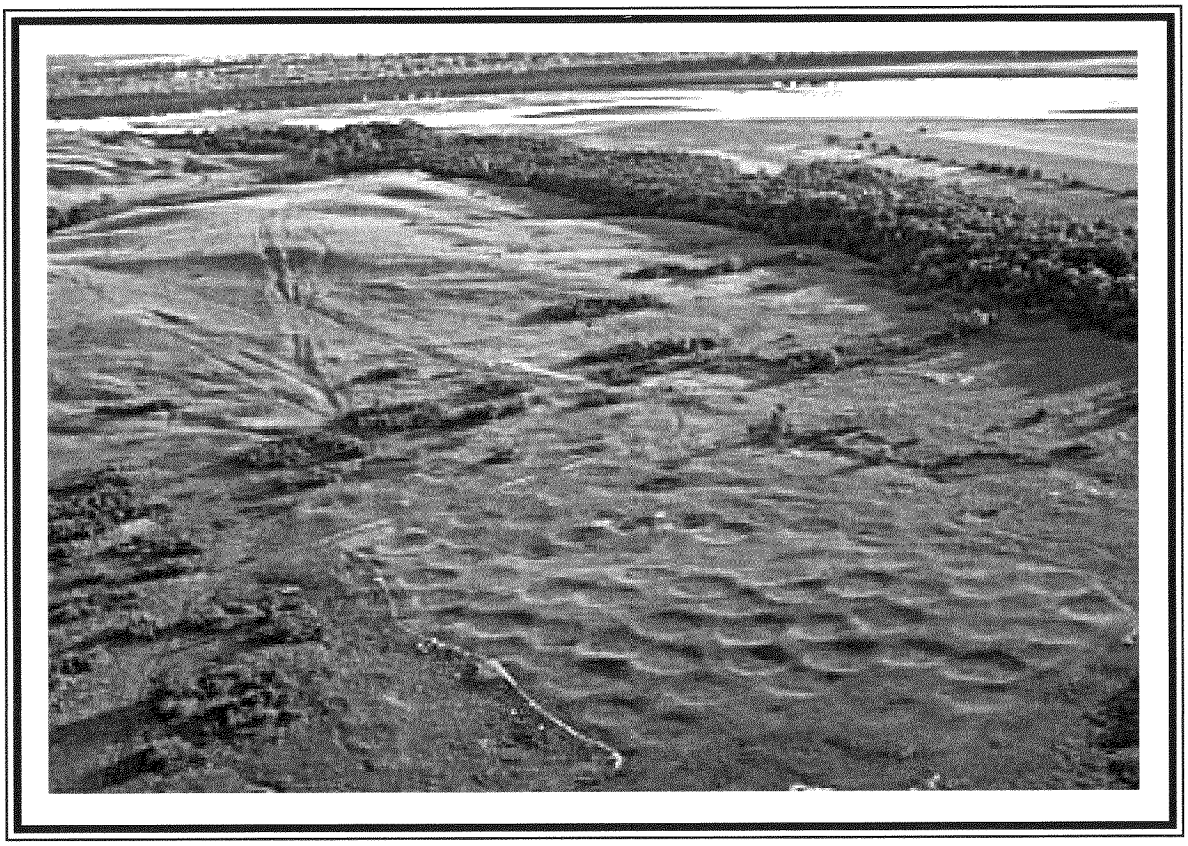
CONTACT WITH NORTHERN PLAINS INDIAN VILLAGES AND COMMUNITIES:

An Administrative History of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota



Big Hidatsa Village (Foreground) with Trails and Cemetery Areas in the Left Background

Prepared for the

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MIDWEST REGION
Omaha, Nebraska

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Table of Contents

Chapter/Section **Page**

Table of Contents ii

Title and Signature Approval Page iii

Acknowledgements iv

Introduction 1

Chapter One: American Indian Setting At Knife River Indian Villages NHS 6

Chapter Two: Historic Setting of Knife River Indian Villages NHS, Colonial Period to WWII 25

Chapter Three: Archeological/Ethnohistorical Interest In Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1872-1964 41

Chapter Four: Roots And Passage Of Knife River Indian Villages NHS Enabling Legislation, 1964-1974 55

Chapter Five: Laying The Foundation And Building Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1974-1995 104

Chapter Six: Interpretation And Management Of Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1978-2004 145

Chapter Seven: Archeological Resource Research Program At Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1974-2004 194

Chapter Eight: Ethnohistorical Resource Research Program At Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1974-2004 225

Chapter Nine: Natural Resource Research Program At The Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1974-2004 236

Conclusion 261

Bibliography 267

Appendices
- A. Key Park Legislation 282
- B. List Of Past And Present National Park Service Personnel 288
- C. Official Annual Park Visitation Figures 290

Index 291

Back Inside Cover: Pocket: Knife River Indian Villages NHS Official Map

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TITLE AND SIGNATURE APPROVAL PAGE

CONTACT WITH NORTHERN PLAINS INDIAN VILLAGES AND COMMUNITIES:
AN ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY OF KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

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2009

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former Knife River Indian Heritage Foundation Chairperson, and park interpreter for many years), Duane Payton (former resident of land in the park and current park neighbor), Thomas D. Thiessen (former KRIV archeologist, 1976-1977 and Midwest Archeological Center archeologist until his retirement) and James Sperry (Superintendent of State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1969-1998). To each of these individuals I owe a deep sense of gratitude for sharing their time and thoughts regarding the history of KRIV NHS. But to Judy Lang, Thomas D. Thiessen, and James Sperry, I offer an additional thank you for supplying important resources and relevant historical information (newspaper articles, photographs, bibliographical material, etc.) on KRIV at their interviews that comprehensively added to the project.

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Needless to say, but I will say it anyway; I accept full responsibility for the final product, including any biases, errors and omissions.

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INTRODUCTION

On October 26, 1974, an Act of Congress (Public Law 93-486) authorized Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS). KRIV is situated in a relatively unspoiled setting on the first terrace above the floodplain at the confluence of the Knife and Missouri rivers, immediately north of Stanton in central North Dakota. At that time, Congress recognized the archeological and historical value of three major and visible Hidatsa[1] Indian village sites (Lower Hidatsa, Big Hidatsa, and Sakakawea). They consisted of numerous circular lodge depressions of varying depths, cache pits in and between the lodges, and other features such as the remains of fortified ditches, ancillary cemeteries, and travois trails. In general, Congress recognized the potential of these surface features when it authorized establishment of the park for three specific reasons: preservation, interpretation, and research related to certain Northern Plains Indians in perpetuity. Consequently, KRIV became unique among the National Park System as the only area whose primary mission was to interpret the lifestyle of an important segment of the nation's indigenous population, the Northern Plains Indian. This interpretation became known as the National Park Service (NPS) theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*.

Today, this 1,759-acre park contains some of the few remaining and best-preserved examples of earth-lodge village and aboriginal cultural landscapes in the Northern Great Plains. KRIV's archeological resources not only represent the story of the Hidatsas life on the Missouri River through the mid-nineteenth century but also represent a record of several millennia of human use of the Upper Missouri and the Knife River area. There is at least one component within the park that dates to Late Archaic times, i.e. between 1,000 B.C. and A.D. 1500. Certainly, one of the most outstanding features of KRIV is that it contains an unbroken record of the development of the culture of the Plains Indian people from as early as perhaps A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1845, a period of more than 1,800 years. During the Plains Village portion of this time span, this area evolved into an intertribal trading hub. Though the Hidatsa were the historic occupants of the villages within the park, they were not the only groups whose story is connected to KRIV's resources. For instance, the Crow Indians[2] at one time in the distant past were part of the Hidatsa but split from their kinsmen, giving up their horticultural lifestyle to develop a nomadic adaptation to the High Plains environment farther west. Many other Indian groups, such as the Mandan, who lived downstream along the Missouri River near and

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[1] The Hidatsa were comprised of three subgroupings: *Hidatsa*-proper, *Awatixa*, and *Awaxawi*. However, the term "Hidatsa" will be used hereinafter when referring to the three subgroups as a whole.

[2] The Crow were a Siouan-speaking group who appeared to have close archeological, historical, and linguistic ties to the Hidatsa. However, it is not known for certain when and where they split from the Hidatsa. For a discussion of the ethnogenesis of the Crow, see M.N. Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study, Final Report December 8, 2006: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, ND; Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site, ND; And Theodore Roosevelt National Park, ND* (Tucson, Arizona: Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona), 110-114.

above its confluence with Heart River, were frequent visitors to the Knife River villages to exchange products of the hunt for the agricultural produce of the villagers.

This mission to preserve, interpret, and research Northern Plains *Indian Villages and Communities* was not always clear. Initially, Congress envisioned that the purposes, scope, and aggregate significance of KRIV's resources were representative and significant for their connection with important events in United States history. This connection was studied as the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians.*

The villagers' centuries-old role as semi-sedentary middlemen traders in the Northern Plains attracted the early attention of Euro-American traders, who sought to utilize the villages as a base for trading opportunities elsewhere along the Missouri. Here, Euro-American fur traders advanced their geographical knowledge of the Upper Missouri and the Northern Great Plains in their quest for fur-bearing animals. Later, the villages also became the scene of the first sustained contact between the United States Government and American Indians of the Northern Great Plains—the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition (1804-1806). A succession of important explorers, scientific observers, early travelers, fur traders, and even artists followed the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Among some of the most notable personages were Canadian trader-explorer David Thompson, self-taught artist and explorer George Catlin, and Prince Alexander Maximilian of Wied (Germany), who was accompanied by the young gifted Swiss artist Karl Bodmer. Later, the American naturalist John James Audubon also visited the villages.

However, increasingly frequent contact with traders and early Euro-American travelers through the region brought epidemic diseases. Combined with warfare and diminished buffalo herds, these events ultimately led to social disorganization and cultural decline in the villages and eventually to the disappearance of a millennium-old way of life, when in circa 1845, the Hidatsa abandoned the Knife River area to form Like-A-Fishhook Village farther up the Missouri River. Nonetheless, when coupled with the villages' rich archeological heritage, this extraordinary historical record of the Knife River villages provides a unique opportunity for the ethnohistorical study of the Trans-Missouri West.

Furthermore, although the primary resources of the park are cultural, KRIV also possesses prime natural areas that include native prairie and one of the few remaining examples of Missouri River floodplain forest—an environment that inspires visitors to imagine Hidatsa and Mandan villages and agricultural village lifeways here, as well as the historical context for Euro-American-Indian contact in the region.

Though a young park, over time KRIV has become a vital part of America's national system of parks. The park contains sixty-five archeological sites and is one of the few NPS areas in which an intensive park-wide (surface) archeological survey has been completed. KRIV is available to more than 20,000 visitors each year for their experience, enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of a significant part of our nation's history. KRIV's earth-lodge footprints, midden piles, fortification ditches, cache

pits, burial grounds, and radiating linear mounds from the villages' periphery all provide an outstanding opportunity to increase one's knowledge of Northern Plains Indian culture and history through studies of its museum collections and/or the archeological resources. KRIV also provides multiple opportunities to educate the public about Northern Plains Indian village life and exemplifies the adaptation of aboriginal farming practices from the eastern woodlands to the Northern Great Plains environment.

This story of the Park Service's administration and management of KRIV is one of growing recognition of the significance of this park's unique archeological, ethnohistorical, and natural resources. The need for park administrative history dates back to 1993. At that time, a park resource management plan recognized that managers and supervisors needed such a document but warned that NPS risked losing early park history if it were not collected soon and that it would become more difficult and costly to obtain in the future.[3]

Chapter One begins this history with a non-technical description of the American Indian setting of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS as context for understanding the park's unique resources. Current knowledge of early American Indian occupation of the area by various American Indian groups is summarized into a brief description of Northern Plains Pre-Village archeology during the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland traditions and then a lengthier discussion of post-village Northern Plain's archeology, or the Plains Village tradition, where Hidatsa/Mandan prehistory is broken down into five cultural complexes (Charred Body, Middle Missouri, Painted Woods, Heart River, and Knife River).

Next, Chapter Two outlines the early history of the park's area, which is broken down into the following basic historic periods: colonial exploration and colonization (pre-1804), subsequent Euro-American exploration and fur trade (1804-1834), an interregnum period of cultural decline and abandonment of the site (1834-1881), and then an American frontier and settlement period (1845-1945). Chapter Two also provides background context for how the area was developed and used in the past prior to NPS administration. Thereafter, Chapter Three narrates at some length the growing efforts by archeologists, ethnographers, historians, and others to commemorate, preserve, or to manage the area's archeological resources prior to NPS involvement. These efforts are categorized into three distinct stages: early ethnography and mapping (1872-1918), pioneer excavation, park building, and ethnography (1919-1937), and scientific excavation, ethnography, and national historic landmark status (1938-1964).

With the above background chapters completed, Chapter Four accounts for the movement to establish KRIV, covering the legislative process as revealed by congressional bills, hearings, committee reports, and final enactment. It emphasizes the key organizations and individuals promoting and opposing park establishment, as well as their motivations,

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[3] National Park Service (NPS), *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, I-002.001-I-002.001, Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) Library, Lincoln, NE; Tom Thiessen to Jim Basinger, 24 February 1993, File KNRI—Revision of KNRI Resource Management Plan, 1993, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

and NPS' involvement and positions the agency took before the passage of Public Law 93-486. Chapter Four also provides critical insight into the legislative intent of Congress when it established Knife River Indian Villages NHS.

With the chronological history of the park understood, several topical chapters, based on primary NPS materials and oral history, follow, which articulate the complexities of managing KRIV.

Essentially, Chapter Five extensively covers the very complicated story of development at Knife River, starting with the land acquisition difficulties (1974-1978) with local landowners. Once the land was acquired, NPS prepared the park's first master plan (1978) and then set out to sensitively situate and construct KRIV's visitor/administration center and other facilities (1979-1995) within the park. As will be seen, practically every spadeful of dirt revealed significant archeological remains, making the Park Service's task very difficult. Coupled with this problem, NPS faced additional complications because of funding issues and strained relations with the Three Affiliated Tribes. The formation of a local advocacy group that united all factions toward a single purpose, completion of a visitor/administration center and other facilities, such as the construction of a full-scale earth-lodge, resolved this juggernaut of problems.

After laying this foundation, the next chapter addresses an equally difficult situation—the daily problems in managing the park's resources, along with development of an adequate park interpretation plan. Among other topics, Chapter Six reviews and analyzes the park's problems and needs, such as the acquisition of additional lands, explores the park's basic management philosophy as reflected over time in its general management plan and statements for management, examines land protection and boundary control issues, and investigates park operations, budgets, and visitation matters. It also illustrates how KRIV's interpretive program, at various times and during different circumstances, vacillated between the two NPS themes, *Indian Villages and Communities* and *Contact with the Indians*, eventually causing an identity crisis for future park superintendents. Was, or should, KRIV become just another "Lewis and Clark" park?

Ultimately, Chapter Six also sets the background for the next three chapters, which closely examine KRIV's management programs for the park's archeological, ethnohistorical, and natural resources. Since the preservation, interpretation, and research related to the culture and history of Northern Plains Indian archeological resources was a central intent of Congress when it authorized KRIV, it is natural that an entire chapter be devoted to the Park Service's effort. Chapter Seven reviews the Park Service's initial archeological research planning and programming (1974-1978), examines the agency's archeological field research (1978-1984), including construction of the visitor/administration center (1984-1987) and with mitigation projects to stabilize the banks of the Knife River (1975-1988), and concludes with a discussion of archeological research from 1986 to the present, including work at the all-important Taylor Bluff Village and Elbee sites.

Notwithstanding the importance of archeological research at KRIV, the villages included important ethnohistorical resources that needed investigation, although these were not as well funded as archeological research at KRIV. This NPS objective was realized through key, early ethnohistorical research on KRIV's historic resources pertaining to explorations and the fur trade on the Northern Plains (1974-1978). In later years (1986 to present), NPS and other research was extended to include a review of ethnohistorical and traditional data on the origins of the Hidatsa Indians and cultural affiliation studies, as well as an ethnobotanical study.

Though Knife River Indian Villages NHS is noted primarily for its unique archeological and historical resources, the area contains a variety of vegetation and wildlife that are of ecological interest. Despite its long history of human settlement and development prior to land acquisition by NPS, KRIV contains native grasslands and riparian woodlands, which required NPS to analyze, protect, manage, and interpret for the public. Management of the prime natural areas of Missouri River bottomlands and mid-grass native prairie and riverine habitats was and still is a primary concern for park officials. Chapter Nine outlines that story, starting with a discussion of natural resource management and development issues that park officials confronted (1974-1986) as well as addressing protection of the park's natural resources in water, vegetative, fire, and wildlife planning documents (1986-present).

The concluding chapter assesses and provides a "State of the Park" look at KRIV in 2004, on its 30th anniversary.

CHAPTER ONE

AMERICAN INDIAN SETTING AT KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS) is located at the northern end of an area of the Northern Plains known to archeologists as the Knife Region (formerly the upper Knife-Heart Region), which is that portion of the Missouri River Valley lying between the mouths of the Knife and Heart rivers. To date, archeologists have gathered considerable knowledge regarding archeological resources located there. But before any administrator or reader can fully understand KRIV and its resources, they must have a full grasp of the park's significance within the field of Northern Plains Indian archeology. The administrator also needs to be acquainted with five terms that archeologists use to explain cultural-historical sequences in this part of the country. Those terms, which will be used throughout this chapter and elsewhere, are: *site*, *component*, *phase*, *tradition*, and *complex*. Although not all archeologists agree on their definitions or even how the terms should be used in this case, we will use the definitions that National Park Service used in their *Cultural Resource Management Plan* (1983) for KRIV, written by Sandra Hellickson-Key and Thomas D. Thiessen.[4] University of North Dakota archeologist Stanley A. Ahler, an archeologist with the most expertise in KRIV archeological resources,[5] considered them valid over the course of many investigations at KRIV. A concise non-technical summary description of these terms will help provide to the reader a clearer context for understanding the park's archeological resources.

First, there are *sites*. Sites are spatially bounded areas containing evidence of occupation or some other form of utilization by man in the past. Sites may be described as defined areas of concentrations of artifacts, ashes, fire-cracked rocks, or other physical remains left by past people. Sites often contain evidence of one or more uses or occupations, each of which is termed a *component*. A component is the smallest unit of taxonomic study in archeology. A component may represent use of the site by the same group or several

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[4] Sandra Hellickson-Key and Thomas D. Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1983).

[5] Stanley Albert Ahler obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1970 and 1975, and was one of many students of W. Raymond Wood who became known as the Missouri Mafia. Ahler spent a lifetime in the pursuit of archeology, making substantial and lasting contributions to Plains prehistory as a research archeologist at the University of North Dakota from 1975 to 1990. Between 1976 and 1987, he directed the archeological program at Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS), leading to the first real understanding of Hidatsa culture history. He passed away on February 3, 2007, in Flagstaff, Arizona after a long illness, only a few months before this project was underway. W. Raymond Wood, "2006 Distinguished Service Award," *Plains Archeologist* Vol. 52, No. 2001 (February 2007); 2; Fern Swenson, "Remembering Stan Ahler," *North Dakota Archaeological Association Newsletter* Vol. 28, No. 1 (March 2007): 5; Carl R. Falk and Marvin Key, "Stanley A. Ahler (1943-2007): A Reflection," *Newletter of the South Dakota Archaeological Society* Vol. 37, No. 1: 1-5; Anonymous, "In Memory: Dr. Stanley A. Ahler (1943-2007)," *Missouri Archaeological Society Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 2: 22-23.

related groups of people over an extended period of time. However, Stanley Ahler noted, stylistic variation in the material remains [e.g., pottery] assigned to a component is not sufficient to detect ethnic heterogeneity in an artifact sample.

A *phase*, the next well-recognized study unit used by Northern Plains archeologists, consists of a group of more than one component that shares a large number of content characteristics, which is generally spatially confined to a single region (e.g., Knife-Heart Region) and which is generally spatially confined to a relatively short time span. A phase can also be characterized by differing forms of village plan, architectural pattern, and material culture assemblage (e.g., primarily pottery style).

Then there is *tradition*. In general, the term tradition in archeology taxonomy has widely varying usages. In its simplest definition, a tradition is a distinctive way of life, reflected in all aspects of culture, that emphasizes continuity in overall adaptive strategies and, potentially, a broad array of technological attributes, which fit into a strategy. In general, Northern Plains' archeologists have widely varying uses for the term tradition. They have also defined sub-traditions within a tradition. Pertaining to KRIV, according to Ahler, a tradition represents a major shift in lifestyle and cultural adaptation to the environment of the Northern Plains. It is a distinctive way of life, reflected in various aspects of culture, and contains persistent themes that dominate the life of the people. In Northern Plains archeology there are four basic traditions: *Paleo-Indian*, *Archaic*, *Woodland*, and *Village* traditions.

Finally, there is the *complex*. A complex is a higher-level unit than a component and/or phase, but it is a subunit of a tradition. A complex is defined on the basis of a very small series of material culture attributes, which are thought to be particularly important for distinguishing subunits within a tradition from each other.[6]

The American Indian setting prior to the establishment of Knife River Indian Villages NHS is complicated but can be effectively divided for our purposes into two broad archeological periods. The first is the Northern Plains Pre-Village Period, which encapsulates the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland traditions. It was a period of time when peoples of the Knife-Heart River region and all the Missouri River Valley in North Dakota were mobile hunters and gatherers, and did not occupy villages. This Northern Plains Pre-Village Period lasted from circa 9500 B.C. to circa A.D. 1000. The second broad archeological period is generally described as the Northern Plains Village Period and contrasted sharply with early eras. It was a new way of life on the Northern Plains based on a mixed economy of hunting and horticulture, and characterized by residence in substantial earth-lodge structures in semi-permanent villages located on the first terrace above floodplain along the Missouri River Valley in the Dakotas. This Northern Plains

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[6] Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-12-I-13; Stanley A. Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 59-62, in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part IV: Interpretation Of The Archeological Record* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

Village Period extended from circa A.D. 1000 to circa A.D. 1886, and can be culturally identified with the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians.

Northern Plains Pre-Village Archeology, 9500 B.C. to A.D. 1000

As a whole, archeologists break down Northern Plains Pre-Village remnants into three regional-scaled and tentatively dated, centuries-long traditions. They are the Paleo-Indian tradition (circa 9500 B.C. to 5500 B.C.), the Archaic tradition (circa 5500 B.C. to 400 B.C.), and the Woodland tradition (circa 400 B.C. to A.D. 1000). Though post-depositional, environmental, and geological processes may have resulted in the under-representation of Pre-Village age sites in the Knife-Heart Region, archeologists have assigned all cultural manifestations in the region to one or more of these three traditions in Northern Plains Pre-Village archeology. They have based their suppositions on the presence and/or absence at sites of certain chronologically diagnostic artifacts, of moderate to heavily patinated Knife River flint (KRF)[7] chipped stone artifacts, and/or on stratified contexts.

Archeological assemblages with the earliest dating in the Northern Plains Pre-Village fall into the Paleo-Indian tradition, a period currently undergoing reinterpretation by some scholars. In the past, archeologists characterized the Paleo-Indian tradition as one where highly mobile populations hunted and killed herds of mammoths and large ancient bison as their primary subsistence strategy. In this effort, they used long, lanceolate, and sometimes fluted projectile points. An overarching trend regarding Paleo-Indian projectile points was the preference for the use of KRF for stone tool manufacture, with the primary source area for KRF located west of KRIV. However, additional, recent research has questioned the mobility assumption about Paleo-Indian tradition and suggests that more regionally distinct groupings used diversified strategies, practiced broad-spectrum economies, and exploited a wide variety of plant and animal resources from different environments.[8] Furthermore, because of KRIV's proximity to the KRF quarries and its location at the confluence of the Knife and Missouri rivers, some archeologists suggest that KRIV may have been an important trade node in KRF procurement and distribution networks even during the Paleo-Indian tradition. However,

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[7] Knife River flint is a dark-brown glassy quartz material that was used extensively by Knife River Indian villagers in the manufacture of tools for scraping hides and shaping wood and bone; for piercing tools like awls and drills; cutting tools like knives; and for chopping tools like axes. Two basic techniques (chipping and pecking) were used to make these stone tools made from the pre-thinned piece of material. People traveled great distances to gather the raw material. It is believed that pre-shaped tools, called blanks, were locally made and then traded to people living greater distances from the quarries. The largest concentrations of the material are found about fifty miles west of KRIV in present-day Dunn County, North Dakota. See, NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Teacher's Guide* (1998), Unit 4, 1-2. For full text see, www.nps.gov/archive/knri/teach/arts/htm.

[8] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 26; Hellickson-Key and Thiessen,, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-13-I-14; Stanley A. Ahler, "Pre-Village Period Archeology in the KNRI," 15, 26, in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part IV: Interpretation Of The Archeological Record* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

although there is abundant evidence of human occupation from sites in the immediate surrounding area during the Paleo-Indian tradition, to date, according to Stanley Ahler, no diagnostic Paleo-Indian cultural components have been identified within KRIV.[9] Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that future excavations, chronometrically dated samples, and diagnostic materials will reveal Paleo-Indian artifact assemblages within KRIV and may provide some of the answers to the above uncertainties regarding the Paleo-Indian tradition.

The second division within Northern Plains Pre-Village archeology is referred to as the Archaic tradition. The Archaic tradition is one characterized by climate and ecological changes to the region. In other words, the Great Ice Age was retreating. Despite the changing environment, for the most part, Archaic peoples followed a life way similar to their Paleo-Indian predecessors but with some important modifications. As a result of ecological changes, smaller prairie animals replaced the giant buffalo and mammoths that eventually evolved into today's buffalo. In response, early Plains Archaic peoples, KRIV's earliest inhabitants, adopted new adaptive strategies. These small bands of nomadic peoples continued as hunters, but as glaciers retreated, hunting strategies necessarily shifted and adapted to the new resource base. Over time, they changed their hunting to emphasize smaller game.

At this time, a new hunting spear was beginning to be adopted as well—the *atlatl*. This tool used leverage to achieve greater velocity, enabling the spears to be thrown farther and harder. *Atlatls* were tipped with small, triangular points of stone. Lanceolated projectile points of the past thereafter abruptly gave way to smaller side-notched forms. By the late Archaic tradition, the production and interregional distribution of typical side-notched points from KRF became evident throughout western North Dakota. Furthermore, as Archaic peoples developed smaller hunting territories, contact between divergent groups decreased in the Northern Plains. By the middle of the Archaic tradition, there was also an increasing reliance on the fruits and seeds of wild plants and on obtaining fish from rivers in the area. Meanwhile, some groups moved into the open plains and inter-montane basins as pedestrian hunters. Unfortunately, archeological remains left by Archaic tradition peoples are buried deep into terraces and windblown silt deposits. Consequently, archeologists have a poor understanding of these peoples.[10] Regarding the Archaic Period and KRIV, Ahler wrote that our present knowledge of the specific cultural complexes present at KRIV was extremely limited. Though diagnostic projectiles and stratigraphic data from a few locations indicated that KRIV was occupied from the early through the late Archaic periods, none could be used to define a cultural taxonomy for the region beyond a very ephemeral Northern Plains Pre-Village period of cultural activity.[11] Though direct evidence of occupation earlier than the Late Archaic is not known presently, they may be discovered in the future.

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[9] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 26-28.

[10] Ibid.; Ahler, "Pre-Village Period Archeology in the KNRI," 15, 24-26; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Teacher's Guide*, Unit 1, 1-2; Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-13-I-14.

[11] Ahler, "Pre-Village Period Archeology in the KNRI," 15, 24-26.

The Woodland tradition, the third and last Pre-Village archeological period on the Northern Plains, followed the Archaic tradition. Peoples of the Woodland tradition continued many of the same hunting and gathering practices of predecessor Archaic tradition peoples, such as hunting buffalo, deer, and antelope. However, some hunting aspects seemed to distinguish them clearly from their ancestors. For instance, by the end of the Woodland tradition, the hunting tool of choice had changed from the *atlatl* to the bow and arrow. This change accounted for ever smaller chipped stone projectile points being recovered from archeological sites. Apparently, Woodland peoples also enjoyed a greater overall emphasis on cooperative forms of bison hunting.

This was evidenced by extensive use of traps and jumps along dissected bluff slopes, or breaks, along the Missouri River Valley for killing and processing these game animals on a communal basis.[12] Another distinction that seemed to separate the Woodland tradition from the earlier Archaic tradition was the way they buried their dead. Earlier peoples on the Northern Plains placed their dead on raised platforms or under low piles of rocks. Woodland tradition people buried their dead in the ground under cone-shaped or round mounds. They also may have used linear-shaped mounds for burial. Within the mounds were placed weapons, tools, jewelry, and decorative pots thought to be needed by the deceased in the after-life. These highly visible burial mounds and mortuary rituals were an indication of greater social organization. Concomitant with this development was increasing evidence from Woodland tradition archeological sites that indicated more permanent and frequently reoccupied seasonal campsites with moderately high population densities at times—another distinction from the Archaic tradition.[13] There was also the first appearance of pottery vessels in the Northern Plains—yet another important distinction.

Woodland people, like earlier Native populations, continued to gather roots and berries, but they also began to plant and grow crops for food as well. They also fished on a more consistent basis, but to date there has been no indication in the archeological record of any great reliance either on horticulture or fishing at this time. To cook and store food items, Woodland peoples shaped, dried, and fired pots from clay for these purposes and others. Generally speaking, ceramic characteristics for at least the early and middle Woodland tradition were elongated pottery vessels with straight or slightly flaring rims, with slight shoulders, conoidal bottoms, and cord-roughened surfaces.[14] Finally, because they traveled year round, they frequently encountered other groups with whom they traded items. Therefore, in the Woodland tradition, there also seemed to be greater accumulation of non-local artifacts obtained through long-distance trade, such as

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[12] Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-14-I-15; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 29-30.

[13] Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-14; Zedano, et al., *Cultural affiliation statement and ethnographic resource assessment study*, 29-31.

[14] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 29-32; Ahler, "Pre-Village Period Archeology in the KNRI," 16; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Teacher's Guide*, Unit 1, 3.

catlinite, sea shells, birch bark, native copper, as well as pottery and artifacts with Hopewellian nuances.[15]

Unfortunately, few diagnostic artifacts have been recovered from well-provenanced deposits within KRIV related to the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and/or Woodland traditions. Current knowledge regarding Northern Plains Pre-Village archeology is extremely poor, with the exception of perhaps the Woodland tradition. However, limited surface and subsurface investigations within KRIV indicated that there are perhaps twenty documented sites containing Pre-Village components, none of which are related to the Paleo-Indian tradition. Additional research with pre-ceramic archeology at KRIV and within the Middle Missouri River Valley is needed to better understand and interpret the changing human adaptation to the environmental changes that occurred between 9500 B.C. and A.D. 1000.[16]

Northern Plains Village Tradition, A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1886

The Northern Plains Village tradition, or just Plains Village tradition, according to Stanley Ahler, represents a dramatic change in adaptive strategies on the Northern Plains. It originated circa A.D. 1000 and extended well into the nineteenth century. Basically, the Plains Village tradition can be "characterized by the onset of sedentary or semi-sedentary maize horticultural societies organized as tribal groups, each with more or less distinctive territorial material culture markers, but all sharing a mixed subsistence economy where food production was, for the most part, as important as hunting."[17] Archeologists have a better understanding of Plains Village tradition than earlier traditions, although over time there have been significant changes in interpretation in temporal and spatial units.[18]

The origins of the Plains Village tradition have yet to be fully determined, especially in North Dakota. Earlier archeologists, such as Donald J. Lehmer, posited that the appearance of the Plains Village pattern came as the result of eastward population migrations into the Knife-Heart Region using the Missouri River, perhaps from present-day Minnesota. More recently, some archeologists, like Stanley Ahler and Steven Lovick, claim that early Plains Village components developed out of late Woodland tradition manifestations in the Knife Region, unlike the Heart Region to the south, which may have been influenced by eastward migrations. They see a cultural continuity in the Knife River Region based on similarities in material culture, adaptive strategies, and the presence of permanent or semi-permanent Woodland, earth-lodge villages. Because newer archeological interpretations by Ahler and Lovick encompass and have the benefit

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[15] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Teacher's Guide*, Unit 1, 3-4.

[16] Ahler, "Pre-Village Period Archeology in the KNRI," 26-27.

[17] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 33.

[18] For instance, until the scholarship by Stanley Ahler and others in the 1980s and 1990s, Donald J. Lehmer had subdivided the Plains Village Tradition into two cultural historical units (Middle Missouri Tradition and the Coalescent Tradition). These two traditions were further subdivided by Lehmer and others into Initial, Extended, and Terminal variants. Ibid.

of the work of ethnographers, cultural anthropologists, and ethnohistorians that were not available to Lehmer and others, it seems reasonable to exposit further on their work. But regardless of the origins of the Plains Village tradition, most archeologists would agree that the cultural components found in the Plains Village components in the Knife River Region were ancestral to the protohistoric and historic Hidatsa.[19]

To understand KRIV's resources, there is not sufficient need here to cover each change and nuance of interpretation by archeologists working in the region. However, following their work at KRIV, Ahler and Lovick abandoned previous interpretations held by archeologists such as Lehmer and instead recognized five complexes within the Knife River Region associated with the Plains Village tradition. These complexes were based on spatial location and associated dates for various components, which Ahler and Lovick assigned with confidence to each complex.

The cultural complexes defined by Ahler and Lovick within the Plains Village tradition were termed from oldest to youngest—*Charred Body*, *Middle Missouri*, *Painted Woods*, *Heart River*, and *Knife River*. In addition to these defined space-time cultural complexes, Ahler added a new unit concept—the *Ethnic* tradition. Ahler described this later tradition as the "product of synthesis of all available data from oral traditions for resident cultural and ethnic groups with all other available data from historical and archeological records." He introduced the concept of *Ethnic* tradition as a "means for describing an end product of the meshing of significant bodies of data from the separate archeological and historical/ethnographic records." Stanley Ahler was convinced that oral traditions frequently contained a broad array of essentially accurate information on prehistoric cultural development that extended back in time. He ambitiously hoped to unravel and reconstruct the Native American setting in the Knife Region separate from the Heart Region by not using just archeology, but also the work of ethnographers, cultural anthropologists, and ethnohistorians.[20]

Charred Body Complex, A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1200

Archeologists Ahler and Lovick start off their description of the Plains Village tradition with the Charred Body complex. To them, the Charred Body complex signaled the beginning of the Plains Village tradition in the Knife River Region. This village-dwelling cultural group, according to Ahler and Lovick, was defined by two key attributes. First, pottery within a Charred Body complex site had to be predominately (greater than 50 percent) cord-roughened, surface-treated body shards. Second, there had to be evidence that site occupants once lived in oval shaped, semi-subterranean dwellings. However, Ahler was only able to assign a single component in the Knife-Heart Region to the Charred Body complex—a small sample from the Flaming Arrow

[19] Ibid., 33-34.

[20] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 63-64.

site (32ML4) in McLean County outside of KRIV. The Flaming Arrow site dated radiometrically to circa A.D. 1100.[21]

Nonetheless, Ahler assigned the ethnic tradition of *Awatixa* to the Charred Body complex. The *Awatixa* band was one of three village groups to which the term Hidatsa is applied.[22] It was said through oral tradition that the *Awatixa* band of the Hidatsa were the first agricultural people to move to and settle near the mouth of the Knife River because they had no traditions of permanent residence elsewhere. The *Awatixa*, according to their oral traditions, were believed to have descended from the sky and landed at Turtle Creek, north of Painted Woods Lake, or about two miles below Washburn, North Dakota. Their culture hero Charred Body (founder of the *Awatixa*) led them to Turtle Creek, a place where the *Awatixa* believed their clans originated. The earliest *Awatixa* site, according to Ahler, was probably the Flaming Arrow site.[23]

Middle Missouri Complex, A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1300

Following the establishment of initial village settlements in the Knife-Heart Region, Ahler named the next complex the Middle Missouri complex. Ahler chose the name to signify and acknowledge the relationship between this taxonomic unit and the Middle Missouri tradition as defined by Lehmer. Ahler believed that this complex denoted probably some of the oldest and most central components in Plains Village cultural development in the Knife River region.

During the Middle Missouri complex, according to Ahler, population growth and settlement dispersed within the Knife River region. One key distinguishing attribute to the Middle Missouri complex in the Knife River Region was that simple stamping on pottery bodies was the predominant surface treatment. Less than 5 percent of pottery body shards in a Middle Missouri site exhibited checked-stamp surface treatment. Another significant attribute in Ahler's Middle Missouri complex was that each site contained pottery rim shards, whereby Riggs Ware (straight rim) and Fort Yates ware (S-rim) predominated 67 percent or more of the collection.[24]

Finally, while no sites dating to this complex had been specifically identified at KRIV, small, dispersed frontier settlements were distributed within the Knife region.[25] Ahler

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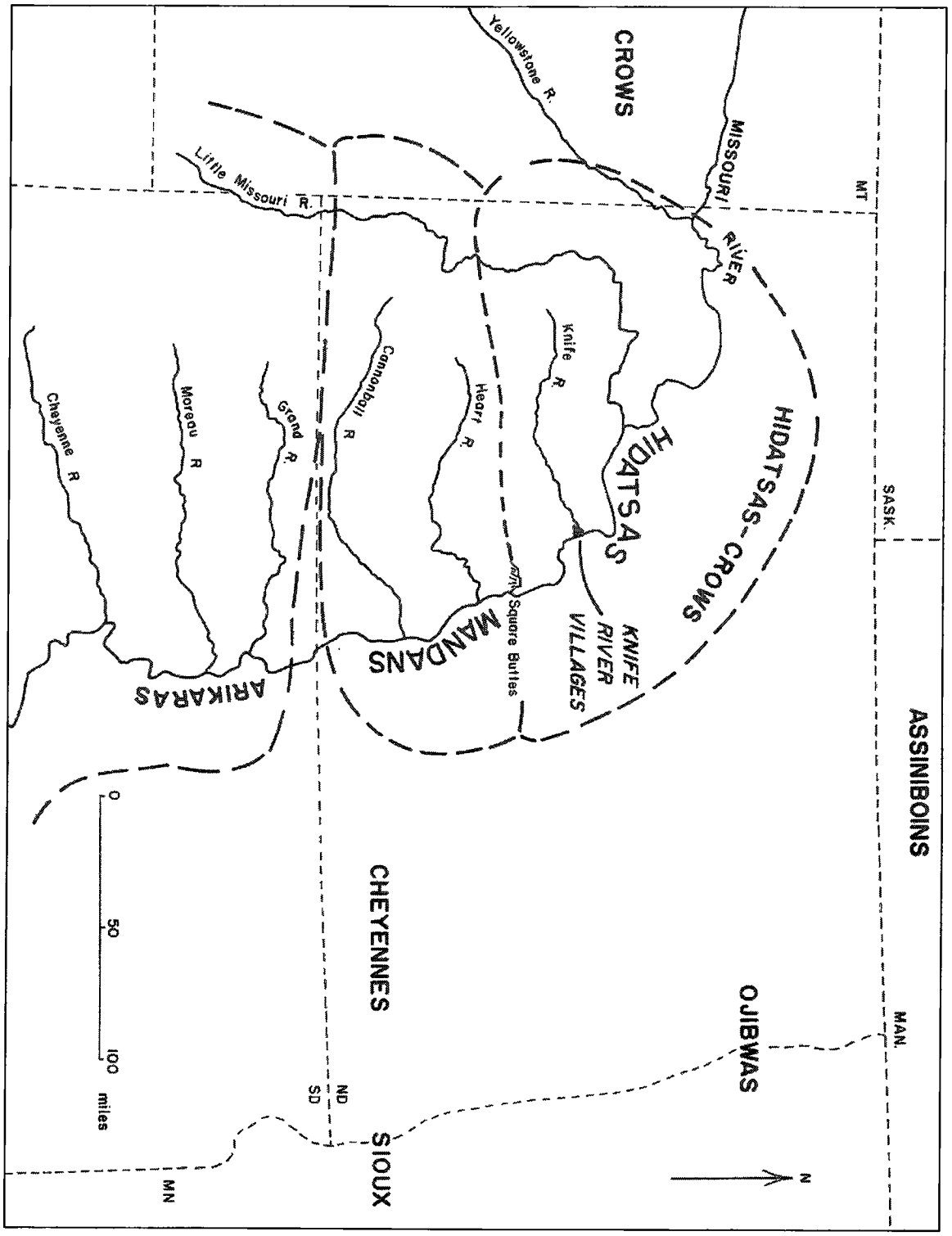
[21] Ibid., 65.

[22] These groups were identified as the *Awatixa*, the *Awaxawi*, and finally the *Hidatsa*-proper (the largest of the three villages). The three groups all lived within a mile of one another, close to the mouth of the Knife River. Each Hidatsa village group also spoke distinct dialects.

[23] *Ibid.*, 72; MHA Nation—Three Affiliated Tribes website: www.mhanation.com/main/history-hidatsa.html; W. Raymond Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 18-19, in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages Historic Site: Part II, Ethnohistorical Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

[24] Stanley A. Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 65-66.

[25] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 34.



Territory of the Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara Tribes at about 1700 A.D. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

and Lovick placed sites like Clark's Creek (32ME1) and Steifel (32ME202) within the Middle Missouri complex and attributed them to the Northern Mandan ethnic tradition. However, Ahler and Lovick assigned the Grandmother's Lodge (32ME59) site as possibly an *Awatixa* band site. They interpreted this situation as representing an existing Mandan population in the region with an influx of ancestral Hidatsa by A.D.1300.[26]

Painted Woods Complex, A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1525

The next complex in Ahler and Lovick's taxonomy was the Painted Woods complex, named after a specific locality southeast of KRIV in the Missouri River Valley near and just upstream from Square Buttes, North Dakota. The Painted Woods complex is defined by three relatively minor differences in ceramic form, decoration, and surface treatment attributes, which are too detailed for our discussion here but mark three distinct time periods. These minor differences in material traits are what bound this group together as a complex and which can be used most directly to contrast them with other, later complexes that had expression in the region. Ahler and Lovick suspected that the Painted Woods complex represented "an amalgamation of stylistic influences from many far flung corners of the Northern Plains." In their analysis Ahler stated "one gains the impression that ceramic assemblages in this complex document a persistent pattern of both population movement as well as free exchange of ideas from many different sources and directions, a process in which no single source of influence becomes dominant within the duration of the complex."[27]

For the first period, which lasted to A.D. 1400, important sites within KRIV included the early component of the Amahami (32ME8) site adjacent to KRIV and the main component of the Buchfink (32ME9) site within KRIV. This first period appeared to be a time of population growth and settlement dispersion. For the next period, which lasted to A.D. 1450, significant Painted Woods sites within KRIV included the Big Hidatsa (32ME12), Taylor Bluff (32ME66), Running Deer (32ME383), and the Lower Hidatsa East (32ME487) sites. This middle period indicated a time of rapid population growth accompanied by expansion and settlement of new territory upstream and outside the region. Population increased steadily until a peak was reached in this period. During this same time, the *Awigaxa* (Mandan),[28] who lived southwest of Knife River in the Heart River region, may have arrived in the Knife River region. According to Ahler, the Lyman Aldren (32ME3) site outside of KRIV may have represented this movement. However, for the last period of the Painted Woods complex, which lasted until A.D.

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[26] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 72; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 35.

[27] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 67-68.

[28] The *Awigaxa* were one of four Mandan bands (*Nuptadi*, *Nuitadi/Nueta*, *Awigaxa*, and *Is'topa*) that once occupied the Heart River region. According to ethnic tradition, the *Awigaxa* lived as nomads in the east as agriculturists. Later they migrated westward and lived downstream of the Heart River but eventually settled north of the Heart River in the Painted Woods region around Square Buttes. Ibid., 67-68, 72.

1525, no new distinguishing sites appeared. To Ahler, this situation indicated a sudden collapse and/or consolidation of population into a relatively small number of large, dense settlements. In the end, none of the villages in Painted Woods complex was fortified. Ahler believed that all the above sites were related to the *Awatixa* ethnic tradition, with the exception of perhaps the Aldren site, which he thought could be in the *Awigaxa* ethnic tradition.[29]

Heart River Complex, A.D. 1525 to A.D. 1600

The Heart River complex was a period of time when Mandan culture south of the Knife River region flourished during the latter half of the Northern Plains Village tradition. This flowering occurred in the Heart River Region—the geographic center of the complex—with high frequencies of Le Beau ware (S-rim) and cord-impressed decorative techniques as the most prominent material marker. This florescence of Mandan culture eventually extended in force northward into the Knife River region.[30]

In the Knife River region, the Heart River complex began to appear after A.D. 1450, dominated the region from A.D. 1525 to A.D. 1600, and then diminished and disappeared by A.D. 1700, when a new complex, the Knife River complex, appeared. Within this timeframe, several important changes occurred. First, the period from A.D. 1525 to A.D. 1600 was a time of continued population collapse (probably due to disease) and of consolidation into fortified settlements with the adoption of circular earth-lodge domiciles, accompanied by a migration of Mandan northward into the Knife River region. Ahler attributed most of the Heart River complex within the Knife River region to either the *Awatixa*, or the *Awigaxa* or Mandan ethnic traditions. Though the period from A.D. 1600 to A.D. 1650 witnessed further population collapse, at this time there were also indications that the first *Hidatsa*-proper may have migrated into the region. While the precise origins of the *Hidatsa*-proper are unknown, according to their oral traditions, they came from the Devil's Lake area of northeastern North Dakota. According to their beliefs, in time they migrated southwestward and eventually met the Mandan near the mouth of the Heart River sometime between A.D. 1600 and A.D. 1700. Afterwards, the *Hidatsa*-proper moved north and consolidated with the *Awatixa* into two compact settlements at KRIV. By the latter part of the Heart River complex, the *Awatixa* were probably occupying Lower Hidatsa (32ME10) within KRIV, while the *Hidatsa*-proper started to settle the Big Hidatsa site, also within KRIV.[31]

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 50, 68-69, 73-74; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 37.

[31] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 50, 68-69, 73-74; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Teacher's Guide*, Unit 1, 6; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 37. However, it should be noted that ethnohistorian W. Raymond Wood believed that the *Hidatsa*-proper arrived on the Missouri River at a later date, subsequent to the *Awatixa* and the *Awaxawi* having already settled there. See Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 19-20.

Knife River Complex, A.D. 1650 to A.D. 1886

The next and final complex within Ahler and Lovick's Northern Plains Village tradition was the Knife River complex. This complex was named after the greater frequency of Knife River ware than any other ware group in the Knife River region. This complex also signified the geographic center of the complex near the mouth of the Knife River, or KRIV. The existence and distribution of this complex was the direct reflection of the entry of a second eastern Hidatsa group, the *Awaxawi*, into the region sometime between A.D. 1650 and A.D. 1780, as well as the *Hidatsa*-proper and the River Crow.[32]

According to ethnic tradition, the *Awaxawi* "came from beneath the earth, and that they came to the surface on a vine, which broke under the weight of a pregnant woman. The earth's surface had already been created by two culture heroes, First Creator and Lone Man." At that time, the *Awaxawi* combined with the *Hidatsa*-proper and the River Crow and moved north to Devil's Lake, North Dakota. Eventually, the *Hidatsa*-proper and the River Crow separated from the *Awaxawi*, who stayed at Devil's Lake and continued to grow corn there for a while. But according to oral tradition, the *Awaxawi* later were forced to leave Devil's Lake because of an approaching great flood. They escaped the flood and fled southwestward to the Missouri River, arriving near Square Buttes (some thirty miles below the mouth of the Knife River) prior to movement northward to KRIV.[33]

On the other hand, the *Hidatsa*-proper eventually ended up at Knife River as well. According to oral tradition, the *Hidatsa*-proper abandoned the growing of corn altogether once they left Devil's Lake and wandered for a time in "northern latitudes." Eventually, they also migrated to the Heart River Region of the Missouri River Valley. The Mandan accepted them on friendly terms for a time, but soon the *Hidatsa*-proper followed their relatives, the *Awaxawi*, to the Knife River area, where they joined the *Awatixa*, who already lived there. The *Hidatsa*-proper and *Awaxawi* ethnic groups were thought to have brought with them a distinctive ceramic tradition, best reflected in Knife River ware, which signified this complex, along with minority companion wares (Deapolis Collared ware and Transitional ware, which is an apparent hybrid of Le Beau and Knife River ware).[34]

Because of the complexity of the history associated with the Knife River complex, archeologist Stanley Ahler divided it into four distinct phases: Willows, Minnetaree, Roadmaker, and Four Bears. It would be instructive here to cover these phases individually in some detail.

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[32] The River Crow eventually pushed further westward, eventually settling in south-central Montana, east of the Absaroka-Beartooth Mountains.

[33] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 50, 69-70, 74-75, 87; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 38. Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 14, 16.

[34] Ibid.

Knife River Complex: Willows Phase, A.D. 1600 to A.D. 1700

The earliest period of the Knife River complex was known as the Willows phase because the term *Hidatsa* means "People of the Willows." It signified the first appearance of the *Hidatsa*-proper and their fellow travelers, the *Awaxawi*, into the regional archeological record. The villages within KRIV, such as Big Hidatsa, were moderate in size and fairly densely settled. Occupation occurred more or less continuously throughout the hundred-year span at both Big Hidatsa and Lower Hidatsa. Additionally, intensive survey work at KRIV by archeologists revealed several sites that constituted special-activity, non-habitation areas used in conjunction with the major settlements, although the functions of components within these sites, such as at Taylor Bluff and Running Deer, were unclear. The Willows phase may have been a peaceful time period at KRIV, for no fortifications existed for any of the components in the Willows phase. Ahler also saw a process of ethnogenesis occurring, whereby there was a growing self-awareness of the various Hidatsa subgroups as a distinct tribal people. However, this period of time also marked the beginning of Euro-American influence on material culture and technologies with acquisition of metal artifacts (e.g., metal awls) through indirect trade. It was also a time of depopulation, which was almost certainly attributable to Euro-American disease.[35]

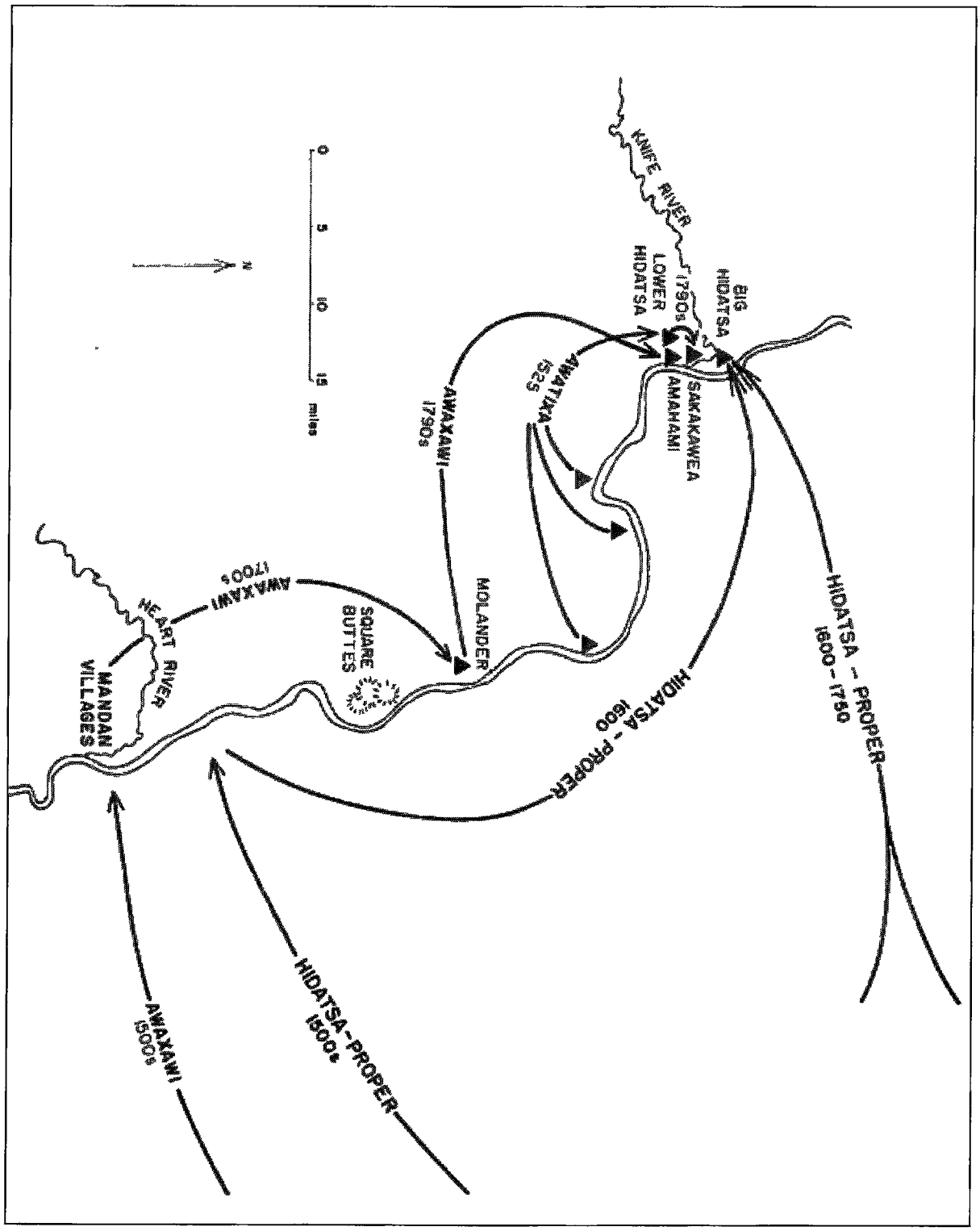
Knife River Complex: Minnetaree Phase, A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1780

Ahler named the next phase in his Knife River complex taxonomy the Minnetaree phase, a term used by the Mandan to identify the Hidatsa subgroups. Ahler chose the end date of A.D. 1780 for the Minnetaree phase to signify the first historically documented smallpox epidemic. The arrival of smallpox marked a major turning point in Northern Plains Village tradition and Plains Indian culture. Components of the Minnetaree phase were concentrated at the mouth of the Knife River but also occurred elsewhere. The dominance of Knife River ware in all components within the region marked the Minnetaree phase. Nucleated settlements included Lower Hidatsa (*Awatixa*), Big Hidatsa (*Hidatsa*-proper) and the Molander (32OL7) (*Awaxawi* and *Awigaxa*) site located three miles north of Price, North Dakota, and outside of KRIV. At this time, the Hidatsa were geographically and effectively a distinct people from the Mandan to the south, and throughout this period, both Hidatsa and Mandan groups maintained strong tribal identities and were culturally independent groups.[36]

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[35] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 87-89; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 38.

