cluny village most likely was only used seasonally, and possibly only for a short duration historically of perhaps a few years at most. Since the Cluny village was intended as a sedentary, non-nomadic settlement, this would suggest that during the winter months the village was probably abandoned with the "outpost clan" returning to the main tribe proper, since most Indigenous Peoples sheltered-in-place for the winter in traditional winter camps travel would be limited. Therefore, the Cluny village would not have been necessary as a frontier outpost. The ongoing tribal conflict and enmity during this historical era (~1745) between the Blackfoot and Crow, and eventual success of the Blackfoot in asserting its' dominance and control of the region near Cluny and extending this territorial control further south would explain the short duration the village was actively occupied. To conclude, the design and limited occupation of the Cluny site would suggest that it was quite likely a Crow village, as Running Wolf contended. One further note, is that the small pits that were built on the west and east ends of the palisade, were possibly an early form or use of rifle pits. The irregular locations of these pits were probably a further defensive measure, since these pits were too small to have adequately provided space for a "house pit." Instead, tipis placed near the centre of the fortification were probably used, something that Forbis suggests and alluded to in his survey. (Ibid, p. 72) The placement of tipis near the horses at the centre of the fortification would have further provided security safeguarding the horses and providing

rapid retreat to the south at the river crossing in the event of an attack; rather than the wooded forests to the north. A southward retreat would also seem plausible since the ancestral land, reinforcements and support for the Crow would have been further towards the south of Cluny village. While it is not known which Crow clan(s) may have occupied the Cluny village, it can be stated that neither the Chief No Vitals' clan nor the people that joined No Vitals' protégé, Running Coyote, would have lived at the Cluny site since the No Vitals' clan according to Crow Elder, Cold Wind, travelled south to the Great Salt Plains after an indeterminate time at the area near Cardston, Alberta; and Running Coyote's People journeyed west towards the Crowsnest Pass. The identity of the Indigenous Peoples, although most likely Crow, can therefore not be definitively ascertained; and that if the Cluny site was indeed a Crow village, it is also most likely that the Crow Nation occupied the Bighorn Mountain region and the Yellowstone River area well before the 1800's as Hyde maintained as early as the late 17th or early 18th century with the westward migration of the Crow occurring sometime prior to the establishment of the Cluny village, and possibly even the departure of the Chief No Vitals' clan from the Crow Nation proper in the late 17th century.

Chief Mountain: Legends & Stories

Although located in what is referred to as Glacier National Park in Montana, Chief Mountain is also part of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and many Indigenous Peoples have legends and stories about this mountain. One such story tells of Napi the trickster or Old Man who decided that he would demonstrate how clever he was by hurling large pieces of Chief Mountain onto the prairie. (Holterman, 1985, p. 128). These portions of Chief Mountain resulted in the forming of the Sweetgrass Hills of Montana, or as the Blackfoot Peoples call them the Sweet Pine Hills. This also provides an explanation for the unique shape of Chief Mountain as a flat-topped butte. Indeed, Napi is thought to have made all mountains; that is all the Rocky Mountains, known by the Blackfoot as the "Backbone of the World."

Another legend told according to Percy Creighton (Kainai) from a tape recording conducted in 1953, A Dream Person who dwelled on the mountain now known as Chief Mountain, instructed the Kainai to build a Sun Lodge at the foot of "outstanding mountain" as it was historically known. (Clark, 1966, p. 249). The man to whom the vision was made, ascended the mountain to fast and pray. The Dream Person then told the man that he and his young men would find buffalo near the Cypress Hills moving westward towards them from a rainstorm. The "big man" and his young warriors found the buffalo just as the Dream Person had told them. This had been a time of starvation for the Kainai,

and an ancient story of providence with the Dream Person aiding the Kainai Peoples. Ninna Piiksii (Mike Bruised Head, Kainai) tells another story. It is based upon an ancient creation story from the beginning of time when the Spirit-Being: Thunder Spirit who dwelled at the Crowsnest Mountain, and Big Raven who dwelled at Chief Mountain, battled with each other. Thunder Spirit had taken the wife of a man without the man's permission, as well Thunder was harming the People. The People asked the Spirit-Being: Big Raven for help and a prolonged battle between Thunder and Big Raven ensued. Big Raven flapped his wings to cool the air and prevent Thunder from using his lightning powers. Finally, with the lengthy battle being inconclusive, Thunder relented and gave the man back his wife. Thunder and Big Raven also agreed to exchange their ancestral homes, with Thunder now dwelling at Chief Mountain, and Big Raven's home at Crowsnest Mountain; hence the ancient name for Crowsnest Mountain is Home of Big Raven, or Raven's Mountain. Big Raven and Thunder were thus able to create peace with the People, by Thunder giving the People his pipe as a peace agreement. (didactic panels, Nitsitapii Landscapes exhibit at the Galt Museum).