[36] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 89-92; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 38-39; Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 16-17, 19.



Movements of Various Subgroups of the Hidatsas During the Period from the Late A.D. 1500s through 1800. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

Meanwhile, the three Hidatsa subgroups (*Awatixa*, *Awaxawi*, and *Hidatsa*-proper) continued to grow in number. Increasingly, they recognized themselves as belonging to a common tribal unit. But Hidatsa traditions at this time abound with stories of splinter groups separating from the main villages and living elsewhere in separate villages for periods of time. Though ditches were not built at the larger settlements at KRIV, they do start to appear in outlying settlements in the Knife River region. Additionally, there was also archeological evidence of the influence of the fur trade on the region. Trade artifacts increasingly appear at sites, although they still were very rare. But the composition of metal artifacts at different archeological sites changed somewhat, as weapon parts appeared for the first time. The Minnetaree phase, according to Ahler, represented the "historic" Hidatsa, though their culture had already partially been altered by indirect Euro-American contact.[37]

However, at the end of the Minnetaree phase, change came when the Mandan moved into the Knife River region. The Mandan did so for purposes of protection and defensive alliance following the A.D. 1780-A.D. 1781 smallpox epidemic that decimated the Mandan and other Middle Missouri villagers living to the south of KRIV, such as the Arikara. During this recorded epidemic, the Knife River villages were affected as well. Lower Hidatsa Village was abandoned, and the *Awatixa*, along with a group of *Hidatsa*-proper, moved north of KRIV and established Rock Village (later inundated by the Garrison Dam and Reservoir project).[38]

Knife River Complex: Roadmaker Phase, A.D. 1785 to A.D. 1830

Archeologist Ahler named the third phase in his Knife River complex the Roadmaker phase. The name Roadmaker derives from a renowned and respected Hidatsa tribal council member and leader of the *Awaxawi* who resided at Amahami Village, and the phase begins after the A.D. 1780-A.D. 1781-smallpox epidemic. The post-epidemic period was a time when Hidatsa village and settlement reorganization took place in response to disease. It was also a time of constant hostile pressure from predatory nomadic groups, such as the Sioux.

About A.D. 1790, the *Awatixa* returned to Knife River from Rock Village and established Sakakawea Village (32ME11). About A.D. 1797, the *Awaxawi*, who traditionally had lived further south, created Amahami Village. Amahami was situated on the grounds of the Mercer County Courthouse, Stanton, North Dakota, just south and adjacent to KRIV's southern border. During the Roadmaker phase, Heart River Mandan remnants also migrated to the Knife River region and founded several sites south of KRIV. Fleeing from the smallpox epidemic and Sioux raids, they settled in the Knife River region in a protective alliance with numerous Hidatsa groups. Mandan villages outside of KRIV

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid. The Arikara were Caddoan-speaking agriculturalists whose language and culture were closely related to Central Plains Pawnee. Eventually, warfare and epidemics forced the Arikara northward, where they merged with Middle Missouri groups of North Dakota. However, they kept their distinctive identity. M. N. Zedeno, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 95-96.

included Blackcat (32ML5), Deapolis (32ME5), and Fort Clark (32ME7). In the Roadmaker phase, these three Mandan villages, along with Big Hidatsa and Sakakawea Villages, were known as the "traditional five villages" near the mouth of the Knife River. Around A.D. 1797 or A.D. 1798, all Hidatsa and Mandan villages in the Knife River region were highly nucleated for defensive purposes, with approximately 1,700 Hidatsa and 1,200 Mandan living in closely packed dwellings and villages. These population estimates reflected a considerable reduction from levels immediately prior to the smallpox epidemic.[39]

In the warm months (spring until late fall) of the year, their villages were primarily located on the high terraces. The summer settlements, such as Big Hidatsa and at Sakakawea, were fortified with pickets, palisades, or intermittent ditch-like features. In the winter months, they constructed temporary winter villages within timbered areas only a few kilometers from their permanent summer settlements. Bison remained the dominant vertebrate species hunted by the Hidatsa and Mandan, but elk, deer, antelope, and bear were hunted as well. Fishing also took place. But more importantly, direct regular contact with Euro-American fur traders from northern trading posts affected their economy and material culture. Trade goods flowed into the region in larger amounts and in more varied forms than ever before, first from Canadian traders from the north and then from St. Louis-based firms to the south. Trade goods brought major transformations of many aspects of material culture in the area, such as the use of metal objects to manufacture bone tools instead of stone implements, a major feature of the Roadmaker phase. It was at this time that Hidatsa and Mandan villagers maximized their role as middlemen between nomadic Native American groups and the Euro-Americans. The Hidatsa and Mandan supplied western peoples with guns, eastern peoples with horses, and all groups with cultigens and other provisions. The Roadmaker phase ended about A.D. 1830, when permanent trading posts appeared within the region, thereby eliminating the Hidatsa and Mandan as middleman in trade networks.[40]

Knife River Complex: Four Bears Phase, A.D. 1830 to A.D. 1886

The Four Bears phase is the last phase in Ahler's taxonomy for the Knife River complex. It begins with the initiation of a local trade period and ends at the time of allotment and abandonment of Like-a-Fishhook Village in A.D. 1886. In general, large-scale population movements caused by warfare, disease, and Euro-American encroachment

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[39] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 92-95; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 39-40; Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-21; Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 17, 19. The Blackcat Village has never been found, and archeologists presume that the channel of the Missouri River washed it away some time in the past. Construction of a power plant destroyed most of Deopolis Village. Amahami village was obliterated by other man-made actions. Only three of the "traditional five villages remain." The State of North Dakota has preserved Fort Clark, which is administered by the State Historical Society of North Dakota, and Big Hidatsa and Sakakawea are both well preserved at KRIV.

[40] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 92-95; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 39-40.

characterize this phase. The Four Bears phase begins with a degree of chaos caused by hostile incursions by the Sioux.

In the spring of 1834, Amahami (*Awaxawi*) and Sakakawea (*Awatixa*) villages were sacked, burned, and destroyed as a result of an equestrian attack by nomadic Sioux who surmounted the fortifications surrounding the perimeters of these villages. Both villages may have been abandoned thereafter, with residents relocating elsewhere, and it is speculated that both groups took refuge at Big Hidatsa (*Hidatsa*-proper). An alternative hypothesis was that the *Awatixa* settled at Taylor Bluff Village near Big Hidatsa following this Sioux attack. Nonetheless, three years later, a massive smallpox epidemic severely reduced Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara populations, leaving approximately 1,000 to 1,200 Hidatsa, and perhaps 250 to 300 Mandan in mixed villages. The Arikara, who had settled around the American Fur Company's post near Fort Clark, had lost more than half of their population to smallpox. During the epidemic, the Mandan were forced to abandon their village at Fort Clark and take refuge at Big Hidatsa.[41]

The Four Bears phase was also a period of sustained contact between Indians and Euro-Americans, and a time period when the "villager's role was altered from that of middlemen in the regional trade to that of provisioner and supplier for permanent trading posts and nomadic groups in the region," for in the period A.D. 1829 to A.D. 1832, the American Fur Company built a series of posts in the Upper Missouri River to become central nodes in the fur trade for decades to come. Meanwhile, material culture in the Knife River Region changed, with pottery abundance and quality deteriorating, perhaps caused by the availability of metal trade vessels. Nonetheless, the process of technological deterioration among the tribes in the region accelerated during this period. At the same time, the amount and diversity of trade items was quite large in the Four Bear phase owing to improved transportation into the region after A.D. 1832 via steamboats coming upriver from St. Louis.[42]

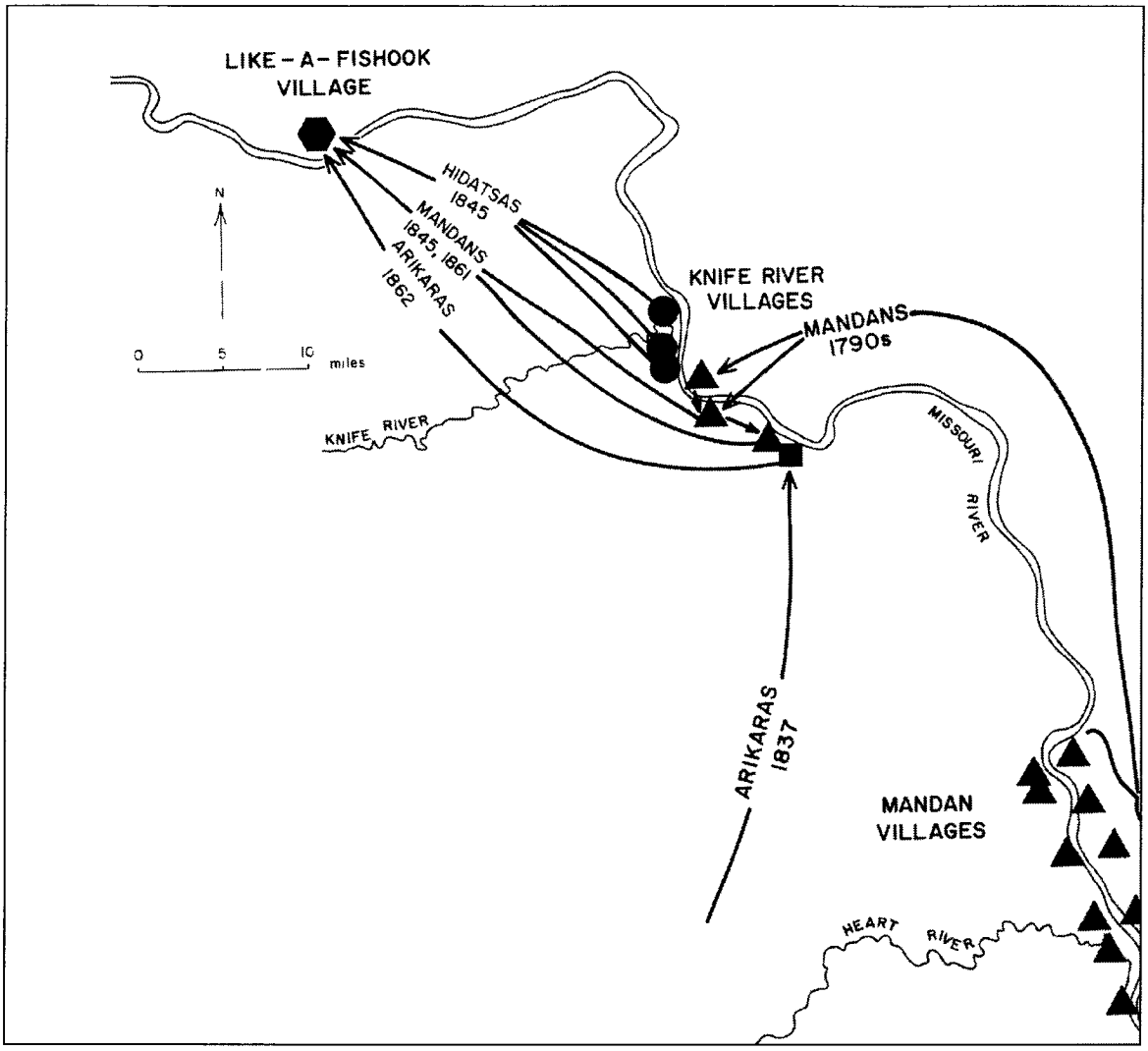
This phase is named both for Four Bears, a well-known Mandan leader at Fort Clark village who died during the A.D. 1837 smallpox epidemic, and for Four Bears, an *Awaxawi* war chief who in A.D. 1845 moved his people up the Missouri River to establish Like-a-Fishhook Village. (See the next chapter for more about this village.) The Hidatsa remnants were joined shortly thereafter by the few remaining Mandan. At about the same time, a non-Indian trading post was established nearby, which eventually became known as Fort Berthold. In A.D. 1861-A.D. 1862, the Arikara joined the Hidatsa and Mandan at Like-a-Fishhook Village, following the destruction of Fort Clark by the

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[41] When they tried to return to Fort Clark in 1838, they found that the Arikara had resettled their village. The Arikara remained there for close to twenty-five years, growing large quantities of corn for consumption and trade. Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 95-97; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 40-41, 102-103; Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 17.

[42] Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taxonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," 95-97; Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 40-41.

Sioux, and built two villages on the opposite bank of the Missouri River. Eventually, the three groups amalgamated and thereafter became known as the Three Affiliated Tribes.[43]



Major Relocations of Members of the Three Village Tribes in the Period A.D. 1790-1862. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

Over the next few decades, Euro-Americans moved into the area surrounding Like-a-Fishhook Village/Fort Berthold. In A.D. 1886, Like-a-Fishhook Village was abandoned when the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation was allotted under the General Allotment Act of 1885, also known as the Dawes Act, and the residents were forced to leave the site and settle on individual plots throughout the reservation. Thereafter, rising waters from the

[43] Ibid.

Garrison Dam and Reservoir project, which formed Lake Sakakawea (Garrison Reservoir), inundated the Like-a-Fishhook Village site in the late 1950s.[44]

Value of Understanding KRIV's Archeological Record

The archeological resources related to the American Indian setting at Knife River Indian Villages NHS represent an important official interpretive theme and facet for the National Park Service—Original Inhabitant: Native Villages and Communities on the Great Plains. The archeology as discussed indicates that the park's resources illuminate the evolution of human occupation of the Northern Plains through two Pre-Village, centuries-long traditions, the Archaic tradition (circa 5500 to 400 B.C.) and the Woodland tradition (circa 400 B.C. to A.D. 1000), and concludes with the Plains Village tradition (A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1886). These resources provide an occupational sequence covering several thousand years and indicate how a widespread aboriginal culture, characterized by earth-lodge villages and a horticultural/buffalo-hunting complex, evolved into the Hidatsa (*Awatixa*, *Hidatsa*-proper, and *Awaxawi*) and Mandan (*Awigaxa*) ethnic traditions to dominate the middle Missouri region just prior to the dawn of Euro-American economic and political entry into the Trans-Missouri West.

KRIV's major and minor sites remain as some of the best surviving examples of the adaptation of aboriginal farming of the eastern woodlands to the northern Great Plains environment. Remnants of the Hidatsa/Mandan semi-sedentary culture, such as house types, village patterns, and burial methods, provide ample evidence of how these resourceful people coped with and utilized their environment. Additionally, later Plains Village Hidatsa/Mandan ways of life contrasted sharply with the culture of their surrounding nomadic neighbors, such as the Assiniboine, Crow, Cree, and Cheyenne, with whom they served as middlemen in intertribal trade. Inhabitants of the Hidatsa/Mandan villages also often fought with later Northern Plains nomadic tribes, such as the Dakota, whom they feared and fortified their villages against. But it was following the drastic and dramatic impacts of diseases for which they had no natural defenses and the introduction of a radically different Euro-American lifestyle that remnant populations of village inhabitants ultimately banded together and then left the area during the historical period.

[44] Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORIC SETTING OF KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, COLONIAL PERIOD TO WORLD WAR II

One purpose for the establishment of Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS) was to preserve, interpret, and research certain archeological and historic remnants and their connection with important events in United States history, starting with the Hidatsa-Mandan Indians' centuries-old role as semi-sedentary middlemen traders in the Northern Plains during the colonial period[45] and concluding with American settlement beginning in 1882 with the founding of Stanton, North Dakota, nearby.

Over time, many archeologists, ethnohistorians, and anthropologists have gathered considerable knowledge on KRIV's colonial period (pre-1804), the Euro-American exploration and fur trade historic period (1804-1834), the interregnum period (1835-1881), and the American settlement period (1882-1945). Their works describe the history, changes, and impacts to the site through exploration, fur trade, Euro-American immigration and settlement, cultivation, grazing, and flooding that occurred in these four time periods. Consequently, they also cover several official National Park Service interpretive themes, such as Indian contact with Europeans and changes in Indian life due to contact, trade, and westward expansion. They also describe many of the early visitors to KRIV, who were important historical figures in their own right.

French/Spanish/British Colonial Period, Pre-1804

Though the presence of European goods in the Hidatsa and Mandan villages along the Missouri River through indirect trade occurred no later than circa 1675-1710, the first recorded presence of non-Indians in the vicinity of KRIV did not come until 1738-1739. At that time, the area was considered part of New France. In an effort to find a riverine passage to the Pacific Ocean, Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Verendrye, and Commandant of the French Posts of the North, journeyed overland from Fort La Reine on the Assiniboine River in present-day Canada to the Mandan villages in the Heart River area. Verendrye's trip probably opened the way for direct trade between French

[45] There are many excellent and informative works on the colonial period and the fur trade in North Dakota, which the reader may wish to consult. They include, but are not limited to, Barry M. Gough (editor), *The Journal Of Alexander Henry The Younger, 1799-1814*, Volume 1 (Toronto, Canada: Champlain Society, 1988); Clay S. Jenkinson (editor), *A Vast And Open Plain: The Writings Of The Lewis And Clark Expedition In North Dakota, 1804-1806* (Bismarck, North Dakota: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 2003); Hubert G. Smith, *The Exploration Of The La Verendryes In The Northern Plains, 1738-43*, edited by W. Raymond Wood (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); W. Raymond Wood, *Prologue To Lewis And Clark: The Mackay And Evans Expedition* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); W. Raymond Wood and Thomas D. Thiessen (editors), *Early Fur Trade On The Northern Plains: Canadian Traders Among The Mandan And Hidatsa Indians, 1738-1818* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Okalahoma Press, 1985).

voyageurs from Canadian outposts to the villages. Following the typical pattern of French-Indian relations, subsequent visits no doubt were made to the area, although records of such visits are at best vague. For instance, between 1741 and 1743, La Verendrye's sons may have come to the Mandan villages on several occasions from Fort La Reine. Or for instance, sometime between 1744 and 1753, a French deserter named "Old Pinneshon," from the Illinois country, may have visited the Mandan villages as well. Once there, he encountered other unnamed French traders, whom he reportedly accompanied back to Fort La Reine. However, whether or not any of these early visitors/traders reached the Hidatsa villages cannot be fully ascertained from the historical record. Furthermore, because the Hidatsa and the Mandan appeared so culturally similar, any visitor to them more than likely could not distinguish between the two groups.[46]

In any case, in 1754, the French and Indian War began, which most likely interrupted trade with the Hidatsa and Mandan because most of the licensed French traders and voyageurs were called back to fight the British. As a consequence of losing the war to the British, in late 1762, the French deeded to Spain its claims to the western half of the Mississippi Valley just prior to the Paris Peace Treaty the following year. By this stroke of the pen, the trans-Mississippi changed from *La Louisiana* to *Luisiana*, thereby ending the French fur-trading era here. Before long, Spain took control of their new borderland with the establishment in 1764 of a new post called *Saint Louis des Illinois*. From this trading post, the Spanish government sought to penetrate the Missouri River country and to protect Spain's new far-flung frontier from both the British and the Americans.[47]

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the Spanish, several British-Canadian traders trespassed into this part of *Luisiana* on many occasions. For instance, in 1773, a Euro-American trader named Mackintosh arrived at the Mandan villages from Montreal. Then, sometime between 1778 and 1783, a French-Canadian *voyageur* named Menard arrived and settled among the Mandan on the Missouri River. And, in 1781, Donald "Mad" Mackay (1753-1833), a trader for the emerging North West Company, a loose association of Montreal merchants trying to break the stranglehold that the British Hudson's Bay Company held on the North American fur trade, became the first British trader to have officially reached the Mandan villages on the Missouri River. Though not recorded by Donald Mackay, it was at this time that the village Indians suffered the first of several smallpox epidemics that decimated the region. Finally, in 1787, a Canadian-Scotsman named James Mackay (1761-1822), traveled for trading purposes at least once to the Mandan villages from a Canadian trader outpost 300 miles distant on the Qu'Appelle River in southwestern Saskatchewan. Furthermore, Mackay was the first to recognize the Hidatsa as a separate group from the Mandan. Little more is known about the visits, trading relationships,

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[46] Thomas D. Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 32-35, in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part II: Ethnohistorical Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993); Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-22.

[47] John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 190-191.

and/or residences of men such as Mackintosh, Donald Mackay, Menard, or James Mackay in this early period. However, the "Mandan and Hidatsa accelerated their role as middleman traders, exchanging Euro-American wares and horses as well as local products with nomadic peoples who traveled great distances to reach the Missouri River villages for this purpose." This led to "tremendous material affluence and prosperity on the part of the Mandan-Hidatsa."[48]

By the early 1790s, the North West Company had established a regular and recurring trade with the Mandan and Hidatsa from their forts on the Assiniboine River. Furthermore, the North West Company competed with the Hudson Bay Company for the Mandan-Hidatsa trade. However, in 1792, Spanish authorities learned of these trespasses from independent trader-explorer Jacques d'Eglise.

Licensed by the Spanish out of St. Louis, in 1790, d'Eglise traveled to the Mandan villages and learned that the Mandan were quite regularly in contact with British traders to the north. He also grasped the fact that the Frenchman Menard had been living among them as a tenant trader for about a dozen years. In addition to Menard, independent French traders, such as René Jusseaume and Toussaint Charbonneau and others had joined Menard on the Missouri River. For instance, in the fall of 1794, Jusseaume and a party of North West Company men built a trading post near the Mandan villages south of the Knife River.[49]

Alarmed by this growing encroachment on their sovereign territory, the Spanish licensed the monopolistic "Company of Discoverers and Explorers of the Upper Missouri," commonly known as the "Missouri Company," to re-establish Spanish control on the Upper Missouri River. Thereafter, Jean Baptiste Truteau led a nine-man party to Mandan country for this purpose, as well as to profit from trade. Truteau's party, however, never reached the Mandan country in North Dakota, and in 1795, the Missouri Company directed former Canadian fur trader James Mackay and his lieutenant John T. Evans to finish the journey begun by Truteau. With thirty-three men and with canoes loaded with merchandise for the Indian trade, the Mackay-Evans Expedition set out to reach the Mandan villages. Mackay never made it to the Mandan villages, but Evans and a few men did. Once there, they found a small vacant North West Company fort and took possession of it without incident. Subsequently, they forced traders such as Jusseaume to quit the area with a proclamation forbidding them from ever returning to the Missouri River for trade. After disposal of their trade goods, Evans and his men returned to *Saint Louis des Illinois* in 1797.[50]

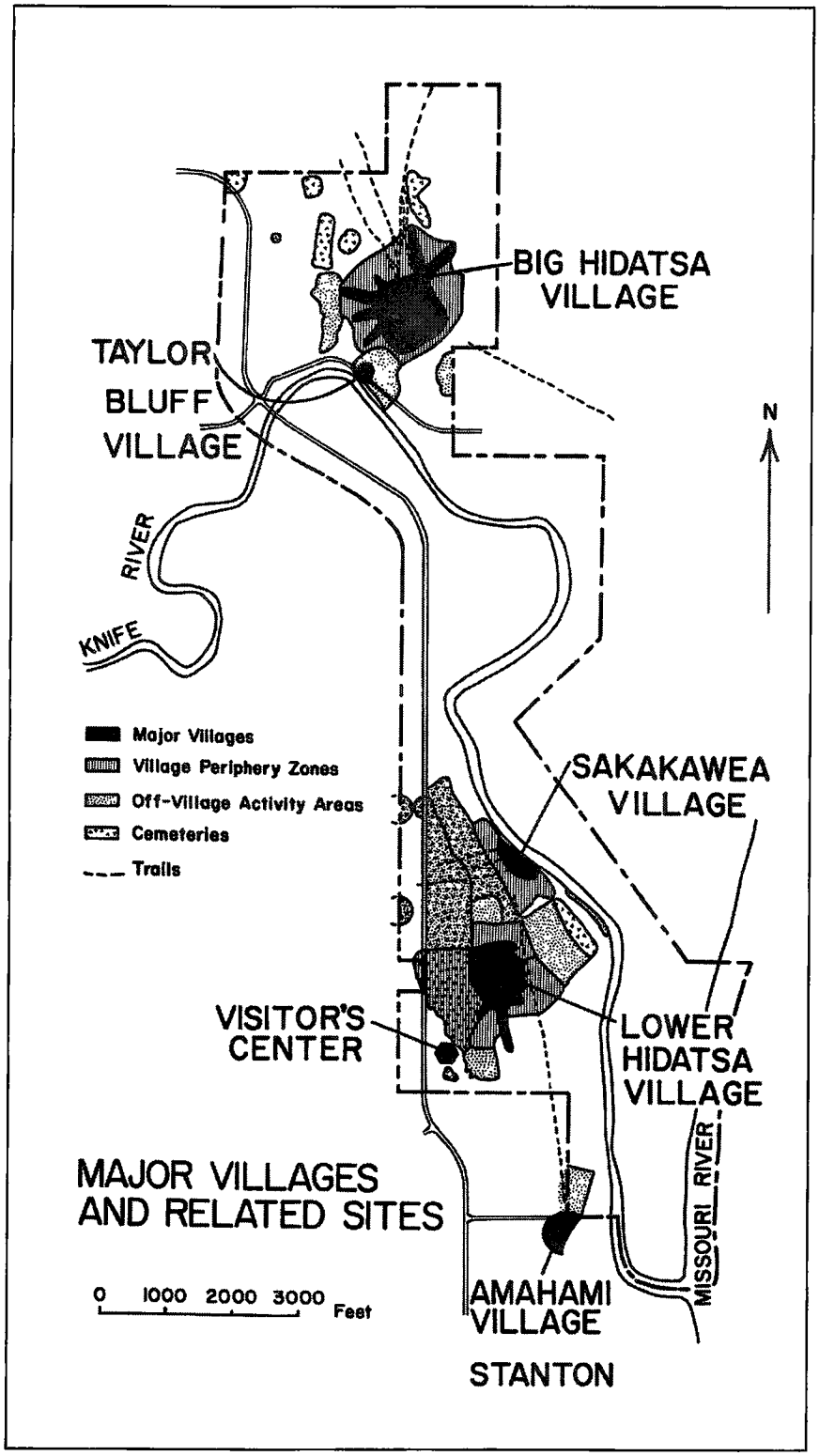
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[48] Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 35.

[49] Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 36-37.

[50] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 197-199; Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 36-37; Thomas D. Thiessen, "Historic Trading Posts Near the Mouth of the Knife River, 1794-1860," 49, in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part II: Ethnohistorical Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

Location of the Major Post-Contact Period Villages within the Park and Other Related Archeological Sites, Such as Trails, Cemeteries, and Activity Areas. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*



In the end, the Mackay-Evans Expedition only disrupted the British/Canadian trade temporarily and did not re-establish Spanish sovereignty at the Mandan-Hidatsa villages. Within seven months after Evans' departure, agents for the North West and Hudson Bay Companies returned and, along with independent traders, again regularly competed fiercely for the Hidatsa-Mandan trade. Furthermore, in the winter of 1797-1798, David Thompson visited the villages at the mouth of the Knife River. Working for the North West Fur Company to find a practical route through the mountains to the Pacific, Thompson trekked from the Turtle Mountains across to the Knife River villages. In the process, he produced the first map of the state, which was invaluable to future explorers. Thompson was also the first to recognize that the Hidatsa were co-residents with the Mandan living there. His map and notes described and indicated that there were six villages occupied by the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara—with two of the villages being occupied solely by the Hidatsa. According to Thompson's observations, three other villages, Black Cat, Sakakawea, and Deapolis, were composite villages of Mandan and Hidatsa, while the last village was characterized as Arikara.[51]

British-Canadian trade continued, despite the fact that in 1800, Napoleon Bonaparte demanded and received the retrocession of the Spanish *Luisiana* to France by secret treaty. With a stroke of a pen, *Luisiana* once again was spelled *Louisiana.*[52]

Euro-American Exploration and Fur Trade Historic Period, 1804-1833

The Knife River region did not remain very long under the French flag. In 1803, as result of frontier pressures from Trans-Appalachian settlers who wished to expand westward to use the Mississippi River to transport their produce, and because of the unfolding of the French Revolution, the fledgling United States negotiated by treaty the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory from Bonaparte. Since there was great confusion over the extent of the actual purchase, in 1804, Congress authorized the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition to explore the newly acquired American territory.

In May 1804, Captain Meriwether Lewis and his co-leader William Clark started up the Missouri River, using information gathered by such previous explorers as Mackay and Evans. In late October, they reached and wintered (1804-1805) on the east bank of the Missouri, which they called "Fort Mandan," only a few miles downstream from the Knife River Indian villages. The following spring, Lewis and Clark continued on along their epic journey to the Pacific but passed through the area again on their return journey in August 1806. During the five winter months they spent at Fort Mandan and during their brief return visit in 1806, they made extensive notes in their journals about the numerous neighboring Indian visitors and significant observations on the Hidatsa and Mandan villagers. They also, from men they encountered, learned a great deal about the Montreal-based North West Company and the London-based Hudson Bay Company's fur trading activities. Information was garnered from men like French-Canadian fur trader

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[51] W. Raymond Wood, "David Thompson at the Mandan-Hidatsa Villages, 1797-1798: The Original Journals," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1977): 329-342.

[52] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 205, 208.

Toussaint Charbonneau, who served as interpreter for the expedition; Hugh McCracken and Rene Jusseaume, both fur traders familiar with the Mandan villages; Charles Chaboillez, who had led a party of North West Company traders to the Mandan villages during 1804-1805; and Hugh Heney, who also worked for the North West Company that winter.[53]

After Lewis and Clark departed in 1805, Alexander Henry of the North West Company visited Knife River, adding significant information regarding the Knife River villages. Henry provided the following detailed descriptions of the earth-lodge villages at Amahami inhabited by the *Awaxawi*.

> These villages at a distance appear like a cluster of molehills, or muskrat cabins. The nearly circular huts are placed very irregularly; some so close to each other as scarcely to leave a foot-passage, others again at a distance of 20 to 30 feet apart. But about the center of each village is an open space of about four acres, around which the huts are regularly built at equal distances, fronting the open space. This circle is of about 30 huts, which I have no doubt were the first erected on the spot. Friends, who joined them afterward for various reasons, erected their huts in the rear, wherever they found it most convenient....[54]

Alexander Henry also gave a detailed description of the lodges and village life at two additional Hidatsa villages, first Lower Hidatsa (*Awatixa*) and then Big Hidatsa (*Hidatsa*-proper).

> We came to the little village of Big Bellies [*Hidatsa*-proper] or Willow Indians, situated nearly at the mouth of the Knife River, which comes from the S. and enters into the Missourie, about one mile from the Saultier [*Awaxawi* or Amahami] village. Here we found a sudden and great change in the manner of the people; the children and even the youths collected and followed us in crowds, laughing and making sport of us, to the great entertainment of the men, who were seated upon their huts enjoying the cool morning air, and by their significant smiles seemed to applaud such proceedings. The dogs also assailed us from every quarter, and were very troublesome. We, therefore made no stop at this village, which consists of about 60 huts, but pushed through the crowd to the west end, where the road leads along the bank of Knife River, here about 50 yards wide, with a gentle current. The water is thick and muddy, and of a reddish color, that of the Missourie being much lighter or paler. Here the road is again very pleasant, running through an open level country with corn-fields in sight, in which numbers of people at work; beyond them we saw several hundred horses, feeding upon the hills and along the banks of the Knife river. We came about one mile from the last village, crossed the Knife River, having the water up to our saddles, with a fine sandy bottom; and 300 yards further entered the great village of the Big Bellies, which consists of about 130 huts.[55]

Despite Alexander's visit, the Lewis and Clark Expedition signaled the demise of British trade in the area and the beginning of the American fur trade there. Subsequent to the

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[53] Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 37-38.

[54] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, April 1968, File H14 (Area History) KRIV NHS, Stanton, North Dakota (ND), 19-20.

[55] *Ibid.*

Corps of Discovery, American fur traders realized the value of the Missouri River route to the fur-rich Rocky Mountains and thereafter ascended the Missouri River in greater numbers. For instance, in 1807, the ambitious Manual Lisa, working for the St. Louis Missouri Company, became one of the first to lead a full-scale attempt to systematically exploit the beaver resources of uppermost reaches of the Missouri and its tributaries. By 1809, Lisa built a post several miles north of Big Hidatsa and used it as a staging area for his company's operations in the Blackfeet and Crow country to the north.[56]

A few years later, Henry M. Brackenridge accompanied Lisa to his trading post and described the life at the third village of the Minnetaree (Big Hidatsa) in this manner.

> This morning, found ourselves completely drenched by heavy rains, which continued the whole night. The Indian women and girls were occupied all this morning, in carrying earth in baskets, to replace that which the rains had washed off their lodges.... The village is swarming with dogs and children....
>
> The dogs, of which every family has thirty or forty, pretended to make a show of fierceness, but on the least threat, ran-off. —They are of different sizes and colors. A number are fattened on purpose to eat, others are used to draw their baggage....
>
> One of the parties, which arrived to day, came from the Snake nation, where they had stolen horses. This arrested their employments for a moment, the immediate friends and relations of such as returned, spent the evening in rejoicing, while several females who had lost a relation, retired to the hills behind this village, where they continued to cry the whole afternoon.
>
> In the evening they usually collect on the tops of the lodges, where they sit and converse; every now and then the attention of all was attracted by some old men who rose up and declaimed aloud, so as to be heard over the whole village. There was something in this like a Quaker meeting.
>
> In the evening, about sundown, the women cease their labors, and collect into little knots, and amuse themselves with a game something like jack stones: five pebbles are tossed up in a small basket, with which they endeavor to catch them again as they fall.[57]

Despite American sovereignty over the area and the appearance of the American fur traders like Manual Lisa, many Canadian-traders continued to visit the Mandan and Hidatsa villages. But with the outbreak of the War of 1812, Lisa closed down the company's operations near Big Hidatsa Village, dissolved the St. Louis Missouri Company, formed the Missouri Fur Company, and established Fort Manual on the Missouri farther south on the present North Dakota-South Dakota border after the war.[58]

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[56] Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 38-39, 50-64; Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-24-I-25.

[57] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 20.

[58] Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 38-39, 50-64; Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-24-I-25.

After the War of 1812, the Americans returned to the Knife River villages. For example, in 1822, the Missouri Fur Company went back to the Knife River area and tried to resume trade there. Under the leadership of Joshua Pilcher, the company erected a trading post a short distance north of the Hidatsa and Mandan villages, known as Fort Vanderburgh. But because of turmoil between the Americans and the Blackfeet Indians in the north, the Missouri Fur Company abandoned Fort Vanderburgh and withdrew from their Knife River location. Instead, they retrenched their operations lower down on the river. At the same time, a number of Canadian traders in cooperation with American partners formed the Columbia Fur Company. In 1823, James Kipp of the Columbia Fur Company built Fort Tilton near the Mandan villages, but it too was abandoned a year later, for similar reasons. Kipp remained in the area and established another post, but little information about its operation is known. Finally, the ephemeral and inefficient early trading posts of the Missouri and Columbia Fur Companies were superseded by the American Fur Company, which in 1822 formed a western department to exploit the Missouri River trade. In 1827, the American Fur Company absorbed the Columbia Fur Company. Its successor, the Upper Missouri Outfit, thereafter began a spate of fort building along the Missouri River to secure control over the fur trade and to act as depots for provisions and merchandise. These forts included Fort Clark, which was built sometime between 1828 and 1830 near the mouth of the Knife River.[59]

For the next three decades, Fort Clark witnessed both the heyday and decline of the Missouri River fur trade. Beginning in 1832, steamboat travel on the upper Missouri was initiated, and the Upper Missouri Outfit supplied Fort Clark and posts farther north by steamboats. Originating in St. Louis, steamboat travel also made the Hidatsa/Mandan villages accessible to early and notable western travelers. The first visitor of historical significance was the self-taught artist and explorer, George Catlin. In 1830, the Pennsylvanian-born thirty-four-year-old artist traveled to St. Louis, where he met famed explorer William Clark, who encouraged him to study the Indians of the West. Thereafter, armed with pencil, oils, and paintbrushes, he boarded the steamboat *Yellowstone* and went up the Missouri to sketch and to illustrate traditional Indian culture just prior to when United States expansionism would radically change them forever. Catlin's paintings, *Buffalo Chase, A Surround by the Hidatsa* (1832), *Hidatsa Village, Earth-Covered Lodges on the Knife River* (1832) *Green Corn Dance, Hidatsa* (1835-1837), as well as several portraits of distinguished Hidatsa men and women, along with narrative details to his paintings in his book, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of North American Indians* (1841), provide primary ethnographic documentation of Hidatsa life to anthropologists and other scholars.

At nearly the same time, young gifted artist Karl Bodmer of Switzerland accompanied German explorer and naturalist Prince Alexander Maximilian of Wied (Germany) on his tour of the Rocky Mountain West. In 1833, after a visit also with William Clark, Maximilian and Bodmer left St. Louis aboard the steamboat *Assiniboine* to visit a number

[59] Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 38-39, 50-64; Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, Cultural *Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-24-I-25.

of forts and villages along the Missouri River, reaching as far west as Fort Mackenzie in August 1833. On their return trip from Fort Union, the Maximilian-Bodmer Expedition wintered for five months at Fort Clark (1833-1834), where Maximilian documented the people, traditions, and history of the Hidatsa and Mandan with reams of field notes that described in great detail their lives, customs, modes of dress, and beliefs, such as the *O-kee-pa*, an important Mandan ceremony. On the other hand, Bodmer sketched and painted watercolors of the inhabitants and scenes of Mandan/Hidatsa village life. Bodmer's most noteworthy and iconic works included *Bison Dance of the Mandan Indians*, *Two Ravens: Leader of Hidatsa Dog Society*, *Interior of the Hut of a Mandan Chief*, and *Winter Village of the Minatarees*. In the spring of 1834, the Maximilian-Bodmer Expedition returned to St. Louis, not fully realizing how significant their travel account, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1832-1834*, would be to today's scholars interested in the time period in Hidatsa/Mandan culture just prior to the time when a combination of warfare, disease, and other factors altered the social, political, and cultural characteristics of these Northern Plains tribes.

Interregnum Period, 1834-1881

Conditions at the Knife River Indian villages changed rapidly after the Maximilian-Bodmer Expedition because of three interrelated factors. First, there was the impact of a changing fur trade market system. Prior to the 1830s, the fur trade was based upon a barter system, with Indians trading beaver pelts for blankets, beads, jewelry, guns, knives, sewing awls, and other Euro-American goods. Generally speaking, Indian tribes, such as the Hidatsa and Mandan, quickly incorporated trade goods and benefited from the conveniences of Euro-American technology. The adoption of trade goods was reflected in Hidatsa and Mandan utilitarian, decorative, and ceremonial material and cultural items. But as they did, their traditional role as middlemen to surrounding nomadic groups and their indirect relationship with fur traders who built trading posts nearby changed dramatically. Very soon, they grew dependent on Euro-American raw materials and trade goods, which required them to live near to and interact with centers of trade, such as Fort Clark to the south. For instance, the Mandan village at Fort Clark was built in 1829-1831 probably for this particular reason. Thereafter, the Hidatsa and Mandan role as middleman in the trade system slowly changed from middlemen in a trade network to suppliers of provisions to the forts, especially as the fur trade moved northward up the Missouri River in response to the construction of a number of forts and the introduction of steamboat travel in 1832.[60]

Second, the Northern Plains fur trade, which was linked to a worldwide economic and political system and subject to the demands of the market place, shifted from beaver pelts to buffalo robes. The advent of steamboats on the upper Missouri in the early 1830s

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[60] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 40-41; Michael K. Trimble, "Infectious Disease and the Northern Plains Horticulturalists: A Human-Behavior Model," 75-129 in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part II: Ethnohistorical Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

provided an efficient means of transporting the heavy, bulky robes downriver. This shift in Euro-American fur market demands led to greater competition with neighboring



Examples of Euro-American Trade Goods Reaching the Mouth of the Knife River at about the End of the Eighteenth Century. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

nomadic groups over this resource. As stated in the previous chapter, in Ahler's Roadmaker phase (1785 to 1830), the Knife River villages coalesced in response to constant hostile pressure from predatory nomadic groups such as the Sioux. In the mid-1830s, these instances mounted as competition for buffalo hides on the Northern Plains increased. Incidents climaxed in the spring of 1834, when a Sioux raiding band destroyed the villages of Sakakawea (*Awatixa*) and Amahami (*Awaxawi*). Following this attack, as described in the previous chapter regarding Ahler's Four Bears phase (1830 to 1886), both groups either took refuge at Big Hidatsa or with other Mandan groups, or it is speculated that the *Awatixa* constructed Taylor Bluff Village near Big Hidatsa.[61]

Third, though the Hidatsa and Mandan enjoyed a more leisurely life due to Euro-American trade goods and though living in highly nucleated, well fortified settlements made them safer from attacks from hostile groups, both factors created a situation whereby they became highly susceptible to disease, which struck in 1837. In that year, a massive smallpox epidemic afflicted groups throughout the High Plains. This disease was especially deadly to the Mandan at Fort Clark, where the epidemic began when a

[61] Ibid.

young Mandan contracted the disease from infected passengers aboard the steamship *St. Peter* that docked at Fort Clark. Early symptoms (fever, sharp headache, and pains) of smallpox took several weeks to occur, but once the Mandan contracted the agonizing disease through traditional social behavior, they rapidly transmitted the disease to other villagers. Once started, there was no way to stop the disease until it had run its course. The devastation was horrible. Prior to 1837, the estimated population of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara, who had recently moved to the vicinity of Fort Clark, was about 7,000 people. Approximately 5,000 smallpox related deaths occurred. All in all, seven-eighths of the Mandan died, and two-thirds of the Hidatsa and Arikara, were dead as well. One of the many who died was the Mandan chief Four Bears.[62]

In the aftermath of this short crucial period of trade, warfare, and disease, the Hidatsa and Mandan grew ever more dependent on Euro-American trade goods and, with a decimated population, feared new Sioux attacks as well. The *Hidatsa*-proper, *Awatixa*, and *Awaxiwi*, which in the Ahler's Roadmaker phase had coalesced into Knife River Indian villages after the 1780-1781 epidemic for mutual defense against increasing Sioux raids, now began a second period of reorganization for similar purposes. Many *Hidatsa*-proper living at Big Hidatsa considered joining the River Crow in Montana Territory, their relatives to the west, and some may have moved there permanently. Others immediately after the epidemic broke out may have moved upstream and built an unnamed village (32OL23) on the upper Knife River near Beulah, North Dakota, and stayed there between 1837 and 1845. On the other hand, the *Awatixa* and *Awaxiwi*, along with a few Mandan, possibly remained at their Knife River villages during this post-epidemic period, perhaps reoccupying Sakakawea for a brief period.

However, within a decade, survivors of *Hidatsa*-proper, *Awatixa*, and *Awaxiwi*, facing additional pressures from their nomadic enemies, did finally abandon all their villages at KRIV and elsewhere, deciding to move further northward to a new site, which they called Like-A-Fishhook—about seventy miles above Fort Clark, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. Here, they built a combined village, where the Hidatsa groups and the Mandan lived in separate sections. This new village was located on the north side of the Missouri on a projecting bluff, which could be easily defended against attack by a fortified stockade on the landward side of the point. In 1860, Fort Clark was abandoned, and two years later, the Arikara, who remained at Fort Clark following the 1837 smallpox epidemic, joined the Hidatsa and Mandan at Like-A-Fishhook. They lived in a third section of village.[63]

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Alfred W. Bowers, *Hidatsa Social & Ceremonial Organization* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), xiii-xiv, 24, 487; Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 40; Thiessen, "Historic Trading Posts Near the Mouth of the Knife River, 1794-1860," 64; Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 21-23; Jeffrey R. Hanson, "Hidatsa Ethnohistory, 1800-1845," 133-134, in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part II: Ethnohistorical Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

At Like-A-Fishhook, Euro-American wares soon completely replaced some native tools, and intermarriage and cultural exchange between the three groups rapidly occurred, especially after the establishment of the Fort Berthold Reservation in 1871 by executive order by which the Three Affiliated Tribes, as they became known as, lost their lands from Fort Berthold to the mouth of the Heart River on the west side of the Missouri, which was set aside for them under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. Soon thereafter, a subgroup of the *Hidatsa*-proper left Like-A-Fishhook Village and moved further up the Missouri River. They lived in two different villages at two different times but were evidently forced to return to the Fort Berthold Reservation. Thereafter, the decline of the buffalo on the Northern Plains, and American acculturative forces, namely Catholic and congressional missionary activity, led to the dissolution of Like-A-Fishhook Village. In 1887, the Fort Berthold Reservation was allotted and families moved onto individual allotments.[64]

Meanwhile, the abandoned villages at Knife River were left to disintegrate, thus ending the Plains Village way of life there. Perhaps John James Audubon, America's premier avifauna artist and printer of *Birds of America* (1840) and who in 1843 set out for one more trip out West to complete his final work on mammals, *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (1845-1848), was the last person to record this former life at KRIV. Audubon on his trip traveled up the Missouri River by steamer and noted the Knife River villages in passing just two years before their migration north. Audubon stated that "the village of the Gros Ventre [*Hidatsa*-proper] has been cut off from the bank of the river by an enormous sandbar, now overgrown with willows and brush, and we could only see the American flag flying in the cool breeze." The sand bar he referred to was the tongue of land between Knife River and the Missouri. A few years later, noted Swiss artist Friederich Rudolph Kurz, who spent the years at the western trading posts on the Upper Missouri River, traveled by the remnants of the Knife River villages. In 1848, Kurz recorded in passing that he "saw in the distance the former village that the Herantsa [*Hidatsa*-proper] inhabited before they chose their present abode near Fort Berthold." Once at the fort, Kurz made numerous sketches of them in his journals.[65]

The American Frontier and Settlement Period, 1845-1945

After 1845, innumerable frontier travelers on stern-wheeler steamboats slowly chugged by the deserted Hidatsa and Mandan villages at Knife River on their way to points north, probably with no realization that the area had been inhabited by Native Americans since circa A.D. 1000. Americans, however, soon filled the void left by the Hidatsa and Mandan. The first to come were early frontiersmen, such as "Lonesome Charley" Reynolds, who supplied game for the garrison at Fort Stevenson (1867-1883).[66]

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[64] Ibid.

[65] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 23.

[66] Fort Stevenson was named in honor of Brigadier General Thomas Greeley Stevenson, a Union officer who was killed during the Battle of Spotsylvania (VA), one of the costliest of all Civil War battles. Fort Stevenson was located on the east side of the Missouri River and northwest of Big Bend, North Dakota.

Reynolds had lived for some years at "Three Villages" (Like-A-Fishhook Village), which was nearby. Prior to his death in 1876 at Little Bighorn, Reynolds hunted the abundant game found in the Knife River Valley to the southwest.[67] Reynolds was not alone in exploiting this area's resources, for eventually two towns developed near the former Hidatsa and Mandan Villages—one north of them, called Causey (1870s to 1891), and the other immediately south, called Stanton (1882 to the present).

Town of Causey, Circa 1870s to 1891

The town of Causey, whose exact location is not fully known, began most likely in the 1870s when John Nagel opened a wood yard along the Missouri River to supply fuel to the steamboats that frequently plied the river. The federal government chartered many of these steamboats, which conveyed troops and supplies to the forts along the river from Fort Stevenson all the way to Fort Union in Montana. During the Civil War, Nagel came up the Missouri on a steamboat as a cook. When he reached Fort Stevenson, he quit his job and started his wood yard on the south side of the Missouri.

In the 1870s, Nagel started another wood yard a bit northeast of KRIV, which was known as the Knife River landing. It employed a number of "wood hawks," or woodchoppers, to harvest logs from the surrounding bottomlands. Sometime thereafter, Peter C. Causey, a Civil War veteran, drifted into the Knife River country. To supplement his government war pension, he made a living as a trapper. Reportedly, in 1878, Causey homesteaded on the east side of the Knife River just across from where the town of Weller once stood on the Missouri River's north bank. Another trapper named Billy Edwards lived across the Knife River from Causey, probably in the vicinity of KRIV. Evidently, Nagel hired Causey to run his Knife River wood yard. It was considered to be the largest wood yard north of Bismarck and employed as many as fifteen men at times, one of them being Bill Miller, who later started his own wood yard as well. Causey also started a post office/trading post at the growing settlement.[68]

As the settlement of Causey grew, squatters and homesteaders came. For instance, just before the area was thrown open for homesteading in the spring of 1882, Joseph Dietrich, who was at one time a Knife River landing wood hawk, and river men Ed Councilman, Bob McGahan, and Steve Card took up "squatters right" along the Knife River. The next year, either farmer Edward Heinemeyer and/or river man Bob McGahan became the first men to file on homesteads in what is now considered Mercer County, created by the North Dakota legislature in 1883. Henry Charles Loy, who came to the Knife River country that year, was instrumental in getting the legislature to organize a county out of this part of the Dakota Territory. At that time, Causey promoted his settlement as the county seat but lost to the town of Stanton, which is today immediately south of what is

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Not much of a fort, it was built of sod and timbers and at no time had more than two companies of soldiers garrisoned there.

[67] C.B. Heinemeyer and Mrs. Ben Janssen, *History Of Mercer County, North Dakota, 1882 To 1960* (Hazen, North Dakota: 1960), 13, 15, 47.

[68] Ibid., 14-15, 20-21.

currently the southernmost boundary of the park. By 1891, the town of Causey ceased to exist.[69]

Stanton, 1882 to 1970s

In 1882, two brothers, Thomas and James McGrath, founded the town of Stanton, North Dakota. In that year, they "built a log cabin, put in a stock of groceries, and, later that winter, established a post office and called it Stanton," after their mother, whose maiden name was Stanton. The following year, Stanton became the county seat in a close election. Settlement of the area surrounding the town slowly followed. In general, rail access to cities such as Mandan and Bismarck was responsible for an influx of settlers into Mercer County. People were drawn to the area mostly by its agriculture (wheat and flax) potential. Lumbering along the bottomlands and coal mining also drew settlers to the place. By 1888, the town of Stanton had grown to approximately 200 inhabitants.[70]

Three years later, Stanton had a post office, printing office, school, courthouse, and hotel, and it continued to be spurred on by a feverish rush to western North Dakota associated with expanding wheat production that began in the 1890s. However, in 1905, a fire destroyed most of Stanton's public buildings, including its courthouse. The conflagration left nothing more than an old school house standing there amongst the residences. Not disheartened, townspeople slowly rebuilt and revitalized their community. Stanton's rebuilt environment soon included a new restaurant/store and hotel (1907), a new bank (1908), and a new courthouse (1910). Furthermore, the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad (1912) directly through Stanton added to the economic mix. It would eventually replace Missouri River steamboat traffic as the major transportation system for the region.[71]

Meanwhile, several settlers filed on land that would eventually become KRIV. The earliest homesteaders within the boundaries of KRIV, as indicated by an 1891 Mercer County map, included August Boerner [aka Borner] and a family with the surname Walker. Apparently, Boerner was the first to file for a homestead (1882), followed by the Walker family. Thereafter, others settled in the vicinity, including George Knoop, who was German and came to the area in 1883 and homesteaded the following year. In 1895, the Knoops bought the hotel in Stanton, tore it down, and transported the logs to his farm and made a nine-room house to replace their log cabin, which was still standing as late as 1960. On the other hand, the Krieger family homesteaded in 1884 on a claim four miles

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 33, 36, 39-40; Steven K. Lovick and Stanley A. Ahler, *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Department of Anthropology and Archeology, University of North Dakota, 1982), 83-84; Elwyn B. Robinson, *History Of North Dakota* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 242-247.

[71] Heinemeyer and Janssen, *History Of Mercer County, North Dakota*, 19-20, 33, 36, 39-40; Lovick and Ahler, *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 83-84; Robinson, *History Of North Dakota*, 242-247.

north of Stanton on land north and northwest of KRIV property and on the north side of the Knife River.[72]

Other families eventually owned land near and/or within KRIV's boundaries. They included George Buchfink, Sr., who came to Mercer County sometime before 1892. At first, Buchfink homesteaded about eighteen miles northwest of Stanton but later moved just north of the town. Then there was the Fred Grannis family, who came to Stanton from McLean County in 1909 and owned a livery barn, draying business, rooming house, and hotel in town. Their son Bryon bought a farm north of Stanton, which included the Big Hidatsa Village site. There was also the Herman Lennius family, who at one time operated a meat market in town. The Leinius family eventually owned property north of Stanton as well. Finally, there were the Russells, who moved to Mercer County in 1903. The Russell family engaged in the stock-farming business north of Stanton and owned land east of the present boundaries of KRIV.[73]

With the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad, Stanton and the surrounding vicinity grew in population and prosperity. From the 1920s to World War II, Mercer County followed more or less the same agricultural history of Euro-American development in North Dakota as other communities did. The 1920s was a time of readjustment following the growth of the previous decade. The stimulus of pioneering had ended, and World War I had pushed land values too high for farmers to make a profit. In this decade, Mercer County farmers struggled with heavy debts, high costs, and low prices for their wheat. The 1930s brought depression and drought. Nevertheless, during the 1920s and 1930s, the population of Mercer County marginally increased, and peaked just before World War II at 9,600.[74]

After World War II and into the 1960s, Mercer County experienced gradual decline, reaching a low of 6,100 in 1965. At this time, Stanton had a population of just over 400. However, in the 1970s, energy development in the area occurred, leading to revitalization and steady population growth ever since.[75]

The Triumph and Tragic Waning of Native American Culture

Remarkably, the non-Indian historic setting for the KRIV area dates as far back as the French, Spanish, and British colonial period. During this colonial era, these European powers, through wars and subsequent treaties, won and lost immense territories of which they had only barest of knowledge derived from traders and trappers exploring and living in the area. Nevertheless, they witnessed a vibrant Northern Plains Indian culture

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[72] Lovick and Ahler, *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 83-84; Heinemeyer and Janssen, *History Of Mercer County, North Dakota*, 79.

[73] Heinemeyer and Janssen, *History of Mercer County, North Dakota*, 63, 67, 99.

[74] Lovick and Ahler, *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 84; Robinson, *History Of North Dakota*, 372; NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 7.

[75] Ibid.

characterized by earth-lodge villages and a horticultural/buffalo-hunting complex. When America took over the vast Louisiana Territory in December 1803, awareness of the immediate Knife River region improved somewhat. During the subsequent historic period of American exploration and fur trading from 1804 to 1834, important persons in United States history observed how circumstances (e.g., disease, competition for resources, hostility from neighboring tribal groups) forced the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara to leave lands, some of whose ancestors had occupied these villages since A.D. 1000. Among the notable witnesses to this triumph and tragic waning in Native American culture were Lewis and Clark, Alexander Henry, George Catlin, Prince Alexander Maximilian, and John James Audubon.

For many years after 1834, the Knife River villages lay in a moribund state. Circumstances changed after 1882, when settlers began homesteading the lands that eventually would be incorporated into Knife River Indian Villages NHS. Though they did not know the specifics of what took place on their lands prior to their arrival, the evidence lay all around them in the form of a distinctly altered landscape that bore evidence of occupation, such as earth-lodge circles, fortifications, trash heaps, and burial sites. As pioneer families such as the Boerners, Buchfinks, Grannises, and Russells built their homes, barns, and fences and plowed their wheat and other fields, they could only speculate on what had transpired before their arrival. A better understanding of the cultural landscape that lay before them had to wait for archeologists, anthropologists, and ethnohistorians to closely examine the Knife River Indian villages and recognize and interpret their significance.

CHAPTER THREE

ARCHEOLOGICAL/ETHNOHISTORICAL INTEREST IN KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES, 1872-1964

Following the Three Affiliated Tribes (Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara) relocation from 1845 to 1880 to Like-A-Fishhook Village on the Fort Berthold Reservation, it did not take long for scholars to become interested in their history and culture and their former villages on the Knife River. However, this early interest started in 1872 with the work of ethnologist Washington Mathews and archeologist Theodore Hayes Lewis of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) in 1882 and 1883. It increased each decade thereafter, as anthropologists, ethnohistorians, and archeologists alike conducted additional research on the three tribes. Though much of this early research these pioneers in the field of anthropology/archeology was unscientific by today's standards, nonetheless it contributed to the overall body of information regarding the importance and meaning of the Knife River sites. As knowledge about Knife River's archeological resources and their historical significance increased, serious consideration was given to creating a park to protect, preserve, and interpret them.

At best, one can only summarize to the reader the extensive body of scholarly work associated with the study of these Northern Plains people. Basically, it can be organized around three time periods and activities: Early Ethnography and Mapping Period, 1872-1918; Pioneer Excavation, Park Building, and Ethnography, 1919-1937; and Scientific Excavation and Ethnography, 1938-1966.

Early Ethnography and Mapping Period, 1872-1918

Washington Matthews, a United States Army medical officer, was the first to take scholarly interest in the Three Affiliated Tribes. In 1865, when he developed an interest in the study of nearby tribes, Mathews was the post surgeon at Fort Union Trading Post,[76] southwest of Williston, North Dakota. Subsequently, circa 1867, Matthews was transferred to Fort Stevenson, near Like-A-Fishhook Village, and then circa 1871 to Fort Buford (1866-1895), built near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers.

While at Fort Stevenson, Mathews became acquainted with the Hidatsa, Mandan, and Arikara groups, and published *Grammar and Dictionary of the Hidatsa* (1872). But at the request of United States geologist F.V. Hayden, Matthews remodeled and enlarged the scope of this paper to include ethnography on the Hidatsa. In 1877, the Government Printing Office reprinted it in a second edition as *Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians* (1877), which provided information on their history, dwellings, religion,

[76] Fort Union Trading Post was the most important fur trading post on the upper Missouri from 1828 to 1867. At this post, the Assiniboine, Crow, Cree, Ojibway, Blackfeet, Hidatsa, and other tribes traded buffalo robes and other furs for trade goods such as beads, guns, blankets, knives, cookware, and cloth.

agriculture, intertribal trade, and arts. Since all of Matthews' informants once lived at the old villages near the mouth of the Knife River, his brief treatise captured some of the earliest information regarding KRIV's sites, as well as the culture of the "Hidatsa," a tribal designation he used for all three groups (*Hidatsa*-proper, *Awatixa*, and *Awaxiwi*). But, as far as it is known, Matthews never actually visited the former Knife River villages of the Three Affiliated Tribes, although in 1865, he surely passed by them as he journeyed on a Missouri River steamboat to Fort Union.[77]

The honor of being the first scholar to actually visit the Knife River villages fell to Theodore Lewis of MHS. In October 1883, Lewis, who was noted for recording numerous archeological sites in the upper Mississippi valley, including many in eastern Iowa, became the first to actually visit and record them. In that year, while surveying and mapping other major Northern Plains Indian village sites in the region, including Amahami Village just south of KRIV's boundary, Lewis sketched a number of crude maps of the Big Hidatsa and Sakakawea sites within KRIV. Today, these early maps of KRIV's villages are located at MHS.[78]

A number of state-sponsored expeditions from Minnesota and North Dakota followed Theodore Lewis to the KRIV villages. Unfortunately, their sole purpose was to collect artifacts for museum display and used uncontrolled excavations. For instance, Jacob Vredenberg Brower, an expert on the source and headwaters of the Mississippi River, and Ernst R. Steinbrueck, working for the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND), conducted an unscientific archeological exploration of the Missouri Valley in North Dakota from 1896 to 1904. Fortunately, the Brower-Steinbrueck Expedition ended a few miles south of KRIV, thereby preserving them from these destructive artifact-collecting endeavors.[79]

However, apparently for a few years thereafter, Steinbrueck continued his village site investigations under the direction of Orin G. Libby, one of the new wave of academic professionals that had recently joined the Department of History at the University of North Dakota (UND) at Grand Forks, North Dakota.[80] By 1907, Steinbrueck produced a

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[77] Bowers, *Hidatsa Social & Ceremonial Organization*, 1-3; Anonymous, "In Memoriam: Washington Matthews," *The Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 18, No. 70 (1905): 245-247

[78] Washington Matthews, *Ethnography And Philology Of The Hidatsa Indians* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1877), III-IV; Stanley A. Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 27 in *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part I: Objectives, Methods, And Summaries Of Baseline Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

[79] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 28; Orin G. Libby, "Typical Villages of the Mandans, Arikara, and Hidatsa in the Missouri Valley," *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, Vol. 2 (1908), 498-508.

[80] Libby moved to Grand Forks in 1902 to teach at UND and became the Secretary of the SHSND in 1903. Soon after he associated with the SHSND, he seems to have spurred a number of Society initiatives designed to record the Native American culture, history, and archeology of North Dakota, such as commissioning living Indians to pictorially record aspects of their culture and history (see "The Sitting Rabbit 1907 Map of the Missouri River in North Dakota," by Thomas D. Thiessen, W. Raymond Wood, and A. Wesley Jones, *Plains Anthropologist* 24(84, Part 1): 145-167 [1979]). He invited a noted archeologist of that day to publish an article outlining a comprehensive archeological research program for

map locating the Knife River villages along with other sites, and a later version (1924) included legal descriptions of the three major KRIV sites. It is not known whether the Steinbrueck-Libby research at this time involved collected artifacts from these sites for SHSND, but Libby's 1908 article "Typical Villages of the Mandan, Arikara, and Hidatsa in the Missouri Valley," in *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, outlined what he saw as clear differences in the ground plans and surface features between Hidatsa and Mandan sites. It also included a map of Big Hidatsa Village.[81]

Thereafter, several SHSND projects resulted in general site location maps for the features at KRIV. These maps were highly important, according to archeologist Stanley Ahler, because they provided "descriptive data on many of the prominent archeological features in the KNRI at a time when they were little affected by cultivation, uncontrolled excavation, and other types of disturbance" which had occurred since being drawn. Of particular significance was a map drawn in 1909 by archeologist A.B Stout and based on information provided by three Mandan-Hidatsa from Fort Berthold. The 1909 Stout map was particularly useful because it showed all four villages (Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa, and Amahami), an extensive system of trails leading to and from and between them, cemetery areas west of Sakakawea and northwest of Lower Hidatsa, and also a fortified area a short distance from Amahami Village. Additionally, in 1911 and 1919, two Harvard archeologists, George F. Will and Herbert J. Spinden conducted additional reconnaissance work in the Missouri Valley. George Will later published this information in *Archaeology of the Missouri Valley* (1924), which provided more descriptions of Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa, and Amahami, along with new maps of Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa.[82]

Unfortunately, when Will published *Archaeology of the Missouri Valley*, several important features noted by Stout in 1909 had been either severely disturbed and/or totally destroyed. For instance, Amahami Village, which consisted of thirty-three earth-lodges enclosed within a fortification ditch, was first disturbed by an early gravel mining operation. Then in 1973-1974, Mercer County built a courthouse and parking lot in the center of the remaining site.[83] Today, only one earth-lodge circle associated with

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the Dakotas (see "The Data of the Archaeology of the Dakotas," by Harlan I. Smith, in *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota,* Vol. I [1906], pp. 74-88). And he seems to have inaugurated a program of acquiring and setting aside for posterity archeological and historical properties around the state of North Dakota, an activity, which continued into the 1930s (see *A Traveler's Companion to North Dakota State Historic Sites*, 2nd edition, by J. Signe Snortland, State Historical Society of North Dakota, 2002). Part of this land acquisition program evidently involved the mapping of archeological sites. The SHSND's interest in acquiring the Knife River sites in the 1920s may have been part of this remarkable land acquisition/historic preservation initiative. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[81] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 28; Orin G. Libby, "Typical Villages of the Mandans, Arikara, and Hidatsa in the Missouri Valley," *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, Vol. 2 (1908), 498-508.

[82] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 28-29.

[83] The courthouse construction was not the only construction episode that destroyed parts of the Amahami Village. Thomas Thiessen remembers watching earth removal for the new sheriff's office and jail (adjacent to the courthouse) in the spring or summer of 1977 and seeing earth-lodge posts and artifacts dumped from backhoe buckets.

Amahami Village is visible on the grounds of the present-day Mercer County courthouse. Though mere traces of the Amahami Village exist today, the integrity of Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, and Lower Hidatsa remained good at the close of this scholarly period.[84]

Meanwhile, ethnographers were busy as well. Between 1908 and 1918, the astute observer and conscientious ethnographer Gilbert L. Wilson became interested in the Hidatsa. Wilson began his scholarly career on the Standing Rock Reservation in 1905. He thereafter spent each summer but one on the Fort Berthold Reservation, recording aspects of Hidatsa life and their material culture. Wilson's Hidatsa informants included Buffalo Bird Woman, who was born in 1839 probably at the Taylor Bluff Village after Sakakawea Village was destroyed, as well as several of her family members, such as Henry Wolf Chief (her brother) and Edward Goodbird (her son). Wilson's first ethnographic work on the Hidatsa resulted in his dissertation, "Agriculture of the Hidatsa: An Indian Interpretation" (1916) from the University of Minnesota. A year later, Minnesota University Press published Wilson's dissertation with the same title. In time, *Agriculture of the Hidatsa: An Indian Interpretation* became a classic on traditional Hidatsa farming practices. Regrettably, Wilson was better at collecting ethnographic material than reporting it in scholarly outlets. A large portion of his work went unpublished until after his death in 1930. Today, Wilson's notes and materials are scattered between the New York City's American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and MHS.[85]

Wilson was the last ethnographer to work with the Hidatsa or the Mandan in this era. In April 1917, America's entrance into the great conflict of World War I curtailed further Hidatsa and Mandan ethnographic research, as well as any additional archeological excavation at KRIV, a situation that lasted until the end of the war in November 1918.

Pioneer Excavation, Park Building, and Ethnography, 1919-1937

Following World War I, significant disturbances occurred at KRIV's archeological sites and those in the immediate surrounding region. For instance, by the 1920s, the Buchfink site, which was just north of Amahami Village and within KRIV's future boundaries, showed almost no surface evidence of occupation, such as earth-lodge circles, fortifications, trash heaps, and burials, largely because of cultivation and farm construction by the Buchfink family. Naturally, agricultural activity, such as land leveling on privately owned land, was disastrous to archeological sites. Luckily, the cost

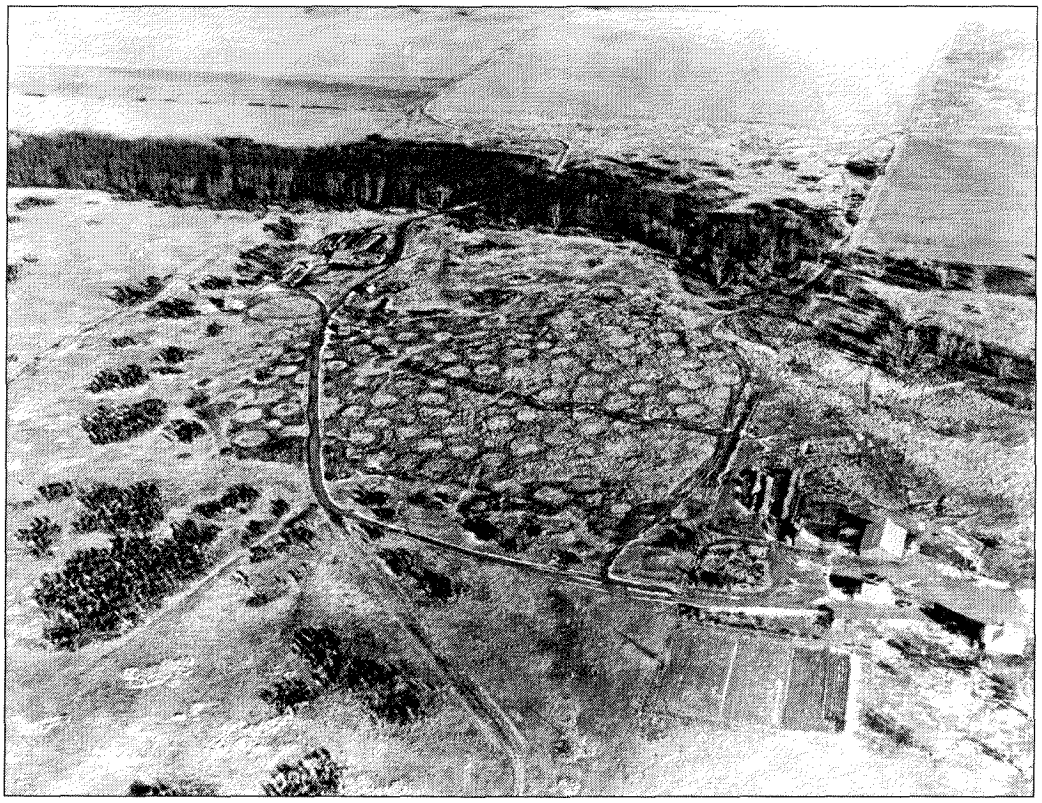
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[84] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 1-2; Stanley A. Ahler, Thomas D. Thiessen, and Michael K. Trimble, *People Of The Willows: The Prehistory And Early History Of The Hidatsa Indians* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: University of North Dakota Press, 1991), 96.

[85] W. Raymond Wood, "The Ethnohistory Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 2 in *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part II: Ethnohistorical Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993); Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 28; Bowers, *Hidatsa Social & Ceremonial Organization*, 3.

of land leveling was high at this time, which partly restrained the destruction of other significant sites.[86]

Even more destructive to the integrity of KRIV's sites than land leveling was "pot hunting." In the 1920s, George H. Sagehorn, a nearby landowner, as well other unknown relic hunters, began to compromise the integrity of Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa by collecting artifacts from these two sites, which eventually were located within KRIV's boundaries. At Sakakawea, Sagehorn routinely recovered items eroding out of the riverbank face and fortunately did not excavate any part of the site. On the other hand, the amateur archeologist did excavate fairly extensively along the eastern, northern, and western margins at Lower Hidatsa, thereby affecting and destroying in some cases both the surface and subsurface contexts here. Sagehorn's activities paralleled in some respects the efforts of contemporary professional archeological investigators of the 1920s. In this light, his activities might be considered as a reflection of a stage and/or period of archeological interest in these sites.[87] Sagehorn worked right up until the early



Early Aerial Photograph of Big Hidatsa Village, Circa 1930s. Olds (later Grannis) Farm is Located in Lower Right Hand Corner of Photograph. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Collection.

[86] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 1-3.

[87] Thomas D. Thiessen to KNRI files, 15 February 1977, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Duane Payton, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, U.S. West Research Inc. (USWR), Salt Lake City, UT.

1960s, and many of the arrowheads he recovered ended up as fanciful designs on plaques that today can be found on the walls of the Mercer County courthouse in Stanton.[88]

Big Hidatsa village was not spared from pot hunting either. In the 1920s, the extensive cemetery at Big Hidatsa, which was along the northwest periphery of the village and very recognizable, was in good condition. But, during earlier times, it sadly had also been "pot hunted." Providentially, the magnitude of the site and the condition of the graves suggested that only a small percentage of total burials had ever been disturbed. Thankfully, at an early date, the Olds family closed them to collectors. Several additional landowners also preserved the integrity of the other Indian village sites because of "an ingrained respect for the historic values involved." Although pioneer farming families may have lacked knowledge regarding an understanding of Northern Plains archeology, local landowners "recognized that these sites were historically and scientifically valuable, something that should be preserved for posterity." As the National Park Service (NPS) officials later pointed out, these landowners "deserve the highest respect for their role as voluntary conservators of our early American heritage.[89]

Conversely, many people recognized the tourism value of the three central Knife River villages. In the 1920s, state boosters and tourism boards took to naming a particular highway and/or highways as a vacationer's path to a tourist destination. For instance, vacationers with their newly acquired automobiles were encouraged by state tourism boards to use the "Yellowstone Trail," or the "Custer Battlefield Highway."[90] In North Dakota, the "Lewis and Clark Trail" appeared to be a natural for such a historic highway, and in 1928 and 1929, a nationwide attempt was made to establish a cross-country highway bearing that name. At that time, North Dakota government officials became interested in Knife River villages' association with the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition. After all, Sakakawea Village was reportedly the home of Sakakawea, and tourism officials recognized that the Knife River Indian villages would have considerable historical interest potential because of national familiarity with her story.[91]

Not surprisingly, SHSND took an interest in preserving and/or acquiring them as a state park at this time as well. In 1928, SHSND Secretary Orin Libby confidentially wrote to his attorney friend John Moses of Hazen, North Dakota, regarding this matter and asked for Moses' help. To Moses, Libby wrote that the directors of the Society "favored the purchase of enough land in and about Stanton to make a park out of the five villages [Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa, Amahami Villages and the Buchfink Site] in that vicinity....The Hidatsa sites...are on both sides of the Knife, near the mouth, and will have to be purchased outright by the state. One of the sites is partly included in the court-house grounds at Stanton." Libby and SHSND directors hoped to tie these sites with two Mandan villages down the Missouri at Deapolis and Fort Clark with good roads. They

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[88] Oral History of Duane Payton, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

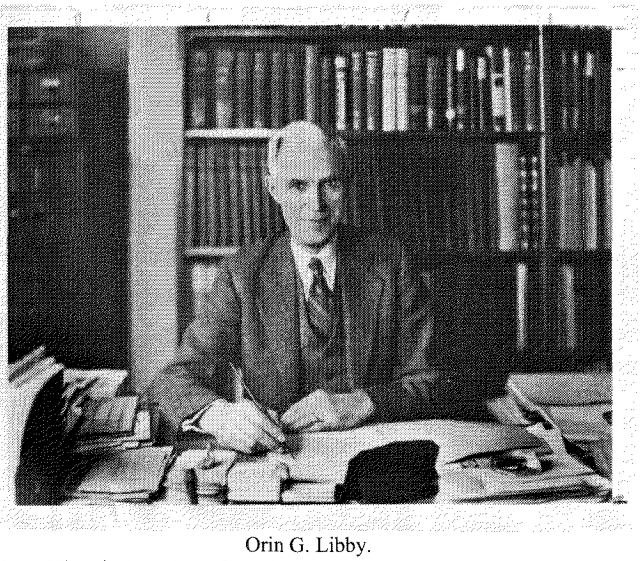
[89] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 2-3.

[90] Washington State History Museum webpage, http://www.wshs.org/wshm/lewisandclark/footsteps.htm.

[91] There are many versions of the Sakakawea's origins.

wanted them to "be one of the most attractive points for tourists in the state" and to "preserve them and make them of real historic interest."[92]

Moses, as an agent for the SHSND, contacted his friend C.F. Schweigert, a former Stanton newspaperman, for advice. Schweigert advised that if a larger tract was purchased, the "three villages could be linked together very nicely with Knife River running through the whole tract with plenty of timber on the tract to make an ideal state and tourist park." Yet Schweigert cautioned Moses that this was a "ticklish" proposition, immediately pointed out that Henry Russell, who owned the land between Big Hidatsa and Sakakawea, probably would not sell his land in any event. Nonetheless, the former newspaperman duplicitously suggested "local businessmen get together and offer to buy the land or get options on it for a local park proposition under the assumption that it is to be an addition to the local Stanton park."[93] Acknowledgement of Russell's reluctance to sell his farmland foreshadowed difficulties that NPS would have acquiring Russell family land for KRIV in the future. In any event, Libby countered that the State of North Dakota probably could purchase only the original village sites and would have to take up the matter of extension at a later time.[94]



Orin G. Libby.
State Historical Society of North Dakota 0080-Box1-File 03-17, BO839

Meanwhile, it appears that word "got out" about the proposition to create either a state and/or larger local park. Local landowner response to the idea was immediate and negative. For instance, August Borner, who owned the land where Sakakawea Village stood, idly talked about plowing up the Indian village on this land if a park materialized. But given the season of the year, there was no immediate danger of the site being plowed. Additionally, Borner's son Richard, who had recently purchased an isolated eighty acres just west and south of Big Hidatsa Village from his father, "snaked" several "shacks" from Stanton onto his land as living premises, perhaps in an attempt to enhance his property's value, thus making it too costly to purchase. In any event, Libby pressed Moses to convince the Borners not to "do anything so foolish as to destroy one of those village sites." But, like the Russell family, in the 1970s, the Borner family would also

[92] Orin G. Libby to John Moses, 15 August 1928, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP), Medora, ND.
[93] John Moses to Orin G. Libby, 31 August 1928, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.
[94] Orin G. Libby to John Moses, 2 September 1928, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

oppose any attempt by NPS to purchase their land. On the other hand, the Olds family estate owned the Big Hidatsa village site, while Stanton and Mercer County owned most of land surrounding the Lower Hidatsa Village site. Moses believed that he could convince Mrs. Ben Janssen, "a public-spirited woman" and one of the heirs to the Olds property, to give an option on the property. When Mrs. Janssen was contacted, she stated that her father, in his lifetime, was "anxious to have the village site preserved." She seemed willing to sell at a fair price their land and farm buildings.[95] With the recent election of George F. Shafer as North Dakota governor, Libby wanted to put the land purchase proposition before him and the state legislature as soon as possible. However, attorney Moses was unable to do anything to help Libby because Borner was in Colorado, and his sons were unwilling to act in his behalf.[96]

Though Libby missed the deadline to present his proposition to the North Dakota state legislature, for a short time in 1929, he pursued the matter with John Moses. Libby informed Moses that Governor Shafer was anxious to have these sites purchased and/or at least leased so as to protect them until they could be taken over and made into one state park. And, with the help of George F. Will and Russell Reid of the SHSND, Libby determined that they might not have to purchase the Olds family farm buildings in order to purchase the necessary land to preserve Big Hidatsa Village.[97] Meanwhile, in June 1929, Libby reported to Governor Schafer on the situation. The SHSND secretary stated that Will and Reid were being sent to Stanton "to arrange for the purchase of the Indian village sites there and to create a state park which shall include the important privately owned village sites which we can enlarge into a real state park later and thus commemorate the Lewis and Clark Expedition and save the home of Sakakawea for future marking and dedication. This will make a very important place for tourists to visit when they made the trip from Williston to Medora in connection with the [Theodore] Roosevelt [National Memorial] Park proposition."[98]

However, despite Libby's tenacious pursuit of state park status for the Knife River Indian villages, it was not to be. The Olds family members balked at the idea of selling their land, reasoning that the sale of the Big Hidatsa Village site would interfere with and/or might tend to spoil a future sale of the farm. On October 22, 1929, Olds family members promised not to plow it up and/or do anything else to disturb it and furthermore would let the State of North Dakota know first when and if they wished to sell the land in the future. Until that day, they would "leave it just exactly as it is." A week later, on "Black Tuesday," or October 29, 1929, Wall Street witnessed a 13 percent decline in the Dow Jones Industrial Average, a day recognized as the beginning of the Great Depression.

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[95] Orin G. Libby to John Moses, 4 September, 9 November 1928, John Moses to Orin G. Libby, John Moses to Orin G. Libby, 19 December 1928, 31 December, 1928, 17, 24 January 1929, Orin G. Libby to John Moses, 29 January 1929, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[96] John Moses to Orin G. Libby, 19, December 1928, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[97] Orin G. Libby to John Moses, 8 May 1929, O.G. Libby to George F. Will, 8 May 1929, Orin G. Libby to Russell Reid, 8 May 1929, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[98] Orin G. Libby to Governor George F. Schafer, 20 June 1929, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

Thereafter, there was no further correspondence regarding the proposed "Three Indian Villages State Park" by Libby and any other SHSND official.[99]

While Orin Libby and the SHSND pursued preserving the Knife River Indian villages as a state park, ethnographic research pertaining to the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians resumed. For instance, following the footsteps of her predecessors Matthews and Wilson, in 1929, Vassar College folklorist Martha Warren Beckwith came to the Fort Berthold Reservation on a "cultural salvage" mission. Over the next three summers, Beckwith recorded more than fifty Mandan and Hidatsa oral traditions that illustrated most of the genres of the two tribal storytelling traditions. Tribal elder Bears Arm served as her main source for Hidatsa traditions, while Ben Benson did the same for Mandan narratives. Beckwith later translated her recordings into English and published this collection of stories as *Mandan-Hidatsa Myths and Ceremonies* (1938). It became a "valuable reference work notable for its copious cross-references to cognate stories, themes, and motifs in the oral traditions of other Plains and Eastern Woodland tribes."[100]

At the same time that Beckwith conducted her fieldwork, but working independently of her, ethnographer Alfred W. Bowers began his work on the Fort Berthold Reservation. Unlike Beckwith, who was an outsider, Bowers was not a stranger to the area. Born in 1907 on a homestead near Killdeer, North Dakota, in Dunn County south of the reservation, Bowers was familiar with that nearby reservation. Upon graduating from high school, Bowers taught in the area until 1927, when he left North Dakota to attend Beloit College in Wisconsin. At Beloit, he studied anthropology under George L. Collie, head of Beloit's Logan Museum, who persuaded Bowers to pursue a career in anthropology. During 1929 through 1931, he attended graduate school at the University of Chicago under the direction of Faye-Cooper Cole. With funding from Logan Museum, each summer Bowers took Beloit students to North and South Dakota to survey and collect materials from Mandan and Arikara sites. However, during that time, Bowers believed in the possibility of reconstructing aboriginal Mandan culture through archeology and oral history. With the aid of elders from both tribes, such as Hidatsa elders Bears Arm, Wolf Chief, Four Dancers, and Mrs. Good Bear, Bowers began his studies by first conducting a census of the lodge groups in the Mandan and Hidatsa sections of Like-A-Fishhook Village. Thereafter, he went on to outline their social and religious organization and to record their religious rites and the myths that underpinned them. He completed his Mandan study in 1931, and during 1932 and 1933, he worked on a similar report on Hidatsa culture. While working on his Hidatsa study, he expanded his earlier research on Mandan social and ceremonial life, particularly on eagle trapping.[101]

Though Bowers was an ethnographer at heart, he did conduct a few archeological investigations in the upper Knife-Heart Rivers region. For instance, in the period 1929 to 1931, he and his students conducted excavations at the Lower Sanger (32OL11), Greenshield (32OL17), and Hensler (32OL18) sites. Bowers never excavated any sites at

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[99] John Moses to Orin G. Libby, 22 October 1929, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[100] Bowers, *Hidatsa Social & Ceremonial Organization*, xvii.

[101] Ibid., xvii-xxx.

KRIV. Instead, he used "surface collections" from Big Hidatsa and Lower Hidatsa along with collections from thirty-three other village sites in the Missouri Valley in his assessment of prehistory of the area.[102] However, with the Great Depression deepening, the Logan Museum was unable to continue financing Bowers' research in ethnography or archeology. Unhappily, Bowers fell on hard times. With no income to allow him to go back to the University of Chicago, the young anthropologist went back to the family farm in Dunn County. For several years thereafter, he worked as a county farm agent.[103]

Scientific Excavation, Ethnography, and National Landmark Status, 1938-1964

While Alfred Bowers struggled to find support for his ethnographic work with the Mandan and Hidatsa, in 1938, the first scientific excavation of sites took place at KRIV, when William Duncan Strong, a professionally trained archeologist, visited there. At this date, Strong, a Columbia University professor, led a team of graduate students to Knife River. Strong's graduate students placed five test units in Big Hidatsa Village and four test units each in Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa villages for the purpose of obtaining ceramic collections and investigating the stratigraphy of the area. According to field notebooks, they also visited Amahami Village. Unfortunately, Strong, a major force in American anthropology, never formally wrote about these KRIV excavations other than to use the ceramic data in a summary article on the prehistory of the area entitled, "From History to Prehistory on the Northern Great Plains."[104] In the meantime, in 1940 and 1941, Alfred Bowers finally received some support from the Logan Museum. This financial backing enabled him to complete his manuscript on Mandan archeology and two others on Mandan and Hidatsa ceremonialism.[105]

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[102] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 29, 32-35.

[103] Bowers, *Hidatsa Social & Ceremonial Organization*, xxx. At this time, Bowers did seek employment with the Indian Service. He believed that his anthropological training would appeal to John Collier's Indian New Deal administration, and he felt that if he were assigned to the Fort Berthold Reservation, he could continue his studies. At this time, John Collier did bring many anthropologists from various backgrounds into the Indian Service either to gather basic facts about tribes in order to organize them into self-governing sovereign entities with tribal constitutions and/or to make social surveys of reservations. However, the Indian Service never hired Bowers for either purpose. By 1938, Collier's "applied anthropology" program and staff were disbanded because of a reduction in the Bureau's budget.

[104] Strong, who studied anthropology at the University of California under Alfred Louis Kroeber, received his doctorate in 1926. After receiving his degree, Strong worked for Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History (1926-1929); was a professor of anthropology at the University of Nebraska (1929-1931), where he helped organize the First Plains Conference, and then became a senior anthropologist for the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, as a senior anthropologist (1931-1937). Subsequently, he became a faculty member and later chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University. He applied the so-called direct historical method, working from known history in interpreting archeological sites. Robert Montgomery, *Register To The Papers Of The William Duncan Strong* (Washington, DC: National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, 2004), 3, 5-6, 29, Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 29; Waldo R. Wedel to Thomas D. Thiessen, 21 January 1977, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[105] Bowers, *Hidatsa Social & Ceremonial Organization*, xvii-xxxi.

After World War II, Bowers returned to the University of Chicago, where, in 1948, under noted anthropologist Fred Eggan, he completed his dissertation, "A History of the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians," which became the first scientific ethnographic study of this tribe.[106] According to Stanley Ahler, Bowers' analysis in his dissertation of rim form, rim decoration attributes, and body sherd surface treatments, provided "one of the earliest quantitative studies aimed at solving culture-historical problems." However, according to Ahler, the Middle Missouri archeological community did not receive Bowers' archeological field investigations positively, nor his ideas regarding the culture-history of the area, largely because of the "lack of publication of either the 1948 dissertation or the primary data upon which it was based."[107] However, two years later and three decades after his initial fieldwork, the University of Chicago Press published his study, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization.* In 1963, he then published his second volume, *Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization*, which appeared as *Bulletin 194* for the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology. At that time, Bowers was a member of the faculty of the University of Idaho.[108]

With completion of the first scientific excavation at KRIV by Duncan Strong, the first professional ethnographic study of the Mandan, and later the Hidatsa by Alfred Bowers, the scholarly community slowly added to the existing knowledge regarding the sites at Knife River. For instance, in 1941, George F. Will and Thad C. Hecker from the SHSND tested a midden dump at Lower Hidatsa Village, finding two distinct house floors. One was nine feet below the surface and centered beneath the dump. Subsequently, in a 1944 article for the *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, Will and Hecker estimated that Lower Hidatsa Village was probably established prior to A.D. 1740 and that the duration of occupation was at least a century long.[109]

In the period from World War II to 1964, scientific archeological investigations at KRIV continued. This research came under the direction of the Interagency Archeological Salvage Program (IASP), which was formed in 1945 when American archeologists learned of the threat to archeological resources posed by the extensive plans for federally-sponsored, multi-purpose dam and related projects throughout the West. By 1945, construction plans were already well advanced, and the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) had already begun work on the Missouri River dams. Time was of the essence if Middle Missouri River archeological knowledge was to be preserved prior to construction and flooding of the reservoirs. Various archeological

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 29, 32-35. At some point during the Knife River Indian Villages research, Stan Ahler met Alfred Bowers when the latter visited the area. Ahler's discussions with Bowers led him to reassess Bowers' earlier ideas about Mandan and Hidatsa culture history, which, as stated, were generally given little credit by the archeological community. This led to a new appreciation for Bowers' earlier work, which is explained in the Knife River Indian Villages synthesis. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[108] Bowers, *Hidatsa Social & Ceremonial Organization*, xvii-xxxi.

[109] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 29-30; George F. Will and Thad C. Hecker, "The Upper Missouri River Valley Aboriginal Culture in North Dakota," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 11, Nos. 1 and 2: 5-126.

groups and societies, such as the American Anthropological Association (AAA), formed the Committee for the Recovery of Archeological Remains. With NPS and Smithsonian Institution support, they formed together into the IASP. This joint NPS-Smithsonian organization oversaw agreements for salvage surveys and excavations with state historical societies, such as SHSND, and local agencies. Special emphasis was given to large river basins, such as the Missouri River Basin, where the Smithsonian agreed to carry out large parts of the actual necessary excavations. Using the knowledge, facilities, resources, and funds of many agencies, IASP carried out intensive archeological, historical, and paleontological surveys in reservoir areas in forty states from 1946 to 1960.[110]

IASP research was carried out by the Smithsonian Institution-NPS' River Basin Surveys (SIRBS) program, and by various cooperating state and local museums and historical societies.[111] In west-central North Dakota, through emergency excavation, IASP surveyed, tested, and salvaged significant sites prior to the flooding of the Garrison Reservoir. The Garrison Reservoir was upstream from the Knife River villages, which were not considered endangered by inundation at the time. Nonetheless, the reservoir flooded the prehistoric fortified Rock Village site occupied once by the *Awatixa*, along with a group of *Hidatsa*-proper, the Crows-Flies-High Site, and Like-A-Fishhook Village, the long-time home of modern Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Indians. Excavation on important prehistoric Missouri valley sites elsewhere diverted attention from the Knife River villages until the early 1960s.[112]

As events turned out, the largest number of significant archeological sites spared by Missouri River Basin project in North Dakota was located in a stretch of fifty miles between the upper end of the Oahe Reservoir at Bismarck and Garrison Dam. While sites in this stretch of the Missouri were safe from inundation, some sites, such as Deapolis Village, which in 1797 and 1798 fur trader David Thompson referred to as the "4th village" of the Mandan-Hidatsa villages and the principal village of the Mandan,[113] were not safe from destruction. Fortunately, lay archeologist Ralph Thompson excavated and reported upon this nineteenth-century Mandan village below Knife River. Thompson amassed a sizeable collection of artifacts from the site, which subsequently figured prominently in understanding the villages at KRIV. Additionally, his 1961 article, "The

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[110] Committee for the Recovery of Archaeological Remains, *The Inter-Agency Archaeological Salvage Program After Twelve Years* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, 1958), 1-3. Interestingly, when the Army Corps of Engineers negotiated with the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation to construct Garrison Dam on their land, "Army negotiators offered to purchase an equal amount of land in the Knife River Valley to replace that lost to the Garrison project, but the Indians found it unsuitable for their needs." Michael L. Lawson, *Dammed Indians: The Pick-Sloan Plan The Missouri River Sioux, 1944-1980* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 59-60.

[111] ISAP operated until 1975, although the Smithsonian Institution ended its participation in 1969. Thomas D. Thiessen, "The Role of the Missouri Basin Project and the Midwest Archeological Center in the Interagency Archeological Salvage Program, 1946-1975," Special Report No. 2, 1999 (Lincoln, Nebraska: Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service).

[112] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 30.

[113] Wood, "David Thompson at the Mandan-Hidatsa Villages, 1797-1798: The Original Journals," 329-342.

Final Story of the Deapolis Indian Village Site" in *North Dakota History*, renewed interest by archeologists and historians in the Knife River Indian villages.[114]

In the meantime, SHSND Superintendent Russell Reid, who in the late 1920s had been involved in trying to purchase the Knife River Indian village sites to create a North Dakota state park, once again became involved in protecting, preserving, and interpreting the Knife River Indian villages. In 1948, Reid edited and annotated *Lewis and Clark in North Dakota*, a travel guide using the explorers' journal entries to describe their encounters with new peoples and cultures as well as the flora, fauna, geology, and geography they encountered. Reid followed up with *Sakakawea, The Bird Woman* (1950), a historical account of the woman companion and guide on the expedition. Throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s, Reid continued to promote the explorers' historic trail through North Dakota for historical tourism reasons.[115]

In the fall of 1962, a major step was taken in the formation of a Lewis and Clark trail corridor, when Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, along with representatives of the Darling Foundation, several federal agencies, and several states met in Portland, Oregon, to discuss this proposal. In 1963, Congress approved a trail plan in principal, and on October 6, 1964, Congress approved Public Law 88-630, establishing the Lewis and Clark Trail Commission (LCTC) to stimulate federal, state, and local agencies to identify, mark, and preserve for the public inspiration and enjoyment the route traveled by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. The LCTC, which included SHSND representatives, was authorized to "advise government agencies in selecting and marking a suitable connecting network of roads along the route.[116] As a member of the LCTC, SHSND Superintendent Reid revitalized interest from both archeologists and historians in the area once again because of the area's association with the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery.

While the SHSND lobbied for including the Knife River Indian villages as a stop on the Lewis and Clark Trail, NPS became involved with the sites for the first time. In the course of working on a NPS national survey of historic sites and buildings project for National Historic Landmark status, Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) senior archeologist Paul L. Beaubien completed a survey form on "Big Hidatsa (or Olds) Village Site." This two-page form filled out by Beaubien in October 1961 set into motion the NPS' interest in the Knife River Indian villages. As far as can be determined, the site form contained the earliest known photographs of any village site at KRIV. Furthermore, the seven photographs attached to the form included an aerial picture of the site as well.

Citing Will and Hecker's 1944 article on the upper Missouri Valley aboriginal culture in North Dakota to describe the importance of the Knife River Indian villages, Beaubien

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[114] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 30; Ralph Thompson, "The Final Story of the Deapolis Indian Village Site," *North Dakota History*, Vol. 28, No. 24: 143-154.

[115] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 3.

[116] Washington State History Museum webpage, http://www.wshs.org/wshm/lewisandclark/footsteps.htm.

stated:

> Much of the [Big Hidatsa] village area is adjacent to unoccupied ranch buildings on land owned by a Mr. Olds. However, it extends southward under the buildings of another ranch. Byron Grannis is the name on the mailbox at this second ranch. Because of the rich archeological values, a greater amount of visible surface evidence of Indian occupation than is usual, and the educational potential, which could be developed through ethnological and historical research, this site merits the "exceptional value" classification in either of two themes, VIII (Contact with the Indians) or III (Indian Villages and Communities).[117]

Although Beaubien considered all of the Knife River villages for the National Historic Landmark (NHL) status, Park Service officials believed that one village, rather than a group, should be designated as a registered NHL. Because of its size (fifteen acres with depressions of more than 108 circular earth-lodges and several fortification trenches), its integrity (considered by Beaubien "exceptionally well preserved"), and "its classic character," Big Hidatsa Village was thereafter selected as *eligible* for NHL designation. Three years later, on July 17, 1964, Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall advised North Dakota Senators Milton R. Young (Republican, 1945-1981) and Quentin N. Burdick (Democrat, 1960-1992), along with Congressman Don Livingston Short (Republican, 1959-1965) that the NPS Advisory Board had designated Big Hidatsa eligible as a registered NHL under Theme VIII, *Contact with the Indians*.[118] Theme VIII was probably prepared by Preston Holder of the University of Nebraska in a report for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings in September 1963, which discussed Big Hidatsa Village briefly and provided two illustrations of the village.[119]

Contact with the Indians vs. Indian Villages and Communities

The documents provide no indication why Theme VIII, *Contact with the Indians*, was selected over Theme III, *Indian Villages and Communities*. However, the long history of making the significance of Lewis and Clark Expedition more important than understanding the history and culture of the Hidatsa and Mandan by public officials may explain why. The early decision to link the Big Hidatsa Village site to NPS Theme VIII, *Contact with the Indians*, and not with Theme III, *Indian Villages and Communities*, was expeditious but proved insufficiently accurate. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, the tension between these two concepts played havoc with the creation, interpretation, and management of the park. Furthermore, the advocacy and oscillation of these two viewpoints by public officials, from Congress to individual park managers, made defining and determining KRIV's purpose and mission difficult.

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[117] Paul L. Beaubien, *National Survey Of Historic Sites And Buildings: Big Hidatsa (Or Olds) Village Site (32ME12)*, http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/66000600.pdf.

[118] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 3.

[119] Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

CHAPTER FOUR

ROOTS AND PASSAGE OF KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE ENABLING LEGISLATION, 1964-1974

Following the designation of Big Hidatsa as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1964, it took several years before NPS set into motion a feasibility study of including this and surrounding sites within the National Park System. In time, a movement developed around this feasibility study toward this action. North Dakota's congressional delegation sponsored legislation to this end with the support of state government officials, Native American groups, associations, and local individuals. On the other hand, many local landowners stridently opposed the park's establishment. The debate extended over a full decade, with each interest group involved expressing different motives for either promoting or opposing the establishment of Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS). As will be seen, the outcome was left in the balance until virtually the last possible moment.

Paul Ewald and the Establishment of Knife River as a NHS, 1964-1968

Following the designation of Big Hidatsa as a NHL in July 1964, Paul A. Ewald, chairman of the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) Archeological Board, became directly involved in the fate of the Knife River Indian Villages archeological sites. In the fall of that year, Ewald met in Omaha with Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) Park Planner Harry Robinson, MWRO research archeologist Wilfred R. Logan and Western Service Center (WSC) Chief of History and Historic Architecture Merrill J. Mattes. It is not known who instigated this particular meeting, the Park Service or Ewald. But, at the meeting, for the first time, NPS officials seriously discussed the possibility of including the "Hidatsa" village sites as an NPS unit. Furthermore, at this meeting, Park Service officials requested that Ewald take the lead, on the Park's behalf, and in investigating the land status upon which the villages sat.[120] Ewald was happy to do so.

Upon his return to Bismarck, Ewald first contacted Mercer County Judge George Sagehorn. Ewald sought three pieces of information from Sagehorn: a list of all the property owners whose land encompassed the Indian village sites, descriptions of the various properties, and a tax list. Since the most important property owner was George Buchfink, Ewald and Sagehorn first talked with him about the Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa village sites. From Buchfink, Ewald reportedly received authorization to control all ingress and egress to both sites. Ewald was also given authorization to act on Buchfink's behalf in instituting legal action in cases of trespass and violation of the North Dakota's antiquities law. Delighted with this news, Ewald immediately informed

[120] Paul A. Ewald to Harry Robinson, 30 October 1964, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

Robinson and Logan of these actions. He also alerted Warren W. Caldwell, director of the Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Surveys, and North Dakota Governor William L. Guy.[121]

Thereafter, Ewald worked directly with MWRO archeologist Logan, providing NPS with advice on additional necessary land purchases to protect other village sites, such as Big Hidatsa. Incidentally, Ewald, who was also chairman of the North Dakota Lewis and Clark Trail Committee (LCTC), informed Logan that the committee was "sold" on the idea.[122] Much as in the late 1920s, when Orin Libby tried to create a state park from the Knife River Indian Villages, LCTC involvement at this time related the establishment of KRIV to the Corps of Discovery Expedition history and linked the future park to NPS Theme VIII, *Contact with the Indians*.

Meanwhile, in 1965, scholars such as Donald J. Lehmer signified the importance of Big Hidatsa as a NHL with the beginning of a new series of archeological investigations into the Knife-Heart region. This region was the last segment of the Missouri Valley not inundated by Missouri River federal dam construction in the late 1940s and 1950s. In 1950, Lehmer, a Harvard graduate (1952), joined the staff of the Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Surveys in Lincoln, Nebraska. Fifteen years later, he compiled "Salvage Archeology in the Middle Missouri," an administrative project report for the MWRO in Omaha, Nebraska. Lehmer devoted the rest of his professional life to "elucidating the culture, history and ecology of the village peoples of the Northern Plains—the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara."[123]

Under SHSND auspices, in 1965, Lehmer conducted test excavations at Lower Hidatsa and Sakakawea villages. Lehmer and a student crew from Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, where he taught, dug two test pits at each site to gather stratigraphic and ceramic information for the region. The Dana College excavations were the first and only scientific excavation of these villages prior to NPS acquiring the property. Lehmer later provided his research to NPS in *Knife River Archeological Sites: An Evaluation* (1967). This research, along with later other separate sample studies of sixteen other villages conducted by him, along with anthropologist W. Raymond Wood of the University of Missouri in the area between Garrison Dam and the upper reaches of the Oahe Reservoir in 1966 and 1967, provided the base for cultural-ecological studies of the prehistoric Mandan and Hidatsa that NPS relied upon as a data source before planning the creation of and development of the KRIV several years later.[124]

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Paul A. Ewald to Wilfred D. Logan, 11 May 1965, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[123] W. Raymond Wood, "Donald Jayne Lehmer, 1918-1975," *American Antiquity*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (April 1976): 178-180.

[124] Ahler, "Archeological Study Previous to the KNRI Program," 30-31; Wood, "Donald Jayne Lehmer, 1918-1975," 179; Donald J. Lehmer, "Knife River Archeological Sites—An Evaluation," circa 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

While Lehmer and Wood conducted the above work, MWRO moved forward ambitiously in recognizing the national historical and archeological importance of Big Hidatsa Village. Realizing that preservation of the site could not be taken for granted forever, in May 1965, NPS attempted to conduct a feasibility study of the site as an addition to the National Park System. MWRO's objective at this time was to focus on Big Hidatsa Village, as well as the somewhat removed Double Ditch State Historic Site (32BL8) administered by SHSND. The latter site was a large earth-lodge Mandan village overlooking the Missouri River, located seven and one-half miles north of Bismarck and abandoned during the massive smallpox epidemic of 1780-1781. However, extremely severe weather conditions compelled the abandonment of MWRO's effort after an inconclusive preliminary study.[125] Thereafter, MWRO became preoccupied with other projects and dropped the matter.

Renewed Interest and the 1968 NPS Feasibility Study

However, several North Dakotans, including Paul Ewald, were not willing to let the matter lag. In August 1966, Ewald contacted Logan to get a status report. Logan's response was lukewarm at best. To proceed further, Logan suggested that Ewald have a congressional member contact NPS regarding the status of the project. If he did, Logan assured Ewald, prompt and assiduous attention would be given to the matter. Ewald immediately contacted Senator Quentin N. Burdick, requesting that the senator write NPS to see if they could reactivate the whole project.[126] Washington Office Assistant Director of Resource Studies Howard R. Stagner promptly responded to Burdick's office, but not with the answer that Ewald sought. Stagner stated that "we certainly agree that the Knife River Villages, and the Big Hidatsa Village in particular, are worthy of consideration for possible inclusion in the National Park System, and we hope to study the area with that objective in mind at our earliest opportunity...[but because of many other studies] it will not be possible to complete the study of the Knife River area before July 1968."[127]

Undeterred, in February of 1967, Ewald, who now was chairman of the North Dakota State Historical Society, and North Dakota LCTC chairman, phoned Washington Office chief archeologist John M. Corbett, seeking information on the project. Corbett replied that to date no actual work had been started on the project. However, Corbett promised him it was scheduled for July 1, 1968.[128] Perhaps believing he was getting the "run around," Ewald prompted Governor William L. Guy to write to NPS to inquire as to the status of the feasibility study as well.[129] NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr. (1964-

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[125] Fred C. Fagergren to Regional Director, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Mid-Continent Region, 23 November 1965, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[126] Quentin N. Burdick to Paul Ewald, 16 August 1966, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[127] Howard R. Stagner to Quentin N. Burdick, 2 September 1966, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[128] John M. Corbett to Paul Ewald, 3 February 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[129] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 4.

1972) advised Governor Guy that the feasibility study would be made as soon as possible.[130] But Hartzog, "a dynamic, politically astute manager," who "welcomed some 70 new areas to the National Park System during his nine-year tenure as director and greatly enlarged the service's role in urban recreation, historic preservation, interpretation, and environmental education,"[131] succumbed to the pressure. With Governor Guy's request in hand, Director Hartzog set into motion a new effort to conduct a feasibility study of Big Hidatsa Village for NPS status.

In early August, Ewald was given the "good news," that a planning team was organized by WSC's Office of Resource Planning in San Francisco,[132] and he eagerly passed that information on to Governor Guy.[133] Merrill Mattes, who not only was Ewald's colleague and friend, but who for many years was MWRO historian at Omaha, captained the team. Other study team members were just as qualified. They included landscape architect Marcus P. Malik, realty specialist Clarence Yurk, Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) archeologist Jackson W. "Smoky" Moore, and Arthur L. Sullivan, superintendent of Theodore Roosevelt National (Memorial) Park (TRNP).[134] Ewald also alerted SHSND Superintendent Ray H. Mattison[135] and sole staff archeologist James E. Sperry[136] of their possible involvement as well[137] and wrote Mattes that "it seems such a long time since this Feasibility Study has been in the making that its coming now seems almost anticlimatical. Let's hope J. Pluvius cooperates!"[138]

With the organization of the feasibility study team, in August 1967, TRNP Superintendent Sullivan (March 1966 to July 1969) set to work laying the groundwork

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[130] Ibid.

[131] http://www.nps.gov/history/history/hisnps/NPSHistory/directors.htm.

[132] Jackson W. Moore, Jr. to Paul A. Ewald, 9 August 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[133] Paul A. Ewald to William L. Guy, 23 August 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[134] MWRO archeologist Logan and Donald Lehmer of Dana College later provided technical assistance to the planning team. Jackson W. Moore, Jr. to Paul A. Ewald, 9 August 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE; NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 26.

[135] Ray H. Mattison became North Dakota State Historical Society superintendent in 1965 once he retired from the National Park Service as a historian for the Midwest Region. Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[136] James Sperry received his M.A. from the University of Nebraska (1965). Thereafter, Paul Ewald offered him a job as archeologist for the State Historical Society of North Dakota. Sperry worked as an archeologist with the Historical Society until 1969, at which time, on August 1st, he was appointed superintendent when Ray Mattison retired. Sperry tells an interesting story of visiting Knife River with Paul Ewald the very week he reported to the job. Ewald immediately took him on a tour of all the Missouri River Indian village sites in his Cadillac, which Ewald used almost as a "cross-county" vehicle, and one that others remembered as well. Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008; Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[137] Paul A. Ewald to Jackson Moore, 24 August 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[138] Paul A. Ewald to M.J. Mattes, 24 August 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

for the study. From the beginning, it was quite clear that NPS officials considered adding to the National Park System not just Big Hidatsa but also all the major Knife River village sites. That summer, Sullivan conducted area research to this end. He also kept in mind the villages association with NPS Theme VIII, *Contact with the Indians*.