Yet another legend is told by the Pikanni that tells of a Pikanni War-Chief who married a young woman that he was very fond of, taking no other wives and not even leaving her to join any war parties. One day only a few warriors returned from a battle that had left many warriors dead. The War-Chief was so stricken by this defeat that he encouraged other warriors to join him in seeking revenge for their previous loss. The War-Chief's wife began to insist that she be allowed to join the war party, however, her husband, the Chief, refused and convinced her to remain at the camp at the base of the mountain. When the war party returned, the Chief's wife learned that her husband had been killed in battle; stricken with remorse and grief she climbed the mountain with her infant child, then leapt off the mountain with her child. The Pikanni buried the woman, child, and the War-Chief at the base of the mountain and named the mountain "the Mountain of the Chief" or "Chief Mountain." (Clark, 1966, p. 272-273). This is a more recent name for this mountain, since the ancient name from the early beginnings was Home of the Thunderbird.

Crowsnest Mountain: Legends & Stories (Raven's Nest Mountain)

There are several legends and traditional oral stories about the origins of naming of Crowsnest Mountain. These stories vary to some extent among the various Indigenous Peoples that most frequented the Crowsnest Valley (the Ktunáxa and Blackfoot), however there are also interesting similarities. One ancient story told by the Ktunáxa is the mountain was known from long time ago or early beginnings, and asso-

ciated with the creation stories of the Ktunáxa, as “Raven’s House.” This mountain was considered by the Ktunáxa as especially sacred land since it is considered the ancestral home of the Spirit-being Raven, a mythological creature whose dwelling was established during the formative years of creation itself. Ktunáxa oral history tells that the mountain “Raven’s House” was used by the Ktunáxa to scout for enemy war parties, and a vantage point to look for herds of buffalo towards the east. This account is like the Blackfoot legend that referred to the mountain as “Home of the Raven.” It is interesting to note that the Cree name for the mountain is “Raven’s Nest Mountain” and seems to allude to this ancient name of “Raven’s House.” It is unclear whether this naming of the mountain is associated in any way with the “raven people” or Raven’s Nest clan. The Blackfoot name of *ma-sto-eeas*, translates as the ‘nest of the crow or raven,’ in part due to the nesting of crows at the foot of the mountain; with the word “nest” perhaps being a reference to a “home.”

It was not until an epic battle occurred in 1853 between a war party of the Crows and their rival enemies the Blackfoot that the more recent and contemporary name of Crowsnest Mountain was first used. Two differing accounts or stories have been traditionally told about this battle. The first mentions that the Blackfoot ambushed a large war party of the Crows at the base of the mountain and defeated completely the Crow warriors. The second story claims that a battle ensued at the foot of the mountain until a large segment or portion of the mountain fragmented and tumbled down the mountainside killing an estimated two hundred Crow and Blackfoot warriors. (Crowsnest Municipality website). The battle quickly dissolved after this incident and the two warring tribes later agreed to never fight each other again, in the Crowsnest Valley, since this incident was considered an act of displeasure of the Creator or divine providence as a sign that the two rivals should seek peace. The Blackfoot, in particular, considered this event as an omen of Napi or Old Man, and decided to name the mountain, Crowsnest Mountain, to commemorate their victory, and to also honor of the Crow warriors that had died in battle; with the name *ma-sto-eeas* still retaining to some extent in an allegorical way, and paying homage to the ancient name of “Home of the Raven.”

It is interesting to note that the 1853 battle is not mentioned in scholarly sources such as the lists of Blackfoot battles recorded from 1808 – 1870 by historians John Ewers (see Table. 7. Ewers, 1958, p. 195), and seems a topic that is considered taboo by Indigenous Peoples such as the Crow and Blackfoot. There is also no mention of this battle in Blackfoot winter counts. It is strange or even implausible that such a notable event of this magnitude would not have been included in a winter count; perhaps an indication of the significance of the unwillingness of Indigenous Elders and Peoples to discuss this subject. As to whether there was indeed a geological event with a landslide is an open-ended

question.

Finally, of interest, although unrelated to legends, settlers and quite probably soldiers of the U.S. Army, "nicknamed" the Wolf Mountains as Crow's Nest Mountain, since it provided a vantage point to observe enemy Indigenous tribes providing distant views of the Little Bighorn Valley located within the traditional territory of the Crow Nation. (Fifer, 2005, p. 107). The nickname of "crows' nest" by settlers may have been a nautical reference to the crows' nest of a tall ship as a vantage or observation point for reconnaissance.