Seeing that the village sites might be part of a potential Lewis and Clark tour route through Mercer County, Sullivan first wrote to Mercer County officials, noting that their draft county comprehensive plan contained no mention of the Hidatsa village sites. Sullivan pointed out to them that the Hidatsa villages were located on privately owned land, currently used by farmers as pasture. Sullivan also played up the fact that they were famous for their association with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. According to Sullivan, "this route passes through Mercer County and when fully developed no doubt will bring about a dramatic influx of visitors to this area. The tourist impact could be significant." But Sullivan cautioned that "whether or not the Hidatsa Village Sites are included in the National Park System is, at this stage of planning, merely a possibility."[139]

With preliminary work completed, the actual feasibility study took place from September 26 to October 5, 1967.[140] The study team conferred with a wide spectrum of the North Dakota citizens, including Governor Guy, Chief of the State Highway Department, Walter Hjella, and of course Paul Ewald. While at Stanton, the team spoke with several landowners and county officials, whom they found "uniformly friendly and helpful after the clarification of the team objectives." One pivotal landowner specifically mentioned in their report was Byron Grannis, who now owned the land upon which Big Hidatsa Village was located. In 1964, following notification of the eligibility of the site for NHL status, Grannis refused to request a bronze plaque and/or participate in the program. The landowner's reasoning was that "since he was operating a farm," he did not "want the public to invade his premises, jeopardizing both his farm and the Indian village." Grannis thought it "best to ignore the invitation and maintain the status quo."[141]

In a memorandum to the Washington Office, MWAC chief archeologist Jackson Moore best described what the study team accomplished during their visit. According to Moore, the team first met with Judge Sagehorn and George Buchfink, owner of the Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa Village sites. To Moore, the preservation of these two villages was excellent, although Moore noted that Sakakawea Village had been in danger of undercutting due to fluctuations of the Knife River ever since the Garrison and Oahe dams began their operation.[142] Moore warned Washington Office that if stabilization

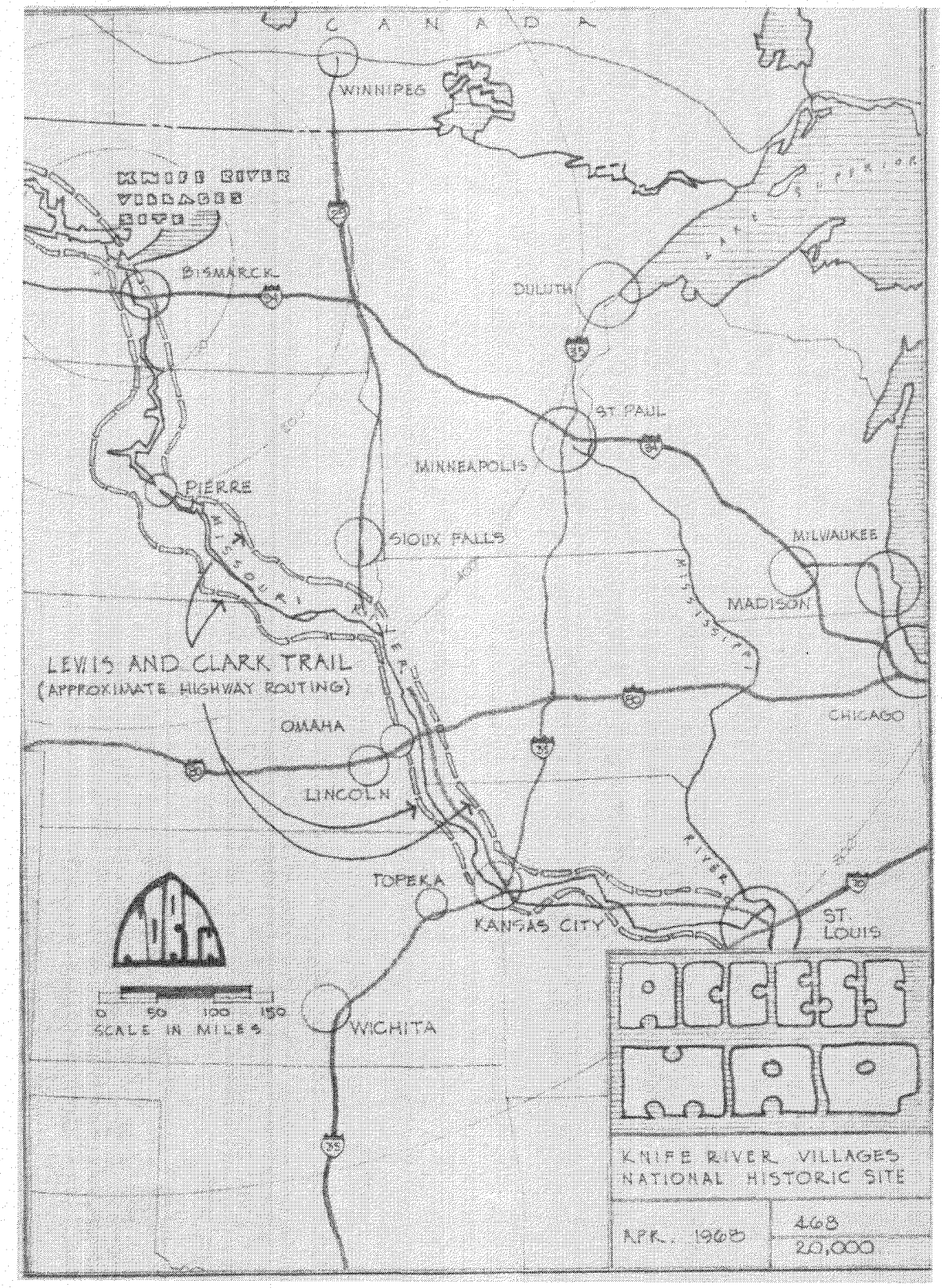
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[139] Arthur L. Sullivan to Warren A. Moreau, 11 August 1967, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[140] Because the sites involved were in private ownership, SHSND Superintendent Mattison decided that his staff would not participate in the study but would provide technical assistance if necessary. Ray H. Mattison to Robert S. Luntey, 21 September 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[141] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 3-4.

[142] In actuality, according to Thomas D. Thiessen, "Knife River has probably been eroding the Sakakawea Village since the 19th century. Lewis' 1883 map of the village shows earth-lodges truncated by the river channel." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.



Access Map Indicating Connection of Lewis and Clark Trail Highway to Proposed Knife River Villages National Historic Site: *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*, 1968.

measures were not taken soon, "in three years this smallest village will be noticeably reduced in size." The Mattes study team next visited Byron Grannis, owner of the Big Hidatsa Village site. According to Moore, they found him "congenial."[143]

The study team next looked at the Forrest Krieger property, which contained the cemetery of the Big Hidatsa Village.[144] Up until 1946, Herbert Knoop had raised grain and stock on the property. Knoop thereafter sold it to Gus and Olga Krieger, who in 1958 rented it for a time to their son Forrest and his wife Violet. In 1962, Forrest's parents deeded it to them.[145] The graves began at a barn and extended some 400 yards east and north, but Moore noted that eight graves appeared to have been vandalized and backfilled. Thereafter, when landscape architect "Mark" Malik joined the party, Moore and Malik walked out a route for a one-way interpretive road for a potential park. The road they laid out first crossed the Knife River and then ran near Sakakawea Village and northward through the woods all the way to a ridge east of the Big Hidatsa Village cemetery. Once there, it bent west past the Krieger barn to join the county road. By the end of the site visit, the "team was enthusiastic about this area." They then went eight miles south to Fort Clark. Once there, they discussed acquisition of this property with SHSND officials. The State of North Dakota was willing to deed Fort Clark to the National Park Service "because of their own lack of ability to develop it within the next 30-50 years." Over all, the study team seemed impressed with the significance, preservation, and extent of Fort Clark, but made no commitments.[146] Subsequent to the team's visit, Mattes went to Omaha and filled in the regional director and the chief of the Washington Office on the project.[147]

Meanwhile, Paul Ewald provided Mattes with additional technical assistance valuable to the study team. For instance, Ewald and George Stroup, a banker from Hazen, took aerial photographs of the villages, conducted an oral history with Nate Olds, the former landowner of the Hidatsa Village site, and reported on Stanton "gossip" about the project. In this context, Ewald told Mattes that Stroup informed Forrest Krieger that he was "probably injuring the value of his holdings by virtue of his reckless 'pot-hunting,'" which elicited a response from Krieger's wife that Forrest had "sworn off all further potting."[148] In the meantime, Ewald and others were "all waiting with bated breath hoping for a 'thumbs up' decision" from the National Park Service.[149]

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[143] Jackson W. Moore, Jr. to Chief Archeologist, Washington Office, 23 October 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Heinemeyer and Janssen, *History Of Mercer County, North Dakota*, 14-15, 20-21; Oral History of Jesse Krieger, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[146] Jackson W. Moore, Jr. to Chief Archeologist, Washington Office, 23 October 1967, File KNRI—Feasibility Study and Related Matters, 1964-1969, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

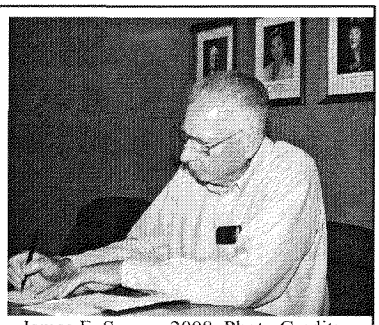
[147] Merrill Mattes to Paul Ewald, 16 October 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[148] Merrill Mattes to Paul Ewald, 20 October 1967, Paul Ewald to Merrill Mattes, 20 October 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[149] Paul A. Ewald to Warren W. Caldwell, 23 October 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

Beginning Landowner Troubles and NPS Erosion Concerns

Unbeknownst to the study team, all was not well with landowner Byron Grannis. Ewald informed Mattes that he had heard rumors that Grannis was "hollering to high heaven because of the ridiculously low offer that had been tendered him." Unperturbed, Ewald thought that someone had simply "run up against evidence of the Grannis willfulness and temper," without Ewald's "help." Ewald also mentioned that Grannis had graded an access road right through the middle of the village, from his residence to some old buildings north of the site. Ewald thought that the road "didn't ruin the site," but that he "would have preferred it to remain as it had for the last 125 years."[150] As it turned out, for some unknown reason, TRNP Superintendent Sullivan may have advised Grannis to bulldoze this access road to the Big Hidatsa Village site.[151]



James E. Sperry, 2008. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

If Byron Grannis was reluctant to advertise Big Hidatsa, the SHSND was not. In due course, James Sperry, newly appointed as SHSND superintendent and "a comer, and make no mistake of that," according to Ewald,[152] used funding from the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) to call attention to the site. The BOR was created in 1962 to develop outdoor recreation programs nationwide, and SHSND used BOR grant money to publish a revised edition of *Historic Sites of North Dakota: A Report on Their Preservation, Development, and Interpretation.* In this report, SHSND openly recommended that the "Hidatsa Indian Villages in Mercer County" be added to the National Park System.[153]

Though during this initial period NPS relations with SHSND and some local property owners appeared to have remained on good footing, there were problems of another sort—erosion. By February 1968, the National Park Service's feasibility study was nearing completion. However, one glaring area of vulnerability became apparent at this time to MWRO Regional Director Fred C. Fagergren. The draft material indicated that the condition of the riverbank where Sakakawea Village was located was very unstable. Fluctuations of the Knife River over the past two years were far worse than during any previous period, and the bank had slumped considerably that spring. Fagergren contacted Governor Guy regarding this point, stating that the study was generally favorable toward establishing the park, but "only on the basis of three intact villages with their attendant

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[150] Paul [Ewald] to Merrill J. Mattes, 22 October 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[151] Paul A. Ewald to Merrill J. Mattes, 30 October 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[152] Paul A. Ewald to Warren W. Caldwell, 23 October 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[153] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 3-4.

features (i.e., cemeteries)." Fagergren suggested to Governor Guy that if he could use his "good office to effect some stabilization of the bank at the Sakakawea Village it would make a favorable action by the National Park Service Advisory Board more certain."[154]

Meanwhile, during the winter of 1967-1968, Jackson Moore assembled the archeological data for a feasibility study. He provided historical and ethnological background sections, information on the condition and evaluation of the archeological resources, and sections recommending research and an interpretive plan.[155] By March 1968, Jackson Moore completed a draft of the feasibility report for establishing a Knife River Villages National Historic Site at Stanton, North Dakota. At this point, Roy E. Appleman, Washington Office chief of the Branch of Park History Studies, who had been researching the Lewis and Clark Expedition for some time, reviewed the document prior to release and clarified several points. But clearly, from his review and Moore's responses, there appeared to be conflicts between Appleman's historical interpretation and Jackson Moore's archeological perspective,[156] indicating differences between the two key basic thematic interpretations for the future park, *Contact with the Indians*, and/or *Indian Villages and Communities*.

Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives, 1968

In April 1968, Mattes' study team completed their feasibility study, which they entitled *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*. The study team used the term "Knife River Villages" in preference to "Hidatsa Villages" because the term was "more readily comprehensible to laymen; also because the study wished to emphasize the broad anthropological, typological, and historical meaning of the site, rather than the limited story of a relatively obscure Indian tribe called Hidatsa." The study team also used the term "national historic site" rather than "national monument" because areas of historic or prehistoric interest fit into the "history" category of National Park Service terminology.[157]

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[154] Fred C. Fagergren to William L. Guy, 26 February 1968, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND. Thereafter, the State of North Dakota began exploring measures to retard the erosion of this village site. It seemed that the problem stemmed from heavy spring rains aggravated further by "abnormal flows of the Missouri resulting from releases at the Garrison Dam and causing back-up of water in the Knife." In the spring of 1969, Superintendent Sullivan visited the site and photographed the high spring runoff. To him, it was quite obvious that the continued erosion of the riverbank would ultimately destroy much of Sakakawea Village, and control of the Knife River would continue to be a major preservation issue in the future. NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 10; Arthur L. Sullivan to Regional Director, 14 April 1969, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND. Interestingly, while there, landowners informed TRNP Superintendent Sullivan that in the past year the Smithsonian Institution had been seeking permission to excavate the Knife River sites, but permission had not been granted.

[155] Robert S. Luntey to Archeologist Logan, Midwest Regional Office, 22 December 1967, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[156] Roy E. Appleman to Regional Director, Midwest Region, 4 March 1968, Roy E. Appleman to Merrill Mattes, 15 March 1968, Jackson W. Moore, Jr. to Chief, Archeological Research, Omaha, 22 March 1968, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[157] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 4-5.

With these technical issues aside, the 1968 feasibility study accentuated that *historically*, the Knife River Villages were pivotal to six key historical events. First, they were one of the sites where adaptive horticulture took place, making the Northern Plains suitable for farming for native inhabitants and for the later emigrants to the area. Second, they were the home for both the river and mountain branches of the Crow Nation of Montana and provided unparalleled opportunity to tell the story of a "plains agricultural group adapting to a nomadic, equestrian way of life—that of the classic Plains Indian." Third, the Knife River villages were a "major hub for trading activities, both intertribal and with white fur traders," and the "scene of many confrontations between Canadians, the French, the Spanish, and the Americans." Fourth, Lewis and Clark visited the Knife River villages frequently during their 1804-1805 winter camp at Fort Mandan, located a few miles south; in fact, one of these villages was the home of Sakakawea and Toussaint Charbonneau, whom Lewis and Clark engaged as an interpreter. Fifth, the Knife River villages could be associated with famous artists and writers such as George Catlin, Karl Bodmer, Prince Alexander Maximilian of Wied (Germany), and John James Audubon. And lastly, the Knife River Villages would complement Fort Union Trading Post NHS, the principal fur trading post on the Upper Missouri River between 1828 and 1867, and acquired by NPS in 1966.[158] The above interpretation reflected the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*, and was reflective of the viewpoint of historians such as Mattes and Appleman.

Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives continued by stating that *archeologically* the Knife River Villages were the "only outstanding *surviving* physical remains of a widespread aboriginal culture, characterized by earth-lodge villages and a horticulture-buffalo hunting complex that dominated the Middle Missouri River for several centuries at the dawn of European-American invasion." *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives* also underlined the fact that only a score of years previously, there had been earth-lodge villages greater in size, complexity, and preservation (if not equal in historic interest) throughout the length of the Missouri River, but unfortunately these other villages had been obliterated by agriculture or inundated by the construction of giant dams and reservoirs along the river. There were "simply no comparable sites remaining."[159] This interpretation clearly reflected the viewpoint of archeologists such as Jackson Moore and the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*.

In any case, after careful analysis, *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives* surmised that because of these unique and outstanding attributes, "...it can only be concluded that the Knife River Villages constituted a national treasure, historically and archeologically; that the Federal Government should assume responsibility for their preservation and interpretation; and that this goal can best be achieved by the creation of an integrated park unit operated by the National Park Service."[160]

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[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.

Park Planning Details: Alternative Plan A vs. Plan B

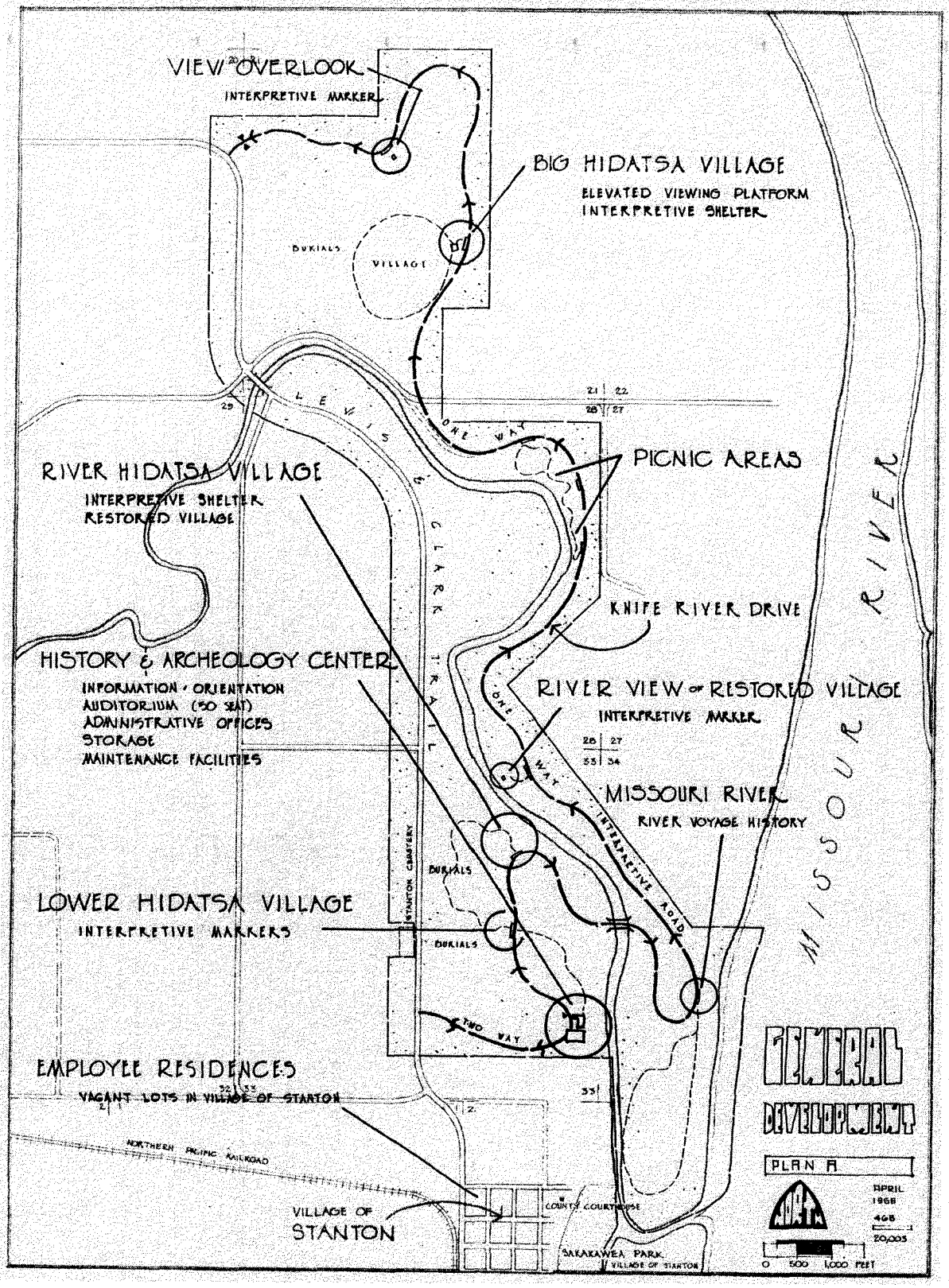
Two alternative plans were suggested in *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*. Both plans would preserve the prime archeological resource sites (Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, and Lower Hidatsa Villages) and provide a central interpretive facility on site.

Alternative Plan A provided for one park with all features full integrated and was the preferred plan because it "afforded maximum protection and a more park-like and exciting visitor experience." Plan A included an "expanded area beyond the mere conservation of the resource to provide a park-like setting within one contiguous boundary, with controlled access, internal circulation, expanded interpretative opportunities, and buffer zones." It provided for a short two-way road from graveled Mercer County Route 37, which was designated by the BOR as part of the Lewis and Clark Trail system, to a history and archeological center with information and orientation for the visitor, a fifty-seat auditorium, administrative offices, storage, and maintenance facilities. The interpretive center would describe the "Hidatsa people and their evolution from earlier archeological periods; the roles of the Hidatsa as warriors, traders, and culture-bearers; the relationship of the Hidatsa to other Upper Missouri historic cultures; early Euro-American contacts; details and impacts of the Lewis and Clark Expedition; later Euro-American visitors, including traders with their dubious gifts of liquor and disease germs which led to the near-extinction of these peoples; and finally, their migration to Fort Berthold and subsequent history, including documentation of typical surviving Hidatsa tribal members."[161]

From the interpretive center, the NHS visitor would proceed along a new one-way interpretive park road to find pull-outs and markers at Lower Hidatsa Village, a pull-out and interpretive shelter and restored village at Sakakawea Village, and then would cross Knife River via a new bridge to a point overlooking the Missouri River, where a pull-out and display on river voyage history (i.e., Lewis and Clark) was to be at hand. From the east side of the Knife River, the visitor would proceed northward along a "pleasant drive" to a river view pull-out of the restored Sakakawea Village and then through a "natural and historically-oriented environment" with picnic areas to an elevated vista-viewing platform overlooking Big Hidatsa Village with interpretive markers prior to reentering Mercer County Route 37.[162]

To accomplish and permit high-standard park development, *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives* outlined 1,230 acres of agricultural lands for acquisition in fee title to

[161] Ibid., 5-6, 10-12.
[162] Ibid.



Alternative Plan A: *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*, 1968.

ensure full protection of the resources.[163] An unspecified number of scenic easements on lands along the west side of Mercer County Route 37 were also needed.[164] At that time, scenic easement restrictions demanded that there be no buildings or other structures other than for farming, recreational, or single-family residential purposes, no utility transmission lines, and no noxious or offensive activity, such as junk cars, inoperative buses, house trailers, shanties, dilapidated structures, and trash or dumps.[165]

Under Alternative Plan A, one of the primary NPS objectives was "to conduct archeological research at the three village sites, to increase scientific knowledge, and to enable visitors to witness a long-range archeological project in operation." The San Francisco-based study team envisioned excavation and laboratory work taking place during the travel season, giving visitors a unique interpretive attraction, while allowing archeologists adequate time to become intimately familiar with these sites. A moderate pace and a relatively small crew would ensure the "indefinite continuation of the project as an interpretive feature." Closely related to the archeological research would be a planned restoration of Sakakawea Village in the form of a cluster of earth-lodges, chosen because this "site best lends itself as a highly photogenic setting at the edge of the Knife River." Finally, though the archeological research was seen as highly significant to the scientific world, interpretation was seen as the most important function for the benefit of visitors. The study team hoped to transform the area of the three villages from "rather drab and undistinguished" farmland into one of the National Park Service's more unusual areas through vigorous and imaginative historical interpretation. According to the study, it had "two romantic historical ingredients which intrigue most people—Indians and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The essential integrity of the historical terrain also lends itself to dramatic interpretive treatment."[166]

On the other hand, Alternative Plan B was one that required the minimum land necessary (550 acres) to preserve the resource and provide necessary access, parking, and site interpretation. The area would be composed of two separate parcels of land in fee title from Byron Grannis and George Buchfink. The research and restoration objectives would be the same as Plan A, as would requirements for an administrative-interpretive center and employee housing, but the road system for the park would be greatly reduced

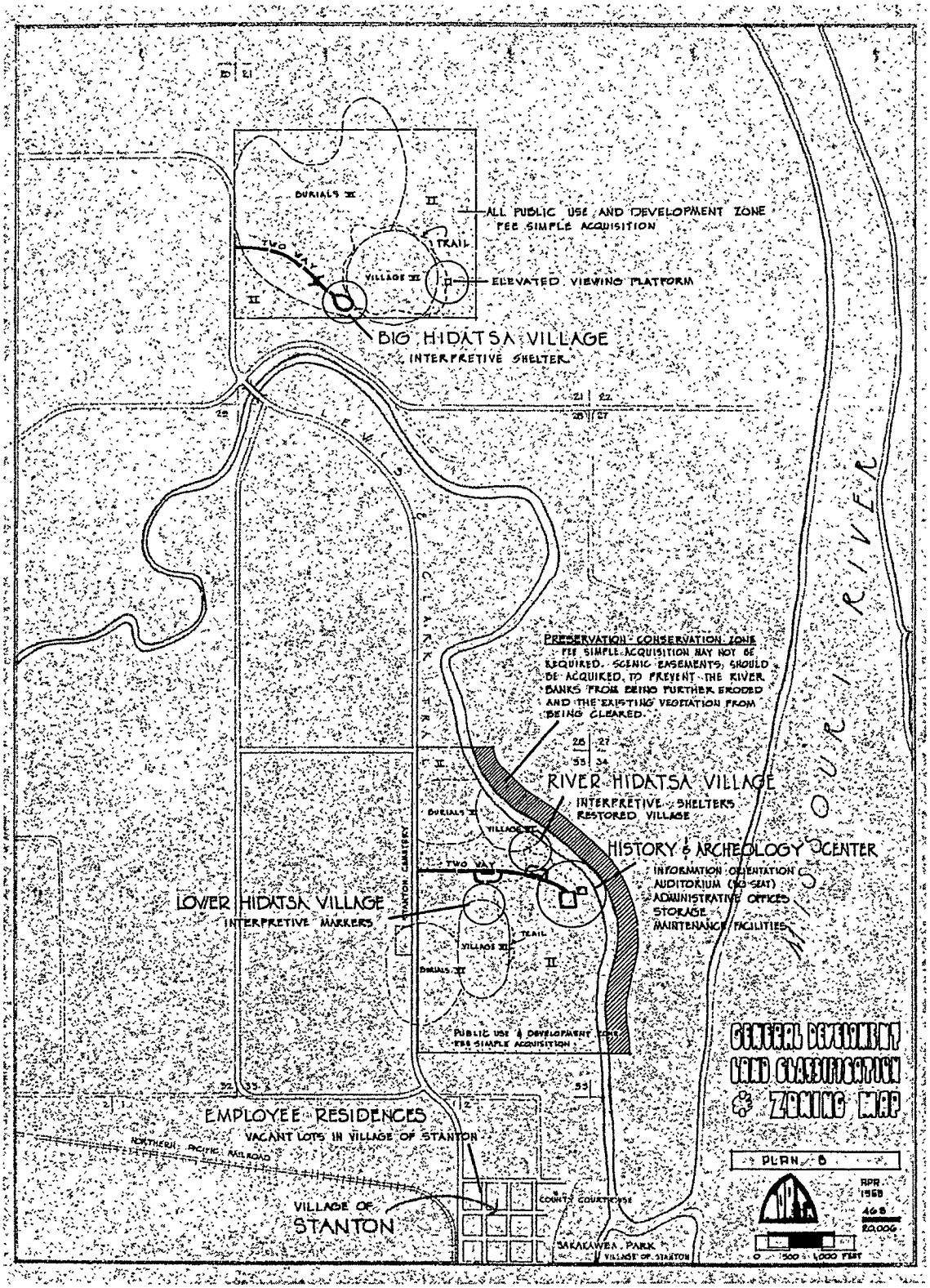
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[163] As stated previously, Byron Grannis owned the key site of Big Hidatsa Village. Though Grannis's farm buildings, farm roads, and cultivated fields surrounded it, the archeological site itself was considered still relatively intact. To the north of the Grannis property lay the Big Hidatsa cemetery. Olga Krieger owned this land, which was in pasture. On the other hand, George J. Buchfink owned much of the farmland north of Stanton that contained the Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa, and the Buchfink Village sites. Farmlands adjacent to the above properties were owned either by Herbert Oberlander, William Russell, and/or Max Borner and included lands east of the Knife River. Finally, Benjamin Neumann, George J. Buchfink, Max Borner, Janet Steifel, and William Rahm owned the farmlands along the proposed 300-foot scenic easement strip west of Mercer County Route 37. Donald F. Benson to Director, Midwest Region, 20 July 1972, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[164] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 9.

[165] Donald F. Benson to Director, Midwest Region, 20 July 1972, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[166] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 10-12.



Alternative Plan B: *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*, 1968.

and interpretation for the park would be more restrictive. According to *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*, Plan B lacked environmental integrity and placed interpretive emphasis on the immediate sites themselves. According to the study, though Plan B would preserve the historical-archeological resources, it would have the "effect of being more of an archeological resource preserve than a historical-archeological park for people."[167] The tension between the NPS study themes, *Contact with the Indians* and *Indian Villages and Communities*, is clearly reflected in this concluding statement comparing Alternative Plans A and B.

Questions of Funding, Erosion, Naming the Park, and Alternative Plan C

After the completion of *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*, NPS personnel in Washington, DC, reviewed the study, whereupon immediately the question of funding for Knife River stabilization came up. Washington staff requested that MWRO pursue it with the Corps of Engineers as soon as possible. Thereafter, Regional Director Fagergren explored the erosion issue with the Omaha District, but to no avail. Apparently, the Knife River was not within the Corps' Garrison-Oahe emergency bank protection project. However, a Corps representative indicated that in his opinion a 1966 flood caused the current problem, and that normal runoffs were "not too critical."[168]

Meanwhile that summer, North Dakota Senators Quentin N. Burdick and Milton R. Young and Governor Guy expressed to NPS Director Hartzog their constituents' continued interest in seeing this project approved as soon as possible. In response, Hartzog informed the Governor that NPS planned to complete the study, including a master plan, by the end of the fiscal year. Hartzog made mention of the National Park Service's erosion concerns. In truth, due to funding and personnel restrictions recently placed in effect, Hartzog felt that the National Park Service would not be able to complete the report until August of 1969.[169]

Unsatisfied with the pace of the project, Ewald later that summer tenaciously buttonholed NPS Associate Director Howard Baker during a retirement address for aging SHSND

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[167] NPS, *Alternatives Study For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 5-6, 12.

[168] Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities to Regional Director, Midwest Region 15 July 1968; Fred C. Fagergren to Assistant Director Cooperative Activities, 17 December 1968, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND. Prior to that flood, according to several local residents, the Sakakawea Village site adjacent to the Knife River was just completely white with animal and other bone fragments. Donna Buchmann, a local person, remembered that it was "just a thrill to go out and stand and watch the river go out and then walk along the bank and look up and see what we could see." Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. But in the 1966 flood, a good part of the Indian village was taken out, and according to Duane Payton the "bones had totally disappeared." Payton concluded that up until that time there hadn't been too much flooding along the Knife River because the Missouri River usually held back the Knife River from going out too quickly. In his opinion, the construction of the Garrison Dam changed that natural flow pattern. Oral History of Duane Payton, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[169] Quentin N. Burdick to George B. Hartzog, Jr., 11 July 1968; Milton R. Young to George B. Hartzog, Jr., 2 August 1968; George B. Hartzog, Jr. to Milton R. Young, 16 August 1968; Associate Director to William L. Guy, 1 October 1968, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

Superintendent Russell Reid. According to Ewald, Baker said that he had been interested in the site for thirty years. After their conversation, Ewald was convinced that Associate Director Baker would most likely be part of any future Washington level review process of the study.[170] Nonetheless, in November, Governor Guy again wrote Director Hartzog to express his continued interest in this historic site. This time, the Governor wholeheartedly endorsed the project, emphasizing that a national park at this site would greatly enhance the potential possibility of the Lewis and Clark Trail.[171]

Over that winter, while Director Hartzog held off pressure from North Dakota politicians, NPS Washington staff continued reviewing the study, resulting in Alternative Plan C, which was, in reality, Plan A with three significant changes. The one-way vehicle road and bridge over the Knife River would be replaced by a "hiking" trail; all land presently used as farmland would revert to prairie grasses to recreate the aboriginal environment; and the southern boundary would include the Buchfink site. One sticking point also centered on the terminology for the park. Should it be called Knife River "Hidatsa" Villages, or Knife River "Indian" Villages NHS? Historian Mattes insisted that it be called "Knife River Indian Villages," with no reference to the Hidatsa in the title. He wrote, "The word 'Hidatsa' is relatively meaningless to that large sector of the public composed of people other than anthropologists and ethnologists, and we are <u>not</u> attempting to immortalize the obscure people known as Hidatsa so much as we are preserving and interpreting a way of life that was once typical of many tribes on the Upper Missouri."[172] Mattes won this argument with the Washington staff.

However, disputes also again erupted over historical interpretation versus archeological perspective. MWRO archeologist Moore accused Mattes of "still trying to present the area as a straight historical area." In Moore's opinion, "the significance of this area is that it begins long before Lewis and Clark.... [And] Obviously, Merrill is terribly excited by the last phase of this story; and so am I, and so are we all. But the last phase is told elsewhere, if not altogether adequately.... I feel that the first phase is not told anywhere else (certainly not by anyone with adequate facilities) and should be the main thrust" of the park. To Moore and other archeologists, the story to be told at Knife River Indian Villages was that:

> Horticultural peoples from the true Plains of Minnesota found it necessary to emigrate out onto the prairie. The prairie was too harsh and barren for pre-horse people to live by hunting or to set up farming operation on the order of the Eastern Woodlands. The floodplains, however, served as ribbons of fertile plains across the vast prairie. They adjusted their lifeway and husbanded crops, which could survive and even thrive in the short growing season available....

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[170] Paul A. Ewald to Quentin N. Burdick, 3 July 1968, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[171] William L. Guy to George B. Hartzog, 14 November 1968, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[172] Merrill J. Mattes to Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities, 14 February 1969, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

> As permanent villages they evolved into centers of trade and communication and a means of cultural diffusion between themselves and the nomadic tribes who became more numerous after 1680. The presence of these Village Indians facilitated the series of expeditions of Lewis and Clark and their successors. They [sic] story is integral with of the Fur Trade and Westward Expansion. Their presence and their horticultural achievement made possible the eventual settlement of the northern part of the "Great American Desert."[173]

In arguing with historian Mattes, the MWRO archeologist tried to shift the thematic interpretation thrust of the park from *Contact with the Indians* back over to *Indian Villages and Communities*.

Meanwhile, in early April 1969, MWRO agreed with the proposed changes outlined in Plan C and prepared the final management objectives for the proposed Knife River Indian Villages NHS. The document used much of the language and ideas from Alternative Plan A (modified by Alternative Plan C) for the purpose of area, the environment, administration, buildings, and land acquisition. For management purposes, it stated that the National Park Service would complete archeological and historical research programs to obtain a complete and comprehensive inventory and evaluation of the resources of the area; that the agency would provide for "living demonstrations" of excavation and salvage of archeological remains; that it would coordinate an interpretive program and development with the Lewis and Clark Trail; and that it would cooperate with and encourage Mercer County and Stanton to implement necessary zoning to protect the environment surrounding the site.[174]

With regard to future interpretation themes, the document seemingly sided with the theme of *Indian Villages and Communities*. It impassively read:

> To present the story of man's adaptation to the use of the northern plains environment and the role of the site played in the early American movement westward. It is a chapter in our history, which portrayed man's systematic efforts through trial and error on how to live with the environment—neither taking nor destroying more than necessary, but still making the land productive to the needs of his society. It is also the story of man's inability to adapt to the more exacting requirements of later societies, but also how the new culture gained and was assisted by this association. This site presents the opportunity to portray to the visitor this important chapter of history, and it can be accomplished through research, restoration, exhibits, protection and interpretation of the events.[175]

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[173] J.W. Moore to Regional Director, 27 February 1969, Personal Papers of Thomas D. Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[174] Leroy R. Brown to Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities, 31 January 1969; "The Knife River Indian Villages (Proposed National Historic Site) Management Objectives," 3 April 1969, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[175] Ibid.

Final Alternative Plan D Selected

By late April, the Western Service Center concluded that development costs for Plan A would run $1.5 million, while those for Plan B would be approximately $700,000. If Knife River bank stabilization became the National Park Service's responsibility; an additional $250,000 would be needed as well. No estimate was included for the recommended reconstruction of Sakakawea Village, or a portion thereof, since the WSC had no opportunity to "consider this esoteric problem." Harry Robinson, now WSC acting chief of the Office of Resource Planning, suggested that the "Omaha archeologists initiate this analysis, which will be required, of course, for the final plan."[176] Thereafter, on July 3, 1969, study team captain Mattes returned the original *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives* to the MWRO director, informing him that he was free to select the preferred Alternative Plan A, as modified by the Washington staff.[177]

In response to Matte's suggestion, Director Fagergren approved a combination of Alternative Plans A and C. From Plan A, he agreed to acquiring all the land in fee simple between Big Hidatsa and the other village sites because fee ownership would permit restoration to conditions as nearly as possible recreating the setting at the period of Indian activity. From Plan C, Fagergren most notably included the Buchfink site within the proposed park boundaries.[178] Furthermore, the MWRO director made several word changes in the document, such as to a "fifty-seat" auditorium, which he left as just an auditorium. In the designation of the bridge, he eliminated the word "foot" and merely labeled it "bridge," and he substituted "hiking trail" for the words "interpretive trail or one-way road." Fagergren felt these changes permitted interpretive planners to make further studies before a final decision. With these changes, he created Alternative Plan D.[179]

On July 10, 1969, Fagergren approved this alternative, which would eventually be sent with supporting data to North Dakota's congressional representatives, governor, and various organizations and persons interested in this project.[180] Alternative Plan D became the basis for the next step in the process to create a NHS from the Knife River Indian villages—preparation of a preliminary master plan and arranging public meeting prior to completion of the final master plan.[181]

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[176] Harry B. Robinson to Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities, 26 April 1969, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[177] Merrill J. Mattes to Regional Director, Midwest, 3 July 1969, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[178] Of the sites known at the time and proposed for inclusion in the park, the Buchfink site was prehistoric in age (believed to be of the Middle Missouri Tradition)--in contrast to the other, historic villages--and bears on Smokey Moore's argument for emphasizing Native American adaptation to the Plains environment over the course of centuries. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[179] National Park Service, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota* (n.p.: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 1970), 12.

[180] Fred C. Fagergren to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, 10 July 1969, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[181] National Park Service, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 12.

North Dakota Native and Non-Native Support for Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1970

During the remainder of 1969 and into the greater portion of 1970, while MWRO worked progressively at drafting a Knife River Indian Villages master plan, North Dakota officials worked hard to support the creation of a NHS at Knife River. In late-April 1970, the North Dakota State Historical Board unanimously and officially passed a resolution in support of the inclusion of the Knife River Villages into the National Park System. Among the reasons given were that the villages were the last sites occupied by the Hidatsa before their voluntary move to Like-A-Fishhook Village and that they were important because of their association and connection with the Lewis and Clark Expedition in North Dakota. In particular, SHSND Superintendent Sperry felt it important to do so at this time because there was considerable urgency in acquiring the land. Sperry wrote MWRO Director Fagergren that "factors of river erosion and development of additional power plants, transmission line construction and strip mining in the Stanton vicinity make it desirable that action be taken soon for protection."[182] Governor Guy was pleased that Sperry was "moving to incorporate the Knife River Village into the National Park System," and offered "all of the assistance" he could to help him.[183]

Newly appointed TRNP Superintendent James B. Thompson (July 1969 to October 1972) also urged early action on incorporating the Knife River Indian Villages into the National Park System. His reasoning differed somewhat from Sperry's. First, Byron Grannis, owner of the Big Hidatsa Village site, was becoming quite old, and Grannis indicated to Thompson that he wished to sell his property soon. The asking price for that Big Hidatsa Village portion of the Grannis farm was $200 per acre, and reportedly, Grannis may have found a buyer in Bismarck. However, this was likely a ruse on Grannis' part to pressure the National Park Service into purchasing quickly and at a higher price than that indicated to him during the 1968 Mattes study team visit. Second, the Big Hidatsa burials that lay on Olga Krieger's property were in jeopardy as well. It was rumored to Thompson that Olga's son Forrest, who farmed the property, had in the past and was again digging into the burials. And third, in Thompson's opinion, riverbank erosion at Sakakawea Village was in a worsening situation and in fact was perhaps accelerating. For these reasons, Thompson urged Regional Director Fagergren to act sooner rather than later on the preliminary Knife River master plan, a version of which he viewed in August.

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[182] James E. Sperry to Fred C. Fagergren with attached Resolution from State Historical Board of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, 22 April 1970, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[183] William L. Guy to James E. Sperry, 25 April 1976, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

Furthermore, Thompson wished to arrange the scheduling of public meetings and begin to sample public opinion on the matter.[184]

In early August, NPS Director Hartzog also received indirect pressure to push forth the proposed Knife River Indian Villages NHS from the United Tribes of North Dakota Development Corporation (UTND), recently formed to work on economic planning and development for North Dakota's four Indian reservations. UTND Executive Director Dallas A. Brian wrote Hartzog regarding the Lewis and Clark Trail, which Brian thought had the objective of creating a "recreational ribbon" across the route. Brian complained that NPS had made no sustained effort to identify the recreational potential of historic and archeological sites on North Dakota's reservations. In requesting assistance in creating a general recreational and historic development plan for North Dakota's Indian reservations related to the Lewis and Clark Trail, he stated, "Without the Indian, the saga of the Northwest has a mute historical message."[185] In response, Hartzog sent Brian copies of both the 1964 BOR report entitled "The North Dakota Report for the Lewis and Clark Trail Study" and the 1969 LCTC final report. Furthermore, Hartzog noted that the National Park Service had just completed a proposed master plan for the Knife River Indian Villages site. Interestingly, the "politically astute" Hartzog indicated that interpretation of this site would "deal primarily with the Indians and secondarily with Lewis and Clark's association with the Indians there."[186]

Master Planning Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1970-1971

In August 1970, National Park Service officials completed its preliminary master plan. WSC landscape architect Marcus Malik captained the preliminary study team, which also included historian Mattes, MWRO archeologist Moore, and TRNP Superintendent Thompson. Entitled *A Master Plan for Proposed Knife River Indian Villages, North Dakota*; in many ways it largely repeated the Mattes 1968 feasibility study. The main body of the report summarized regional access and circulation to the proposed NHS, population trends, nearby recreational facilities, historical interest in the area (e.g., Fort Mandan), as well as the NHS link to the Lewis and Clark Trail system. The preliminary master plan also discussed local economic resources, dominated at that time by agriculture (livestock production and cash grain crops) but recently diversifying with growing power plant development that used lignite coal produced by nearby strip mining.[187]

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[184] James B. Thompson to Director, Midwest Region, 4 September 1970, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[185] Dallas A. Brian to National Park Service, 3 August 1970, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[186] Thomas F. Flynn to Dallas A. Brian, 18 September 1970; Roger J. Contor to Director, National Park Service, 28 January 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[187] National Park Service, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, passim.

A Master Plan for Proposed Knife River Indian Villages also contained key sections on the site's national significance as well as historical and archeological descriptions of four Indian village sites (Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa and Amahami) and the Buchfink site within the park. Apparently, Amahami Village was still under consideration for inclusion in the NHS, even though only one earth-lodge ring remained on the Mercer County courthouse grounds. The preliminary master plan also had two appendices. Appendix A provided an archeological chronology of Knife River Indian Villages, and Appendix B provided a historical chronology of the site. However, the key portions of the preliminary master plan were the boundary and general development maps and explanations of the proposed development.[188]

Preliminary Master Plan Details

The main development concept behind the Knife River preliminary master plan was to concentrate all visitor impact on the group of villages to the south, closer to Stanton. The multi-functioning visitor center, which would support the necessary interpretation, information, administration, research storage, and maintenance for the NHS, was situated so as not to intrude on the "historic scene." From the visitor center, people would be left on their own to discover the historic and archeological features by means of spur roads, trails, and transportation systems. According to the document, an unusual added attraction was the "opportunity to view the ruins as a living laboratory where, in season, visitors will be able to see archeological excavations, reconstruction and stabilization of the earth lodges, and the processing of artifacts. All of these activities will be undertaken with the idea specifically in mind that the public would witness the entire scientific process." With regard to interpretation, the master plan read that the "primary interpretive theme of the Knife River villages is their development out of the Middle Missouri and Central Plains traditions, their maturity in early historic times, and their decline and abandonment under the pressures of civilization." A primary interpretive objective would be to "encourage visitors to compare the cultural adaptation of these primitive people with our own adjustments in similar areas of human activity." A secondary theme was the "pageant of Western frontier history, reflected by the succession of fur traders, frontier history, and travelers who passed this way in the early 19th century."[189] For the moment, *Contact with the Indians* appeared to have taken a back seat to *Indian Villages and Communities*.

Following the visitor's introductory experience at the visitor center, he or she would go either to the Lower Hidatsa and/or Sakakawea Villages, or to the Buchfink site, all of which would present a "cluster of interpretive opportunities." However, the visitor's experience would climax at Big Hidatsa Village. To get there, the visitor would take a bridge over to the east side the Knife River and hike along a trail two miles to the site. Along the way, he or she would receive more visitor stimulation and a greater perspective on the environment of the villages through a series of stops and overlooks of the two

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[188] Ibid.

[189] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 19-20.

rivers, or perhaps through typical patches of Indian corn and beans, and Indian pastures and horses. Visitors to Big Hidatsa Village could also get there via automobile, using the county road. In the end, the Big Hidatsa Village site would be used to interpret the origin and fate of the Hidatsa Indians.[190]

Boundaries for the proposed national historic site included enough land to protect, interpret, and conduct research on the four villages plus lands and related cemeteries adjacent to and connecting these villages to ensure access and protection of buffer lands for scenic control. Fee simple lands for public use and development would come from nine private landowners: Ricky Schrieber (12 acres), H.J. Lennius (10 acres), George Buchfink (131 acres), Herbert Oberlander (118 acres), William Russell (252 acres), Vernon Smith (12 acres), Max Borner (76 acres), Olga Krieger (253 acres), and Byron Grannis (191 acres). An additional 41 acres were owned by the State of North Dakota, and the ownership of 46 acres was yet undetermined. The proposed NHS boundaries also included a continuous land strip adjacent to the newly designated Lewis and Clark Highway, which included Mercer County Route 37. The eastern side of the highway was to be purchased in fee simple, while the western side would be purchased as a 400-foot scenic easement, which restricted the owner's right to construct any structures or erect any signs. Scenic easements needed to be obtained from six private landowners: Olga Krieger (6 acres), William Rahm (24 acres), Jacob Steifel (13 acres), Max Borner (62 acres), George Buchfink (24 acres), and Duane Payton (13 acres).[191]

Extensive landscape restoration was also considered necessary to remove existing roads and structures, with the intent to return the environment to a facsimile of what it was when the villages were inhabited. There was the need to eventually restore and stabilize the earth-ring villages and protect them from erosion. However, Sakakawea Village would be partially reconstructed to a replica of the village of Sakakawea's time. Horses similar to the ones Indians had would be introduced to keep grasses down, and Indian crops of corn and possibly other vegetables would also be introduced to replace existing agricultural fields so as to give the appearance of the historic scene as well. However, before any construction, excavation, and/or restoration efforts could be initiated, the preliminary master plan specified that a thorough archeological evaluation be prepared to ensure that facilities and the like were not constructed on important archeological sites. Thereafter, an extensive program of archeological excavations would take place on a continuing basis to obtain important scientific data, as well as artifacts for study and exhibit.[192]

Park Operation and Land Acquisition Estimates

Meanwhile the cost of land acquisition had been finalized. In January 1971, a five-year development schedule and program summary for the proposed 1,250-acre park was

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[190] Ibid., 20-21.

[191] Ibid., 17-18, 22 and Map entitled "Land Ownership and Zoning."

[192] Ibid.

fashioned for legislative support data. The National Park Service estimated that operations, which included management/protection, and maintenance/rehabilitation, would cost $635,200. To administer the area, a superintendent, assistant clerk, and several maintenance personnel were required. To carry out the interpretive program, a chief with a trained staff was also needed. This permanent staffing would be supplemented during the heavy visitor season by the use of seasonal personnel.[193]

The National Park Service also estimated development costs, which included roads/trails and buildings/utilities, at $1.615 million. The sum total for operations and development for the project was approximately $2.25 million. This figure, however, did not include land acquisition costs.[194] The land acquisition estimates for unimproved and improved lands came in late April. Under the category of unimproved lands, there were 273 acres of cropland, with an estimated fair market value of $57,330, and 816+ acres of pastureland, with an estimated fair market value of $105,850, bringing the total to $163,180. Under the category of improved lands, there were 21 acres of home site and/or farmstead lands valued at $4,250. Additionally, there were 141+ acres of easement lands that needed acquisition, with an estimated value of $9,550. In total, the National Park Service estimated they needed approximately 1,250 acres, with an estimated fair market value of $176,000, along with an additional 41 acres of state land, which the National Park Service hoped would be donated to the project. On top of this cost, there were seven improved farm units valued at $246,805. When this amount was added to the land costs, along with contingencies ($52,242), administrative and technical costs ($54,185), and costs related to the recently passed Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) ($166,000), the total amounted to approximately $520,000 for land acquisition during the first year of the project.[195] This figure was more than double the amount estimated by the National Park Service in its 1968 *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*. Much of the extra cost was attributable to the Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, which assisted individuals who were required to move by federal action in finding a new location through payments to cover moving costs.[196]

Initiation of Legislation and Environmental Impact Statement of June 1971

At this point, discussions began between Director Hartzog and the North Dakota congressional delegation for sponsoring a bill for the acquisition, protection, and development of the proposed Knife River Indian Villages NHS. NPS approached

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[193] Director, Western Service Center to Director, Midwest Region with Program Summary Enclosure, 18 January 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[194] Ibid.

[195] "Estimated Land Acquisition Cost," 27 April 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[196] John E. Ritchie to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, 10 March 1969, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; NPS, *Proposed Establishment Of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Draft Environmental Statement* (Omaha, Nebraska: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 1971), 16.

Democratic Senator Burdick first. Recently, Burdick had received a letter from local landowner William Russell inquiring whether or not the proposed park would affect some of his property, which stretched along the east side of the Knife River. Russell had written the senator in early April 1971 stating that he was a young farmer and would like to invest in irrigation, a new barn, corrals and such, but that he hesitated to invest any more time and money in his place because of the uncertainty of the situation. Apparently, Russell was not aware of any of the details of the preliminary master plan or the possibility of participating in public meetings yet to be scheduled. The National Park Service replied to Senator Burdick that their master plan had been recently completed and that Russell's property would be affected if the proposed park were implemented.[197] For whatever reason, Senator Burdick apparently did not pass along this information to Russell.[198]

In May 1971, the preliminary master plan was finalized as *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages Historic Site, North Dakota* and was released to the public to stimulate discussion on the historic site proposal. The final master plan differed slightly from the original preliminary plan in that it included photographs and drawings of earth-lodges and such but did not include the two appendices that appeared in the preliminary version of the document.[199] Copies were sent to a great diversity of federal and state agencies for comment. The master plan was neither approved nor disapproved administratively or congressionally at this stage, and it could be changed or revised.[200]

With the master plan complete and open for comment, the Washington Office and MWRO prepared to include Knife River Indian Villages NHS on the region's legislative program for consideration in the National Park Service's Omnibus Bill before the upcoming 1st Session of the 92nd Congress (January-October 1972). Meanwhile, inquiries as to the project arrived at Director Hartzog's desk. For instance, in June 1971, Nathan Little Soldier, chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes Tribal Business Council, made such an inquiry. Little Soldier was concerned about the status of the proposed park and expressed his support for the proposal as well. However, National Park Service officials were tight-lipped on the matter, replying to Little Soldier that NPS had discussed the possibilities of public meetings on the proposed site, but they informed him that at present none was planned. Though National Park Service employees had informal contact with Senator Burdick's office and even with Governor Guy and other state officials on the project, no details pertaining to any possible public meetings on the preliminary master plan were leaked.[201]

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[197] William N. Russell to Senator Q. Burdick, 1 April 1970; Quentin N. Burdick to George B. Hartzog, Jr., 6 April 1970; Thomas B. Flynn to Quentin N. Burdick, 29 April 1970, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[198] William Russell Telephone Communication, 15 August 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[199] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site.*

[200] NPS, *Proposed Establishment Of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Draft Environmental Statement*, 18.

[201] James B. Thompson to Director, Midwest Region, 7 May 1971, Roger J. Contor to Nathan Little Soldier, 2 June 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

At about this time, TRNP Superintendent Thompson summarized for MWRO the overall support and opposition to the proposed Knife River Indian Villages NHS. Though no direct statement of support from Governor Guy had been received, Thompson inferred support from the Lewis and Clark Trail Council of North Dakota. This group included in its membership State Highway Commissioner Walter Hjella, Director of the State Outdoor Recreation Agency John Greenslit, Director of the State Travel Division Joe Satrom, State Game and Fish Commissioner Russell Stuart, and SHSND Superintendent Sperry. They represented the highest levels of state government and therefore the governor himself. The only other politically concerned groups that Thompson considered important, other than the state government, were the Indian tribes. The latest expression of support from Nathan Little Soldier was encouraging because Little Soldier was a highly respected leader. Thompson informed MWRO that he had heard no opposition to the proposal from individual landowners, although some, such as William Russell, felt that their land should not be included in the proposed park.[202]

With legislative support data complete, and overall support and opposition to the proposed NHS surmised, all that remained was the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). An "informal" EIS indicated several adverse impacts once the area had been purchased and restoration and development had occurred. Certainly, development would attract visitors, which would have a marked impact upon the environment. Visitors would have to be kept on the trails, and automobiles restricted to the periphery. Of course, farm structures now located on the site would have to be removed, and newly constructed facilities would have to be located away from the village sites so as not to endanger them or be visually obtrusive. Furthermore, new facilities would need to be planned and programmed carefully so that construction did not significantly affect and/or destroy artifacts and data. National Park Service officials believed these adverse impacts could be mitigated with proper planning and management. During this informal assessment, officials considered only one alternative to NPS acquisition—protection as a state park. However, this possibility was not considered viable, "since it was doubtful that the state would be able to finance the necessary acquisition and management of such lands." In fact, it appeared to NPS officials that state parks developed in the mid-1930s with NPS help were now in need of repairs that the state could not afford. At that time, it was clear to them that this area of national significance required NPS protection, and no other alternative would do. Therefore, in mid-June 1971, MWRO Regional Director J. Leonard Volz confidently released to various federal agencies and the public at large MWRO's draft EIS for a proposed 1,292-acre Knife River Indian Villages NHS.[203]

In summary, the draft EIS found that there might be several adverse effects as well as beneficial aspects to the project. First, there was the social impact from acquisition of

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[202] James B. Thompson to Director, Midwest Region, 9 June 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[203] Bill W. Dean to Director, National Park Service, with attachment, "Environmental Impact Statement, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 13 July 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

properties and scenic easements. Construction would be limited on scenic easements, and land purchased in fee simple would be changed dramatically with the elimination of farming and grazing. However, the Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 could, in part, mitigate these adverse effects. There were also adverse ecological impacts stemming from increased visitor use to consider, especially once the Lewis and Clark Trail development became a reality. Visitor use impacts on the ecosystem included littering, pollution, and erosion caused by human foot traffic. Nonetheless, good development and sound management of the site could mitigate such visitor use impacts. A protective staff would see that the resources were utilized properly and visitor use directed. On the other hand, there were several beneficial effects to developing the park. The EIS drew attention to the economic benefits for the community. Increased visitation would boost the local economy of the community of Stanton with its population of 517. In the first year, the draft EIS forecasted a remarkable 48,000 visitors to the site, and by tenth year, 85,000. The EIS also accentuated the fact that visitor enjoyment and understanding of significant archeological features far outweighed any adverse effects. Finally, designation of the area as part of the National Park System would protect the area. Thus, future generations of Americans would be assured the enjoyment and understanding resulting from interpretation of the archeological sites at Knife River.[204]

The draft EIS looked at two alternatives: either maintaining the status quo, or turning the area over to state historic park status. With regard to the first alternative, protection of the site could not be provided, nor would there be any economic stimulus for the local community. However, the EIS pointed out that, as an NHL, the Big Hidatsa Village site, would be eligible for federal financial assistance for acquisition and development with monies provided to the State of North Dakota under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966—if the State provided matching funds.[205]

As to the establishment of the area as a state historic park, the EIS mentioned that the village sites would be assured some protection and interpretation of the site but that designation as a state park would be expected to result in lower visitation to the area and provide limited economic benefit to the local community. The EIS also went on to mention that the State of North Dakota at that time had no funds for development and protection of these archeological resources. Additionally, North Dakota was not eligible for historic land purchases under NHPA because, due to staff limitations and budget constraints, it had not filed with NPS a State Historic Preservation Plan and Annual Program—a prerequisite for such funding. Furthermore, North Dakota state officials had expressed to NPS their concern about current environmental impacts upon the area, whether or not it was designated as part of the National Park System. There were factors of river erosion and development of additional power plants, transmission line construction, and strip mining in the Stanton vicinity that made it desirable that protective action be taken as soon as possible, which the State of North Dakota was unprepared to

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[204] NPS, *Proposed Establishment Of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Draft Environmental Statement*, 2, 14-15, 21.

[205] Ibid., 15, 17-18; James E. Sperry to Riesley R. Jones, 3 August 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

handle. Water fluctuations from Garrison Reservoir were also having a sluicing effect that extended up the Knife River and caused severe bank erosion. There were already two 200,000 KW power plants 2.5 miles east of Stanton, with another 400,000 KW plant already funded and a third 200.000 KW power plant partially funded. Given the above considerations, the draft EIS recommended the project for legislative action by Congress.[206]

Legislative History: 92nd Congress, 1st Session

Upon an informal request by Senator Burdick's staff in early August 1971, NPS drafted a bill "to provide for the establishment of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site in the State of North Dakota, and for other purposes." The draft bill authorized the establishment of a 1,250-acre national historic site, comprising four historic Indian village sites together with adjacent lands, for preservation and administration. The boundaries of the park were those that appeared in the preliminary master plan and included Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa, and Amahami Villages, plus the Buchfink site. The draft legislation was prepared as a service and courtesy to Senator Burdick and was not cleared by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).[207] A similar "courtesy" was later extended to Democratic freshman North Dakota Congressman Arthur A. Link, who planned to discuss the project further with Burdick in hopes that he might introduce similar legislation in the Senate.[208]



Left to Right: Governor William Guy, Senator Quentin Burdick, and Governor Arthur Link at 1976 Democratic Convention
State Historical Society of North Dakota 0080-Box 1-File 03-17

Several weeks later, Governor Guy adjoined his support to the proposed legislation by organizing an Advisory Committee on the Knife River Indian Village Site, chaired by SHSND Superintendent Sperry. In addition to Sperry, Governor Guy asked several other federal and state officials and North Dakota citizens to be part of the Advisory Committee. They included TRNP Superintendent Thompson, North Dakota Outdoor Recreation Coordinator John Greenslit (also founder and president of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation),

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206 NPS, *Proposed Establishment Of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Draft Environmental Statement*, 15, 17-18; James E. Sperry to Riesley R. Jones, 3 August 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

207 Frank A. Bracken to Quentin N. Burdick, 9 August 1971, with attachment, "A Bill", File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

208 Arthur L. Link to George B. Hartzog, Jr., 17 November 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

Nathan Little Soldier of the Three Affiliated Tribes, and Clarence Loewen of Hazen, an LCTC member who was selected to represent the people of Stanton, including the landowners of the site. The Advisory Committee was tasked with the challenge of keeping interest alive in this preservation proposal. As an NPS employee, Superintendent Thompson had misgivings about being on the committee, thinking that his presence might restrict the role that it could play. However, MWRO Director Volz was glad that Thompson accepted the appointment.[209]

The Knife River Indian Village Site Advisory Committee, which was obviously biased toward the project, wasted little time in taking action. As chair, Sperry believed it to be "advantageous to hold an early meeting at Stanton to give out information and receive the opinions of those in the area." He issued a press release notifying the public of the intent of the all-day meeting and sent special invitations to those most interested.[210] On October 6th, they organized a public meeting at Stanton. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information on the proposal to local citizens and to sample public reaction to the proposal. At the meeting, which had a "fairly good turnout," according to Sperry, TRNP Superintendent Thompson presented the plan, and the committee asked whether or not anyone was against building the park in Stanton. As Sperry recalled, "In terms of individuals that were opposed to it, many, in fact, maybe the majority, maybe all of the property owners in that area were opposed. They didn't want to give up their property, understandably, so I think there were probably some hostile comments.... There were some hostile feelings definitely.... People didn't want to give up property that they were emotionally attached to."[211]

Regional newspapers that covered the event, however, made no mention of any initial public reaction at this meeting, either for or against the proposed park. One local newspaper did mention that George Buchfink, who owned land within the proposed NHS, stated that "it had been four years since he was first contacted by the Interior Department about the park, and that he has, however, had many people stop out to the site to dig up the grounds."[212]

If landowners were slow to react in public, they were not in private. Several weeks later, Maynard Borner, who owned 138 acres of fee simple and scenic easement lands within the proposed NHS, including his residence, certainly made his views known to North

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[209] William L. Guy to James E. Sperry, 7 September 1971, Superintendent to Director, Midwest Region, 8 September 1971, J. Leonard Volz to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt, 29 September 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[210] James E. Sperry to William L. Guy, 13 September 1971, Personal Papers of James E. Sperry, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[211] Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. In fact, several persons recalled a particular incident in which a state employee working at Fort Clark was beaten up in a local Stanton bar when he was mistaken for a National Park Service employee. Ibid.; Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[212] Unknown newspaper, "National Historic Site Proposed Near Stanton," October 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

Dakota Senator Young.[213] In a letter to the senator, he protested openly against the park on several grounds. In his letter, he stated, "The Borners homesteaded [this land] in 1882 which makes it ninety years that there have been Borners on this land and this is how we want it to stay. We are very much opposed to the park going through. We have been living here [on one parcel] going on seven years, worked on our homes, built up our livestock and invested in more land because we planned on living on the land the rest of our lives. This is why we do not want the park."[214] Senator Young's office also received correspondence in favor of the NHS proposal. For instance, North Dakota Historical Society, Inc. (NDHSI) requested that he "do everything possible to have this very historic area of our state protected and placed under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service."[215]

Senator Young queried TRNP Superintendent Thompson about these letters. With regard to the Borner letter, Thompson informed him that, yes, some of Borner's land and his residence would be needed for the proposed park, but Thompson pointed out to the senator that approximately 400 acres of Borner land lay outside the proposed park boundary. Furthermore, if legislation were enacted, NPS would fully compensate Borner for his property. Although Thompson understood Borner's objections to NPS acquisition, the National Park Service felt that there were "high public values to be considered as well" because the Borner land contained several key historical and archeological features of high priority between Big Hidatsa and Sakakawea villages. Regarding NDHSI's endorsement of the NHS, Thompson appreciated their support, and he informed Senator Young that the National Park Service would be happy to assist the senator if he wished to propose legislation to establish the NHS.[216]

Besides the Stanton public meeting, the only other public meeting was held in Bismarck on December 6, 1971. At this meeting, the Advisory Committee publicly discussed the master plan proposal but received no further opinions from persons concerned with and/or interested in the project.[217] Apparently, with no further opposition to the master plan heard, Senator Burdick the next day introduced S. 2954 (December 6, 1971) into the Senate, and Congressman Link introduced H.R. 12082 (December 7, 1971) for himself and Congressman Mark Andrews of North Dakota. Both the Senate and House bills were identical to the draft NPS prepared for them earlier.[218] No action was taken on either bill prior to the close of the 1st Session of the 92nd Congress on December 17, 1971.

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[213] By this date, Senator Young had become one of the longest serving members of the Senate in its history and would in 1974 run once more successfully.

[214] Mr. and Mrs. Maynard Borner to Milton R. Young, 27 October 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[215] Mrs. Dave Robinson to Senator Milton Young, 25 October 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[216] James B. Thompson to Milton R. Young, 11 November 1971 (2 letters), File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[217] "Indian Village Plan Finished," *Bismarck Tribune* 4 December 1971.

[218] S. 2954, "A Bill to Authorize the Establishment of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 4 December 1971, and H.R. 12082, "A Bill to Authorize the Establishment of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 7 December 1971, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; "Historic Site Bill Introduced" *Bismarck Tribune* 6 December 1971.

Legislative History: 92nd Congress, 2nd Session

With bills introduced into both houses of Congress, it was clear to the Borner family that creation of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS was now a stronger possibility. So in February 1972, the Borner family hired an attorney to argue that the 1969-1971 master plan, which had been derived without input from local landowners, was not a "sound investment of the taxpayer's money."[219]

In their petition, this time sent to Senator Burdick, who forwarded it to NPS Director Hartzog, the Borner family argued first that the area under consideration was simply not accessible to the public for whom the project was proposed. They could not believe that NPS thought the park would succeed, because the Stanton area was so isolated and had only negligible tourist traffic, and even if visitors did come, Stanton could offer only minimal services and facilities to them. Next, they contended that there was not a need for additional recreational facilities in the area. The Army Corps of Engineers had already developed facilities and services at a dozen different points along Lake Sakakawea to the north, including boat ramps, docks, storage areas, and rentals, as well as fishing, camping, swimming, picnicking, rental cabins, and related concessions. With regard to historical areas, the Borner petition maintained there was no need for more historical sites in the area, either. Sites such as Fort Clark State Park, Double Ditch Indian Village, Fort Mandan State Historical Site, and Huff Indian Village were already developed and were more easily accessible than the Stanton area. To the Borners, the proposed Knife River Indian Villages NHS had nothing new or unique to offer the public that the average tourist could not learn from these other sites. They also stressed that the Hidatsa Indians had long ago lost their identity and become a part of the Mandan Indians, which the above State of North Dakota historical sites amply demonstrated. In their opinion, federal taxpayer money would be better spent on improving these sites rather than creating a new park. Third, they asserted that agriculture was the dominant industry in the Stanton area and that the project would take large portions of property from twelve family ranches and farms, thus hurting, rather than helping, the local economy. The remaining farmland of these owners would have little agricultural value, and landowners would be left with "too little land with too much machinery to allow them to earn a living in a manner to which they were accustomed."[220]

The Borners also opposed the National Park Service's proposal on sentimental grounds. Over the past ninety years, their pioneer ancestors had conquered this land and made it suitable for living. If the lifestyle and graveyards of the Indians were to be honored, they wondered why their own ancestors' graves and hard work to subdue the land were not considered as well. In conclusion, they questioned why, if it was deemed necessary to save the historical values of the area, it could not be done without designating it as an

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[219] Quentin N. Burdick to George B. Hartzog, Jr., 21 February 1972, with attachment, "Analysis of the Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historical Site, North Dakota," File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[220] Ibid.

NHS. Private agreements, allowing for archeological excavation, could be signed with the landowners, which could be completed without spending the money to buy land and without losing the archeological and historic values. Furthermore, when NPS originally brought up the subject in 1965, only Big Hidatsa Village was discussed as a NHL, because this was the best-preserved village of the three. By limiting acquisition to only this village, NPS would disrupt fewer landowners in their view.[221]

MWRO Director Volz, not Director Hartzog, replied to the Borner petition. Volz simply thanked the attorneys for bringing the views of the Borner family to the National Park Service's attention. Volz continued by informing them that if the family wished to discuss the matter further, TRNP Superintendent Thompson would be happy to meet with them.[222] On the other hand, Thompson wrote Burdick that NPS could not agree with Borner's evaluations of the proposal or the relative merits of the North Dakota state sites. With regard to losing his land, Thompson again played up the fact that the Borner family would have 460 acres of their present holdings outside the proposed boundary available for continuing his present agricultural operation. Furthermore, if legislation was enacted establishing the NHS, Thompson believed that NPS would fully compensate the Borners for lands purchased. They would also be entitled to certain benefits under the Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. Once again, Thompson stated that he understood Borner's objections to the acquisition of his land for park purposes, but NPS felt that there were "high public values to be considered as well."[223]

Despite Thompson's position, one of Borner's arguments struck a chord with NPS officials. Washington Office personnel noted that because of the way the master plan drew the park's boundary, many properties would be severed, leaving portions that would not be economically feasible to continue farming operations upon. Therefore, NPS revised their land cost figures to include a contingency amount for severance costs in addition to relocation costs.[224]

New land acquisition problems were discovered as well. While the preliminary master plan was being prepared (1969 to 1971), the value of any existing minerals, primarily lignite, was considered nominal, but by the spring of 1972, a mineral boom was underway, which had a pronounced effect on the real estate market. This boom changed the NPS previous land acquisition figures, warranting a new appraisal. Additionally, Stanton itself had also changed during this time from an isolated farming community to an accessible residential community that supported the newly operational lignite-fired power plants. Besides, a new bridge over the Missouri River at Washburn now physically tied Stanton with eastern North Dakota. This development fulfilled the

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[221] Ibid.

[222] J. Leonard Volz to L.E. Greenwood, 28 February 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[223] James B. Thompson to Quentin N. Burdick, 7 March 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[224] Kit Wing to John Kavamot, Midwest Region, 9 March 1972, Philip Iverson to Director, Denver Service Center, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

tourism potential associated with the Lewis and Clark Trail. Finally, a rising cost of living of 10 percent between 1971 and 1972 increased NPS staffing costs as well.[225]

If these changing economic conditions were not trying, the political landscape for enactment of the legislation also was becoming precarious. Time was running out on setting hearing dates for S. 2954 and H.R. 12082. The 2nd Session of the 92nd Congress would soon end on October 18, 1972, and the Interior Department had not supported action for either bill before Congress.

TRNP Superintendent Thompson, noticing that the project had stalled, believed that success depended on MWRO Director Volz placing pressure on Director Hartzog. In March 1972, Thompson wrote Volz, opining that the "North Dakota political climate right now would be at its most favorable due to all the support given by the incumbents, and the fact that several incumbents will have left their current positions after November." Thompson thought it imperative to "preserve these sites before they are altered by landownership changes, farming practice changes, and the rapid erosion of one of these sites."[226] SHSND Superintendent Sperry concurred with Thompson's conclusion. In late April, Sperry endorsed the draft EIS conclusions, stating "If the area is not placed in public ownership soon, the historic and archeological resources face certain partial or even complete loss. Erosion from the Knife River, amateur excavations by collectors, and cultivation by present landowners are immediate and serious threats." Sperry believed that "acquisition of this property and the proposed development is the only way to save this valuable and interesting part of our heritage." He urged Director Volz to take prompt action in implementing the proposed master plan, especially the acquisition phase.[227]

Apparently by July, the Washington Office saw the urgency for early action. Gary E. Bunney of the Washington Office telephoned the MWRO, requesting clarification about how the NHS fit into the National Park System Plan, Part I (History). MWRO replied that the overall significance of the Knife River villages established the thematic category in the National Park Service System Plan of (1) original inhabitants, (c) Indian meets European; and (2) changes in native life due to contact, (c) changes in economic base. MWRO concluded "there are no other existing areas in the National Park System that are presently represented by this theme." The MWRO also reported "inclusion of this area will fill an important gap, particularly when the results of archeological excavations become known."[228]

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[225] Acting Superintendent to Director, Midwest Region 3 April, 1972, Glenn O. Hendrix to Director, Midwest Region, 10 April 1972, J. Leonard Volz to Director, National Park Service, 24 April 1972, Director, Midwest Region to Director, National Park Service, May 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[226] James B. Thompson to Director, Midwest Region, 29 March 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[227] James E. Sperry to Director, Midwest Region, 25 April 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[228] Acting Director, Midwest Region to Director, National Park Service, 2 August 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

In support of this determination, the MWRO staff emphasized many points in the master plan that supported the overall significance of the villages. On the side of thematic context *Contact with the Indians*, they pointed out that the villages were the home of Sakakawea, a guide/interpreter for Lewis and Clark. Additionally, the Hidatsa were a major source of horses, and their villages were a major hub of trading activities for furs, buffalo hides, and other items; that the impact of European technology (firearms, cutting implements, ironware, dry goods) on the Hidatsa was apparently considerable; and that the Hidatsa fell prey to epidemics of disease (particularly smallpox) introduced by Europeans. For the thematic context of *Indian Villages and Communities*, they drew attention to several arguments, including the fact that the archeological remains of these villages were in excellent condition, that they were among the very few surviving earth-lodge villages once common in the upper Missouri River region, and that excellent paintings of these villages by Catlin and other artists permitted superior authenticity to reconstruction and interpretation. Finally, MWRO staff mentioned that the proposed NHS at Knife River would provide an excellent companion to Fort Union Trading Post NHS further up the Missouri River.[229] But, despite the urgency implied by Bunney's telephone call and all good intentions of MWRO, S. 2954 (December 6, 1971) and H.R. 12082 (December 7, 1971) were not reported out of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committees prior to the close of the 2nd Session of the 92nd Congress. The reason—the Interior Department had not completed its final report supporting and/or opposing the action.

Legislative History: 93rd Congress, 1st Session and Senate Hearings

By the beginning of the 93rd Congress in January 1973, NPS had completed its analysis of the proposed Knife River Indian Villages NHS.[230] NPS was committed to reintroducing legislation in support of the proposed NHS. Photographs were updated, including views of the surrounding terrain, showing the visual impact of a coal-fired steam generating plant site that was proposed southeast of Stanton.[231] NPS expected full support in the Congress. Senator Burdick was not up for re-election until 1976, so NPS felt assured of his support. Congressman Andrews continued to serve in the House.[232] NPS expected support from the State of North Dakota as well. Congressman Link had not run for re-election but instead been elected as North Dakota's new governor. In mid-January, Sperry informed Governor Link that it appeared that legislation would be introduced in Congress probably early in the session and that it was an "appropriate time

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[229] Ibid.

[230] Bill Dean to Gary Bunney, 17 November 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[231] Bill W. Dean to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt, 20 December 1972, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[232] Andrews would be re-elected every two years until 1981, when he moved on to the Senate.

for the National Park Service to again have indications of support from the state on this proposal."[233]

Conditions seemed suitable for legislative enactment, but there was one land issue that still plagued all concerned: ownership of a 41-acre tract of accreted lands along the Missouri River shoreline. It appeared that the adjacent landowner, William Russell, was entitled to the land if he simply surveyed it, but Russell and the State of North Dakota were unaware of this fact. Up until at least January 1973, local landowner Russell leased the land from the State of North Dakota for a Boy Scout camp he operated on an island within the accreted lands.[234]

North Dakota Land Donation

When Governor Guy, and later Governor Link, learned that North Dakota still owned this 41-acre parcel, the State indicated that it wished to donate the accretion lands to the United States, but only upon enactment of federal legislation authorizing the Knife River Indian Villages NHS. Since ownership of the land seemed questionable, the National Park Service decided that seeking a scenic easement on the parcel was a fully acceptable alternative to fee simple title. Apparently by this time, the Missouri River had changed its course to the east, making it unnecessary to purchase the land. New TRNP Superintendent John Lancaster (October 1972 to May 1979) warned that the Missouri River could change its course again and that ownership of the land would be critical to the integrity of the park proposal. Nonetheless, by late February 1973, Governor Link informed MWRO Director Volz that the North Dakota legislature had authorized transfer of this tract of state land to the United States under the condition it become part of the NHS. Governor Link reiterated his support for this project and hoped that favorable action would be taken in Congress soon. Link penned to Volz that "due to vandalism, river erosion, and other potential destructive agents it is important that these sites be placed in public ownership immediately to be preserved, protected and developed for public benefit."[235]

Walker-Bohlen Legislative Briefing and Hulett-Utley Options Paper

Unbeknownst to Governor Link, Washington support for the proposed Knife River NHS had waned with the re-election of President Richard M. Nixon. In early January,

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[233] James E. Sperry to Arthur Link, 17 January 1973, Personal Papers of James E. Sperry, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[234] James B. Thompson to Director, Midwest Region, 3 July 1972; J. Leonard Volz to Superintendent, 18 August 1972; Ernest W. Pedersen to United States Department of the Interior, 26 September 1972; Robert E. Benton to Director, Midwest Region, 29 September 1972; M. James LaRock to Files, 5 January 1973; John O. Lancaster to Director, Midwest Region, 5 January 1973; J. Leonard Volz to Arthur A. Link, 15 January 1973; Arthur A. Link to J. Leonard Volz, 12 February 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[235] Ibid.

President Nixon appointed Ronald H. Walker (1973-1975) to replace George Hartzog as NPS director. On January 26, 1973, Walker held an important briefing with Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks E.U. Curtis Bohlen, which included the topic of Knife River. At this briefing, Washington Office staff presented the Knife River NHS proposal in typical fashion, with exhibits showing the regional setting, resource description, development concepts, and land ownership. Normally, the usual questions at this type of briefing addressed specific elements of the proposal. However, Bohlen and Walker instead centered their questions on the relative priority of the proposal in the total new areas program of the National Park Service system.

First, Bohlen specifically asked, "Why include the site in the National Park System?" In response, the briefing team detailed how the 1964 Secretary's Advisory Board recommended Big Hidatsa for eligibility for NHL status; that the historic themes at Knife River Indian Villages NHS, as defined in the National Park Service System Plan, would fill a significant void in the plan; that the site was the "best remaining archeological group typifying the Middle Missouri Indian Culture, and that other sites, characterized by earth-lodge dwelling, had been destroyed or inundated by reservoir projects." Another key question was whether or not the North Dakota delegation was behind the proposal. The briefing team responded that no member of Congress was vigorously "pushing" the proposal but that identical bills had been introduced by Senator Burdick and Representative Link [both Democrats] during the 92nd Congress. Next, NPS Associate Director for Legislation Stanley W. Hulett was directly asked how the proposal ranked in the Service's new area program. Hulett replied, "It would have a relatively low priority."[236]

A series of new questions then followed. First, the question was raised as to whether the State of North Dakota would be willing to acquire and develop the site using matching grant funds available under the NHPA. Next, if the primary value was the archeological study and classification, should the federal government perhaps acquire only the actual sites in fee or easement? Finally, could the site be preserved under its existing status? But, because of the various alternatives under discussion, Bohlen asked that an "options paper" be prepared in which costs and possible effects were examined. Robert M. Utley, who by the end of the year was appointed NPS Associate Director of Park Historic Preservation, was assigned to the project.[237] The January 26th briefing was a clear setback for those advocating NHS for Knife River. It was also indicative of NPS Director Walker's stabilization policy that foresaw that "NPS funding and staffing would be inadequate for a continuing high influx of new parks and program responsibilities."[238]

As directed the briefing, Hulett and Utley prepared an option plan outlining varying degrees of protection for the proposed NHS. They developed ten options, with general cost estimates, for Walker's consideration. The first five options involved NPS

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[236] Gary E. Bunney to Associate Director, Legislation, circa 26 January 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[237] Ibid.

[238] http://www.nps.gov/history/history/hisnps/NPSHistory/directors.htm.

acquisition and development of the NHS. They were: (Option 1) send to Congress the legislative proposal as presently formulated for approximately 1,250 acres, which would fill a significant void in the National Park System if enacted; (Option 2) defer to some future date the submission of the legislative proposal as presently formulated, the same as Option 1, but delayed with annual escalation of costs for lands, development, and operations occurring; (Option 3) propose a lesser legislation plan to include only the principal archeological sites (Big Hidatsa in one parcel and Lower Hidatsa and Sakakawea in a second, detached parcel) with some development of 550 acres, thereby reducing land requirements, lowering operation and development costs, and lessening interpretative opportunities and protection; (Option 4) acquire easement only on principal sites, with no development, which would keep the site essentially intact but offer no protection of the site from vandals and pot hunters and no archeological research or interpretive opportunities; and (Option 5) acquire an easement on the specific archeological site, Big Hidatsa Village (330 acres), with the same consequences as Option 4.[239]

Options six through ten centered on helping the State of North Dakota acquire the land and develop a state park. They were: (Option 6) designation by North Dakota of the area as a state park, which was currently not feasible because North Dakota had no funds for development and protection of these archeological resources; (Option 7) provide North Dakota with historic preservation grants under NHPA, which was also not currently feasible because North Dakota was one of only two states nationwide not participating in this program; (Option 8) continue to encourage state participation in the historic preservation program by providing federal financial assistance for acquisition and development of Big Hidatsa Village on a matching basis, under the guise that it was eligible as national historic landmark, while at the same time losing all benefit to the other villages and sites (e.g., Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa, Amahami, and the Buchfink site); (Option 9) maintain the current status, with all villages and sites facing an uncertain future as economic enticements such as the agriculture market, land prices, mining activity, and/or power production, threatened conversion to other uses, resulting in the complete loss of the archeological and historic resource; and (Option 10) obtain participation of philanthropic foundations in acquiring the land and protecting the resource until such time as federal development and operational funds were available, which, depending on the foundation, might provide protection, interpretation, and archeological research.[240]

MWRO, State Officials, and North Dakota Congressional Delegation Refuse to Back Down

When MWRO learned of the results of the Walker-Bohlen briefing and Hulett-Utley's options paper, Acting Director Robert L. Giles immediately forwarded a memorandum to Associate Director of Legislation Gary Bunney. Giles emphatically stated that the

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[239] Associate Director, Legislation to Director, circa February 20 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[240] Ibid.

Midwest Region "strongly" favored and supported Option 1 because the site deserved a place in the National Park System at the earliest opportunity. According to Giles, if some form of protection were not provided soon, there was a good chance that it would be lost forever by the channel changes of the Missouri River and Knife River and erosion of the banks, and that landowners Olga Krieger and Byron Grannis threatened to put Big Hidatsa Village into agricultural production if the area were not soon incorporated into a National Park Service area. Furthermore, Giles drew attention to the fact that the State of North Dakota indicated their support of the proposal by donating a 41-acre tract to the project and that the Three Affiliated Tribes supported the proposal because it would focus national attention to their ancestral home. Giles also stressed that because the State of North Dakota did not participate in the Historic Preservation Program and therefore was not eligible for grant money and that since the "State of North Dakota has had years to acquire and operate this site, but has expressed no interest in doing so," he knew of "no reason to assume they would do so now or in the near future." Giles concluded by expressing that the only acceptable alternative, "but much less so, would be Option 10 if a suitable organization could be found."[241]

While this internal NPS debate occurred, North Dakota's congressional delegation showed their continued support for the establishment of the Knife River NHS. On March 6, 1973, Congressman Andrews introduced H.R. 5199. A month later, Senator Burdick introduced S. 1468 for himself and fellow Senator Young. Both bills were identical and did not differ from the legislation introduced in the previous Congress, and both bills were then referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs for each respective body for possible hearings.[242]

Introduction of these bills at this time was influenced and/or prompted by new NPS information on growing local landowner anger about the project. Apparently, Byron Grannis had become so impatient over progress made on the NHS proposal that in 1972, he reportedly plowed a ring around Big Hidatsa Village so that his wife could search for artifacts. Then in March 1973, Grannis did put his land within the proposed park boundary (190 acres) up for sale at $300 per acre—$100 per acre over his asking price the previous year. The Borners were equally hostile. Max Borner publicly expressed his hostility to the NPS proposal, and his son Maynard Borner was even more hostile than his father. When Maynard learned that Grannis land might be for sale, he appeared very interested in buying it himself to stop the project.[243] Then again, the NPS proposal did gain unexpected support elsewhere. In April, the Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC), a Bismarck-based wholesale power supplier, expressed preservation concerns at Knife River. For some time, BEPC had been working with citizens to develop local

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[241] Robert L. Giles to Associate Director, Legislation, 23 February 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[242] H.R. 5199, "A Bill to Authorize the Establishment of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 6 March 1973, and S. 1468, "A Bill to Authorize the Establishment of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 4 April 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[243] Director, Midwest Region to Associate Director, Legislation, 9 March 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

historic and cultural sites, such as Fort Clark Historic Site southeast of Stanton. BEPC Director James L. Grahl urged North Dakota's congressional delegation to introduce and support legislation to provide the necessary authorization and funding for the Knife River NHS. Grahl even warned NPS Director Walker "that cultivation of land action by individuals may soon destroy much of this heritage."[244]

To TRNP Superintendent Lancaster, this support appeared insufficient to overcome opposition to the project. In late July, he requested a special meeting on Knife River Indian Village designation. In attendance were State Planning Division Director Jack Neckels, Travel Department Director Joe Satrom, Outdoor Recreation Agency Executive Officer Gary Leppart, and representatives from Senator Burdick, Senator Young, and Representative Andrew's offices.[245] At this meeting, Governor Link formed the group into an unofficial state level task force to preserve the site and to encourage Congress to act. In a newspaper, Neckels said, "The National Park Service strongly supports designating the site to be part of the service, but cannot act until Congress and the Department of the Interior have endorsed the project. The time has come for consolidated effort at the state level to indicate to Congress that we are serious about this project." In the same newspaper article, Governor Link underlined that the "state must begin building supportive evidence for the project and must work closely with North Dakota's delegation. It takes a great deal of nudging and pushing to get a bill before a committee... [And people] should contact federal officials and let them know this thing is alive and on the move."[246]

Landowner Opposition Mounts

In turn, several local landowners conveyed their opinions to the newspapers as well. They were not all that pleased at the prospect of losing their land to the federal government and even were extremely bitter about the proposal. "As far as I'm concerned," William Russell told one newspaper, "they can go to hell. I'm not interested, regardless of the money." Russell, according to the papers, stood to lose more than 250 acres if the site became a reality, and the project would gobble up all of his pasture plus 100 acres of farmland. In addition, he would lose access to 300 to 400 acres on a piece of land he leased from the State of North Dakota east of the Knife River. Russell and Maynard Borner were determined to keep the land that had been in their families for more than ninety years. Borner accused NPS of not holding additional public meetings because they did not want "to let people know how much opposition there was to the

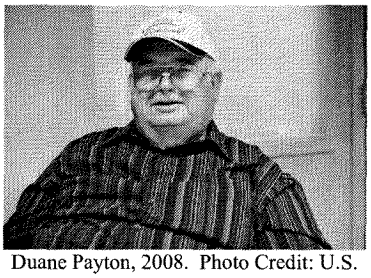
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[244] James L. Grahl to Ronald Walker, 27 April 1973; J. Leonard Volz to James L. Grahl, 8 May 1973; Stanley W. Hulett to James L. Grahl, 1 June 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[245] Kathy Satrom to Jim Sperry, 30 July 1973, Personal Papers of James E. Sperry, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[246] Unknown newspaper, "Stanton Indian Village Sites May Be Preserved," 1 August 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; "Group Plans to Preserve Hidatsa Village Areas," various newspapers, 1 August 1973, Personal Papers of James E. Sperry, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

development." He also argued that only about 100 acres was needed to preserve the old villages and burial sites. Another farmer, Vernon Smith, owner of about twelve acres in the proposed site, told the newspaper that he would lose his home if the land were taken. Yet another local farmer, Herbert Oberlander, said, "He would lose all of his 117-acre farm." Finally, landowner Duane Payton said, "His land falls into a buffer zone bordering the site, and he doesn't know how the project will affect him." However, a couple of farmers, whose land would be affected, did not oppose the development if they get a "fair price for their land." For instance, George Buchfink, who had more than 150 acres in the development, said, "He will sell if the price is right," because the "site would raise heck with his farm." Byron Grannis told the newspaper resignedly, "If they want it [this land] they'll take it. You can't stop the government"—a reasonable indication that he still hoped the government would buy his land.[247]


Duane Payton, 2008. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

Though this negative publicity from local landowners was damaging, Governor Link's unofficial task force had anticipated it. According to Gary Leppart, "This opposition was in evidence at the time the project was initially proposed, and is something that I feel we can expect to encounter." Though he sympathized with the landowners whenever a development jeopardized their lands and homes, Leppart strongly felt that this project was too important and necessary to the people of the state and nation.[248]

Despite local landowner opposition, the governor's unofficial task force continued forth, gaining more project endorsements than their opponents, through better organization. For instance, in August 1973, Paul Ewald, who now worked for the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, prepared a resolution signed by approximately 250 tribal members in support of the park proposal.[249] Thomas J. Clifford, president of the University of North Dakota, visited with Senators Young and Burdick and was assured of their help on the project.[250] Governor Link also contacted state senators representing the Stanton area, such as Robert L. Stroup, encouraging him to support the project.[251] This statewide pressure resulted from personal phone calls, letters to key individuals and civic and educational groups, resolutions from key groups, and news releases. Their effort, along with a consensus between MWRO and Ernest A. Connally, Washington Office associate

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[247] Unknown newspaper, "National Historic Site Proposed for Stanton: Most Farmers Opposed to the Project, " circa early August, 1973; "National Historic Site Status Sought for Villages," *Minot Daily News*, circa early August 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[248] Gary Leppart to Kathy Satrom, 28 August 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[249] Merrill D. Beal to Associate Director, Legislation, 2 August 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[250] Thomas J. Clifford to Gary Leppart, 17 August 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[251] Arthur A. Link to Robert L. Stroup, 24 August 1073, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, worked. Soon thereafter, NPS Director Walker notified Assistant Secretary Bohlen that in order to "preserve the irreplaceable archeological and historical resources at Knife River," the National Park Service would "vigorously support Option 1; that is, the legislative proposal as previously formulated."[252]

November 1973 Hearings on S. 1468 and H.R. 5199

On October 4, 1973, Governor Link's task force met to discuss and complete their assignments prior to testifying before Congress. For this meeting, Sperry prepared an information statement for their use that included a description of the site and the national significance of Knife River Indian Villages. Last on their agenda was the phrase "Dealing with landowners and public in area." Of note, no one from the unofficial advisory committee had been assigned to this task.[253]

Testing the Congressional Waters

Following this last task force meeting in mid-October 1973, Kathy Satrom, Governor Link's assistant, went to Washington, DC, to meet with North Dakota's congressional delegation, where they discussed witness testimony before Congress. Satrom also met with unknown Interior Department and NPS officials as well.[254] On her return, she noted for the record that Senators Burdick and Young, as well as Representative Andrews, were still giving the proposal strong support.[255]

After the meeting, Senator Burdick announced to the press that on November 6, 1973, the Senate Interior Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation would hold hearings on S. 1468 to establish Knife River Indian Villages NHS. "There is considerable support in North Dakota for this bill," Burdick told newspaper reporters, and he expected "a number of North Dakotans to come to Washington to urge its approval." Burdick furthermore pronounced, "I have received letters of support from people in all walks of life in North Dakota—from university presidents to travel experts. Because erosion in that area has become evident, however, it is urgent that a national designation be considered immediately."[256] Representative Andrews also intended to have House hearings on H.R.

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[252] Ira E. Whitlock to Assistant Secretary, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, 24 August 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[253] Kathy Satrom to Jim Sperry, et al., 1 October 1973, with attachments, "Information on the Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site" prepared September, 1973, and Knife River Designation Task Force Committee Agenda, 4 October 1973, Personal Papers of James E. Sperry, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. It appeared that the task force made no effort to bring the local landowners on board with the project. This lack of seeking some form of consensus with them would turn out later to be a key mistake, causing continued hostility to the park for generations to come.

[254] "Villages Eyed As Historic Site," *Bismarck Tribune* 12 October 1973.

[255] "Hearing Set On Knife River Historical Site," *The Forum* 24 October 1973.

[256] "Historic Site Hearings Set On Villages." *Bismarck Tribune* 13 October 1973.

5199, but unfortunately, there was no possibility of having a hearing that month.[257] Subsequent to returning to Bismarck, Satrom reported to the task force. She believed that the National Park Service had prepared a report favoring the project—good news. But, she hinted, "Money problems involved in making the villages a federal site could pose difficulties."[258]

Interior Department and Washington Office Balk Again

There were indeed financial problems on the federal side, and by this time the Interior Department had taken Option 1 off the table. Days before Satrom's visit, National Park Service officials briefed Deputy Assistant Interior Secretary Bohlen of the Knife River proposal a second time. At this time, Bohlen indicated that he favored Option 6—North Dakota designation of the area as a State park. Bohlen's position was that the Interior Department and NPS were "very impressed with Knife River," that they acknowledged "its importance and significance, but with the availability of land and water conservation money and historic preservation money, they encourage[d] the state to apply for such funding and assume operation and administration." Washington Office Associate Director of Legislation Gary Bunney thereafter communicated this regrettable position to Jack Neckels of Governor Link's unofficial task force member. However, Bunney also noted in his letter to Neckels that there was money in the Secretary of the Interior's contingency fund and perhaps money obtainable from the Bureau of Reclamation to support a state park. Bunney also let on that the Interior Department was also looking at other alternatives, such as the two-site option (Option 2), which would reduce the acreage needed and cost considerably less.[259] Meanwhile, behind the scenes, Senators Burdick and Young began laying groundwork with their fellow Senate Interior Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation members but feared that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) might scuttle the project altogether, an action that had occurred on other, similar projects.[260]

While North Dakota's delegation worked hard digging up support for enactment of S. 1468, letters, telegrams, and statements of support poured forth on the bill, as well as some opposition from local and state individuals and groups. For instance, Superintendent of Stanton's Public Schools Michael F. Hauck wrote Senators Burdick and Young that with the establishment of the proposed national park, his school district would lose 1,200 square acres of taxable land and close to $1,000 in tax money supporting their school district. Hauck also informed the senators that area sheep ranchers feared that the area would act as a "federal game refuge" and harbor coyotes that

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[257] "Hearing Set On Knife River Historical Site," *The Forum* 24 October 1973.

[258] Kathy Satrom to Knife River Indian Villages Task Force, 30 October 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[259] Jack Neckels to "Unofficial Task Force"—Knife River Indian Villages, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[260] Kathy Satrom to Knife River Indian Villages Task Force, 30 October 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

were killing neighboring sheep.[261] Conversely, Glenna Raybell, president of the North Dakota Women's Coalition, highlighted that setting aside the park would honor the home of Sakakawea. "Her contribution to the eventual opening up of the western states to settlement is unquestioned," according to Raybell. "To honor Jefferson's Monticello without giving a corresponding honor to the village of this woman would be neglect, not only archeologically, but socially."[262]

However, one week before the hearing, NPS Director for Legislation Stanley Hulett made it officially known to Henry M. Jackson, chairman of the Senate Interior Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, that NPS was opposed to enactment of S. 1468 "because of existing fiscal and budgetary constraints and the backlog in funding for land acquisition and development in existing units of the system." In Hulett's words, the National Park Service questioned whether the quickest and most feasible method of preservation was to authorize a unit of the National Park System for this purpose. The Service tabulated that land acquisitions would cost $600,000 and development costs would be $2.268 million. In view of the large backlog in the system, funds for land acquisition and development would not be available for some years. As an alternative, Hulett proposed that the "State of North Dakota would be better able to acquire and protect these sites using matching Federal grant funds," such as under National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 and/or the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. While the latter fund could not be used for historic preservation, according to Hulett, it could help North Dakota acquire most of this area and assist in the development of trails and other recreation facilities. The OMB and the Nixon administration did not object to Hulett's suggestion, but when Senator Young, North Dakota's senior senator and a Republican, learned of this position, he expressed "displeasure" with the Interior Department's position and intended to speak personally with Interior Department Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton (1972-1975) about the matter.[263]

Showdown in the Senate

On the day of the Senate hearing on S. 1468, a five-person delegation, led by North Dakota Lieutenant Governor Wayne Sanstead, testified before the Senate Interior Subcommittee in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. The delegation included SHSND Superintendent Sperry; Anson Baker of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fort Berthold Reservation; Vincent Malnourie, tribal chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes; and Sheila Robinson, NDHSI secretary, member of the North Dakota Lewis and Clark Council, and president of the McLean County Historical Society. And, in an almost unprecedented move, Representative Andrews arranged for the delegation to meet that same day with Representative Roy Taylor, chairman of the House Interior Subcommittee,

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[261] Michael F. Hauck to Senators Burdick and Young, 23 October 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[262] "Historic Site Agreed On," *Minot Daily News* 5 November 1973.

[263] Stanley W. Hulett to Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, 31 October 1973, with attachment, "Department Views of S. 1468," File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

and Representative Joe Skubitz, ranking minority member, to discuss the Knife River proposal. According to Andrews, "When the departmental reports are received, the subcommittee will be able to take action based on the testimony they get at this special meeting," which unfortunately went unrecorded.[264]

According to Sperry, on the night before the hearing, the delegation had no idea what the NPS official position was on the bill. They were completely unaware that Washington Office National Park Service officials had in fact intended to withdraw NPS support for the bill to create Knife River Indian Villages NHS.[265] Therefore, when NPS for the first time gave its official support to the project through Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed, they were momentarily delighted! But they soon learned that the National Park Service recommended Federal acquisition of just 550 acres as an NHS. In other words, they opted to support Option 2. The suggested acreage included Big Hidatsa Village in one parcel and Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa in a separate detached parcel. Option 2 did not include the surrounding 770 acres of scenic and other lands recommended in the NPS master plan.[266]

After Senator Young "communicated" with Interior Secretary Morton, the National Park Service had hurriedly revised its proposed legislative report in opposition to the Park and instead selected Option 2. Washington Office officials now estimated land acquisition costs for purchasing in fee simple at $300,000 and development costs at $800,000 by the fifth year. Overnight, a new park boundary map was devised, which showed a north unit of approximately 300 acres and a south unit of 250 acres. The Buchfink and the Amahami Village sites were excluded from acquisition under Option 2. Furthermore, only six properties needed purchasing and only seven people would be displaced. According to NPS testimony, annual costs of operation and maintenance would be $150,000 five years after enactment of the bill. The OMB and the Nixon administration had advised the National Park Service that they had no objection to the project as stated in Option 2, a position that was crafted after Senator Young called. Under Option 2, interpretation of the site would center on "agricultural village life, the nomadic life of the Plains Indians, the visiting of the village by the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and early European visitors to the villages." Finally, because the sites were threatened by natural erosion from the Knife River and were subject to the work of pothunters, the National Park Service wished to acquire the properties as soon as possible.[267]

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[264] "Testimony Set On Historic Site," *Bismarck Tribune* 2 November 1973.

[265] Oral History of James E. Sperry, 28 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[266] Assistant Secretary of the Interior to Chairman, with attachment, "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site (Proposed), 6 November 1973, Statement of Department of the Interior, November 1973, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Summary Sheet, n.d., Richard C. Curry to Legislative Counsel, 24 January 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[267] Ibid. At the hearing, none of the concerns/protests of the local landowners were presented, although the hearing addressed the loss of county tax income and predator control as minimal issues.



Delegation from North Dakota Presenting Testimony on S. Bill 1468 in Washington DC on November 6, 1973. Left to Right: Vincent Malnourie, Anson Baker, Nathan Little Soldier, Wayne Sanstead, Senator Quentin Burdick, James Sperry and Sheila Robinson. Photo Credit: James Sperry

Thereafter, the North Dakota delegation testified as to the national and state significance of the site, but no one questioned the National Park Service's reduction of the national historic site from 1,250 acres to just 550 acres. Days later, Senator Burdick explained to Director of the State Outdoor Recreation Department Gary Leppart that he thought the hearing went well, even though the National Park Service recommended acquisition and development of only 550 acres. Letters and telegrams from Leppart and others had served to build a strong case for the bill in Burdick's view, and the senator felt that the size of the park was still negotiable. Burdick was confident that legislation to protect at least the Indian village sites would be enacted by the Senate that term.[268]

On November 27, 1973, the full Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs met in executive session to consider S. 1468. Two days later, they unanimously reported S. 1468 out of committee to the full Senate with one amendment. They struck from the original bill the words "such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act" and inserted in lieu thereof the phrase "not to exceed $600,000 for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands and not to exceed $2,268,000 for development of the historic site." The bill as approved called for an area of 1,292 acres to be included in the NHS.[269] Clearly, Senators Young and Burdick sought to override National Park Service concerns regarding the cost of land acquisition and development. On November 30th, the Senate subsequently passed the measure unanimously. In describing the approval of his bill, Burdick believed that because of severe erosion problems in the area, there was a need to act quickly to preserve the area from destruction. In addition to their historic value, Senator Burdick saw the potential for tourist development and emphasized the point that Knife River Indian Villages NHS would complement Fort Union Trading Post NHS.[270]

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[268] Quentin N. Burdick to Gary Leppart, 8 November 1973, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[269] United States, Senate, *Senate Report 93-586, "Authorizing The Establishment Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site,"* 29 November 1973, 1st Session, 93rd Congress.

[270] "Senate Okays Burdick Bill on Historic Site," *Fargo Forum* 3 December 1973.

Legislative History: 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, and House Hearings

With the Senate amending the National Park Service proposal in favor of the acquisition and development of a unified site, the measure went to the House of Representatives for action in the 2nd Session of the 93rd Congress. Many supporters for the establishment of the NHS redoubled their efforts toward this end. Governor Link made it clear to Interior Secretary Morton and others that North Dakota was not in a position to acquire and/or administer the lands in the original National Park Service master plan and that the consequences of anything but full acquisition of this valuable area would be significant.[271] The governor now encouraged supporters to get behind Representative Andrews during hearings on passage of H.R. 5199.

On January 28, 1974, the House Interior Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation considered H.R. 5199. Representative Andrews, along with Lieutenant Governor Sanstead, provided additional testimony on behalf of the bill. At this time, the informal testimony by the five-member delegation before Representatives Taylor and Joe Skubitz in November of the previous year was inserted into the record.[272] The Andrews bill was similar to the one passed in the Senate. It proposed the purchase of 1,250 acres north of Stanton as an "archeological national historic site," as outlined in the 1971 master plan.[273] NPS Deputy Director Russell E. Dickenson, accompanied by TRNP Superintendent Lancaster, presented the National Park Service's position on the bill, which had not changed from the 550-acre, two-parcel proposal labeled as Option 2.[274] The next day, the House Subcommittee reported favorably on the bill, supporting Option 1 to the full Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, but action on the House bill would not take place until later in the term.

Landowners' Last Ditch Pleas

This interim period allowed for local landowner William Russell, who had earlier told the government to "go to hell" and was "not interested, regardless of the money," made one last appeal to halt the project. In mid-July, he wrote to Governor Link, Senators Young and Burdick, and Representative Andrews to express his continued opposition. Russell reminded them that at the October 6, 1971, Stanton meeting, there was much opposition to the park proposal, "all of which apparently fell on the deaf ears of the park service representatives." Though there were many reasons why landowners like Russell opposed the park, the primary reason for him was "losing our land on the east side of the Knife

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[271] Arthur A. Link to Rogers C.B. Morton, 14 January 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[272] Arthur A. Link to Friend, 17 January 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[273] "Andrews, Sanstead Urge Knife River Historic Site," *Bismarck Tribune* 28 January 1974.

[274] Richard C. Curry to Director, 20 February 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

River." If the National Park Service took this land, Russell contended, it would split his land up. Russell also drew attention to his family's love of the rich bottomland between the two rivers, which he did not want to lose. He wanted to know why the National Park Service needed the land on the east side of the Knife River. Russell apparently was not against the taking of his land on the west side of Knife River but thought that taking the east side was "ridiculous." In his letter, he also threatened to clear his land on the east side of the Knife River, making it irrigated and tillable acres, if the House of Representatives passed legislation supporting the NHS as proposed.[275]

Despite Russell's plea to see the Knife River project from "his side," action from the House of Representatives came in mid-August, when House Report 93-1285 was issued, which endorsed the Senate version of Option 1 for Knife River but, interestingly, scaled down the Senate's development package of $2.268 million to $1.130 million—or essentially one-half. Subsequently, the Knife River establishment proposal was incorporated into a NPS "new areas" omnibus bill with five other similar measures, H.R. 13157. This omnibus bill included the establishment of the Clara Barton NHS (Maryland), John Day Fossil Beds National Monument (Oregon), Springfield Armory NHS (Massachusetts), Tuskegee Institute NHS (Alabama), and the Martin Van Buren NHS (New York).[276]

Inherited Park Problems

In anticipation that Congress might approve the proposed Knife River NHS during the remaining calendar year, two days after the introduction of H.R. 13157, TRNP Superintendent Lancaster summarized the state of affairs on the Knife River project for the newly organized Rocky Mountain Regional Office (RMRO) in Denver. He warned RMRO Director Lynn H. Thompson (1974-1978) of three problems inherent with establishing the NHS. The first problem involved stabilization of the Knife River bank. Lancaster, in reviewing the legislative support data, noticed an important financial gap in that no monetary consideration was given for bank stabilization of the Knife River, which was eroding away the Sakakawea Village site. Lancaster emphasized the seriousness of the problem to Thompson. Using comparative figures from a Corps of Engineers project at TRNP, he estimated it would cost approximately $96,000 to stabilize 1,200 linear feet, which was far below the $250,000 estimated by the Mattes feasibility study six years earlier. The second problem was the overall protection of the village sites. Byron Grannis, the landowner of the Big Hidatsa Village site, was anxious to build a new house. He told Lancaster that he wished that the proposed bill either be passed by Congress soon or be thrown out so that he could determine where to build his house. However, Grannis had made similar comments for many years previously. In addition to these two items,

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[275] William H. Russell to Governor Link, 12 July 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[276] United States, House of Representatives, *House of Representatives Report 93-1285, "Providing For The Establishment Of Clara Barton NHS, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Knife River NHS, Springfield NHS, Tuskegee Institute NHS, And Martin Van Buren NHS, And For Other Purposes,"* 14 August 1974, 2nd Session, 93rd.

Lancaster felt that the RMRO director needed to be aware that "a vast amount of public relations work will be needed in the Stanton, North Dakota, area to pave the way for acceptance of the National Park Service."[277]

Enabling Legislation (Public Law 93-486), October 26, 1974

On October 4, 1974, the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to which H.R 13157 was referred, considered the same and reported favorably thereon, with amendments, and recommended that the bill as amended be passed. As recommended by Senate Committee Report 93-1233, the historic site still included 1,292 acres, $600,000 for land acquisition, and $2.268 million for the necessary facilities, archeological investigations, restoration work, and interpretive facilities.[278] Four days later, the Senate considered and passed H.R. 13157, amended to include the same acreage and amounts as recommended in S. 1468 that had been passed by the Senate on November 30, 1973. On October 16th, the House concurred with the Senate amendment, and Congress passed H.R. 13157 by voice vote.

Ten days later, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 93-486, which provided under Title I the following relevant sections:

> Section 101, a (3): For establishment as the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota, those lands depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota," numbered 468-20,012 and dated July 1970.
>
> Section 102 (a): When the Secretary determines that an adequate interest in lands has been acquired to constitute an administrable unit for each of the areas described in section 1 of this Act, he may, after notifying the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States Congress of his intention to do so at least fourteen days in advance, declare the establishment of such unit by publication of a notice to that effect in the Federal Register. Such notice shall contain a map or other description of the boundaries of the unit, together with an explanation of the interests acquired and the costs incident thereto. The Secretary may refrain from acquiring property for establishment of any unit authorized by this Act where, in his judgment, satisfactory agreements or donations with respect to properties, which are needed for the protection and administration of a particular unit, have not been consummated with the owners of such properties.
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> Section 104 (c): Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, $600,000 for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands and $2,268,000 for development.[279]

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[277] John O. Lancaster to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), 16 August 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[278] United States, Senate, *Senate Report 93-1233, "Providing For The Establishment Of Clara Barton NHS, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Knife River NHS, Springfield NHS, Tuskegee Institute NHS, And Martin Van Buren NHS, And For Other Purposes,"* 4 October 1974, 2nd Session, 93rd.

[279] *Public Law 93-486*, 93rd Congress, H.R. 13157, 26 October 1974.