It is of note too, that there exists historically another Crow clan, led by Little Nest, known as the Little Nest clan that darkened black the conical top portion of their tipi covers, ostensibly to symbolically represent the nests of crows or ravens. (Marquis, 1928, p. 342). (Little Nest and the Crow Elder Joseph Medicine Crow were half- brothers). Another Crow ancient tribal clan were the Raven-Face clan, a clan of about 20 families, that seceded from the Crow Indigenous Peoples due a dispute with a rival clan. (Lowie, 1993, p. 182). (An ancient legend is attributed to the historical figure of Raven-Face). This is a further indication that such clans exist within the Crow Nation, and it is therefore quite probable that the "raven people" or "Raven's Nest" clan were indeed a clan of the Crow, as this paper asserts. It also demonstrates yet again the interchangeability, and occasional ambiguity, of the use of the words crow and raven among the Crow Indigenous Peoples as "anything (i.e. any bird) that flies."

Waterton Lakes: Legends and Stories

The Crow's Nest Pass was frequently used by Blackfoot war parties en route to the camps of the Ktunáxa, despite wild game being less abundant along this valley and even more scarce along this trail than others further south. (Ewers, 1958, p. 201). Similarly, the Waterton Lakes region was a place of contested territoriality between the Blackfoot (predominantly the Kainai and Pikanni) and the Ktunáxa, with the later traversing the mountains to primarily hunt buffalo, while the Kainai and Pikanni sought to prevent and safeguard their perceived right to these lands.

The Blackfoot would therefore traditionally camp at either the present-day buffalo paddock within Waterton Lakes National Park; at Emerald Bay or along the Waterton River near the park gates. (Davison, p. 7).

According to Davison, the valley within Waterton Lakes National Park now known as Blakiston Valley was named by the Blackfoot as "the place where the Kootenay (Ktunáxa), go up." (Davison, p. 1.) The Ktunáxa themselves referred to this valley as "the buffalo trail" (South Kootenay Pass) where they would travel as a corridor to hunt buffalo. Although the Waterton Lakes area was primarily used for hunting buffalo and other big game; it was also used for collecting plant

material for medicinal or ceremonial purposes, as well as berries to supplement their diets. (Ibid, p. 13). The internecine warfare was described by Ross Clark, a young fur trader who had spent five years with the Kutenais (1812-1817 C.E.) and described them as "the remnant of a once brave and powerful tribe." Their numbers (the Ktunáxa) were greatly reduced by constant warfare with the Blackfoot over the rights to hunt buffalo east of the Rockies. (Clark, 1966, p. 137). It should be noted also that the Crowsnest valley has extensive grasslands; and as many as five transcontinental divide passes that included: South of Crowsnest Lake that leads to the north fork of Flathead River and the Tobacco Plains of the Kootenay Valley, via the west summit of the Kootenay Pass; and Allison Creek Valley with access to the Elk Valley (Reeves, 1973, p. 1, & 2). There are also two lower elevation passes within this region. The dispute over accessibility to these mountain passes can therefore be understated.

The Ktunáxa, were driven from the upper waters of the South Saskatchewan River to beyond the Rockies in by the Pikanni in 1794 C.E. (Morton, 1973, p. 460).

According to Duncan McGillivray an explorer with the Northwest Company after the 1800's the Ktunáxa were confined to making semi-annual forays across the mountains in mid-June and September to harvest buffalo. (Clark, 1966, p. 138). This was often met with armed conflict by Blackfoot. In the early to mid 1700's C.E., the Blackfoot and Piikani were traditionally encamped near Eagle Hills and the Battle River when in 1715 C.E. they moved from near the North Saskatchewan south-westward to the South Saskatchewan and occupied the upper waters there and then took possession of the Bow River along the Rockies; with the Kainai on the Red Deer River and the Siksika on the upper waters of the Battle River south of Edmonton. This account was noted according to David Thompson, although Thompson did not first meet the Blackfoot himself; it was instead Anthony Henday of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1754 C.E. who was the first settler/explorer to meet the Blackfoot near the Red Deer River. (Ibid, p. 18-19). In 1808 C.E., the explorer, Thompson, met Ktunáxa that had crossed the mountain passes to travel towards the Upper Saskatchewan River to engage in trade, mostly for the purposes of obtaining arms to defend themselves against the Pikanni, afterwards "return(ing) to their own country." (Moreau, 2015, p. xix.). Thompson also mentioned in 1809 C.E. that the Kutenai would look for wild horses with some success (Moreau, 2015, p. 154); having the custom of transferring their cargo from canoes to horses. They also traded horses for tobacco and ammunition. (Ibid, p. 169).