The Real Work Now Begins

Surprisingly, there was little, if any, national or state fanfare regarding the inception of Knife River Indian Villages NHS. Local newspapers such as the *Hazen Star* and the *McKenzie County Farmer* covered the announcement of President Ford signing into law KRIV's establishment. Besides outlining the familiar details of the park to the newspapers, RMRO Director Lynn Thompson stated that the recent authorization of KRIV had "filled a significant gap in the National Park Service's roster of archeological sites," and that the National Park Service wished to begin acquisition of private lands within the boundaries as soon as possible.[280]

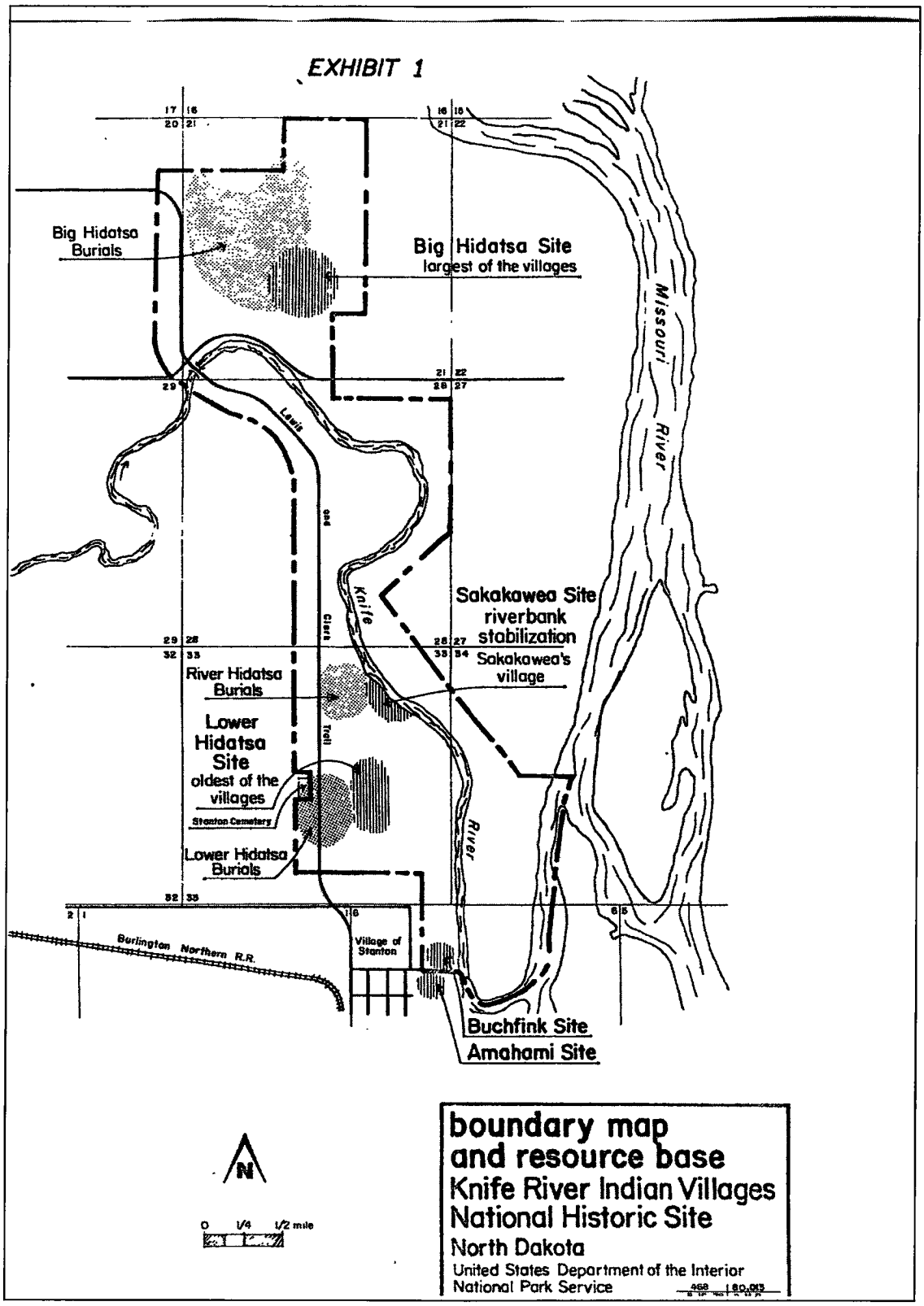
TRNP Superintendent John Lancaster was made responsible for administering the area on an interim basis. Lancaster described the project, specifying that Knife River would be managed to preserve the irreplaceable archeological resources and to restore the natural setting to a facsimile of what it may have been like when the villages were inhabited. Additionally, he mentioned that a section of one village would be partially restored for visitors, who will be encouraged to watch the archeological work while it was underway. Lancaster also indicated that the National Park Service "was anxious to work with the current owners of these lands, and we feel certain that agreements can be reached on the acquisition of their property located within the authorized Historic Site boundaries." Finally, he noted, "since the signing into law of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site... all archeological and historic properties are protected by the 1906 Antiquities Act. The Antiquities Act makes it a Federal offense to remove or disturb any archeological or historic object on Federal properties."[281]

The path from Paul Ewald's first meeting with NPS officials in July 1964 to the passage of Knife River Indian Villages NHS' enabling legislation in October 1974 was a slow, twisting, and arduous road. But, even though the destination of securing the Knife River Indian Villages under the protection of the United States government had been reached, the way to creating, building, and interpreting the park's resources, and combining them into a viable NPS unit, would not be any easier. As will be seen, the real hard work now began.

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[280] "Knife River Villages Added to National Park Roster," *McKenzie County Farmer* 28 November 1974; "Park Officials Begin Work With Village Site Landowners," *Hazen Star* circa 9 December 1974.

[281] John O. Lancaster to Mark Miller, 9 December 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.



Early Boundary Map Based on Map Attached to Public Law 93-486.

CHAPTER FIVE

LAYING THE FOUNDATION AND BUILDING KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, 1974-1995

With the passage of Public Law 93-486 in October 1974, the Rocky Mountain Regional Office (RMRO) immediately undertook the long, complicated, multi-task exercise of laying the foundation and building Knife River Indian Villages NHS. The first order of business was managing a land program that involved acquisition through fee and scenic title, and demolition and removal of non-contributing buildings and structures under Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966. Subsequently and simultaneously, a number of archeological and ethnohistorical studies were contracted for and undertaken with various universities and institutions. These studies eventually convinced National Park Service officials to reinterpret the 1971 master plan to accommodate their scholarly recommendations.

With these findings and the realities of development funding and site constraints in hand, a new master plan emerged in 1978. It redefined the park's development objectives from those promulgated during the feasibility and legislative process prior to enactment of Public Law 93-486, while preserving the park's purpose and significance. This change involved a very complicated process and history. Thereafter, a delicate construction program began at KRIV as NPS oversaw the funding, design, and construction of KRIV's facilities. Eventually, they included a unique visitor center complex with auditorium and laboratory with artifact storage, a full-scale earth-lodge exhibit, maintenance facilities, and an interpretive trail system with signage.

First Meeting with Local Landowners, 1974-1975

Following KRIV's authorization under Public Law 93-486, responsibility for land acquisition and development planning fell to RMRO Director Lynn Thompson in Denver.[282] The first order of business was the acquisition of 1,292 acres of land, as depicted on the July 1970 master plan map.[283] To this end, in late November, TRNP Superintendent Lancaster sent out letters to twelve key property owners inviting them to a meeting on December 5, 1974, at the Stanton Community Center. At the meeting, RMRO representatives would explain in detail National Park Service procedures in acquiring land and NPS obligations and limitations under the terms of the Congressional authorization.[284]

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[282] Joe Brown to Arthur A. Link, 29 November 1974, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[283] Richard C. Curry to Regional Director, RMR, 14 November 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[284] John O. Lancaster to Forest Krieger, 25 November 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND; "Knife River Village Meeting Scheduled," *Bismarck Tribune* 3 December 1974.

Through Governor's Link's office, Lancaster also invited SHSND Superintendent James E. Sperry and Director of the State Planning Division Neckels. Only weeks earlier, Governor Link, upon learning of the authorization of KRIV, wrote NPS Director Ronald Walker informing him that the passage of the legislation was timely because of the intense interest and emphasis on the utilization of the lignite resources in the immediate historic site area. As a result, the governor anticipated that Stanton and the adjacent area would receive considerable population influx, which led him to urge NPS to immediately begin implementation of a "fair and equitable lands acquisition program" to assure protection of the historic resources.[285] To be sure of accurate coverage of the meeting, Lancaster also invited newspaper reporter John Hjelle of the *Bismarck Tribune*, as well as members of the local press, to attend this meeting.[286]

At this December 1974 meeting, NPS officials explained how Public Law 93-486 authorized the Interior Secretary to acquire lands, waters, and other property, or an interest therein, for KRIV, and that under the Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, all real property needed to be appraised before NPS could initiate negotiations with each property owner. He was also careful to mention that the owner of the property would be given an opportunity to accompany the appraiser during the property inspection. National Park Service officials asked for their cooperation in this process.[287] While the National Park Service appraiser set up appointments after the meeting, RMRO realized that "in order to cope with the extremely sensitive public relations problems which already occur[red] in this sparsely populated community, it was imperative that a area manager be brought on duty as soon as possible." Although public relations would be of the utmost importance and would occupy a great deal of the manager's time, the area manager's duties would also include coordinating all activities needed in setting up KRIV as an NHS.[288] However, by the time a budget for KRIV was established, allowing NPS to hire KRIV's first park manager on August 17, 1975,[289] negotiations with local landowners had already "gone south" quickly.

Land Acquisition, 1975-1976

During the first year of the NPS land acquisition program, federal government appraisers busied themselves visiting and inspecting each property, examining property tax records, and then negotiating with the owners. Those landowners who wished to sell were friendly, while those property owners hostile to the idea openly resisted. By January

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[285] Arthur A. Link to Ronald Walker, Director, 7 November 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[286] John O. Lancaster to Arthur Link, 22 November 1974; John O. Lancaster to John O. Hjelle, 21 November 1974, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[287] Sherman W. Swenson to H.J. Lennius, 11 February 1975, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[288] "Budget Justification for Items Requested for New Park Area," circa early 1974, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[289] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1975, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

1976, NPS had acquired 156 acres of the 1,292 acres needed for the park, and most of that land came from a few smaller landowners.[290]

Several of the key landowners, such as Forrest Krieger, Max Borner, Duane Payton, Vernon Smith, Herbert Oberlander, and William Russell had refused to accept government purchase of their lands. In the case of most of these owners, there was considerable difference between what NPS offered as just compensation and the landowners' counter offers. Four of the landowners had claims exceeding $100,000. Oberlander claimed $150,000 as opposed to the NPS appraisal of $67,000, and Russell wanted $251,000 for his parcel, while NPS appraised his land at just $76,000. In fact, many landowners' claims were not even obtainable by the negotiators, who more or less "fled the premises in fear of their safety."[291] In one case, an Omaha appraiser who sought an easement agreement was met by a very vocal family dog, which got him by the pants and would not let go.[292] In the Borner family case, they were simply unwilling to sell at any price because of family farm ties. Because NPS was unable to negotiate the purchase of many of the key tracts at prices supported by NPS estimates of just compensation, by late July, the National Park Service recommended that United States Attorney Harold O. Bullis institute condemnation proceedings.[293] Yet, by the end of the year, the Department of Justice had not proceeded. Instead, Bullis recommended, in view of the amount of the claims asserted by the various owners in the pending case, that consideration be given to employment of a second appraiser, preferably one independent of the National Park Service.[294]

Draft and Final Impact Studies, 1975-1976

While waiting for the land acquisition to be completed in mid-1975, NPS officials decided to move forward with draft and final impact studies for the NHS. In July 1975, NPS made available to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the public a draft environmental statement on the NHS,[295] which was followed by a final document a

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[290] Charles R. Rinaldi to Regional Solicitor, 17 June 1976, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[291] Charles R. Rinaldi to Regional Solicitor, 17 June 1976, with enclosure, "Tract(s) for Condemnation;" Glen T. Bean to Associate Director, Park System Management, Washington Office 9 June 1976, Charles R. Rinaldi to Regional Solicitor, 18 June 1976, with enclosure, "Tract(s) for Condemnation;" Regional Solicitor to Edward H. Levy, 20 July 1976, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[292] Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[293] Charles R. Rinaldi to Regional Solicitor, 17 June 1976, with enclosure, "Tract(s) for Condemnation;" Glen T. Bean to Associate Director, Park System Management, Washington Office 9 June 1976, Charles R. Rinaldi to Regional Solicitor, 18 June 1976, with enclosure, "Tract(s) for Condemnation;" Regional Solicitor to Edward H. Levy, 20 July 1976, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[294] Harold O. Bullis to Sherman W. Swenson, 15 December 1976; Harold O. Bullis to Frank E. McAnear, 11 February 1977, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[295] NPS, *Draft Environmental Statement: Proposed Knife River Indian Village NHS, North Dakota*, July 1976, passim, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND.

year later. The draft document was sent to every public official, public agency, and public group state and nationwide imaginable, but for unknown reasons, not directly to the landowners. It differed little from the 1971 EIS. But unlike the previous document, this time, it was subject to support and some criticism.

In general, federal and state agencies supported it and/or pointed out minor errors or omissions. These agencies included the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), SHSND, North Dakota State Planning Division, Governor Link's office, North Dakota State Park Service, and the North Dakota Highway Department. Several federal agencies provided specific advice regarding land restoration and range and vegetation management, wildlife management, mineral development, hunting and fishing, and transportation issues. They included the ACOE, BOR, Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Bureau of Mines (BOM), United States Geological Survey (USGS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA).[296]

Riverbank stabilization and the erosion of Sakakawea Village were of particular interest to several federal and state agencies. Many suggested that the effects of flooding at the site should be assessed in order to maintain their archeological integrity, and in this regard, ACOE indicated that new regulations gave them the power to exercise regulatory jurisdiction over the Knife River.[297] Naturally, saving Sakakawea Village from total erosion, which had been occupied by the Hidatsa at the time of Lewis and Clark's Expedition, was one of the first National Park Service priorities. The final EIS, in addressing those concerns, indicated that the "control of the course of this river will be a major element in efforts to preserve the remains of this village site.... Preliminary estimates indicate a need for 1,800 linear feet of bank stabilization.... As the Park Service does not, at this time, own the property on which the river bank stabilization is necessary, exact surveys have not been made."[298]

Only one agency noted issues related to the local landowners. Custer National Forest Supervisor D.C. MacIntyre pointed out that assessment of the impact on the local landowners created by the proposed park was missing from the document. "If the loss of lands would mean the economic failure of one or more farm units, this should be recognized and compensated for or the proposal altered." NPS countered this Agriculture Department agency criticism, stating that Congress had predetermined site size based on input gathered prior to establishment of the NHS. There would be no uneconomic remnants due to land acquisition, and mitigation for relocated families would be discussed in the final EIS. MacIntyre also suggested that the EIS give more attention to involving local people in the final site size and development, and that local input should be used to fit the site into the natural attractiveness of the surrounding prairie. NPS made no comment regarding this thought.[299]

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[296] NPS, *Final Environmental Statement: Proposed Knife River Indian Village NHS, North Dakota*, July 1976, passim, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND.
[297] Ibid., A-21-A-22.
[298] Ibid., 7.
[299] Ibid., A-2-A-3.

MWAC Funding, Initial Research, and Development Program, 1974-1976

With completion of the EIS process in the spring of 1976 and while NPS waited for land acquisition to be completed, MWRO turned to MWAC[300] in Lincoln, Nebraska, to begin its pre-development and interpretive archeological research program. MWAC desired to proceed as "cautiously as possible with the archeology and to disturb and remove as little as possible."[301]

Following the passage of Public Law 93-486 in October 1974, MWAC identified the funding needs to begin studies at KRIV. A month later, MWAC submitted a request for $136,000 per year for five years to develop an archeological program at KRIV and attempted to secure funds and positions through "normal programming channels." MWAC's funding request included preparation of a research design outlining the direction of work, remote sensing, mapping, ground survey, magnetic surveying, and ultimately field work, including testing and excavations to resolve problems defined in the research design.[302] MWAC chief archeologist F.A. Calabrese declared that this funding would have provided "top quality research, what we should expect for an important National Historic Site,"[303] but according to Calabrese, they "met with little success. It was apparent that the Service was not going to provide staff, nor funds to develop a major research program in archeology at Knife River or for that matter anywhere else within the Service. There were just not enough resources to meet other Service needs."[304] Apparently, MWAC's five-year research program estimates, though realistic in terms of needed pre-development and interpretive archeological research,

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[300] In 1969, MWAC, in Lincoln, Nebraska, emerged out of the Smithsonian Institution's Missouri Basin Project Office. Six years later, and just when KRIV was established, MWAC received its first base funding for work with parks, and its salvage program responsibilities were shifted to a newly established Interagency Archeological Services office in Denver and Atlanta. MWAC staff participated in the review of planning, programming, and management documents involving archeological considerations. They provide advice about needed archeological work prior to new construction and provide program development assistance to park managers gathering basic inventory data or initiating interpretation programs. Center staff also participated in team planning efforts and the preparation of general management plans as well as environmental assessments and management plans. MWAC was the only NPS unit that routinely provides archeological assistance to two regions, both the Midwest Region and the Rocky Mountain Region. Randall Pope, Lorraine Mintzmyer, and F.A. Calabrese, "A Bioregional Archeological Center: How It Works," *CRM Bulletin* Vol. 7, No. 1 (April 1984): 5, 11.

[301] F.A. Calabrese to Regional Director and Deputy Regional Director, RMR, 16 April 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[302] Development/Study Package #101, "Archeological Investigation of the Five Knife River Indian Villages," n.d., File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[303] F.A. Calabrese to Superintendent, TRNP, 26 March 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[304] F.A. Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview," circa 1979, 2, File H14 (Administrative History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

were beyond the National Park Service's capability, considering its current funding levels.[305]

At the top of MWAC's agenda was the need for archeological investigation results because of the erosion of Sakakawea Village. Since late 1975, MWAC had consulted with ACOE and the ACHP regarding stabilization options. They outlined an archeological program for KRIV to be carried out in conjunction with the stabilization at Sakakawea, but had to wait for property acquisition. On June 28, 1976, NPS finally acquired the Buchfink property (155 acres), which contained not just Sakakawea Village but also Lower Hidatsa Village. By that date, it was clear that the Knife River had eroded about 20 percent of the site, and emergency salvage measures were required.[306]

During that summer, pre-bank stabilization salvage of the slump areas on Sakakawea Village began. Luckily, MWAC found $33,000 for stabilization of the site (for archeology and planning), which provided KRIV with its first solid funding.[307] To begin the work for that summer's archeological investigation of Sakakawea, MWAC sent staff archeologist Robert Nickel. This initial funding also allowed the Interagency Archeological Services Office-Denver, which was part of the RMRO, to transfer Thomas D. Thiessen from its staff to assist Nickel. As a member of the park staff, Thiessen worked with Nickel and his MWAC crew on the initial archeological fieldwork at KRIV. He also served as a liaison with MWAC and other cooperating researchers. MWAC also began aerial photography and mapping of KRIV in cooperation with the Division of Remote Sensing, Chaco Archeological Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico under the direction of Thomas R. Lyon.[308]

Stabilizing Sakakawea aside, MWAC still faced the challenge and dilemma of accomplishing its other archeological goals at KRIV within the constraints of budget and personnel ceilings. The $33,000 spent on the stabilization of Sakakawea was but a drop in the bucket. The solution came some time in February 1976, when the chairman of the anthropology department at the University of North Dakota indicated a willingness to participate in a joint NPS/UND archeological program at Knife River by providing a position and matching funds necessary to support a principal investigator for the Knife River project.[309]

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[305] F.A. Calabrese to Superintendent, TRNP, 26 March 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[306] Park Ranger, KNRI to Superintendent, TRNP, 25 November 1977, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[307] Chief, Midwest Archeological Center to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, RMR, 19 March 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; F.A. Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview," circa 1979, File H14 (Administrative History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[308] Park Ranger, KNRI to Superintendent, TRNP, 25 November 1977, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); Anton L. Whitehead, "Sakakawea Village Being Studied," n.d., File H14 (Administration History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[309] F.A. Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview," circa 1979, 3-4, File H14 (Administrative History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Calabrese thereafter took this offer to NPS' annual Rocky Mountain Regional Superintendents Conference held in Denver that March. At a March 31, 1976, meeting attended by RMRO Deputy Regional Director Glen T. Bean, TRNP Superintendent Lancaster and others, Calabrese outlined the NPS/UND joint project proposal. Calabrese stated that MWAC had the general expertise, interest, and capability to direct archeological work for the development and interpretation of KRIV. He also concluded that MWAC probably would be called upon to direct the bulk of the archeological investigations. However, though MWAC had general expertise in the area, the Center had admitted that additional specialists would be needed and recommended that this work be contracted to individuals at universities. For instance, they would need expertise in ethnohistory and other specialties not available through the Center. To remedy the situation, Calabrese suggested utilizing a portion of KRIV's research funds to hire a half-time research archeologist to be stationed at UND,[310] who would be responsible for developing a research design for KRIV's archeological program and for directing field and laboratory operations for that project. The UND research archeologist would also be responsible for generating other funding through the National Science Foundation (NSF) and other research grant sources for KRIV. "Considering funding costs, personnel problems, available positions and other realities," Calabrese thought that MWAC's proposal provided "a viable method for undertaking the necessary research for development of the Knife River Indian Villages." To Calabrese, "with the limited available funds it seemed the only feasible way to get the project moving." Subsequently, RMRO agreed with MWAC's proposal.[311]

Though Calabrese was a "bit nervous" about the joint project, in early April he met with UND's president and dean. By the end of the month, a memorandum of agreement (MOA) was drafted and signed between NPS and UND and was submitted to the Interior Department solicitor. However, the solicitor considered the MOA insufficient because the anticipated arrangement involved the transfer of funds. Instead, a contract was drafted in May and finalized with all signatures on June 28, 1976. The contract had two objectives. The first was to undertake a "cooperative (UND-NPS) archeological program for the Upper Missouri River Drainage Area designed to provide an understanding of regional prehistory, ethnohistory, and history of American Indian populations with and adjacent to the area." The second objective was to "conduct an integrated interdisciplinary program including (but not restricted to) archeological, historic, prehistoric and other scientific research needed to understand Hidatsa prehistory and history and relation of the Hidatsa to surrounding prehistoric tribes."[312]

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[310] At an evening social gathering during this Superintendents Conference, Calabrese introduced Thomas Thiessen to John Lancaster and recommended him for the archeologist position at Knife River Indian Villages. According to Thiessen, "John later told me he could see my obvious embarrassment at Cal's exaggerated praise, and he said that was why he arranged for my transfer to Knife River Indian Villages." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[311] F.A. Calabrese to Regional Director and Deputy Regional Director, RMR, 16 April 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[312] F.A. Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview," circa 1979, 4-7, File H14 (Administrative History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

In signing this contract, MWAC broadened and refocused the project to include not just the study of the five villages at KRIV but putting them into a regional context. Calabrese clearly saw a loftier goal for the joint project than was expressed during the debates over and leading to the creation of the park. He believed that the acquisition of KRIV "offered an opportunity to test a series of hypotheses that evolved from ongoing research in the area by a number of researchers affiliated with the Center."[313] Calabrese's lofty goals redefined KRIV's purpose and significance but went beyond the mandate from Congress. They also predisposed NPS to putting the majority of its funding squarely on the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*, and not the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*. But, in another way, they were practical. The immediate and practical objective was to find funding to support research at KRIV and to initiate a comprehensive program for preliminary data acquisition and begin solving park area problems, such as locating a visitor center and other facilities at KRIV. If a broader "regional" project context served that purpose, well, so be it. But first, NPS still had to acquire all the remaining parcels of land within the boundaries of KRIV.

Land Acquisition, Demolition and Removal of Non-contributing Buildings and Structures, 1976-1978

Throughout the remainder of 1976, inertia continued to plague the National Park Service's land acquisition program. In September of that year, nine local landowners gathered a petition seeking the reduction of the size of the park. In July 1976, the National Park Service issued *Final Environmental Statement: Proposed Knife River Indian Village NHS, North Dakota*, which justified Alternative A, full acquisition of the authorized 1,292 acres, over Alternative B, to acquire less land and fewer sites, or just 490 acres in two separate units that took in only the immediate village sites. Naturally, the landowners petitioned for Alternative B to Senator Young and Burdick's offices. The senators routinely sent it on to the RMRO, which responded that the option for a smaller park was a dead issue since the passage of Public Law 93-486. Meanwhile, notices of condemnation and declaration of takings had been filed on the tracts of the nine landowners.[314]

In 1977, NPS earnestly pursued land acquisition negotiations because area land prices were increasing rapidly due to coal development. The National Park Service soon realized that appropriated funds made available in fiscal year 1975 were now insufficient for acquisition of lands. However, by the end of the fiscal year, NPS had acquired 1,024 acres by purchase agreement.[315]

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[313] Ibid.

[314] Clay Alderson to Quentin N. Burdick, 20 September 1976, File L7617 (Statements and Studies Concerning NPS Areas); Park Ranger, KNRI to Superintendent, TRNP, 25 November 1977, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[315] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (Denver: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1978).

Meanwhile, in October 1977, condemnation proceedings went to trial. In court, government lawyers made their case that the landowners had received just compensation for their land, but the court saw it differently. The nine landowners were awarded amounts greater than the government appraised estimates. For instance, Duane Payton was initially offered $3,500 to acquire a scenic easement to his property, but he was eventually awarded $17,000.[316] Perhaps, seeing the handwriting on the wall, in January 1978, Byron Grannis finally sold his 190 acres, with improvements, to the government for $100,000, far below the $250,000 he initially sought.[317] With the 41-acre donated tract from the State of North Dakota, all acquisition through fee and scenic title was complete. By the end of the summer of 1978, the federal government had bought roughly 1,250 acres (1,116 acres of fee simple purchases, and 134 acres of scenic easements) at a cost of $1.124 million—almost twice the amount as authorized by KRIV's establishment legislation.[318]

With land acquisition complete, NPS wasted little time in demolishing and removing most, if not all, of the non-contributing buildings and structures under Section 106 of the NHPA. Though new TRNP Superintendent Harvey D. Wickware (1979 to 1987) had no indication that any of the previous owners had any vindictive thoughts regarding the purchase of their land and buildings,[319] under the existing "politically-sensitive circumstances" associated with land acquisition actions, RMRO officials felt differently. They deemed it wise to dispose of them as soon as possible.[320] According to one source, "as long as the buildings remained there, it was kinda like a festering wound. A reminder, well, to the people that had been displaced."[321] National Park Service officials hoped that any such sentiment by former landowners attached to the structures, "would fade faster from memory once the structures were removed from the scene."[322]

To remove the structures, NPS first had to conduct a building survey under Section 106 of the NHPA, which requires all federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. An earlier "windshield" survey had determined that the Nate Olds house constructed in the late 1800s was eligible for the National Register because it had some architectural significance. The two-room house (parlor with

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316 Oral History of Duane Payton, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

317 Park Ranger, KNRI to Regional Director, RMR, 30 January 1978, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

318 Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1978, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); Sherman W. Swenson to Eugene K. Anthony with "Agreement Between the National Park Service and the State of North Dakota Regarding Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 10 June 1977, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings); KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Michael Holm, *Structures Report: Knife River Indian Villages NHS, National Park Service*, 22 November 1978, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND.

319 Harvey D. Wickware to Regional Director, RMR, 24 July 1979, File L1415 (Acquisition of Lands Policy and Procedures), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

320 Michael Holm, *Structures Report: Knife River Indian Villages NHS.*

321 Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

322 Michael Holm, *Structures Report: Knife River Indian Villages NHS*; John O. Lancaster to Regional Director, RMR, 6 October 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

bedroom alcove) was an excellent example of a small Great Plains farmhouse and had reportedly been moved to the Grannis property in 1905. However, it was located in the middle of Big Hidatsa Village, a main archeological site, and therefore had to be cleared. To mitigate the property, Roger Evans of RMRO's historical architect's staff recorded it as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), and HABS drawings were completed and submitted to SHSND.[323] On the other hand, NPS retained for future use by park personnel the remaining buildings on the Grannis property, which included a four-gable, one-and-a-half story house (1915), an unattached two-stall garage, a storage building, and a privy.

With no other properties eligible for the National Register having been found, a total of forty-one farm structures from the condemned lands within KRIV were proposed as disposable properties for the General Services Administration (GSA) to sell. With the exception of the Grannis properties, eventually all the buildings were auctioned off and removed.[324] However, MWAC suggested that removal of all intrusive structures be directed to a winter removal, and then only after a hard freeze. This procedure assured that a minimum of damage would be caused to archeological sites as mandated by federal law and NPS directive.[325] SHSND State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Sperry concurred with NPS opinion that none of the buildings to be removed met one of the criteria of eligibility for National Register nomination and that their removal would have "no effect" on the area's historical and architectural values. The non-contributing buildings were seen to detract from interpretation of the historic site's primary interpretive focus—the earth-lodge villages and their environment.[326] The Section 106 process was completed during the spring of 1980. However, removal occurred during the late spring and summer months.[327]

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[323] James B. Thompson to James E. Sperry, 28 March 1977; Lynn H. Thompson to James E. Sperry, 28 March 1978; James E. Sperry to Lynn H. Thompson, 3 June 1977, and Acting Regional Director to Assistant Director, Cultural Resources, Washington Office, 14 February 1979, File H 3015 (Management and Preservation Compliance), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Rodd L. Wheaton to Associate Regional Director, Professional Support, RMR, 8 August 1975, File H1415 (Legislative History, 1973-1975), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[324] Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[325] Michael Holm, *Structures Report: Knife River Indian Villages NHS*; Park Manager, Knife River Indian Villages NHS to Director, 30 January 1978, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); John O. Lancaster to Regional Director, RMR, 22 February 1978, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), and Kenneth R. Ashley to James Sperry, 18 April 1979, File H3015 (Management and Preservation Compliance), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[326] James E. Sperry to Glen T. Bean, 24 October 1979, File H3015 (Management and Preservation Compliance), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[327] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1979, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; John F. Taylor, Historic Structures Data Sheet, October 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

NPS Updates 1971 Master Plan

With the parklands acquired by NPS and non-contributing buildings removed, NPS issued an update to its 1971 proposed master plan in January 1977. In September 1977, RMRO completed and approved *Master Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, which was implemented in 1978.[328] A careful comparison of the 1971 and the 1978 KRIV master plans indicates several subtle but significant changes, indicating that NPS had pulled back from some of its initial planning thoughts for KRIV.

On an optimistic level, NPS officials were confident that they had secured the preservation of the lands. This confidence was reflected by NPS dropping the sentence from the preservation section: "Time enough to ensure that the Knife River villages are preserved in their present condition is running out, and the trend toward consolidation of small farms and mineral extraction in the region threatens to eventually destroy what remains of the unprotected Indian villages."[329] But extensive changes were made in the master plan that pessimistically reflected the realization that funding levels were inadequate and/or that an action might not be warranted for one reason or another.

For instance, under landscape, the new master plan dropped the sentence: "In addition, selective vista-clearing may open up important views of the Missouri River." This provision was dropped because of its cost and most likely because NPS realized that this landscape would protect the views of the park from future strip mining of lignite coal near the park for use in coal-fired electrical generating plants and in coal gasification on the east side of the Missouri River.[330] Under stabilization, the verb tense "will be" in the sentence: "Eventually, a section of the River Hidatsa village *will be* [italics added] partially reconstructed to a replica of the Indian village of Sakakawea's time," was changed to "may be" in the new master plan. Following the initial archeological stabilization work at Sakakawea Village, National Park Service officials may have realized how enormous and costly this action would be and therefore softened the statement.[331] Additionally, at a staff meeting in December 1976, the potential for reconstruction of earth-lodges was discussed. It was estimated that limited reconstruction of just one earth-lodge for research and interpretive purposes would cost approximately $20,000.[332]

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[328] It should be noted that the State Historical Society of North Dakota in accordance with a Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement did not concur with the 1978 KRIV master plan until after December 1980. Regional Director to James Sperry, 4 December 1980, File KNRI—Master Plan, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[329] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 9; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan* (Denver: National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1978), 9.

[330] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 21; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan*, 21; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (1978), SFM 3.

[331] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 21; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan*, 21-22.

[332] F.A. Calabrese and Robert K. Nickel to File, 22 December 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

Under research, the phrase "on a continuing basis," was dropped from the sentence: "More importantly, however, there will be an extensive program of archeological excavations, *on a continuing basis* [italics added], to obtain important scientific data, as well as artifacts for study and exhibit" in the new master plan. Again, NPS officials may have realized what an expensive item this action would be.[333] Under access, the new master plan cautiously stated that the area "will be accessible via County Road 542," but made no mention that this section of road would be eventually paved and connect KRIV with many other Missouri River historic sites. Apparently, RMRO did not want to imply that the Service would pay for the pavement of the road.[334]

Finally, under development, the new master plan completely dropped the following two sentences with regard to a visitor facility: "This facility will be the only permanently manned station, so the visitor will be on his own from this point on, to discover the historic and archeological features by means of spur roads, trails, and transportation systems. He may encounter onsite interpreters at the major points of interest, but this area tour will be largely self-guiding." By this date, RMRO officials realized that the initial master planning of the history/archeological visitor center in 1971 would have to be radically redesigned in the future.[335]

In addition to the above changes, there were other modifications. The land classification map that appeared in both documents was subtly changed as well. The 1971 master plan version showed three kinds of land classification: Class II: General Outdoor Recreation Area (180 acres), Class III: Natural Environment Areas (825 acres), and Class VI: Historical and Archeological Areas (237 acres). The 1978 master plan noted that all areas within the boundary of the national historic site would be managed as a total cultural resource and classified as a historic zone. Physical development in support of preservation, protection, interpretation, and use of the area would be minimal, and they would be classified as a development sub-zone. Remaining acreage would be classified as a natural environmental sub-zone and managed to provide for environmentally compatible area protective of the cultural resources. Nonetheless, a small development zone was proposed either just south or east of Big Hidatsa Village, and the main development zone (237 acres) was still situated between and/or near Lower Hidatsa and Sakakawea Villages.[336]

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[333] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 21; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan*, 22.

[334] Ibid.

[335] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 22; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan*, 22-23.

[336] NPS, *Master Plan: Proposed Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, passim; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan*, passim.

Guides for Archeological/ Ethnohistorical Work at KRIV, 1976-1977

As stated earlier, in June 1976, NPS and UND signed a contract to initiate a research program for KRIV. By the fall term, Stanley A. Ahler joined UND's anthropology department faculty for this purpose, and began work on KRIV's research plan.[337] In early December, Ahler provided a basic research outline as proposed in their contract.

Ahler divided the research into two major facets: (1) research dealing with the "location and identification" and (2) research dealing with the "evaluation" of archeological resources. The UND archeologist assumed that planning for improvements and permanent buildings and facilities within the park would first require accomplishment of the first research facet and that at some later date, evaluative research would be necessary. First, NPS had to decide where park development could occur, and then the agency could decide what form park development would take. In other words, park development could not begin until all cultural resources were located and identified, and an interpretation program could not take definite shape until evaluation of the resources had been at least partially accomplished.[338]

Ahler's research outline noted that "location and identification research" had already begun in a piecemeal fashion, and the remainder of the work would take another two years to complete after base level funding of the archeological program began. This research facet would include completion of a magnetic survey already in progress, completion of aerial photographic coverage of the entire park, production of contour maps, on-the-ground survey and reconnaissance of archeological resources, a geo-morphological study of the park, and subsurface surveys conducted by archeologists and geologists in selected park areas. Likewise, Ahler noted that some "evaluative" research had also begun and that studies of existing archeological collections and pertinent literature and documents could be completed in three years, once base level funding began. This research involved the development of a series of explicitly stated, archeologically and historically important research problems, which could be investigated using the unique cultural resources found within the park. Once the problems were defined, the next step was finding their solution through a variety of means, such as the acquisition and study of all existing archeological materials, documents, and literature pertaining to sites within the park area and within the region, or by limited intensive excavations within the park, or by the study of all existing ethnographic and ethnohistorical literature and documents related to native populations in the general park area. All such data would be stored in a computerized data storage/retrieval system. Ahler estimated that base funding level requirements for the entire archeological program he outlined would be approximately $200,000 per year for the first five years of park

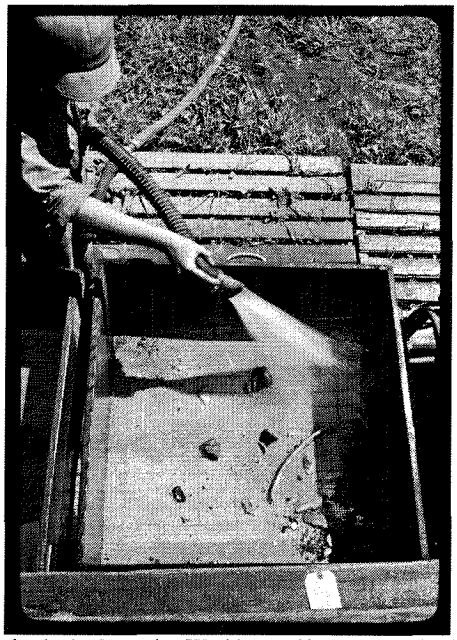
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[337] Robert D. Powell to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 14 October 1976; Stanley A. Ahler to Tom Thiessen, 9 December 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[338] Stanley A. Ahler to Tom Thiessen, 9 December 1976 with Attachment "Tentative Outline: A Research Design for Long-Term Archeological Research Program within the Knife River Indian Villages NHS," File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

development.[339] This figure was far greater than the $136,000 per year for five years that Calabrese had proposed.

In December 1977, the UND archeologist eventually produced "A Program for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," which delineated the major archeological problems to be considered and designed a twelve-year research program to resolve these problems. Major problems included the location and identification of KRIV's archeological resources, evaluation of KRIV's cultural resources, establishing village chronologies, differentiation of Mandan and Hidatsa villages, understanding cultural subsystems and their evolution, and resolving problems in resource management and preservation.[340]


Archeologist Screening/Washing Artifacts. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library

Ahler broke down KRIV's twelve-year research program into three phases. Phase I, which was scheduled to begin in the spring of 1978, included inventory, reconnaissance, and establishment of a database and was expected to take one to three years of the project schedule. Phase II, included intensified test excavation, and was scheduled for years four through seven. Finally, Phase III, scheduled for years eight through twelve, involved initiation of major excavations, continuing analysis, interpretation programs, and living archeology. Overall administration of the research program would be handled by MWAC, and the existing cooperative agreement between NPS and UND would be continued throughout the duration of the twelve-year program. Success in following this program depended upon uninterrupted funding at the approximate levels requested. Throughout the duration of the program, MWAC was tasked with preparing an annual work plan for UND, which identified appropriate work schedules, contract arrangements, research personnel, and research report schedules for the annual period. The total cost of the twelve-year, three-phase program was estimated at approximately $3.5 million, which Ahler considered a very conservative figure. Ahler estimated that Phase I would cost $460,000 ($154,000 per year), Phase II would cost $908,000 ($227,000 per year), and Phase III would cost $1.465 million ($367,000 per year). In addition, UND would be paid $295,000 (or $24,580 per

[339] Ibid.

[340] Stanley A. Ahler, *A Program For Investigation Of The Archeological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, Draft, December 1977, Contents, 62-68, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND; Stanley A. Ahler, *A Research Plan For Investigation Of The Archeological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center) Contents, 60.

year) for administration coordination over the course of all three phases.[341] The implementation of Ahler's research program will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven.

While Stanley Ahler prepared his archeological research design for KRIV that supported the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*, University of Missouri-Columbia (UM-C) anthropologist W. Raymond Wood prepared a similar guiding document assessing ethnohistorical resources research pertaining to KRIV, under contract with MWAC to support the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*.

In March 1977, Wood submitted his report to NPS entitled "Historic Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site." In it, he first discussed the available published works on the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians and the known archival resources pertaining to these groups at a number of repositories, such as at MHS, SHSND and UOMC as well as at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) (New York) and the Joslyn Art Museum (Omaha, Nebraska). Thereafter, Wood recommended that NPS initiate four interdependent research programs as soon as possible.

First, he believed that a new synopsis of Hidatsa and Mandan ethnohistory was badly needed. Existing studies hardly explored more than the most obvious sources of the historical record. In short, in his view, a new look at Hidatsa origin traditions and later documentation was mandatory. He estimated that it would take a principal investigator and two researchers up to two years to complete the study, which required visits to a number of institutions (e.g., Smithsonian Institution, Provincial Archives of Ontario, and University of Montana) to study their archives, and oral histories and consultations with Hidatsa informants on the Fort Berthold Reservation.[342]

Second, Wood recommended an extensive study of Hidatsa material culture, which would require a specialist in Plains material culture and take roughly one year to complete. Wood suggested that Alfred W. Bowers be contacted to get involved in this project and that technical studies such as this would be needed to gather illustrative material to interpret and present the life of the Hidatsa. The involvement of Hidatsa living on Fort Berthold Reservation was also suggested as desirable. Ray Wood also outlined the need for cultural-ecological study of Plains Village tribes that analyzed the role that various ecological factors played in shaping their societies, as no such study existed at that time. The volume of data available and the complex nature of its interpretation justified a three-year study. According to Wood, a project of this nature could take many different forms, depending on the nature of the final overall research design for the park.[343]

Finally, Wood recommended a restudy of the entire Maximilian-Bodmer collection, including his journals and all of Bodmer's sketches and watercolors, especially those not in print. Wood recommended John C. Ewers, senior ethnologist for the U.S. National

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[341] Ibid.

[342] Wood, "The Ethnohistory Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 1-9.

[343] Ibid.

Museum, be consulted in carrying out this assignment. Wood estimated that this last project would take three years and would require an ethnographer, a German translator and an ethnohistorian, augmented by consultation with archeologists.[344]

Unlike Stanley Ahler's report, Raymond Wood's 1977 report did not present any budget figures or schedule for these ethnohistorical projects. It did not matter. MWAC was unable to support Wood's recommendations to the degree that Wood anticipated because, according to Calabrese, it involved research by "one or two individuals pursuing specific leads rather than teams of scientists trying to resolve major problems."[345] Nonetheless, Wood and other university scholars at the University of Missouri, working in close collaboration with MWAC personnel and with some NPS direct and indirect support, undertook various ethnohistorical projects related to KRIV.[346] The details and implementation of KRIV's ethnohistorical research program will be discussed in detail in Chapter Eight.

Initial Planning of Park Facilities, 1978 Season

With all lands acquired, a new master plan in place, and Stanley Ahler's research design accepted, by early 1978, NPS was ready to take steps toward planning KRIV facilities. In the spring, RMRO identified four potential locations for the visitor/administration center facility locations. Site size for construction of buildings and parking facilities was projected at five acres, but in some instances, construction of access roads added substantially to the total area impacted. One site (Area A) was located in the extreme southwest corner of NPS fee lands, while the remaining three sites (Areas B, C, and D) were located on parcels of land that lay between the villages of Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa and Big Hidatsa Village to the north. These latter areas were selected because their central location within the KRIV was seen as advantageous.[347]

Specifically, Area A was adjacent to the existing gravel county highway and in the extreme southwest corner of NPS fee lands, on the former Buchfink tract. The second (Area B) and the third (Area C) sites were both located on the Oberlander tract. Area B was on a hill slope and intermediate terrace, centered approximately 200 meters east of the existing gravel road and straddling the driveway to the Oberlander tract. Area C was situated on an elevated terrace where the Oberlander farm complex stood. Area D was

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[344] W. Raymond Wood, *Historical Resources Of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, March 1977, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND; F.A. Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview," circa 1979, 22-24, File H14 (Administrative History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[345] Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview," 24.

[346] Wood, "The Ethnohistory Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 1-9.

[347] Stanley A. Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1978* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: University of North Dakota, 1978), 8. Apparently, the visitor center location at the extreme southern end of the park, just north and adjacent to Stanton, which had been suggested by Mattes' study team in *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives* (1968), was never considered.

located immediately east of the gravel county road and west of the Knife River, in the southwest corner of the former Russell tract.[348]

RMRO selected these locations prior to any systematic cultural resource inventory by archeologists in and around Knife River Indian Villages NHS. By the time UND's summer season of field archeology was completed on September 1, 1978, each area was rejected for one reason or another. For instance, Area A was dismissed for cost and political reasons when the Lobodi (32ME411) site, a human burial location characterized by a clearly defined concentration of artifacts, was found. When the costs of mitigating the disturbance were measured, not just in monetary terms for field and laboratory work but also in political terms with the Three Affiliated Tribes, Ahler thought it best to avoid the situation. Area B was abandoned because Ahler's field school discovered that a large number of burials existed in this area. Therefore, any further consideration of Area B as a development site was out of the question. Area C met a similar fate, for it contained a variety of subsurface cultural features associated with the Scovill site (32ME409), including human burial sites. Finally, there was Area D. Ahler believed that the nearby Elbee site (32M408) probably extended into this location. To determine this would require a very extensive and expensive program of test excavations. Further consideration of Area D as a potential site was therefore also deemed inadvisable.[349] MWAC impressed upon RMRO that any of these locations would involve costly mitigation investigations.[350]

Archeologists learned a great deal about the cultural resources within KRIV during the 1978 field season, which negated every RMRO visitor/administration center selection. In fact, their research demonstrated that KRIV's resources were far richer and even more varied than previously thought.[351] But, due to these preliminary research findings, RMRO needed to select new visitor/administrative facility sites during the following year's UND field season. Expected construction for 1979 was rescheduled as a consequence.[352]

New Alternatives for KRIV Visitor Center, March 1979

Over the winter of 1978-1979, RMRO selected four new alternative placements for the visitor center (Areas A-D), and that time sent them to Stanley Ahler for his opinion prior to the upcoming 1979 field season. Each alternative lay in an area in which archeologists had already conducted relatively intense surface examinations. In replying, Ahler stated that some areas contained high densities of artifacts and that burial sites were present as

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[348] Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1978*, 8, 22-24.

[349] Ibid.

[350] Carla Van West to Regional Director, RMR, 25 September 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[351] Ibid.

[352] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1978, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

well. In his opinion, test evaluation and excavation for two of the four alternate locations (B and C) would be exceedingly expensive ($39,000).[353]

RMRO balked at the associated costs, but MWAC chief archeologist Calabrese came to Ahler's defense. Calabrese argued to his superiors that preservation of the archeological resource should be the primary concern in selecting placement of the visitor center and that the utmost consideration should be given to that resource in the selection of the location.[354] In February 1979, MWAC was given the green light to test two of the four new alternative visitor center placements (B and C) during the 1979 field season. Maps were sent to MWAC, which depicted fairly precise shapes for the proposed facilities. The outer line on the maps designated an area that all construction was to be contained within. It was this maximum area that the archeological surveys would cover for two of these sites.[355]

Tribal Relations Go Off Track in Area C

In the meantime, related problems developed. Sometime prior to the spring of 1979, Gerard Baker, a park employee and member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, made his tribe aware that the National Park Service had been contemplating visitor center sites that might have burial sites located within them.[356] The Tribal Business Council commended him for his role in this matter and expressed appreciation to Gerard for not losing sight of his heritage. In reaction to this knowledge, the Three Affiliated Tribes requested to review the alternate sites for the building program at KRIV that had been suggested by MWAC.[357] Thereafter, on April 20, 1979, the Three Affiliated Tribes passed a tribal resolution opposing any building on burial sites at KRIV. They also requested that the National Park Service report to the Council the final selection of the site prior to building the center.[358]

Meanwhile, in May of 1979, NPS renegotiated UND's scope of investigations for that summer to include the investigation of the alternative visitor facility locations at Areas A-C. Clearly, RMRO's Planning and Resource Preservation Division preferred Alternative Site C to other sites and indicated to MWAC that "sufficient investigative research should be conducted and documented to allow for siting the visitor facility at this site." Calabrese corrected the record on this point, stating, "It is our understanding that this

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[353] Stanley A. Ahler to F.A. Calabrese, 13 December 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[354] F.A. Calabrese to Assistant Manager, Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team, Denver Service Center, 12 March 1979, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[355] Donald A. Purse to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 23 February 1979, File H3015 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[356] Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[357] Tillie Walker to Clay Alderson, 24 April 1979, File H22 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[358] Resolution of the Governing Body of the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation, 79-112, 20 April 1979, File D18 (Planning Program Records, 1976-1989), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

summer's work is to be strictly for planning purposes and will not constitute completion of an adequate mitigative research program if significant archeological remains are encountered and the decision is made to construct on this location."[359]

In early August, Calabrese met with RMRO Director Bean, TRNP Superintendent Wickware, and KRIV Area Manager Earle Curran (April 1979–December 1980) to discuss the subject. Glen believed that it was possible to design the building to result in the minimum ground disturbance and place it within Area C, where the least archeological remains would be disturbed, by separating the visitor center, administration, and maintenance areas.[360] After this meeting, National Park Service staff had several meetings with Three Affiliated Tribes members concerning building plans at KRIV. Alternative sites were presented to them, but as late as September 1979, council members continued to be leery of NPS intentions, especially because during the summer a burial site was disturbed and a medicine bundle removed to UND. When National Park Service employee Gerard Baker learned of it and complained, KRIV Superintendent Russell C. "Clayton" Alderson (August 1975–March 1979) insisted that Ahler immediately return it, which he did, with apologies. Bean also apologized for the incident. He promised the council that they would be notified of any other accidentally discovered remains and that if such an occurrence happened again, they would be re-interred according to tribal wishes. Bean hoped that Baker's "special insight and great sensitivity and respect for his tribal members and traditions" would be of great help.[361]



Example of Artifacts Collected by Waterscreens. Taylor Bluff Excavation, 1983. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians*.

NPS waited until the 1979 summer archeological work was completed and reported upon before selecting a site for the visitor/administration center. That report came in November 1979 and strongly recommended Alternative Site B over Site C. Ahler

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[359] F.A. Calabrese to Associate Regional Director, Planning and Resource Preservation, RMR, 11 May 1979, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[360] F.A. Calabrese to Regional Director, Midwest Region, 1 August 1979, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[361] Tillie Walker to Glenn Bean, Regional Director, 12 September 1979, File D18 (Planning Program Records, 1976-1989), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Clay Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

reasoned that there was a greater chance of finding artifacts and burial sites in Site C, which would drive up the mitigation costs considerably.[362] But following the extensive testing of alternative sites in 1979, RMRO Director Bean now had second thoughts about the entire situation. In early January 1980, Bean penned a handwritten note to Deputy Regional Director James B. Thompson [former TRNP superintendent] and others, stating, "[Having g]iv[en] further thought to the proliferation of archeological excavations at Knife River-Hidatsa, I am not convinced that the miles of trenches last summer [1979] were necessary. I've concluded that we need to take a second look at our real needs as far as interpretation is concerned." He continued, "Aside from my doubts as to the need for such extensive 'dig' type archeology, I am convinced that our strained relationships with the Indians derives in part from the desecration of sacred ground. This in itself is good reason for more care and caution than we've exercised to date."[363]

But despite tribal concerns, Ahler's report, and Bean's misgivings, Area Manager Curran and TRNP Superintendent Wickware, in late January 1980, strongly disagreed with Ahler's "opinion," even though the "estimated mitigation costs for Site C were twenty-one times higher than the unacceptable Site B location." Curran and Wickware believed there were several factors that could reduce the cost of Site C mitigation, including reducing the facility footprint size by designing a two-story building. Wickware stressed, "we believe Site C must be our location, and that by thinking in realistic terms regarding the size of the facilities needed for the foreseeable future, that this site can be used without total mitigation."[364] RMRO Chief, Division of Park Planning, Roy C. Slatkavitz agreed with their general opinion. In early February, Slatkavitz advised the Denver Service Center (DSC) that they should begin preliminary design and layout for Area C, even though it contained the Scovill site, with human burial sites therein. Curran and Wickware surmised they could be avoided.[365]

Assessment of New Alternative/Administrative Facility Sites, December 1980

On March 24, 1980, MWAC reviewed Stanley Ahler's findings from the 1979 field season. The data from this work, along with mitigation requirements, was incorporated into an environmental assessment prepared for public review prior to completion. MWAC felt that it was impossible to ascertain the location and extent of any necessary mitigation requirements until this document went through the public review process. Only then could an alternative building site be selected and a visitor facility design be

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[362] Earle G. Curran to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, 29 November 1979, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[363] Glen Bean to James B. Thompson, et al., circa 4 January 1980, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[364] Harvey D. Wickware to Regional Director, RMR, 30 January 1980, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[365] Roy C. Slatkavitz to Chief, Division of Compliance and Assistance, RMR, 12 February 1980, File D18 (Planning Program Records, 1976-1989), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

determined.[366] MWAC also took the position that this was the ideal time to hammer out an agreement with the Three Affiliated Tribes and the archeological community regarding actions to be taken during burial site encounters. MWAC also decided to include the Buchfink site alternative in the site selection process, as proposed by the Three Affiliated Tribes.[367]

In December 1980, RMRO released *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, North Dakota.* Denis Davis, an employee of the Denver Service Center (DSC), captained the team for the project, and DSC played a role in the definition and selection of the visitor center location. Team members included RMRO Chief Park Planner Slatkavitz, landscape architect Ed Moery, architect Charles Hudson, planner Anna Whitfield Watkins, and environmental engineer Jim Taber. MWAC chief archeologist Calabrese, and research archeologist Ahler, along with former KRIV Area Manager Alderson, and new Area Manager Curran contributed to the report as well.

The environmental assessment defined and discussed five alternate building sites (A-E), all of which conformed to proposals made in KRIV's 1978 master plan.[368] Furthermore, all sites met several other criteria, such as avoiding floodplains and significant known archeological resources for enhanced interpretation, visitor use, and resource protection. All alternate site selections were based on known information regarding archeological resources from the 1979 fieldwork. The study team did not consider sites north or east of the Knife River because it was felt that any location there would force the majority of visitors (coming through Stanton) to pass most of the archeological and historical sites before they ever reached the visitor center. The study team did not consider a location in Stanton because it was thought that fewer visitors would stop at a town facility, more patrols would be needed to protect the park's resources, potential use of some interpretive media would be constrained, and the transition between the visitor facility and the sites would be too awkward.[369]

Of the five alternative sites, *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* seemed to highly recommend Alternative Site B and Site C. Alternative Site B was located in the southwest portion of the NHS and was known as the Buchfink site alternative that the Three Affiliated Tribes proposed. Alternative Site B was preferred because NPS officials felt it to be the best compromise between a site that would affect few if any significant archeological resources and would still have a view of major

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[366] Richard A. Strait to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 26 March 1980, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[367] Richard A. Strait to Assistant Manager, Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team, Denver Service Center, 26 March 1979, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[368] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan*, 22.

[369] NPS, *Assessment Of Alternatives: Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota* (Denver: National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1980), 14, 28.



Lower Hidatsa Village, Settled by the *Awatixa* Hidatsa about A.D. 1525 to 1780. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

archeological sites.[370] On the other hand, Alternative Site C, which was also located in the southwestern portion of KRIV and north of Alternative Site B, was given high marks, too. This site was initially selected because of its central location in respect to both the Lower Hidatsa and Sakakawea archeological sites. Alternative Site C was also relatively close to the county road and was about 75 yards south of preliminary Planning Area C that Ahler had investigated in 1978. This shift took Alternative Site C away from suspected burial locations associated with Planning Area C.

This public review and comment was scheduled for the spring of 1981, but clearly *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* seemed to favor Alternative Sites B and C as preferred alternatives because they were targeted for extensive archeological research during 1980.[371]

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[370] Alternative Site A from *Assessment Of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* was located in the southwest portion of KRIV. It was selected because, according to 1979 field season data, it was unlikely to contain subsurface cultural features or significant cultural materials in the plow zone. However, it was felt that of the five sites, this site, along with Alternative Site E (discussed below) would have the most constraints and limitations on the interpretation and visitor experience. For that reason, it was rejected. Alternative Site D was located in the west-central portion of KRIV. However, unlike Alternative Sites B and C, Alternative Site D was not tested during the 1979 field season because field discoveries in Areas B and C did not prohibit those areas from further consideration for visitor facility location. Pre-mitigation evaluation and subsequent pre-construction mitigation estimates for Alternative Site D were also significantly greater than mitigation costs for the other four alternatives. Finally, Alternative Site E from *Assessment Of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* was located in the southern portion of KRIV. Alternative Site E closely resembled the "potential" location that appeared in the 1978 master plan. Alternative Site E was initially selected because about one-fifth of the site had been previously disturbed by a road and gravel mining operations during historic times. Thus, any archeological resources in the mined area of Alternative Site E had been destroyed or irretrievably disturbed. Alternative Site E was reportedly not tested for this reason in the 1979 field season. However, of the five sites, this one, along with Alternative Site A, had the most constraints and limitations on interpretation. Ibid., 28-62.

[371] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1979, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Reassessment of Alternative/Administrative Facility Sites, 1981-1982

In March 1981, the National Park Service released *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, North Dakota* for public comment. It was specifically sent to North Dakota's congressional delegation and to Governor Allen Olsen. The document identified the five possible sites and the potential impacts associated with each of the five locations. The period of public review and comment closed on May 31, 1981.[372] Following an evaluation of the comments received, everyone hoped that a site would be selected as soon as possible, so as not to delay the project any longer. Their hopes of "smooth sailing" hereafter were dashed when UND archeologist Ahler publicly commented on the project.

During the comment period, Ahler wrote to KRIV Superintendent Sandra Hellickson-Key (December 1980–September 1984) concerning the document. Ahler drew attention to several pertinent mistakes in the document. First and perhaps foremost, Ahler informed Hellickson-Key that Alternative Development Zones A through D, as demarcated on the maps within the documents, *did not* correspond to the four areas that in the summer of 1979 UND had investigated intensively for cultural resources and reported on that fall. In all four cases, the areas UND investigated were considerably smaller in size and *were in substantially different locations* than the areas mapped in *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites*. Therefore, all references to "UND's findings concerning cultural resources in each area," in Ahler's opinion, "were irrelevant, out of context, and misrepresentations of recommendations actually provided by UND." "The net effect of these irregularities," according to Ahler, was "that none of the five alternative construction locations mapped in the Assessment of Alternatives has been formally and specifically evaluated for cultural resources." Ahler hoped that NPS would pursue these matters in a productive manner and arrive at a satisfactory solution to the problems he noted.[373]

Despite the urgency of Ahler's information, no one seemed to know what to do about it. Ahler's letter clearly had taken the wind out of the project's sails, for during the summer and fall of 1981, no action was being taken. In December 1981, action was finally taken, when RMRO's regional director requested that Calabrese draft a report on the overall situation at KRIV, specifically with regard to locating a permanent visitor/administration center. Calabrese reviewed the pertinent information regarding the inaccurate map problem in *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites*, the burial issues pertaining to the alternative site selections, and the costs of mitigation of each alternative site selection. He noted that Alternative Site C was the site favored at this stage of the selection process by NPS staff, but "its selection will be complicated by a resolution of the Tribal Council of the Three Affiliated Tribes opposing development of

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[372] James B. Thompson to Allen Olsen, 30 March 1981, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[373] In addition, Ahler noted that the reason Alternative E was not investigated in 1979, when the other alternatives were being examined, was that this "alternative did not exist in 1979, contrary to what the reader is led to believe at several places in the Assessment." Stanley A. Ahler to Sandra Hellickson-Key, 4 May 1981, File D18 (Planning Program Records, 1981-2001), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

any area at Knife River known to contain human burials." Calabrese strongly recommended that NPS consider acquiring archeologically sterile lands outside the present park boundaries as the visitor/administration center and/or reconsidering locating the facility within Stanton.[374]

Calabrese's suggestion went unentertained, and nothing further happened until early March 1982. At that time, KRIV Superintendent Hellickson-Key suggested a meeting in Bismarck between RMRO, MWAC, TRNP and KRIV officials and Stanley Ahler to discuss the problem.[375] However, Associate RMRO Director Richard A. Strait did not believe a meeting was necessary and sought a simpler solution. RMRO agreed that the discrepancy between the maps as printed in *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* needed correction. Therefore, Strait arranged for an amendment to the assessment to correct the maps and make that information available to the public.[376] However, the RMRO believed that even with enlarged development sites, the text and the impacts in the assessment were all still valid because of the comparative manner in which the sites were evaluated and because of the extensive archeological mitigation required if any site was selected.[377] So NPS produced corrected maps for alternate Development Zones A, B, C, and D, and *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* was amended. Alternative Site E was conveniently ignored.[378]

Recapitulation and Contextual Background, 1982-1983

From 1976 to 1982, in preparation for KRIV facility development, NPS had written and completed a master plan, an environmental impact statement, and an assessment of alternatives for the visitor center. Through these documents and others, it was generally understood, although never officially announced, that Alternative Site C would be the preferred alternative. By May 1982, NPS officials had to reconsider the entire issue because of four significant events.

First, because of UND's research program, the full extent of KRIV's archeological resources at the Sakakawea, Lower Hidatsa, and Buchfink sites were now known to encompass parts of Alternative Sites B, C and E. Extensive maps on KRIV produced by Stanley Ahler provided complete information on the whereabouts of existing

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374 F.A. Calabrese to Regional Director, RMR, 31 December 1981, with enclosure, "Park Boundary/Historic Scene Evaluation Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS," File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

375 Sandra Hellickson-Key to Regional Director, RMR, 11 March 1982, File D18 (Planning Program Records, 1981-2001), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

376 Richard A. Strait to Area Manager, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 26 March 1982, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

377 Robert J. Shelley to Regional Director, RMR, 30 April 1982, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

378 Richard A. Strait to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, 18 May 1982, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

archeological sites and resources within the park boundaries. Second, UND's research conclusively indicated that the unannounced but RMRO-preferred Alternative C included Native American burial sites. In March 1981, this information was not available when *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility* Sites was published, but by March 1982, it was conclusive. Third, NPS officials realized that the drastically changed national economic situation during the Ronald Reagan administration made costly and extensive mitigation out of the question. Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, on November 26, 1982, a draft publication of *Native American Relationships Policy* appeared in the Federal Register. It stated: "To the extent practicable, Native American burial areas historically or prehistorically related to present day tribes or groups, whether or not formally plotted and enclosed as cemeteries, shall be located, identified, and protected. Such burial areas shall not be disturbed, destroyed, or archeologically investigated nor shall the integrity of their cultural or sacred values be compromised significantly except with a demonstrated showing of overriding public benefit directly related to the mission of the park in which the burial is located."[379]

As a result of all of these events and others, the location of the visitor center, according to one National Park Service report, had become a:

> subtle but emotional issue with factions polarized both inside and outside the Service. Various factions are poised for conflict when and if a preferred alternative is announced. Support for construction of the facility, so necessary for development of the park, has been sidetracked and has become, instead, support or opposition for a given alternative. At this point to select any of the alternatives could place the Service in direct conflict with its own Management Policies and with the Three Affiliated Tribes."[380]

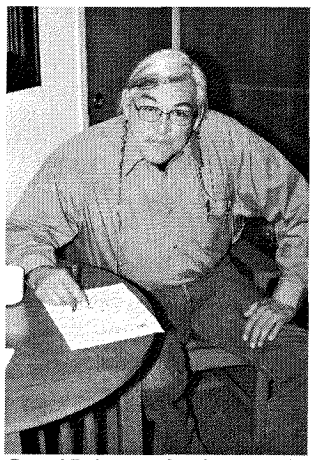
The National Park Service had three choices: (1) to have no action, which would assume the selection of Site C, which would lead to public controversy, possibly resulting in litigation and loss of construction funds because of the protest by special interest groups that believed that full consideration was not given to other reasonable alternatives; (2) to select and announce an alternative based on existing assessment of alternatives via the finding of fact process, which would almost certainly result in the complete loss of support for the Service among the Native American community and would require costly mitigation for any of the present alternatives; or (3) to reconsider options and recommend a new course of action, which would afford an opportunity to fully consider the best solution to the problem and fully involve special interest groups.[381] Eventually, the National Park Service was forced to chose a combination of options two and three. In doing so, the National Park Service ensured that the proposed undertaking was reviewed properly.

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[379] "Knife River Indian Villages NHS: Visitor/Administration/Research/Maintenance Facility Site Selection," 1984, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Ibid.

Improved Tribal Relations Derailed Again

Throughout the reassessment period, Sandra Hellickson-Key was KRIV's superintendent. Shortly after she came to KRIV in 1980, the park desperately needed to improve its relationships with the Three Affiliated Tribes. In the summer of 1981, a road modification project just north of Stanton and just west of Sakakawea Village was undertaken as part of a plan to widen, upgrade, and blacktop the gravel road leading north of Stanton in order to bring it up to the standards of the Lewis and Clark Trail System. Although forewarned that for at least seventy years a burial site was known to be on the hilltop west of Sakakawea Village near the road, the road construction crew, in complete disregard for caution, disturbed it.[382]



Gerard Baker, 2008. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

However, UND became involved when it was asked to examine the unwarranted disturbance of the burial remains. Subsequently, the remains were taken back to UND. When Hidatsa NPS employee Gerard Baker accidentally learned of this from Stanley Ahler, he straightaway informed Tribal Chairman Austin Gillette. This was the third incident where Baker contacted his tribe directly about unwarranted incidents at KRIV instead of going through NPS channels. In April 1979, Baker had warned tribal officials about the National Park Service contemplating a visitor center on known burial areas. In September 1979, he had notified them of a medicine bundle being removed to UND from a burial site. And now, he spoke up about this burial incident.

In turn, the chairman protested the action to Washington, DC, officials.[383] Gillette believed that the story of the tribes needed to be told. "We can't be just like a signpost, you drive by it and you forget about it."[384] At the tribe's request, the burial remains were returned to KRIV very soon thereafter, and Baker reburied them at an undisclosed location within the park. To explain UND's role in the mishap, Ahler wrote directly to Three Affiliated Tribes chairman Austin Gillette to clear up the matter.[385] Nonetheless, TRNP Superintendent Wickware severely reprimanded Baker for his actions, and transferred him to Fort Union Trading Post NHS. Though proud of his

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[382] As early as the spring of 1977, KRIV park archeologist Thomas Thiessen had warned his superiors that any improvement or upgrading of Mercer County Road 542 would in all likelihood encounter burial sites along the highway and west of Lower Hidatsa, Sakakawea, and Big Hidatsa sites, and that any disturbance of these areas would be of major concern to members of the Three Affiliated Tribes. Thomas D. Thiessen to Chief of Planning, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, 23 May 1977, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[383] Stanley A. Ahler to Austin Gillette, 9 July 1981, File H22 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[384] Oral History of Austin Gillette, 31 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

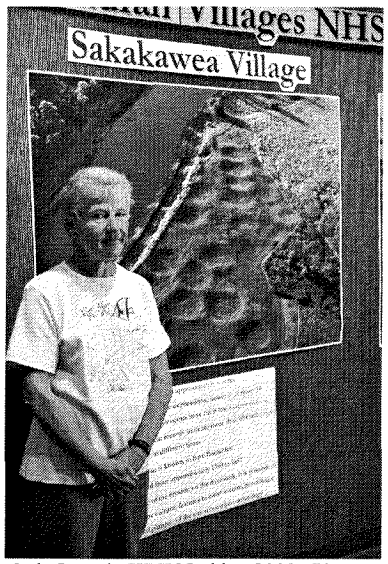
[385] Stanley A. Ahler to Austin Gillette, 9 July 1981, File H22 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

NPS uniform, to Baker this was "absolutely personal" because of his ancestors being there.[386]

Formation of the SCA and Advocacy of a Visitor/Administration Center, 1983-1984

Following her inability to get a Bismarck meeting to resolve the visitor center location, Superintendent Hellickson-Key began rethinking the location of the visitor center, which was a very unpopular step to some in the National Park Service because it could delay funding for new park facilities. In actuality, the issue united the community of Stanton with the Three Affiliated Tribes, who wished to honor their ancestral home. By late 1983, several Stanton community members expressed to Hellickson-Key that they wanted to promote visitation to the park for economic reasons. They realized that the old Grannis farmhouse, with its outdoor "john" and feeble interpretive exhibits, simply would not improve visitation to the park. Others informed her that they were empathetic with the Native American position of locating the visitor center where no burials existed. So, according to Hellickson-Key, in the winter of 1983-1984, "a small but energetic group formed to chart their political strategy. Foremost in their strategy was the need to gain Congressional interest in funding a visitor center for the park."[387]

This union of interested community citizens, inspired by Superintendent Hellickson-Key, initially called themselves the Stanton Community Action (SCA) group. Noel Boyko initially headed the organization, which at the beginning had membership of about 20 or 30 people. SCA developed a plan of what they wanted and why, and then advocated for the plan, starting with obtaining the blessing of local and county officials and then overcoming the animosity of those citizens who had lost their family farm and land to the National Park Service. As Judy Lang, an early member of the group and also a National Park Service employee for many years, pointed out, "It took time, and it took patience, and understanding. But we had to find a happy medium to satisfy everyone, because when the day was done, everybody still had to live together." Once that obstacle was overcome, SCA members learned the logistics of putting together resolutions and professional letters to



Judy Lang in KRIV Lobby, 2008. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

[386] Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[387] Sandra Key and Michael Holm, "The Knife River Indian Villages Phase I Research Program from the Perspective of Two Park Managers," 109-110, in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part IV: Interpretation Of The Archeological Record* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993).

officials (e.g., senators, congressmen, and the governor) and speaking before the North Dakota legislature on behalf of their main goal—funding and construction of a visitor/administration center.[388]

In their initiative, SCA offered a development proposal, which included a visitor center complex, a reconstructed Indian village, an auditorium, funding for a theatrical production, an archeological research laboratory, better vehicle and foot access to park sites, and a statue of Sakakawea. In February 1984, SCA enlisted North Dakota Congressman Byron L. Dorgan to secure funding for this visitor/administration center complex at KRIV. In response, Congressman Dorgan brought the issue of a new visitor center to the attention of NPS Director Russell E. Dickenson (1980 to 1985). Pointing out the need for such a development, Dorgan stated he wished to assist SCA develop the Knife River site with expanded visitor and interpretive facilities.[389]

SCA and Three Affiliated Tribes Unite, Reject Alternative Site C

SCA quickly realized that Congressional interest in Knife River would be greatly enhanced if the Three Affiliated Tribes were also supportive. However, ever since the Three Affiliated Tribes learned that the National Park Service preferred Alternative Site C, which included mitigation of a known burial site, they distrusted NPS' intentions for the project. Therefore, in order for SCA to gain tribal support, the burial question had to be resolved. The National Park Service had to agree to revisit the location of the visitor center for this to happen.

In late April 1984, NPS came closer to that decision, when Three Affiliated Tribal Chairperson Alyce Spotted Bear informed TRNP Superintendent Wickware that the tribes were "officially" and "unalterably" opposed to any plan to locate the visitor center on Alternative Site C. Chairperson Spotted Bear emphatically penned, "Our people do not take the digging-up of ancestors' graves lightly. Nor can we accept the erection of a building on top of our ancestors' graves. We consider even the contemplation of such a building an insult to the respect and reverence we hold for our ancestors."[390] Wickware responded by assuring the tribal chairperson that the NPS had no such intentions and pleaded for the tribe's advice on this matter to ensure that the Service did not unwittingly offend anyone. Wickware included in his letter to SCA President Boyko a copy of his

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[388] Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[389] Byron L. Dorgan to Russell E. Dickenson, 14 March 1984, Signe Snortland-Coles to Noel Boyko, 26 September 1984, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Byron L. Dorgan to Russell Dickenson, 14 February 1985, File L7419 (River Basin Studies and Activities), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. Director Dickenson had made efforts to restore organizational stability after a succession of short-term directors. With the support of the Reagan administration and of Congress, Dickenson pushed through his Park Restoration and Improvement Program, which devoted more than a billion dollars over five years to park resources and facilities before his retirement in March 1985. http://www.nps.gov/history/history/hisnps/NPSHistory/directors.htm.

[390] Alyce Spotted Bear to Harvey Wickware, 30 April 1984, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

letter to Spotted Bear.[391] Thereafter, Boyko initiated contact with Alyce Spotted-Bear to share common goals between SCA and the Three Affiliated Tribes regarding the development of KRIV. The two groups thereafter worked closely together during several meetings.[392]

Final Alternative/Administrative Facility Site Selection of Alternative B, 1984

After Spotted Bear's letter, the Three Affiliated Tribes and SCA raised considerable attention by arousing the general public on the issue of burial disruptions. By May 1984, because of the bad publicity, NPS officials, including Superintendent Hellickson-Key, realized that Alternative Site C was dead and that a new visitor site location and a new environmental statement were in the offing.[393]

In July 1984, NPS prepared a new EIS and reopened the comment period on Alternative Sites A-E, with new and correct location maps prepared by research archeologist Ahler. NPS even added Alternative Site X, which was located east of the county highway, north of Knife River and southwest of Big Hidatsa Village. Press releases were mailed to thirty-five media outlets, and sixty-two individuals and organizations were mailed copies of the new document and the press releases. Formal presentations were made to SHSND, the Three Affiliated Tribes, and the community of Stanton. Following these actions, serious concerns were still proffered by the Three Affiliated Tribes relative to human burials within the park. To quiet their concerns, National Park Service officials negotiated an MOA (June 1, 1984) between the tribes and NPS to resolve that issue.[394]

This time, in reviewing the environmental assessment, UND archeologist Ahler supported the document. Ahler even went so far as to write Congressman Dorgan, backing the visitor center complex plan set forth by SCA. Apparently, some people voiced concerns that construction of such facilities at KRIV, as advocated by SCA, might lead to damage of other important remains within the site. However, Ahler assured Congressman Dorgan that this would not be the case, especially because NPS was keenly sensitive to this aspect of development planning. In addition, Ahler underlined the fact that the Fort Berthold tribes had agreed on a human burial policy and had developed plans in case of inadvertent discovery of such remains during any construction. Finally, Ahler believed that SCA's plans were not too ambitious or too large to be well executed. The archeologist emphasized the importance of having an on-site artifact storage and research facility in the park. Without such a facility, Ahler feared that much of the collection would be placed in dead storage, compromising KRIV's interpretive

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[391] Harvey Wickware to Alyce Spotted Bear, 9 May 1984, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[392] Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[393] Key and Holm, "The Knife River Indian Villages Phase I Research Program from the Perspective of Two Park Managers," 110.

[394] NPS, *Finding Of No Significant Impact For The Visitor/Administrative Facility: Knife River Indian Villages NHS, North Dakota*, November 1984, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

program.[395] Besides Ahler, other archeological groups openly supported SCA's goal for a visitor/administration center, including the North Dakota Archaeological Association (NDAA).[396]

After meeting with the public and hearing their viewpoints on Alternative Sites (A-E, and X) and field reviewing each site, there was considerable staff discussion on the findings of fact and analysis regarding controlling issues (e.g., significant archeological resources, flood plain and erosion, and Three Affiliated tribal concerns), influencing issues (e.g., interpretive themes, resource protection, utilities, energy consumption, construction and mitigation costs, roads and access, geology, and application of handicap criteria), and other issues (e.g., visual impact of the building, off-site visual influences, economic impact on Stanton, and sociopolitical implications). In the end, RMRO and MWAC recommended that with a minimum shift toward the northeast to take advantage of the terrain and its orientation to the Lower Hidatsa Village, the National Park Service officially should select Alternative Site B as the preferred alternative for the following reasons.[397]

Site B addressed all visitor and administrative needs and was located within what was considered the more interesting part of the park. Site B had a good overview site relationship to the cultural resources and a good spatial relationship to the park entrance, the community of Stanton and the community utilities, providing immediate contact and access to the visitor. Site B offered flexibility for design options, there were no physical drawbacks of the site, and it met criteria and concerns expressed by the Three Affiliated Tribes.[398]

In November 1984, the North Dakota congressional delegation and North Dakota's governor were notified of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the visitor/administration center facility at Knife River as reported. The FONSI concluded the long planning process in the site selection for the facility, which had begun with the release of *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* (December 1980).[399] Mitigation costs for additional archeological test excavation were kept to a minimum but still amounted to approximately $38,000.[400]

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[395] Stanley A. Ahler to Representative Byron L. Dorgan, 18 August 1984, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[396] Signe Snortland-Coles to Sandra Hellickson-Key, 26 September 1984, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[397] Regional Director, RMR to Allen Olson, 17 December 1984; NPS, *Finding Of No Significant Impact For The Visitor/Administrative Facility: Knife River Indian Villages NHS, North Dakota*, November 1984, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[398] Ibid.; "Co-Operative Agreement Three Affiliated Tribes and the National Park Service, 1 June 1985, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[399] Regional Director, RMR to Allen Olson, 17 December 1984; NPS, *Finding Of No Significant Impact For The Visitor/Administrative Facility: Knife River Indian Villages NHS, North Dakota*, November 1984, File L7617 (Environmental Impact Studies and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. During the 1987 and 1988 field seasons, UND conducted archeological investigations on Alternative Site B. The minimum shift toward the northeast to take advantage of the terrain and its orientation to the Lower Hidatsa Village caused some concern with the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, but it was quickly resolved.

In summary, public interest and tribal concern provided the energy to resolve the issue of visitor center location. It also took knowledge of KRIV's resources that NPS gained from Ahler's research program to finally locate the center in a less resource-sensitive location within the park and only a few meters from significant resources. Because of this accurate and in-depth archeological knowledge, NPS was "able to lay maps in front of community organizations and tribal leaders and discuss the trade-offs in a way that was understandable." An important by-product of this long and drawn out site selection process, albeit unintentional, was growing respect for National Park Service research.[401]

Design and Groundbreaking of KRIV's Visitor/Administration Center, 1986-1989

With the long, hard-fought battle to locate KRIV's visitor/administration center over, Superintendent Michael "Mick" O. Holm (March 1985–November 1992) took over KRIV. At first, he pessimistically assessed that development and funding permanent facilities for "Rocky Mountain Region's newest park" would take perhaps 20 years. Besides a visitor center to replace the 50-year-old, two-story Grannis farmhouse, an amphitheater, trails development, and analysis of a possible reconstruction of portions of one of the major Mandan-Hidatsa earth-lodge villages were anticipated. However, it appeared that that State of North Dakota intended to oppose and/or restrict the village reconstruction to a modest level to avoid competition with Fort Lincoln State Park, some fifty miles from Knife River.[402] Holm's pessimism may have had some foundation, because design and construction of the visitor/administration facilities took another ten years. This time, archeological remnants were not the problem, but finding construction and development funds was.

James E. Sperry to Richard A. Strait, 25 July 1987 and 27 July 1987, Richard A. Strait to James Sperry, 31 July 1987, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND. In the end, the decision on this location for the center proved accurate, and as work proceeded, only a small amount of cultural material was discovered—exactly as expected. In July 1989, NPS accepted the final report on Alternative Site B. Key and Holm, "The Knife River Indian Villages Phase I Research Program from the Perspective of Two Park Managers," 1115; Paul R. Picha, Dennis L. Toom, and Stanley A. Ahler, *1987 And 1988 Archeological Investigations Related To Visitor Center Construction In Area B At The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, 1989); Douglas D. Scott to Stanley A. Ahler, 3 July 1989, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[400] Department of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, "Proposal for Additional Archeological Test Excavation and Archeological Mitigation at Visitor/Administration Facility Site B, Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 19 June 1987, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[401] Key and Holm, "The Knife River Indian Villages Phase I Research Program from the Perspective of Two Park Managers," 111.

[402] Michael Holm to Jim Harpster, Office of Communications and Public Affairs, RMR, 14 May 1985, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. At that time, there was a philosophical shift in the Park Service archeological community as to whether artifacts should remain in place or whether to move them elsewhere, where they could remain in boxes in university basements unstudied for many years. Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

NPS proceeded with design planning based on Alternative Site B, the preferred construction zone, and Holm submitted a visitor center development/study archeological package for funding. Advance planning and design funding for the project in fiscal year 1986 amounted to $435,000, which was released in April 1987. The availability of these funds was something that everyone had waited for a long time. Although it did not cover construction, it was a positive step toward that goal.

Largely through SCA efforts, this first step in development of a new visitor center became a reality.[403] In mid-1986, SCA had reorganized as a 501 (c) non-profit group under a new name, the Knife River Indian Heritage Foundation (KRIHF). By 1987, membership had grown to eighty-five members, with elected officers and a board of directors. Fifty percent of the board members were Native Americans.[404] The reorganized group now shared power with a parallel group of Native Americans from the Fort Berthold Reservation.[405] Superintendent Holm applauded their efforts, especially those of the organization's president, Judy Lang.[406]

Meanwhile, at the direct request of the North Dakota congressional delegation and in part attributable to the continuing efforts of KRIHF, additional funds of $145,000 for visitor center design were added to the NPS' fiscal year 1987 program.[407] With support of North Dakota's congressional delegation attained with the help of KRIHF President Judy Lang, the process was accelerated. At that time, Lang stated, "I realize that federal dollars are scarce right now, but this new visitor center is something we have worked very hard for. With congressional support and assistance, our group hopes to help the National Park Service with the dedication of a new center at Knife River to coincide with our State Centennial in 1989. I feel it is appropriate that we pay tribute to North Dakota's Native American community and their ancestors during this statewide celebration."[408] This goal was achieved, even though the contracting process to select an architecture and engineering firm for the project did not go well. All of the submitting firms were rejected for one reason or another. So NPS decided to do the work in-house.[409]

In April 1989, NPS officially unveiled a scale model of the planned visitor center at Knife River in a ceremony at the state capitol's Great Hall. NPS representatives, North Dakota's congressional delegation representatives, state government officials, Three

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[403] "Design Funds Available for Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2 April 1987, File H14 (Administration History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[404] Michael O. Holm to Public Affairs Officer, RMR-DP, 7 July 1986, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[405] Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

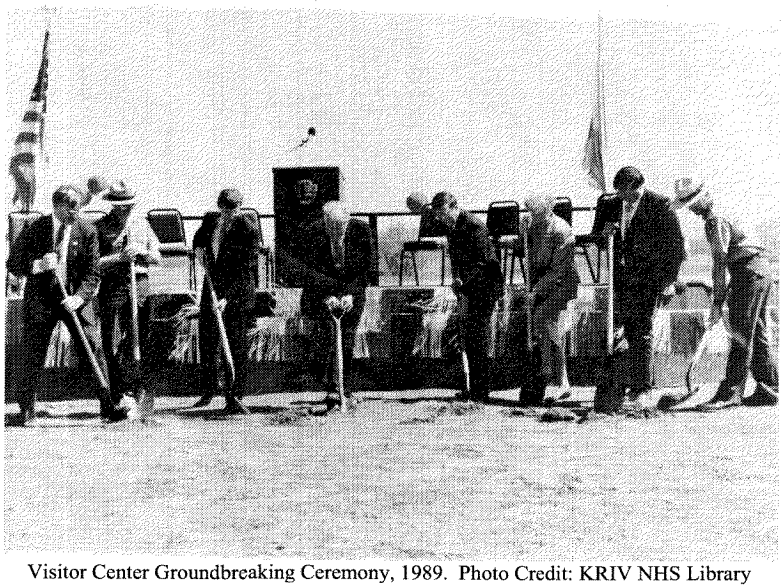
[406] Oral History of Michael Holms, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[407] Richard A. Strait to James Sperry, 31 July 1987, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1987, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); Briefing Statement, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 17 March 1989, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[408] "Design Funds Available for Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2 April 1987, File H14 (Administration History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[409] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1987, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Affiliated Tribal member Jim Mossett, and local citizens represented by KRIHF president Judy Lang attended.[410] At the ceremony, Superintendent Holm showed off the design, which included a planned 8,200–square-foot center with auditorium, exhibits, offices, and archeology lab. Holm said that construction would begin that summer but would include only site preparation, formal trails, and utility corridor systems. Money for the visitor center was not yet available, but Holm said he was optimistic that the project would continue on schedule for a targeted 1990 completion.[411]



Visitor Center Groundbreaking Ceremony, 1989. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library

On May 13, 1989, even though all funding for the project was not fully in place,[412] a visitor center groundbreaking ceremony took place at the NHS. Superintendent Holm welcomed a crowd of 300 persons. On the podium with him were North Dakota's congressional delegation (Burdick, Dorgan, and Kent Conrad), state officials including Governor George Sinner, Edward Lone Fight, the chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes, and NPS officials including former Superintendent Hellickson-Key and TRNP Superintendent Mack Shaver. Tribal elder William Bell, a Mandan Indian, gave the prayer for the groundbreaking in the Hidatsa language.[413] Traditional dancers for the New Town, Mandaree, White Shield, and Twin Buttes communities joined the Sacred Feather Drum and Singers in performance for the ceremony. "No speech was as eloquent," according to one source, "as seeing these traditional skills still being practiced on the site where they were first developed to meet the needs of daily life." Also dedicated was a system of trails that linked the various

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[410] Unknown newspaper, "Model Unveiled of KRIV Center," circa April 1989, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[411] Ibid.

[412] Though delays in funding occurred, the project proceeded. Construction plans were divided into two phases. Phase I construction consisted of development of infrastructure and utilities to support the visitor/administration center. Phase II construction consisted of construction of the building, with work beginning in June 1989. NPS estimated funding requirements at $3.2 million for the project. Briefing Statement, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 17 March 1989, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[413] "Good Omens for KRIV Ceremony," *Hazen Star* 18 May 1989.

village sites, "leading the visitor back thousands of years."[414] In the crowd of attendees were many KRIHF members as well.

The common thread in all the speeches was one of cooperation and persistence among community, federal, and state officials. Only $600,000 had been so far approved, but legislation had been introduced by North Dakota's congressional delegation to request another $1.6 million to continue funding the project, with another $1 million needed on top of that to finish the building.[415] When two eagles spiraled slowly above the speaker's platform, this was seen as a good omen. Thereafter, park officials informed Senator Burdick that if funds were made available by early in fiscal year 1991, they predicted that the center would be complete and ready for use in early summer of 1991.[416]

Construction and Dedication of Visitor/Administration Center, 1989-1992

Park officials were only one year off from their prediction. Construction Phase I was awarded to Schirado Construction, Glenn Ullin, North Dakota, on September 5, 1989, with a target date for completion in October 1990. On September 19, 1990, almost a year later, Phase II of construction was awarded to Capitol City Construction, Bismarck, North Dakota, for the low bid of $1.45 million, with 390 days allowed for completion, starting on October 10, 1990.[417] The contractor planned on working during the winter of 1990-1991 and completing the project by October 1, 1991. Superintendent Holm hoped to see the completion of the building and exhibits coincide then, making this accomplishment a significant contribution for the National Park Service's 75th anniversary.[418] Nonetheless, the new visitor/administration center was not completed at this time because Phase II funds totaling $1.6 million were unavailable due to higher priority construction needs within the National Park Service. A discretionary increase for this lower priority project (ranked 364 Service wide) also ran counter to the President's goal of reducing the large federal deficit. But in 1991, funding became available, and by December 31, 1991, the building was 95 percent complete and accepted by the National Park Service. At that time, Sammy Little Owl blessed the building in traditional Native American manner.[419] Having missed the opportunity to celebrate the National Park Service's 75th anniversary with the completion of the visitor center in January 1992, park

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[414] Sheldon Green, "Knife River Villages," *North Dakota Horizons* (Fall 1992): 9.

[415] "Good Omens for KRIV Ceremony," *Hazen Star* 18 May 1989.

[416] "Questions Submitted by Senator Quentin N. Burdick," 12 May 1989, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[417] Briefing Statement Knife River Indian Villages NHS, circa October 1990, File A40 (Records of Conferences and Meetings); Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[418] Michael Holm to Deputy Regional Director, RMR, circa October 1991 with attachments, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[419] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1991, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

staff began planning dedication ceremonies for the new visitor center for June of that year.[420]

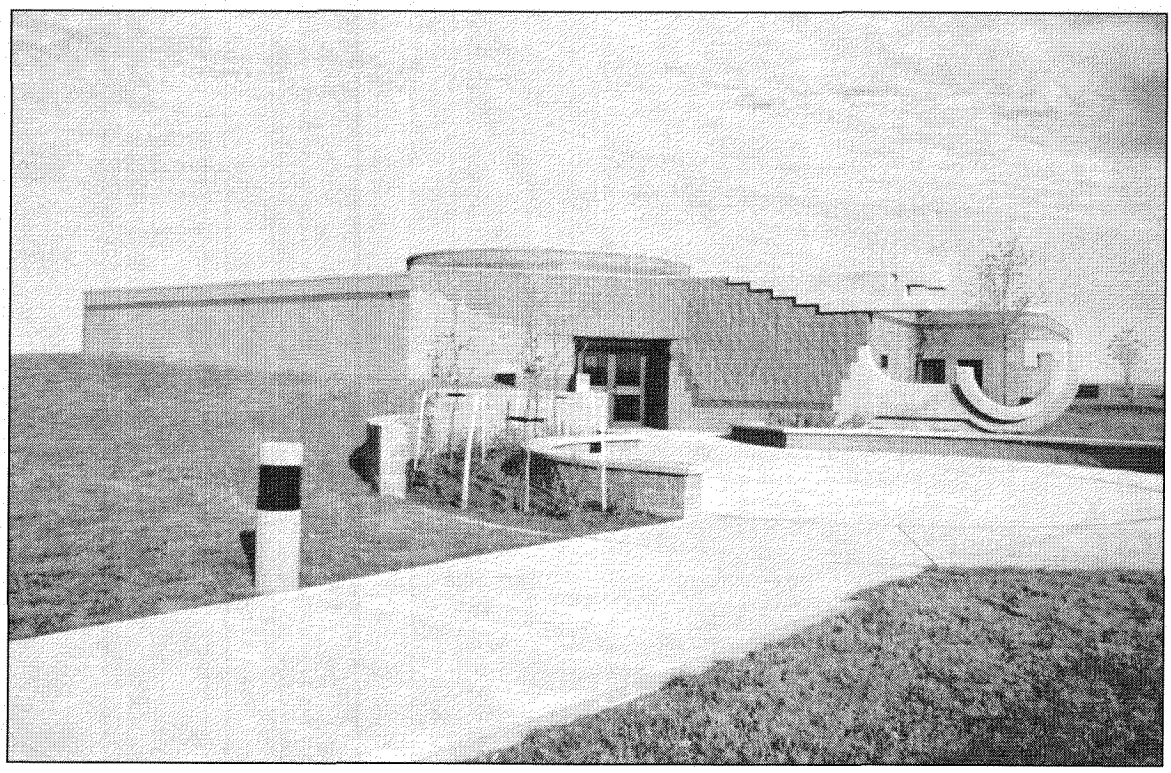
On June 27, 1992, on behalf of the National Park Service and the Three Affiliated Tribes, dignitaries from North Dakota's congressional delegation, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the NPS, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the State of North Dakota, and tribal officials were invited to a formal ceremony to celebrate its official opening with a daylong event. As unveiled to the 1,500 in attendance, the one-story, earth-tone-colored exterior of the building was designed with rounded corners to be reflective of the village earth-lodges, while the earth-bermed walls surrounding the building were created to harmonize with the prairie and to present a low profile in relationship to the surrounding environment. Denver Service Center (DSC) architect Tom Busch and landscape architect Jack Gordon, who worked on the project jointly, wanted symbolically to link the building to the earth. Attached to the entrance side of the building was a concrete corner sculpture of an eagle with talons outstretched, with the eagle's wing forming the building's entrance facade. To enter the building, which resembled the shape and style of a Hidatsa lodge, one passed through a doorway just beneath the eagle's wing. This concept was designed by Three Affiliated Tribes architect Denby Deegan and was cast in Minneapolis. Other Native American symbols were used on the building's exterior as well. For instance, the tile band that encircled the outside of the building represented the "circle of life." It also represented the water and sky below the wing of the eagle sculptures.[421]

Inside the building, the heart of the visitor center was a round lobby that "abstractly represented an earth-lodge and spiritual circle of life." The lobby size was that of a smaller family earth-lodge, and the shape of the lobby was reminiscent of an earth-lodge *atuti*, with four central posts, four stringers, and beams radiating from a smoke hole (skylight). Inlaid slate on the floor below the skylight was used to resemble a fire pit. Inside the building was a comfortable thirty-seat theater designed for projecting audio-visual media in many formats and which showed a locally produced film that discussed the importance of the historic site. Off the lobby was an administrative wing of four offices: one for the superintendent, who oversaw the park's entire operations and its permanent and seasonal employees; one for the park ranger, who supervised and implemented visitor services operations, cultural and resource management programs, and law enforcement; one for the resource management specialist, a newly-created position, which implemented the park's natural resource program at the field level; and one for the maintenance supervisor, who managed the park's buildings, trails, and ground maintenance program. In addition to these offices, there was a conference room for training and meeting purposes, an administrative clerk/reception area, a communications

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[420] First on the list was the long-awaited move to the new facility from the old Grannis farmhouse that had functioned as an administrative and visitor center since 1976. On February 23, 1992, it was vacated and compliance completed for its removal. Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1992, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[421] Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Building Fact Sheet, circa June 1992, File A82 (Special Events Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Green, "Knife River Villages," 8-10; , "Design Brings Plans to Life," *Courier: Newsmagazine of the National Park Service*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (May 1992), 16-17.



Visitor Center, October 1992. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library.

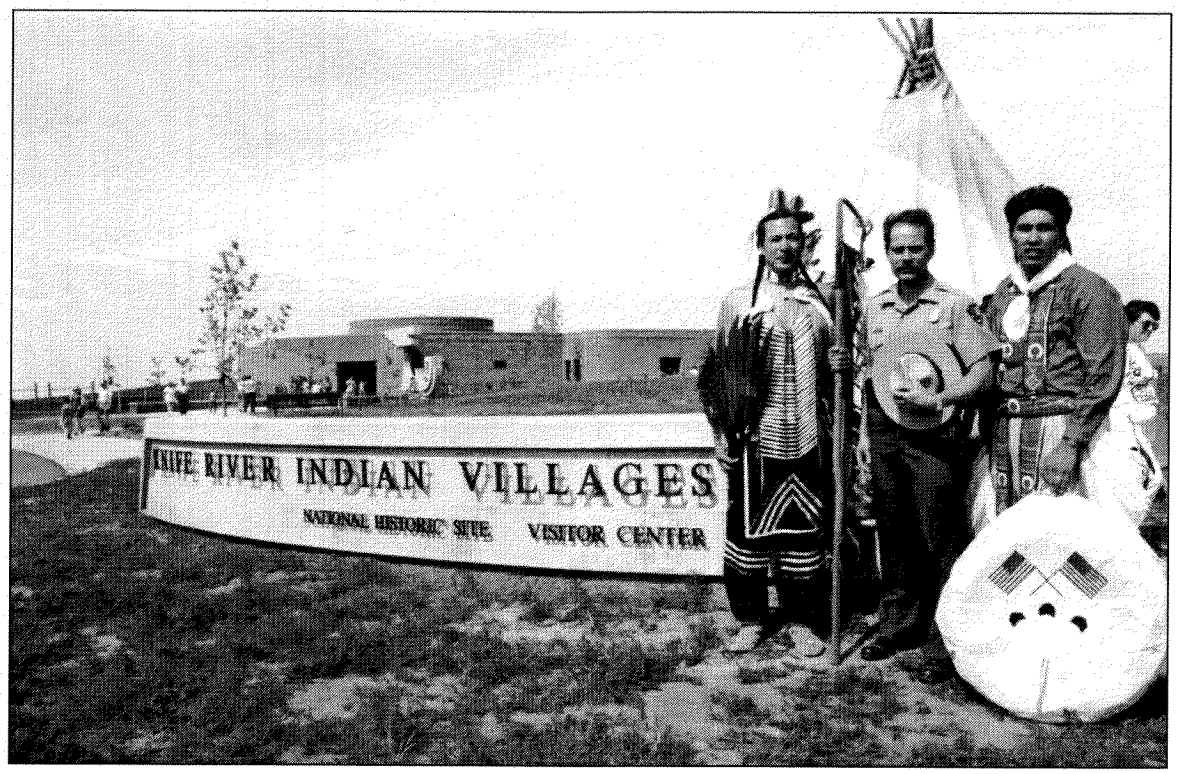
center, and a park mail and files room.[422]

There were also special activities rooms. For staff and on-site researcher use, there was a small library room. Space-saving shelving housed more than 1,000 titles pertaining to archeology, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara ethnohistory and culture, natural history, and other pertinent topics. There was also an interpreter's workroom with two workstations. In the building's basement, reached by elevator and/or stairway, was a fully equipped laboratory that allowed continued research on the archeological materials, as written by Congress in the enabling legislation. Important NPS files and information about 200,000 archeological objects recovered from the park area catalogued by collection type, location, etc., were stored here and used for KRIV's museum program. Close at hand was a secure temperature- and humidity-controlled curatorial fire-resistant storage facility with space-saver shelving for 1,000 square feet of materials.[423]

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[422] Ibid.

[423] Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Building Fact Sheet, circa June 1992, File A82 (Special Events Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Sheldon Green, "Knife River Villages," *Horizons* (Fall 1992): 8-10; "Design Brings Plans to Life," *Courier: Newsmagazine of the National Park Service*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (May 1992), 16-17; Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Building Fact Sheet, circa June 1992, File A82 (Special Events Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.



June 1992 Dedication Ceremony. From Left to Right: Keith Bear, Chief Ranger Fred Armstrong, and Wayne Fox. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library.

Though the post-construction review found problems in soundproofing, heating, health concerns related to air quality and inadequate ventilation, design of clerk and seasonal work areas, vegetation rehabilitation, and parking,[424] all in all it was a very impressive facility for such a small park. Those who attended the dedication ceremony included James Sperry, Wayne Sanstead, Anson Baker, and Sheila Robinson, all of whom were members of the North Dakota delegation that testified in Washington, DC in support of congressional bills to authorize the park. Others groups, such as KRIHF members, who lobbied Congress for the buildings design and construction, attended as well and were very proud of the results of their hard work. Superintendent Michael Holm was proud to showcase the park and the hard work of his staff, believing that KRIV was the "best park in the system."[425]

Construction of Full-Scale Earth-Lodge Exhibit, 1988-1995

While park staff worked on the approaching June 1992 dedication ceremonies for the new visitor center, they also began to develop construction documents for a full-scale earth-lodge exhibit to be built at the park in 1993. This exhibit was located adjacent to

[424] Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages NHS to Manager, Central Team, Denver Service Center, 20 April 1993, File D5217 (CX-1200-9-1902, Visitor Center), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.
[425] Michael Holm to Anson Baker, Sheila Robinson, Wayne Sanstead, Jim Sperry, 22 May 1992; Michael Holm to Staff, KNRI, 17 June 1992, File A82 (Special Events Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

and 250 feet east-northeast of the new visitor/administration center and within the designated development zone of Alternative Site B. Its purpose was to complete interpretation of the NHS. With the construction of this Hidatsa earth-lodge, the visitor would see first hand the imposing structures these agriculturalists and traders constructed and once lived in. For those visitors wishing to experience the nature of Indian life along the Knife River, an interpretive trail system from the earth-lodge exhibit provided access to the Lower Hidatsa Village site. The interpretive trail terminated at Sakakawea Village. To enhance this experience, NPS believed an interpretive earth-lodge should be replicated and constructed near the visitor/administration center. The 1978 master plan included provisions for earth-lodge reconstruction in the Sakakawea Village site area, but since reconstructed earth-lodges currently existed at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, NPS officials believed an earth-lodge exhibit replica, not an authentic reconstruction of an earth-lodge, would be more appropriate.[426]

Work on the interpretive earth-lodge, had actually begun two years earlier. In a supplemental agreement between MWAC and UND, Stanley Ahler, an expert on Hidatsa archeology, Jeffrey Kalin of Primitive Technologies, Inc., Bethlehem, Connecticut, and an expert on native material culture fabrication, and Michael Scullin of Mankato State University and an expert on Hidatsa ethnology had drawn up a prospectus for construction of a full-scale circular earth-lodge exhibit at KRIV. They saw the project as an opportunity to provide NPS useful information in the design, construction, and operation of such an exhibit. Their prospectus stemmed from discussions as far back as July 1988 between Ahler, Kalin, Superintendent Holm, and Chuck Erickson, superintendent of Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. Erickson provided them valuable information on the construction and maintenance of circular earth-lodges from his experience at On-A-Slant Village with that state park.[427]

NPS' first concern, expressed by MWAC archeologist Thomas Thiessen, involved technical design specifications for construction. Because the great majority of the park's interpretive story dealt with the prehistory and history of the Hidatsa, Thiessen believed it logical that the exhibit focus specifically on a Hidatsa style earth-lodge, using a detailed technical description of such an earth-lodge provided by early 20th-century ethnographer Gilbert L. Wilson.

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[426] Michael Holm to Files, 17 April 1992, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[427] Stanley A. Ahler, Jeffrey Kalin, and Michael Scullin. *Prospectus For Construction Of A Full-Scale Earthlodge Exhibit At The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Dept. of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, 1991), passim. Mike Scullin (then of Mankato State University) supervised the building of a full-scale earth-lodge replica at the 1976 FARMFEST exposition at Mankato, Minnesota. He also built two "dummy" lodges and a section of palisade to simulate the look of a Hidatsa village. Designed so that visitors could enter through the entryway and exit through one side where timber leaners and earthen covering were omitted, the exhibit was one of the most popular at the exhibition. Clay Alderson and Thomas Thiessen drove to Mankato to view the exhibit and discuss it with Scullin. Because Scullin was one of the very few living individuals with actual experience in building a full-scale earth-lodge, Stan Ahler reasonably enlisted him to help with the earth-lodge prospectus for Knife River Indian Villages. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

In their prospectus, Ahler, Kalin, and Scullin agreed. They recommended that the exhibit be patterned after the details of Wolf Chief's summer lodge as described to Wilson by Buffalo Bird Woman during the years 1909 and 1919. Ahler, Kalin, and Scullin recommended that interior features incorporated in the exhibit construction include a windscreen, a horse corral, a central fireplace with cooking pole, approximately six beds, a storage platform, a mortar and pestle, and one or more cache pits. They also strongly recommended that a traditional garden and a drying stage be constructed outside and near the exhibit. They provided data on alternate construction methods, estimates of construction materials and sources, construction schedules, and construction cost estimates. Besides providing design specifications down to the smallest detail, such as the number, length, and width of each type of structural member of the earth-lodge, their prospectus discussed routine inspection and maintenance requirements and possible uses of the exhibit for research and interpretive programs.[428]

In the end, Ahler, Kalin, and Scullin envisioned two kinds of "living history" programs associated with the earth-lodge exhibit. Superintendent Holm particularly supported this aspect of the project because he felt KRIV should be more about the "people" and not about just their bones. Though he agreed that KRIV was a premier archeological site, he and people like Gerard Baker felt that folks were talking only about the archeology and not about the Hidatsa people, so the living history element depicted by the earth-lodge replica was seen as a way to balance this perspective.[429] One program would be a warm-weather residence program designed to stimulate and experimentally document a broad range of traditional native activities performed in an earth-lodge, with a family and/or small group of people actually taking up residence in the lodge in the spring and perhaps at intervals during the summer through the fall harvest season. The second kind of research would center on winter season activities but would be more restricted because of lower park visitation rates in the winter season. Ahler, Kalin, and Scullin wanted each type of activity to be fully recorded on videotape for purposes of additional interpretive program development. However, their prospectus also warned that the "constructed lodge would be temporary, frequently in need of maintenance, and eventually in need of complete or near complete replacement. The cycle of construction, maintenance, and replacement should be firmly programmed into park operation plans and budget."[430]

Some NPS officials enjoyed many aspects of the earth-lodge prospectus, while others wanted to develop alternative ways of preserving the earth-lodge and maintaining it beyond a temporary existence of perhaps ten to twenty years. NPS Regional Historical Architect Richard J. Cronenberger was not so kind. "The proposed interpretive replication of the earthlodge," Cronenberger reported, was "based on two premises that have been unsuccessful in the past: first, that construction techniques be authentic, and second, that annual building maintenance will also function as an interpretive tool." With

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[428] Ibid.

[429] Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, and Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[430] Ahler, Kalin, and Scullin, *Prospectus For Construction Of A Full-Scale Earthlodge Exhibit At The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, passim.

regard to construction and design issues, Cronenberger found it unacceptable to construct a new structure with such a short life span, particularly when the funds did not exist to adequately maintain existing buildings and structures. Therefore, he and others wanted a roof membrane of waterproof EPDM rubber placed under the sod and earth to keep water out of the grass and willow branches to help minimize rot of structural members. A subsurface drainage system was also needed to allow water that penetrates the soil roof to drain away from the structure without eroding the soil base. They also recommended treatment of any wood in contact with the ground with a preservative such as Cuprinol.[431]

Cronenberger was even more critical of the concept. Although it was "important to adequately interpret the life styles of the Hidatsa," he wrote, "unfortunately, the NPS will not allow the space to become flea- and rodent-infested or allow hay and manure to accumulate in a corner pen like in original lodges." He also felt there had to be more adequate discussions of how the earth-lodge would be interpreted. Other concerns Cronenberger had involved the use of bone or stone tools to construct the lodge. In his opinion, the traditional approach to construction was not practical or feasible for government contracting, especially the use of expensive materials such western red cedar for structural members. Finally, he thought that Ahler's, Kalin's, and Scullin's cost estimates were very low. In his opinion, a more realistic figure was more than double the estimates provided in their prospectus. In the end, the RMRO historical architect would support the project only if the interpretative replication of an earth-lodge at Knife River was "designed to minimize maintenance and have a life span of at least 50 years."[432] Despite the above reservations for the project, in February 1992, Cronenberger came to KRIV for preliminary planning on the construction of the earth-lodge and thereafter helped KRIV work on the final design.

Construction documents were available in January 1993, and a contract to construct the exhibit was awarded to Yellowstone Traditions of Billings, Montana. They completed construction of the full-scale earth-lodge in October 1994 at a cost of $130,000; almost triple the amount expected in Ahler's, Kalin's, and Scullin's earliest projections. Another $30,000 was obligated for furnishing the structure and was contracted to Larry Belitz. Coteau Properties, a local coal mining company, provided the native prairie sod required to complete the earth-lodge project. Thereafter, earth-lodge projects completed under contract or in-house included application of an additional layer of sod, completion of a sidewalk, installation of an alarm system, fabrication of a smoke hole cover, compaction of the floor, and a security door and lighting. On Memorial Day weekend of 1995, the replicated earth-lodge opened to the public for the first time.

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[431] Les Siroky, RMR-ME to Ann Johnson, Division of Cultural Resources, RMR-PR, 11 September 1990, Richard J. Cronenberger to Acting Branch Chief, Branch of Park Cultural Programs, Division of Cultural Resources, RMR, 13 February 1991, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[432] Ibid.

A Full Product Offered

The completion of the earth-lodge marked the completion of development at KRIV as delineated by its first General Management Plan (GMP) in 1986, discussed in the next chapter. The earth-lodge was open for visitors year-round, although furnished only from April to November. Since its construction, many of the park's interpretive programs have focused around the earth-lodge. With the visitor center and earth-lodge exhibit completed, visitors were now offered a "full product" insofar as a quality interpretive experience.[433]

The design and construction of KRIV facilities fully emphasized the National Park Service's commitment to the theme of *Indian Villages and Communities* over that of *Contact with the Indians*. However, as will be seen, at times its interpretive program vacillated between the two themes, causing an identity crisis for future park superintendents.

[433] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1992-1996, 2000, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERPRETATION AND MANAGEMENT OF KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, 1975-2004

Long before the construction of the visitor/administration center in 1992, National Park Service (NPS) worked on developing the Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site's mission, public interpretation of the park's resources, and management of the park's unique resources. Without any direct park-oriented facilities to manage, NPS administrative decisions and policies prior to 1992 pertained to employing staff to administer a largely undeveloped park. During this initial period, daily administration and interpretation issues challenged each park superintendent in different ways as they tried to meet the National Park Service's objectives to preserve, manage, and interpret the NHS resources and their natural setting. Interpretation values, bolstered by Ahler's research, leaned substantially toward the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. This interpretation peaked with the addition of a northern parcel to KRIV by Congress, which saw KRIV as a unique Northern Plains archeological park.

But following the completion of the University of North Dakota's archeological research, the construction of visitor/administration facilities, and the land acquisition that year, there was slow shift in the park's interpretation values from the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. Each new superintendent tried to increase visitation to the park, and slowly and subtly, emphasis on *Contact with the Indians* appeared to be the park's best tourist draw. This inevitable shift peaked in the period 2000 to 2006, when the nation as a whole and KRIV in particular celebrated the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. This shift also occurred largely because of a loss of institutional memory regarding the roots and founding of KRIV by incoming park managers, who came to and saw KRIV as just a "training" stop in National Park Service careers before moving on.

First Statement for Management, 1975

Before any management or interpretation of KRIV's resources took place, the first order of business for the emerging park was the creation of a Statement for Management (SFM). This task was assigned to TRNP Superintendent John Lancaster. On November 10, 1975, a little over a year after Congress established the park, Lancaster submitted to the Rocky Mountain Regional Office (RMRO) a simple SFM.