Hugh Dempsey mentions that Tunáxa or Michel band of the Ktunáxa historically occupied an area from the Crowsnest Pass to Watterton Lakes, their traditional encampment (Dempsey, 2018, p. 41) near the former villages of Michel and Natal, British Columbia; were deci-

mated by smallpox in ~ 1730 C.E.; however other accounts suggest that this may not have occurred until a few years later in 1735 or 1736 C.E. It is highly probable that the Tunáxa and the "raven people" clan co-existentially experienced the same suffering of a devastating disease that similarly led to their mutual demise during the same outbreak of smallpox.

The Tunáxa had two annual buffalo hunts per year in the spring and autumn. (*Ibid*, p. 43). Although the Tunáxa were no longer existent, Dempsey mentions a Battle in 1820 C.E. between Ktunáxa and Blackfoot after an unsuccessful attempt at a treaty, with negotiations at the plateau site of the present-day Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton Lakes National Park. This indicates that it is apparent the remnant people of the Ktunáxa still attempted to assert their rights to hunt buffalo in Waterton Lakes. Hostilities between these warring tribes continued until the late 19th century C.E when a peace treaty was brokered by the NWMP near Ft. McLeod. (Candler, 2019, p. 11).

Conclusion

This paper has sought to provide a plausible explanation for the ancestral origins of the "raven people" clan or Raven's Nest Peoples. Unlike Davison who asserts that the "raven people" were Cree since Raven's Nest is derived from a Cree word, I believe that these Indigenous People were descendants of the River Crow, and more specifically, Chief No Vitals' clan succeeded by Running Coyote. I have attempted to provide a plausible chronology of events from the oral history and stories of the Crow Elders, Cold Wind and Joseph Medicine Crow, that preceded the ultimate decimation of this clan of the Crow Nation, one of three clans that were historically lost. I have provided other information about the Indigenous history, legends, and stories of the Crownest Valley and the adjacent area that extends into southeastern British Columbia, the traditional territory of the Ktunáxa that frequented the area, and the region now known as Waterton Lakes National Park. The historical record, and information on this subject, is admittedly sparse, thus this research requires further scholarly exploration into the era, supplemented with the oral histories and stories from Elders of pre-contact and the early post-colonial contact eras. My intent has been to present here in this paper an overview and brief synthesis of the historical sources available. It is also my hope that some light has been shed on the origin of the "raven people," that has been a contemporary enigma for scholars and non-academics alike

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APPENDIX 1

Blackfoot Indigenous Geographic Place Names
[Alberta & Montana]. Nitawahsin. Home of the Blackfoot Peoples

List by Ninna Piiksii. (Mike Bruised Head) & Itsinohtss piyaki (Rebecca Many Grey Horses) from Nitsitapiisksakoo: Nitsitapii Landscapes exhibit at the Galt Museum, Lethbridge, Alberta (2022)

[With some additional place names derived from Alberta Parks website.]

Spitzii. High River
Na-to-ke-okos. Old Man River
Kinuk Sisakta. Milk River. ("Little River")
Kaiyo Isisakta. Marias River
Omak-a-ty. Missouri River
Ponoká'sísaahataa. North Saskatchewan River ("Elk River")
also "Big River" (according to Davison)
Kinok - Kxis - sis - ugthy Battle River
Pahksipiskwi. Box Elder Creek
Amukikini Isisakta Big Horn River
Khpaksi Tuktai. Little Bighorn River
Moki-nist-sis. Bow River

Mātoki okās. Two Medicine River
 Mātoki okās omaksikimi. Two Medicine Lake
 Otahkoíítahtaa. Yellowstone River
 Kaksistuk-kwi Ituktai. Sun River
 Satsó pochis Ituktai Powder River
 Miki Istukists. Big Horn Mountains
 Mahkwyi Stukists Little Rocky Mountains
 Miistákisti. Rocky Mountains also known as "The Backbone" (according to Davison) or "the Backbone of the World" (according to Hugh Dempsey)
 Kyō - Ochisistukiks. Bear Paw Mountains
 Aiya kí mikwi. Cypress Hills
 Kátoyissiksi. Sweet Grass Hills

Ninaiistako. Chief Mountain.
 Ancestral home of the mythical creature Thunderbird. (Ksiistsikómii-pí'kssiwa)

Omahkaí'stoo. Crownsnest Mountain also known as Crow Mountain and "Raven's Mountain".
 Ancestral home of the mythical creature Big Raven. Both in creation stories

Omhkoohkaa. "Big Avalanche" Turtle Mountain landslide at Frank, Alberta
 Paahtómahksikimi. Waterton. Origin story of the sacred beaver bundle took place here.

ohkotokí'tapiiksi. rock beings

APPENDIX 2