Starting a park was no easy matter, for even in this nascent state, several major factors influenced management objectives for the NHS. For instance, there were immediate legislative and administrative constraints on the NHS. Congress had appropriated only $600,000 for the acquisition of lands. The 1976 SFM concluded that the appropriated funds would not be sufficient for full land acquisition. Increasing demand for low-cost electrical power had made it feasible to strip mine the lignite coal found near the park for use in coal-fired generating plants and in coal gasification. This regional development

rapidly drove up the price of land. As it turned out, the SFM was correct in its assumption.[434]

Next, RMRO and Lancaster had to contend with other regional development issues.[435] Eight miles south of KRIV, the State Historic Society of North Dakota (SHSND) managed Fort Clark,[436] and sixty miles south, they administered Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, which already had reconstructed Mandan earth-lodges and an historical interpretation program. There was also Fort Mandan, north of Washburn on the west bank of the Missouri. Fort Mandan commemorated the winter encampment of Lewis and Clark (1804-1805). Finally, to the north, the Three Affiliated Tribes were busy developing the Four Bears recreation complex on the Fort Berthold Reservation. Over time, KRIV had to find its niche in this mix of nearby regional recreational/historical sites. But ultimately, at that time, NPS officials were more concerned with internal park influences—namely, land acquisition, which took longer and cost more than expected, and erosion of the Sakakawea Village site, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.[437]

Given the above legislative, administrative, regional, and internal influences, NPS had its work cut out for them, but for the time being, KRIV's first SFM had to suffice. In December 1975, RMRO Director Bean approved the document, and the Washington Office signed off on it on January 21, 1976. In February, it was released for a thirty-day public review.[438] By that date, RMRO had hired Russell C. "Clayton" Alderson as the Area Manager of the NHS.

KRIV's First Park Area Manager

In February 1975, TRNP Superintendent Lancaster advertised the position of Park Area Manager for Knife River Indian Villages NHS and presented the area and position as honestly as possible to any candidate. The fact sheet noted that the Knife River area

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[434] "Statement for Management Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 15 June 1976, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[435] In addition to the archeological sites and other Native American interpretive places named in the narrative, there were nearby sites that should be noted. They include the Double Ditch, Molander, and the Huff sites—all of which are owned and managed by the SHSHD. Knowledge of these properties also present opportunities for broadening visitor experience and education at KRIV. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[436] Interestingly, Thomas Thiessen once received a telephone call from Frances Kennedy, wife of former NPS Director Roger Kennedy, inquiring whether he thought Fort Clark should be added as an outlying unit to KRIV. Thiessen thought it should because it would incorporate into the Knife River interpretive story a large part of what was missing—the association of the Arikara people. Oral History of Thomas Thiessen, 14 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[437] "Statement for Management Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 15 June 1976, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[438] "NPS, Proposes Management Document for Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 10 February 1976, *National Park Service News Release*, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

experienced extreme seasonal temperatures, ranging from minus 40 degrees in the winter to 108 degrees in the summer. In describing the park, the announcement stated, "Knife River Indian Villages is currently undeveloped, and since the land hasn't been purchased, it will be some time, if ever, before government housing will be available. We are currently seeking funds to purchase trailer houses to be located in the town of Stanton." Next, it mentioned that a full complement of services, such as churches, shopping centers, hospital, airport, etc., were available only in Bismarck, sixty-three miles southeast of Stanton, but observed that a movie theater was located in Hazen, North Dakota, a distance of just twelve miles. On the positive side, the fact sheet mentioned that there was good television and radio reception and that "ample opportunity" existed for outdoor activity—fishing was excellent on the Missouri River, and hunting of waterfowl was a popular sport since the area was on the central flyway. Furthermore, "the opportunity to live in an undeveloped park offers many rewards. The area is isolated and rich with the intrigue of rural America. The area is located 20 miles below Lake Sakakawea, which is one of the largest man-made lakes in the U.S."[439]

Lancaster had a pretty difficult time filling the position because it called for a person with both good public relations skills combined with planning and organization experience. Though there were good candidates, none of them seemed to have the combination Lancaster was searching for until Clayton Alderson applied. Previous to applying for the position, Alderson had worked seasonally for six years at Grand Teton National Park (1959-1965) and (1972-1975), and in the early 1970s had laid out, developed, and served as the superintendent at Perry State Park (Ozawakie, Kansas). With a recommendation from the superintendent at Grand Teton, Lancaster hired Alderson that summer.[440]

By the time Alderson and his family arrived in August 1975, there was not a place to rent or buy because of the lignite coal mining boom, so Lancaster purchased a three-bedroom, 14 x 70-foot Windsor mobile home for him and his family (wife and three children) to live in while he worked at KRIV. For a year, one bedroom in the trailer was converted into an office. Eventually, Alderson found a house lot and built a home for his family. A year or so later, NPS purchased a second trailer. Alderson then used this 12 x 60-foot trailer as an administrative office. It had two offices, a central meeting room, and room for a library and additional storage, and was located in the Stanton trailer court in town.[441]

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[439] "Area Information of Interest to NPS Employees Considering Transfer: Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 4 February 1975, File D3423 (Buildings #1 Administration/Quarters), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[440] Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[441] Individual Building Data Form-Administration Building and Headquarters #1, and Individual Building Data Form-Administration Building and Headquarters #2, File D3423 (Buildings #1 Administration/Quarters), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. When Thomas Thiessen reported for duty at Knife River Indian Villages in July 1976, according to Thiessen, "Park headquarters was located in the end bedroom of a trailer that also served as the residence of Park Technician Doug Kranz and his wife, Audrey. It was located in a mobile home court in Stanton. This trailer was probably earlier used as living quarters by Clay and his family. Sometime during Thiessen's time at the park (1976-1977), an office trailer was also moved into the mobile home court and park staff vacated the Kranz' residential trailer. The new trailer had an office for the Area Manager, a large room that Doug and Tom worked in, and a restroom. The trailer was

Response to KRIV Statement for Management, 1976

From August 1975 to February 1976 and the issuance of the SFM, Alderson spent time trying to blend into the community. During this period, he did not wear a uniform or drive a government vehicle.[442] He and his family soon became part of the community and got to know a lot of the people. His strategy was to get acquainted with people first as a person and a neighbor, or in some other capacity first, and then work with them on park issues. During the winter, Alderson addressed various local organizations and invited interested individuals to contact him at any time if they wished to make suggestions for the park. Alderson also met several of the families who lost their land to the NHS, such as the Grannis and/or the Krieger family. In an interview with him, Alderson joked that when he introduced himself as manager of the park to Violet Krieger, she said with a smile, "Oh, it's good to know ya. So now we'll know who to shoot at."[443]

When in February 1976 Alderson released the SFM to all local papers, they interviewed him about the process and fielded public comments and suggestions on how to manage and develop the park.[444] Few people responded to the SFM, but comments by those who did were informative. Some recommended no revisions at the time but corrected some factual errors. Others, such as Lake Sakakawea State Park Superintendent Roger D. Bollman, recommended that some sort of functional interpretive program be instituted during initial site development to contain displays of significant finds. By doing so, he thought NPS could arouse curiosity, cooperation, and assistance from some of the local citizens and appease the locals' mistrust of the new development in their midst.[445] Nonetheless, KRIV's initial SFM would not be revisited and/or revised until 1989. Meanwhile, Alderson started wearing his uniform, got a government vehicle, and started to have a stronger presence in the community.

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set in place by maintenance people from Theodore Roosevelt, who provided maintenance support. The Kranz' residential trailer was later moved to Fort Union Trading Post, and served as housing for Thomas Thiessen and MWAC archeologist Bill Hunt in 1986." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[442] According to Thomas Thiessen, "I believe it was early in 1977 when we were ordered by John Lancaster to wear NPS uniforms to increase our visibility in the community. I remember eating lunch at the Power City Cafe in Stanton one day while wearing my uniform. A North Dakota State Patrolman, who was also in uniform, finished his lunch and approached me and surprised me by asking which district I worked out of, even though our uniforms were very different from one another. Also as part of the public relations effort, Clay Alderson laid out the community baseball field at Stanton using a transit borrowed from MWAC archeologists working at Knife River Indian Villages. By virtue of his outgoing and friendly personality, Clay was absolutely the perfect match for his job as the first manager." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[443] Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[444] "Knife Village Plans Available," *Beulah Beacon* 18 March 1976; "Management Statement for Knife River Released," *Hazen Star* 18 March 1976, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[445] Roger D. Bollman to Clay Anderson, 28 March 1976, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Having received no outstanding opposition or comments on the 1976 SFM, Area Manager Alderson settled into his daily management duties. His primary objectives were to survey the park boundary, continue to acquire land for the park, and supervise building removal. DSC "lands people" and lawyers conducted the negotiations, and they always seemed to stir up people. When they left, Alderson would just sit back, because he knew the landowners would be in to see him soon thereafter. They would come in and say, "We want to have breakfast with you tomorrow, and don't bring your wife." Alderson sympathized with the core of landowners who did not want to give up their land because it had been in their family for generations. During his time with them, he would acknowledge their viewpoint and just tried to keep an open dialogue with each landowner.[446]



Sakakawea Village, 2008. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library.

Besides these tasks, Alderson managed other KRIV activities, which ranged from law enforcement action to resource management and interpretation. For instance, in May 1977, he carried out a minor law enforcement action, when two individuals from Wisconsin were caught using metal detectors near the Sakakawea Village site. He informed them they were in violation of the 1906 Antiquities Act and the North Dakota

[446] Park Ranger, KNRI to Superintendent, TRNP, 25 November 1977, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

State Antiquities Act,[447] confiscated the artifacts, and told them to stay off park property. During the summer of 1977, Alderson also oversaw a six-week field school conducted by UND, which profiled the riverbank at Sakakawea and conducted limited surface collection and some test excavations. Surface collections were conducted at the Big and Lower Hidatsa sites as well. There also were promotions and transfers to handle. In August 1977, park archeologist Thomas Thiessen transferred to MWAC, and in December of that year, Michael "Mick" Holm, later to become a KRIV superintendent (1985-1992), was assigned to KRIV as a park ranger-historian trainee (1977–1979).[448]

In his "spare" time during these years, Alderson also guided visitors through the area, presented programs to various organizations and school groups in off-site locations, and worked in cooperation with the Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association (TRNHA) on displaying and selling items of regional interest.[449] In the summer of 1978, he unofficially counted 119 people on guided tours—the first visitation figures for the park.[450] These people were mainly "historian types" interested in the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who had read about KRIV. Without any formal interpretation program, Alderson and Holm would walk them around the park and show them what was out there.[451] These early visitor numbers recorded by Alderson were far below the 48,000 visitors that the 1971 EIS predicted would come to KRIV in its first year of operation!

KRIV Annual Report and Administration Issues, 1978

In KRIV's second year of operation, Area Manager Alderson had many administrative duties to complete. They included personnel, budget, and interpretation issues, besides seeing that land acquisition, building removal, and planning efforts for the visitor center went well—a full agenda of activities in and of itself.

One personnel/management issue Alderson immediately confronted was filling the park archeologist position and working with UND archeologist Stanley Ahler. On June 18, 1978, during the middle of UND's field research program, John F. Taylor replaced Thomas Thiessen. UND crews had begun surface collecting in April and May, and by

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[447] John O. Lancaster to Ernest Schug, and John O. Lancaster to Clifford Vergilies, 25 May 1977, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[448] Park Manager, Knife River Indian Villages NHS to Director, 30 January 1978, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[449] Ibid.

[450] Clay Alderson to Interpretive Prospectus Team Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 26 September 1976, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. According to Thomas Thiessen, "I remember the low visitation count for the first year in which people were counted. As I recall, the count included Ray Wood three times, each time accompanied by an entourage of students. I also remember one man and his very young son who visited in the dead of winter. He was an airline employee whose hobby was visiting national parks (which he could do cheaply by air travel), and he was checking Knife River Indian Villages off his list to visit. I believe that Clay gave him a snowmobile tour of what little land NPS owned at the time." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[451] Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

June, UND's eight-week research program was in full swing.[452] Unfortunately, Taylor was a Southwestern archeologist and not a Middle-Missouri archeologist, and he never quite fit into this fraternity of archeologists (Ahler and Calabrese) known as the "Missouri Mafia" because they all came out of the University of Missouri and were a cohesive group of graduate students of W. Raymond Wood and later as professional colleagues.[453]

To make matters more difficult, Alderson also had almost no communication from Ahler's field crew, and Clay was only able to stay abreast of the archeological activity by ferreting information out on his own cognizance. One day, friction developed between Alderson and Ahler when Area Manager Alderson had his authority countermanded by Ahler, who felt he had complete autonomy over the archeological work at KRIV. Alderson, who had come up through the NPS in a non-traditional manner, felt he had to defend his authority as park superintendent. Eventually, MWAC leadership had to intercede in the dispute, and thereafter communication between the two individuals soon improved, but they never really got along and "locked horns" on other occasions.[454] On the other hand, Alderson befriended and worked closely with Taylor. Together, they even worked on a challenging project that involved a controlled burn of an earth-lodge built in 1933 at On-A-Slant Village in Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, for research purposes and for interpretation of Mandan culture.[455]

However, not all of Alderson's duties were so stimulating. There were day-to-day duties to attend to, which involved overseeing the park's operating budget, working with TRNHA, and supervising Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) enrollees and Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) workers. The YCC and CETA employees worked with office and maintenance staff on a number of projects, such as

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[452] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1978, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[453] Oral History of Thomas Thiessen, 14 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. According to Thomas Thiessen, "I didn't know John Taylor well, but he was relatively isolated by virtue of lack of collegial interaction, a circumstance that came with the Knife River Indian Villages job (something that I also had experienced). John must have had problems of which I was totally unaware, as he eventually took his own life after transferring to the BLM in Montana." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[454] Clay Alderson to Chief, MWAC, 31 January 1978; John O. Lancaster to Regional Director, RMR, 14 August 1978; F.A. Calabrese to Regional Director, RMR, 14 September 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[455] R. Clay Alderson to Charles Erickson, 25 September 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. According to Thomas Thiessen, "The earthlodge at Slant Village was torched by a team of individuals including John Taylor, Bob Nickel and Jeff Richner from MWAC, and John Weymouth from the University of Nebraska. Thermocouples were placed within the structure to measure temperatures in various locations as the structure, which was in serious disrepair and a safety hazard, burned." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

removal of fences and unsafe structures, roadside cleanup, office work, and environmental activities.[456]

Meanwhile, there were promotions and new hiring opportunities that demanded Alderson's time. During the summer, Holm continued to conduct guided walks throughout the park, placing special emphasis on the ongoing archeological work, while at the same time, he kept up-to-date on the work of the archeological field crews. In the fall, Holm contacted area schools and presented interpretive programs on KRIV for them, as well as for civic organizations. For his hard work, in December 3, 1978, he was promoted to a new pay grade. Meanwhile, Hidatsa tribal member Gerard Baker, or Yellow Wolf, joined the staff in the fall of 1978 as a park technician. His position was part of a seven-week student-training program. Baker was expected to complete his college training that winter, and then return to KRIV in the spring of 1979 as a permanent full-time employee.[457]

In these early years, Alderson and Holm handled interpretation duties as best as they could, but no official interpretive program existed at this time. An Interpretive Prospectus (IP) team from the Harper's Ferry Center (HFC) was set to visit the park in the late fall of 1978. They were given documents such as Ahler's "A Program for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," (1977) and W. Raymond Woods' "Historic Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS" (1977) to help develop the park's IP. The interpretive study team were also encouraged to visit MWAC for additional documentary sources, published and unpublished,[458] but the trip was cancelled,[459] probably because RMRO was having difficulties finding an appropriate location for the visitor/administration center.

The interpretation issue was not addressed again until the spring of 1979. From April 2 to 5, 1979, a HFC interpretive planning team did meet at the park, at which time it was agreed that the "park's primary interpretive theme would be the Mandan-Hidatsa lifestyle, including the successful adaptation of these groups to the Northern Plains environment as well as the role played by these villagers in both prehistoric and historic Plains trade systems." This statement mimicked MWAC chief archeologist Calabrese's expanded regional and "loftier" interpretation of the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. A secondary theme focused "on the presence of Euro-Americans in these villages and the role of the villages in historic exploration and economic development of the Missouri River valley." This statement covered the bases for the NPS theme, *Contact*

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[456] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1978, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[457] Ibid.; Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[458] Thomas D. Thiessen to John Wise, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center, 15 January 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[459] Clay Alderson to Interpretive Prospectus Team Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 26 September 1976, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

with the Indians.[460] On April 22, 1979, shortly after this meeting, Clay Alderson moved on and assumed area manager duties at Cedar Breaks National Monument (CEBR), Utah.

General State of Flux, 1979-1980

On the same day that Alderson left for his new post, Earle Curran transferred from his post Cedar Breaks to assume duties as KRIV's Area Manager. Area Manager Curran was transferred to KRIV because of community conflicts he had encountered at Cedar City and came to KRIV at a time of indecision regarding the location of the visitor/administration center. Some residents of Stanton considered Curran not very personable, which may have accounted for his short term as superintendent, from April 1979 to December 1980.[461]

During Curran's administration, several personnel changes occurred that put KRIV in a general state of flux. First, on June 3, 1979, Gerard Baker returned to KRIV upon graduating from college and assumed a permanent full-time post as park technician. Second, on July 1, 1979, historian trainee Michael Holm was reassigned to Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area in Wyoming. Third, on June 10, 1980, Robert Appling, a park technician at Jewel Cave National Monument, replaced Holm as park ranger-historian. Fourth, on June 13, 1980, park archeologist John Taylor transferred to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Lewistown, Montana, and the park archeologist position was eliminated altogether for unknown reason(s).[462] Finally, in late 1980, Rhonda Flynn assumed the duties as the park's first permanent part-time clerk-typist.[463] Although KRIV's staff changed and grew during the first term of President Ronald Reagan, NPS faced budget cuts that affected the park system and the NHS. For instance, at KRIV there was an immediate reduction of the operating budget that caused considerable cutbacks in seasonal staff and interpretive endeavors.[464]

Other changes occurred during Curran's administration. For instance, KRIV's office headquarters were moved on June 15, 1979, from their trailer location within Stanton to the former Byron Grannis farmhouse. Thereafter, Curran and his staff made improvements to the farmhouse to provide the park with adequate visitor and office space. With this move, on-site and off-site interpretation grew steadily as KRIV staff

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[460] "Knife River Indian Villages NHS: Visitor/Administration/Research/Maintenance Facility Site Selection," 1984, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND; "Adjustments of Boundaries Necessary to Protect Significant Park Resources and Historic Scene," circa 31 December 1981, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[461] Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[462] When asked whether or not eliminating the archeologist position at KRIV was a good idea, Thomas Thiessen did not think so because he felt the superintendent needed a primary advisor on archeological issues. After the position was eliminated, MWAC tried to fulfill that role, but with a Center archeologist assigned to several parks, it was difficult to keep abreast of park planning and development issues. Oral History of Thomas Thiessen, 14 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[463] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1979-1980, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[464] Ibid.

presented a variety of programs to local schools, civic clubs, and even foreign visitor groups, and presented programs at their new office center. For instance, in 1979, interpretive programs were presented to six local schools, totaling 300 students, and nine programs were presented to visiting school groups, totaling 1,182 persons. In 1979, park technician Baker especially made several contributions to this growth. Baker performed Mandan-Hidatsa dances to approximately 1,425 people at the park,[465] and the next year, Baker and YCC crews completed an earth-lodge adjacent to the Grannis farmhouse for instructional purposes. They constructed the half-scale earth-lodge replica from nearby resources, and according to historic accounts by Gilbert Wilson, it proved to be an exhibit of much interest to visitors.[466]

But without a park archeologist and no formal interpretive program forthcoming from HFC, KRIV's interpretive program as developed by Robert Appling relied on historical accounts and not regional archeology to describe KRIV's mission—in other words, the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*. In November 1979, RMRO Director Bean reinforced this approach. At that time, Bean, recommended to HFC that any proposed interpretive program developed by HFC should focus primarily on the significance of the site (the role it played in American history) and secondarily on its archeology.[467]

The historical approach may also have appeared successful because the next year KRIV witnessed steady improvement in visitor statistics and interpretive program numbers. In 1980, Appling presented interpretive programs to eighteen schools, totaling 1,098 students, and 108 on-site tours were presented by Appling and Baker to 677 persons—four times as many individuals than KRIV had served during the previous year.[468] Daily visitation numbers increased as well, to approximately 4,950 persons, largely because in late 1980, Mercer County completed construction of a new bridge on County Highway 37, the primary access route to the park. Naturally, completion of this bridge greatly facilitated visitor access.[469]

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[465] Ibid.

[466] Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[467] Manager, Harpers Ferry Center to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region 21 November 1979, File H14 (Administration History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[468] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1979-1980, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. In an oral history, Gerard Baker tells many humorous stories regarding his relations with Stanley Ahler regarding the construction of the earth-lodge and visitation by tourists. In one story, he relates how three ladies from New York were visiting one afternoon and how one accidentally fell into a deep test pit. The lady was not seriously hurt, but Baker's comment was that "this was his first experience with a tourist trap." Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[469] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1979-1980, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

KRIV Annual Report and Administration Issues, 1981-1982

On December 28, 1980, Sandra Hellickson-Key replaced Earle Curran as superintendent when Curran accepted a BLM position in Needles, California. Hellickson-Key had transferred from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to NPS. As expected, during 1981, the first of three years of Hellickson-Key's administration at KRIV, severe cutbacks in the park's approved budget occurred, yet, despite fiscal restraints, Hellickson-Key was able to make several important changes at KRIV during her years there.

For instance, Hellickson-Key started the first regularly scheduled summer programs at KRIV, and in 1981, KRIV hosted twelve special events involving interpretation with Native American themes. Special "living history" events, featuring Native American lecturers or crafts, appeared to be the most successful. Then, in October, the park hosted a cultural exposition that featured traditional Native American food, songs, crafts, and religious observances as well as more modern artwork and crafts. This was the largest attraction yet held at KRIV. More than 350 people attended from both the Fort Berthold Reservation and the local community, which met the exposition's goal of integration of these two diverse publics. In the same year, a self-guiding tour was established at the Big Hidatsa Village site. The trail proved to be a popular attraction and made staff time available for other innovative interpretive activities. Finally, in 1981, park staff completely remodeled the visitor center located within the Grannis farmhouse. They added museum exhibits and new restrooms, graveled the parking area, constructed wayside exhibits at three of the major archeological sites, and returned fifty acres of former cropland near the Lower Hidatsa Village to native grasses.[470]

Hard Times Befall KRIV and Preparation of Key Park Documents

The year 1982 saw hard times fall upon KRIV. The *Assessment of Alternatives Visitor/Administrative Facility Sites* needed correction, locating the visitor/administration center had stalled, and Hellickson-Key also had a difficult time fiscally and administratively. In May, Appling transferred to Coulee Dam National Recreation Area in Kettle Falls, Washington. To allow the park to remain fiscally solvent, Superintendent Hellickson-Key decided to leave the park ranger/historian position vacant until January 1983. Instead, she relied heavily on its volunteer program to provide routine as well as special interpretive activities.[471]

Only six events were offered in 1982, in which about 2,500 participated. In spite of its financial problems, KRIV joined in Stanton's centennial celebration. The fact that KRIV was invited to take part in the event was seen as something of a public relations coup for the park. For the centennial, KRIV provided a special program in the civic center by

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[470] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1981, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); Knife River Indian Villages NHS Statistics, circa October 1986, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[471] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1983, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence, KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Charles Blake, a well-known Indian dancer. Blake, a Mandan Indian, presented his program, "Native American Pride, An Odyssey," which involved the creative use of technical effects with modern and historic art forms. His group received a standing ovation from the 1,500 attending the event. Despite the success of this centennial program, visitation at the park was lower than expected that year, partly because of extremely rainy weather in June that left the park accessible only by four-wheel drive vehicles and partly because of construction on Highway 83 during July and August. In 1982, visitation numbered 5,100 persons, only 150 more than the previous year.[472] In the same year, the Harpers Ferry Center released *Maxidiwiac*, a short film that portrayed the life of Buffalo Bird Woman, a Hidatsa Indian woman born about 1840 at the Knife River Indian Villages, and the ways of the Hidatsa people of the 19th century.[473]

At the same time Hellickson-Key juggled the above events, RMRO was busy preparing two required interpretation documents. The first document RMRO undertook to write was a Scope of Collections Statement for the park. On August 21, 1982, RMRO completed and approved a Scope of Collections Statement for KRIV. Its purpose was to describe the current collection of artifacts collected to date related to resource management goals and objectives, as well as the interpretive themes as approved in management documents, and then to provide guidelines for acquiring objects for KRIV's future museum collection. It also standardized how historic/prehistoric artifacts collected were to be examined, categorized, and stored as part of permanent collections for KRIV for research and exhibition. Finally, it noted collections outside the National Park Service purview, such as the massive George Sagehorn collection excavated from the Lower Hidatsa and Sakakawea sites and the smaller collections in the possession of Byron Grannis and George Buchfink that were accumulated when these people owned lands on which the sites were located.[474]

The second crucial interpretation document was a Statement for Interpretation (SFI), a formal interpretation document for the park. RMRO informed Hellickson-Key that completion of a draft SFI was expected by HFC in January 1983. This news came at a critical time in the park's history. The near completion of Phase I of Stanley Ahler's archeological research program drastically enlarged the park's information base and necessitated a re-evaluation of NHS' 1976 SFM, and its 1978 master plan. Ahler's report identified fifty-five archeological and historic sites within park boundaries. The park now had in its possession information on the cultural resource base that allowed park superintendents such as Hellickson-Key to avoid unknowingly negatively impacting a cultural resource. This information also allowed for more informed planning for future

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[472] Ibid.

[473] NPS, *Maxidiwiac (Buffalo Bird Woman)* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Dept. of the Interior, 1982).

[474] NPS, *A Plan For The Interpretation Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: Harpers Ferry Center, 1983), Appendix B: Scope of Collections Statement for Knife River Indian Villages NHS; NPS, "Knife River Indian Villages NHS Scope of Collections Statement," 8 April 1986, File H20 (Collections—Scope of Collections), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

development, such as the visitor/administration center discussed in the previous chapter.[475]

A Plan for the Interpretation of Knife River Indian Villages, NHS, 1983

As promised, in May 1983, RMRO approved *A Plan for the Interpretation of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* that HFC had prepared. The planning team consisted of HFC interpretive planner John Wise, MWAC archeologist Thiessen, TRNP Superintendent Wickware, KRIV Superintendent Hellickson-Key, and Park Ranger Appling. The document tried to straddle the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*, with a regional approach but ultimately shifted it toward the latter.

The document described at length the significance of the area around the mouth of the Knife River as the home of the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians and their distinctive lifestyle but also spotlighted that of equal and perhaps potentially greater significance was the information learned from UND's archeological research accomplished over the prior two to three years. This research highlighted that the area contained not just five village sites, representing a few hundred years of occupation, but actually more than fifty sites dating over a period of possibly 8,000 years. The recent revelation that the Knife River area was utilized by "various groups during an extended period of time" permitted interpretation of "not only the development of the Plains Village tradition and the successive contact with Euro-American culture (historical period), but also the preceding cultures which thrived in this harsh environment of the northern Great Plains." The challenge facing planners and program managers was that of "translating these concepts and historic events into interpretive reality."[476]

The park's interpretive emphasis had shifted considerably from just the Lewis and Clark period to the culture and history of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara peoples. *A Plan for the Interpretation of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* suggested that interpretive themes for the park include the natural environment, village life, inter-tribal trade and conflict, Euro-American contact, and Mandan/Hidatsa in the mainstream of today. But since much of the archeological evidence to support these themes lay buried beneath the surface, the document warned that NPS would find it difficult to get visitors to appreciate the park's archeological values. Park managers needed to recognize these constraints when programming funds for interpretive efforts and development of the park. Furthermore, because KRIV drew from the same "visitor pool" that other recreational/historic entities appealed to, the HFC interpretive study team suggested a coordinated approach with the Three Affiliated Tribes, Lake Sakakawea State Park, Fort Clark Historic Site, and sites such as Fort Mandan, Cross Ranch, Double Ditch, Fort Abraham Lincoln, and the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck.[477]

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[475] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1983, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); Sandra Hellickson-Key To Whom It May Concern, circa June 1982, File A8215 (Records of Dedications, Anniversaries, and Other Observances), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[476] NPS, *A Plan For The Interpretation Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 1-9.

[477] Ibid.

Preservation of the irreplaceable archeological resources was necessary, but provision of a visitor contact facility and interpretive program to accommodate year-round day-use activities was just as important. On an interim basis, the park needed to continue its existing interpretive program, which centered on the visitor contact station at the former Grannis farmstead. However, long range, park officials needed to address the interpretive program and exhibit in the proposed 1,200 square feet of space devoted to interpretive exhibits, information/orientation, and cooperating sales display in the new visitor/administrative center. Exhibit treatment, according to the HFC plan, would generally emphasize earlier occupancy of the area as documented by archeological evidence, a continuum of perhaps as many as 8,000 years, Mandan and Hidatsa village socio-cultural systems, the significance and extent of trade in prehistoric/historic times in the Middle Missouri Valley region, and Euro-American contact with the village inhabitants. The HFC also suggested museum displays addressing sensitivity to the value and fragility of the archeological resources that the visitor was viewing, and "briefly" the art and science of archeological investigation.[478]

A Plan for the Interpretation of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS continued by putting forward several other ideas. For instance, the HFC plan suggested that if the visitor center were suitably located, a "viewing port" overlooking the villages was thought ideal for superimposing a graphic rendition of how the villages may have appeared over present-day features. It also proposed that during the facility planning process basic design, colors, and wall treatment within the structure should give consideration to local Native American traditions, ideas that were adopted during the construction of the center. Intriguingly, it proposed reconstruction of an authentic full-scale earth-lodge, perhaps located near the Big Hidatsa Village or on the east side of the Knife River, where a winter village might be simulated. With the large percentage of Native American visitors, it was thought that this "reconstructed resource" might be utilized by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes or other Indians for ceremonial purposes.[479]

Other HFC plan suggestions, of a more practical level, included wayside exhibits, trails, audio-visual support, and a publication program. Visitor center exhibit costs (planning and production) were estimated at $233,000, wayside exhibits (planning and production) at $131,000, and audiovisual support (orientation presentation, specific interest sequences, audio cassette recording, and brochures) at $114,000. Additional and continued research was also suggested on several themes, such as the investigation of peripheral villages and sites, Mandan-Hidatsa uses of plants and animals, and the role of women in village life. Ethno-botanical investigations were needed to determine the contemporary floral and faunal composition of the area during the period of early Euro-American contact, and oral histories with elder descendents of the Knife River Indian Villages were needed as well for informational purposes.[480]

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[478] Ibid., 10-25.
[479] Ibid.
[480] Ibid.

The preparation and release of the *A Plan for the Interpretation of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* should have been a major event in 1983. However, KRIV's annual report for that year seemed under whelmed by it, stating only that the "interpretive prospectus was completed this year, and although it is a minimally acceptable document, it does provide some assistance."[481] The Hellickson-Key administration perhaps took this attitude because the interpretive plan was based on the outdated 1978 master plan and therefore needed immediate updating. Everyone agreed that *A Plan for the Interpretation of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* was a lame duck. RMRO suggested that this would happen either concurrently with, or immediately following, writing the park's first GMP three years thence, under Superintendent Holm's administration.[482]

Additionally, two new and critical documents became available after the preparation of the IP. They were *Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP): Knife River Indian Villages NHS* (discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight) and *Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP): Knife River Indian Villages NHS* (discussed in Chapter Nine). These documents eventually provided continuity to park management and proved to be useful tools for a myriad of purposes.

Hellickson-Key Administration Final Years, 1983-1985

During the remaining years of the Hellickson-Key administration, KRIV's staff and programs grew rapidly. The year 1983 began with William "Bill" Haviland filling the position of chief of information and resource management.[483] The presence of Haviland yielded important advances in interpretation that year through several unique programs that led to a 75 percent increase in park visitation to 8,920 persons, the fourth highest percentage increase in the entire NPS that year. Haviland's interpretation program included a lecture on the painter Karl Bodmer by Joseph Porter along with a Joslyn Art Museum display of Bodmer's works and a ranger-guided canoe program, using bull-boats, of the archeological sites via the Knife River. Haviland and KRIV staff also arranged for Hidatsa pottery seminars and initiated special interpretive efforts, such as "artifact day," "fur traders day," an ethno-botany program, and some buffalo hide tanning and Indian dancing. These special events, coupled with KRIV interfacing with North Dakota's tourism program and statewide promotional material for the first time, were responsible for the improved and increased interpretation efforts. Management efficiency in handling these events stemmed from close to 1,700 hours of volunteer help, a continuing indication of the park's internal problem of lack of funding.[484]

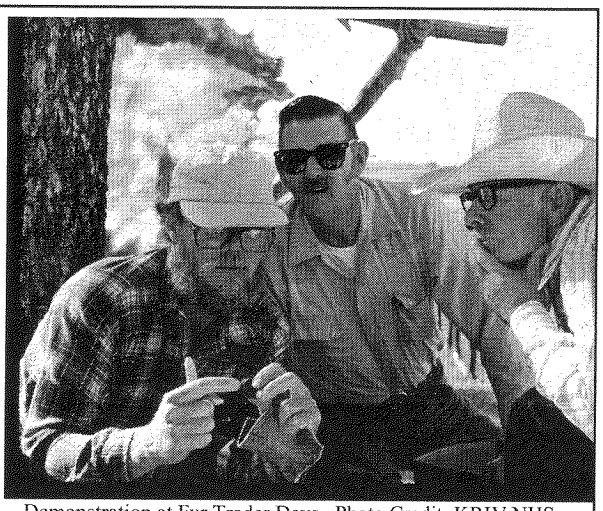
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[481] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1983, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[482] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1983; Marc Sagan to Regional Director, RMR, 23 May 1985, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[483] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1983, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[484] Another major internal problem was lower-grade jobs. With the availability of higher-paying employment in the area related to energy development, the park found it next to impossible to recruit and keep quality full-time and seasonal employees. This problem was exacerbated by the unavailability of low-



Demonstration at Fur Trader Days. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library.

Though funding problems persisted over the next few years, visitation numbers grew for the park. In 1984, visitation dropped 2.9 percent to 8,657 persons, largely because 5,000 to 6,000 construction workers moved out of the area with the construction completion of the Great Plains gasification plant near Beulah, twenty miles west of KRIV. That the loss was minimal reflected the fact that regional and out-of-state visitors outnumbered local residents, an indication that park publicity was reaching a broader population basis. Because of the success of "fur traders day" the previous year, in 1984, KRIV hosted "Village Indian Trade Days." This successful event took place over two days in August and included an "interpretive encampment" that sought, through demonstration, lecture, and living history activities, to convey the social and religious culture of the village Indians. For this event, the park established contact and gained some participation from the Three Affiliated Tribes.[485]

"Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery Meet the Earth-lodge People"

In March 1985, Michael Holm became KRIV's fourth superintendent. At the time he was appointed, Holm was the chief of interpretation at Bighorn Canyon and had been looking for a similar opportunity elsewhere in the NPS. But when he learned that the KRIV superintendent position had opened, he saw it as a good opportunity to return to the park and raise his family in a community he liked. He applied and was offered the job. He quickly fit into the community and assumed the reins from Hellickson-Key, who had helped resolve the visitor/administration center location issue before she left.[486]

Under Superintendent Holm's direction, visitation numbers climbed to 14,462 persons—up 67 percent from the previous year. Over one-half of all park visitors participated in some type of formal presentation. Special events held that year included a historical drama entitled, "Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery Meet the Earth-lodge People." Written by park employee Phillip Zemke and put on by Stanton Theater Unlimited, it was supported by a $24,000 grant from the North Dakota Humanities

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cost local area housing. Knife River Indian Villages NHS Statistics, circa October 1986, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1983, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[485] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1984, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[486] Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

Council and was held at the Stanton town park in cooperation with KRIV. This drama about Sakakawea attracted 1,500 people and was indicative of the strong local interest and support for KRIV by various groups, especially Stanton Community Action (SCA), which at the time was developing congressional support for expanded visitor administrative facilities and related park development.[487]


Scene from Lewis and Clark Drama. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library

However, the drama was a throwback to the distant past, when Orin G. Libby and Paul Ewald linked the significance of the park to the Lewis and Clark Expedition and to the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*. Superintendent Holm struggled over the appropriateness of the Lewis and Clark drama. He did not want KRIV to become "just another Lewis and Clark park." He realized that the park might be going in the wrong direction and that they should be telling the Native American story, but he allowed his Chief of Interpretation Haviland to proceed because the drama was popular and it engaged people from the Three Affiliated Tribes to come down to KRIV.[488]

Meanwhile, other interpretive programs continued at KRIV. They included hide tanning, Native American children's games, and traditional dancing, with the staff continuing to present guided tours as well as canoe and off-site programs. Much of labor for these activities was provided under the Volunteer in Parks (VIP) program. In 1985, more than 100 volunteers contributed in excess of 4,300 hours of project time to KRIV. Meanwhile, the YCC program handled much of the routine grounds maintenance, park-wide cleanup, trail rehabilitation, and administrative/visitor service functions.[489]

Statement for Management and General Management Planning (March 1986)

In March 1986, KRIV issued a SFM, which provided an up-to-date inventory of the park's condition and analysis of its problems. However, it did not provide any prescriptive decisions on future management and use of the park, but instead provided a

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[487] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1985, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[488] Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[489] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1985, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

format for evaluating conditions and identifying major issues and information voids.[490] The issuance of the SFM was in preparation of the document to follow, *Environmental Assessment (Revised), General Management Plan (GMP).* By this date, it was apparent that 1978 master plan was out of date and, for a number of reasons, did not provide adequate direction for management and development. Since its issuance, a Scope of Collections Statement (1982), an Interpretive Prospectus (1983), a Cultural Resource Management Plan (1983), a Natural Resource Management Plan (1983), and a Finding of No Significant Impact (1984) for the visitor/administrative facility had been issued for site selection. Furthermore, the 1978 master plan predated all these reports, as well as new information regarding changes in local and regional economics and land uses, and changes in visitation and use patterns.[491]

To address this problem, a scoping and public involvement program, begun in July 1985, identified six issues of relevance, which the RMRO summarized in *Environmental Assessment (Revised), General Management Plan.* Led by team captain and RMRO planner/landscape architect Michael D. Snyder, who had come to RMRO from the U.S. Forest Service,[492] the interdisciplinary group was composed of Haviland, Holm, and RMRO archeologist Ann Johnson, who consulted many organizations or individuals during the preparation of the plan. In the end, the GMP listed six issues affecting KRIV management that had changed considerably since the 1978 master plan.[493]

First and foremost, the 1978 master plan was oriented toward managing four major archeological areas (Big Hidatsa, Lower Hidatsa, Sakakawea village, and the Buchfink Site) dating to the 1500s. But Phase I of UND's research program clearly identified more than fifty additional sites, some of which contained components that were several thousand years old. The second issue on the list involved the recent decision to locate the multi-functioning visitor center site at Alternative Site B, and not closer to Stanton as mapped in the 1978 master plan. This decision required a whole new assessment of vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns and related management needs. For instance, the trail on the east side of the Knife River found in the 1978 master plan was eliminated altogether as unnecessary. Third, there were new needs to evaluate the manageability and cultural resource protection afforded by current boundaries under the 1978 master plan. Phase I archeological surveys identified the Running Deer Site owned by Laverne Grannis, the widow of Byron Grannis, as a potential winter village. The significance of this site east of Big Hidatsa Village called into question 1978 master plan protection strategies.[494]

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[490] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (Denver: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986).

[491] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota* (Denver: National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1986), 1-4.

[492] Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[493] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 7-10, 80-81.

[494] Ibid.

Fourth, there was a need for more clearly identified natural and cultural resource management strategies. For instance, since the park was no longer subject to livestock grazing and other agricultural practices, exotic grasses and shrubs had invaded and grown throughout the park. New management practices, such as prescribed burns and mechanical and biological methods to reduce excessive fuel buildups and subsequent fire hazards, had to be evaluated. There was also confusion and questions raised on whether earth-lodge reconstruction was still viable. Fifth, there was a need to coordinate management with adjacent influences and land uses, especially paving of roads and other improvements. And sixth, there was a need to determine relationships of activities, visitor use patterns, circulation, and interpretation within the NHS. With construction of the visitor/administration facility pending on Alternative Site B, other parking, trails, and roads found in the 1978 master plan, such as the river access road, were no longer needed.[495]

The 1986 GMP proposed handling these issues by dividing the park into three land use and management zones. The first zone was a development subzone (9 acres) that included the visitor/administrative facility, maintenance area, and residence (old Grannis farmstead buildings). This subject was written about in the previous chapter. The second zone was a cultural resource subzone (643 acres) that included all archeological sites and related adjacent areas. Within the cultural subzone, there were a myriad of management issues that the GMP described. They included, but were not limited to, management and protection of archeological collection, evaluation and protection of the Running Deer Site, documenting the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status for the NHS, impacts of the river access road on the Elbee Site, management of the Sakakawea Site, and reconstruction of earth-lodges. These subjects will be covered in some depth in Chapter Seven. The third zone was a natural environment subzone (641 acres) that included the Knife River, prairie grasses, riparian vegetation, cottonwood terraces, and other various wildlife habitats. With regard to the natural subzone, critical issues involved river erosion, vegetation management, fire management, boundary controls, fishing management, poison ivy control, threatened and endangered species, air quality, noxious weed control, and water resource management. These subjects will be addressed in Chapter Nine.[496]

In May 1986, government agencies, institutions, and the general public institutions responded to the March 1986 GMP findings. Harper's Ferry manager Marc Sagan thought the document was very well organized and logically presented, and he made a strong case for each of the proposed actions. However, Sagan felt that KRIV's IP "should be updated/revised as soon as possible following the approval of the GMP to assure an accurate prescription of the interpretive media that is to be provided to implement the GMP's provisions."[497]

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[495] Ibid.

[496] Ibid., 7-30, 80-81.

[497] Marc Sagan to Regional Director, RMR, 17 December 1985, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

More importantly, when Stanley Ahler reviewed the GMP, he noted the obvious fact that there was no mention of a plan for further archeological research at KRIV. He wondered in writing whether Phase II of his research design, or any kind of continuing archeological/historical research, was planned by NPS for KRIV. He wrote, "It would seem that such ongoing research would be a highly integral part of any management plan for the KNRI [Park]. The interpretive product would be immense, particularly if we were able to build upon what we are just now learning from the Phase I program. In addition, an ongoing research program would be of great interest to the park visitor and would fulfill one of the foremost objectives identified in the early debates and discussions which led to the creation of the park."[498] Unbeknownst to him, NPS had chosen not to continue programmed additional archeological research for a variety of reasons that will be described in the following chapter.[499]

Revised General Management Plan (August 1986)

Based on received comments, in August 1986, the same interdisciplinary team revised the previous document and reissued it as *Revised General Management Plan.* The August 1986 GMP provided a balanced response to resource protection, park management, and visitor-use issues and substantially replaced the 1978 master plan.

The August 1986 GMP "set forth the basic management strategies for achieving identified objectives," and "outlined the appropriate level of development necessary to provide visitor use and enjoyment of the national historic site, while protecting its natural

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[498] Stanley A. Ahler to Michael O. Holm, 24 June 1986, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[499] Oral History of Thomas Thiessen, 14 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. Overall, the Knife River Indian Villages archeological research program has been well received by the archeological community for its methodology, thoroughness and rigor, and results. For instance, a 2006 article by Mark D. Mitchell in *American Antiquity*, Vol. 71, No. 2:381-396, 2006 entitled: "Research Traditions, Public Policy, and the Underdevelopment of Theory in Plains Archaeology: Tracing the Legacy of the Missouri Basin Project," commented on the program on pages 392-393 as follows: "In the 1970s one northern Plains project in particular exhibited many of the research practices that would come to characterize the emerging disciplinary matrix of public archaeology conducted under the NHP [National Historic Preservation Act]. In 1976, the NPS and the University of North Dakota began a cooperative archaeological research program at the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, located at the confluence of the Knife and Missouri Rivers in north-central North Dakota (Calabrese 1987; Thiessen 1993). This work was to be conducted under the terms of a multiphase, problem-oriented research design incorporating both culture-historical and processual research objectives (Ahler 1978). A variety of new methods--perhaps most notably including then-experimental remote sensing techniques--were employed. Statistical sampling procedures and waterscreen recovery techniques were used and the project carefully combined ethnohistorical and ethnographic data with the results of archaeological investigations. In fact, the Knife River project might have become a new exemplar of practice in the northern Plains, replacing wholly or in part the earlier MBP [Missouri Basin Project] model. But just as the initial phase of the project was nearing completion the NPS terminated its funding, citing changing priorities for archaeological research within the agency (Calabrese 1987). A full report on the project did not appear until the early 1990s (Thiessen 1993), although some aspects of the work were published earlier."

and cultural resources."[500] There were important sections on land-use management, land protection, cultural and natural resource management, visitor use and interpretation, park operations (estimated at $315,000 with six full-time employees—superintendent, two park rangers, museum specialists/archeologist, maintenance worker, and clerk typist, four part-time positions), general developments/development concepts, and a phasing schedule and cost summary for the new visitor/administrative center ($2.54 million). There was also a section on additional studies and plans needed, which included determining the relationship of the Running Deer Site to Big Hidatsa Village, the need for a water management plan, research to determine the effects of vegetation treatment on cultural and natural resources, research on the park's fire ecology and the need for a fire management plan to reduce fuel buildup through prescribed burning, and an integrated pest management plan for addressing control of rodent burrowing activities.[501]

Of interest was the fact that the August 1986 GMP adopted word for word the four interpretive themes (natural environment, village life, inter-tribal trade and conflict, and Euro-American contact period) from the outdated KRIV IP (1983). However, a fifth theme from that document—Mandan/Hidatsa in the mainstream of today—was not adopted. Finally, the August 1986 GMP made no mention of future Phase II archeological work, as suggested by UND archeologist Ahler. From this point forward, passive exhibits at the visitor center and the earth-lodge exhibit, and not active archeological excavations of important sites before the public, became the prime focus for all KRIV's interpretation efforts. Additional archeological work would be confined to Section 106 compliance and related mitigation issues at KRIV.[502]

Park Development under the August 1986 GMP

With the final approval of the August GMP, KRIV Superintendent Holm had the necessary document to manage the park's development program, although KRIV's IP was outdated. Holm's tenure as superintendent from March 1985 to November 1992 was the longest of any at KRIV. During that time, he not only oversaw the design and construction of the long awaited visitor/administrative center (discussed in the previous chapter), but his years at KRIV were perhaps typical of the daily trials and tribulations of managing a small park within the National Park System. The variety of issues that confronted him and his staff ranged from managing the park's general operations (e.g., budget, personnel issues, visitor service programs, law enforcement, public relations, etc.) while at the same time trying to construct needed facilities. He also oversaw development of the park's interpretive programs, trails, and wayside exhibits, as well as expanded the park's boundaries to include threatened resources.

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[500] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, August, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota* (Denver: National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, 1986), 1.
[501] Ibid., 3-24.
[502] Ibid.

The year 1986 was something of a banner year for KRIV. Besides achieving certain management accomplishments, as noted above, Superintendent Holm expanded visitor hours to ten hours a day during the summer and added weekend operation during winter months. On summer weekends, KRIV offered special programs on Native American crafts and culture. Winter activities included formal cross-country ski programs on groomed trails. Ranger-guided tours to the resource areas also increased under Superintendent Holm, but more than 40 percent of KRIV's budget was needed to provide these basic programs. Fortunately, Superintendent Holm could rely on a healthy VIP program and a YCC program to supplement his staff's time by carrying a major part of the park's summer maintenance workload. Superintendent Holm also made recruitment trips to Fort Berthold Community College, United Tribes Technical College, and University of Mary in Bismarck to encourage Native Americans to apply for jobs at KRIV.[503]

Public relations were also good. Besides attending the normal meetings with county and tribal groups, Superintendent Holm worked closely with KRIHF, which aggressively promoted the park, although some neighbors still expressed reluctance in accepting the park.[504] With regard to resource management, a vertebrate inventory was underway under contract with Montana State University, which sought to complete baseline data on flora, fauna, and archeological resources at Knife River,[505] and Stanley Ahler worked on analyzing and reporting on the archeological materials that were systematically collected within the park between 1979 and 1983.[506] Superintendent Holm told Thiessen that there would be no more research excavations at Knife River until all of Ahler's reports were completed and on the shelf. He also insisted that all artifact collections held at UND be returned to NPS as soon as possible.[507]

A year later, efforts toward getting the new visitor/administration facility dominated most of Holm's time. In fact, on this matter, involvement with KRIHF, tribal officials, state and local governments, North Dakota's congressional delegation, and other agencies had become daily and routine. In 1987, staff enthusiasm and morale remained high, with good visitor response to KRIV's programs along with the hope of finally obtaining permanent new facilities. Through the continued efforts of KRIHF, the park received congressional add-on funds to complete the planning and design of the future center.

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[503] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1986, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[504] Ibid.; Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[505] Robert E. Moore, "Proposal for Supplementary Study to Survey of the Vertebrate Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 21 March 1987, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[506] Stanley A. Ahler, *Conservation And Packaging Of Artifact Collections And Records From Phase I Archeological Investigations At The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, 1987).

[507] Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

Furthermore, the Three Affiliated Tribe's Cultural Affairs Committee agreed to review the park's development plans and publications program.[508]



Sakakawea Actress Lewis and Clark Drama.
Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library.

Although extensive recruitment at colleges and tribal reservation offices allowed KRIV to employ two Native Americans on staff in 1987, the cost of personnel services continued to be the greatest drain on the park budget. Park trends of operation costs increasing and permanent work force decreasing continued, and Holm had to rely on 2,000 hours of volunteer work to carry out various interpretive programs. Thanks to this effort, the annual "Lewis and Clark Drama" program continued uninterrupted. "Fur Trade Days," also became an official event at KRIV. Fur Trade Days presented an important opportunity for Fort Berthold Indians to come down, set up a tent type operation, demonstrate their culture (e.g., buckskin tanning, beading, etc.) for tourists, and create a better understanding of their culture and the significance of KRIV. At the same time, Native American craft items were added to the KRIV's sales program. This addition not only met the park's visitor desires but also increased the involvement of Native Americans in park operations.[509]

In 1987, visitation to the park reached an all-time high of 18,500 persons, a 29 percent increase over the previous year. Visitation numbers increased due to a NPS tri-anchor or triangle western North Dakota tourism plan that included Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Fort Union Trading Post NHS. But as positive as the statistics looked, they were not nearly the 85,000 persons that the 1971 EIS had predicted annually for the NHS.[510] Meanwhile, issues like vegetation management and museum collection were handled as best as possible but remained unresolved. Vegetation had overgrown on a major village site, but it was removed and a mowing program initiated. Progress was also made on the spread of exotic/obnoxious plants. Park artifact collections continued to

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[508] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1987, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[509] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1987, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[510] In an interview, Michael Holm criticized these early predictions made by NPS to sell parks to local people. He stated, "They would put these projections [out] and they were never realized, and then managers would have to go to communities and say, Well, it's this and this and this, but in reality, I think if we would not lay out those kinds of projections, then it would be a much easier task for managers to manage parks." Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

be stored at UND, and museum conservation problems and storage issues would go unresolved until the construction of the visitor/administration facility.[511]

Park Description in 1987

Up until the opening of the new facilities in 1987, any information on KRIV's resources had been limited to dry government reports or brief information that appeared in the occasional newspaper article, with one exception. That exception came in 1987, when an interesting piece appeared in *Horizons* magazine, published by the Greater North Dakota Association. Written by *Hazen Star* editor Lauren Donovan and illustrated with photographs, "Earth Lodge People: The Knife River Indian Villages Preserve a Rich and Ancient Culture," described the park as "just a babe in diapers." She reported, "If the interpretive signs and park insignia were removed from the 1,300-acre site, it's doubtful that anyone would guess they were wandering within the confines of a place that has undisputed national and historical significance."[512]

For the piece, Donovan interviewed Superintendent Holm on the park's significance, whom she described as a "slim, fair man, on whom the park service uniform and hat looks not only flattering but appropriate." The journalist also questioned farm widow Laverne Grannis, who said regarding the Big Hidatsa Village site on her property that she "never paid any attention to it until cars would come in with doctors from Minot looking for beads and artifacts laying on top the ground. We weren't here long [since 1945] and we stopped it because we didn't want holes dug in our pastures. We were satisfied with it just the way it was. I guess we can take a lot of credit for saving it." In recent years, she noted enjoying activities at the park, such as the Indian dancing, the pottery classes, and workshops on Native American dress, and even wandered up from time to time to visit her "good neighbors" with fresh baked cookies. In the same article, Donovan also informally conversed with two young Native Americans from Fort Berthold who at the time were visiting KRIV—Elgin Crows Breast, a recently elected member of the tribal business council, and Calvin Grinnell, the program director for a local radio outlet. Both said they "appreciated the protection the presence of the park staff affords the land that was once their home, generations back, to their ancestors."[513]

Threat to Cultural Resources: Jessie Krieger Parcel, 1987-1988

While Superintendent Holm managed the park's resources, in December 1987, a threat to known cultural resources north of Big Hidatsa Village outside of, but adjacent to the park, caught his attention. These cultural resources were on the Jessie Krieger property. In October of the previous year, Jessie Krieger, a young farmer who recently acquired the

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[511] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1987, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.
[512] Lauren Donovan, "Earth Lodge People: The Knife River Indian Villages Preserve a Rich and Ancient Culture," *Horizons*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Fall): 18-21.
[513] Ibid.

land from his father, visited Holm in his office. Krieger informed Holm that he intended to sell approximately 475 acres of property adjacent to the northern boundary of NHS and asked if NPS was interested in purchasing it. The late 1980s were hard times for growers throughout the country, and Krieger was in financial trouble, like many other farmers. Krieger's property contained the significant Stanton Mounds (32ME104), which in 1969 were identified from aerial photographs. They also were referenced in Hidatsa oral traditions as places created by their ancestors as mythological beings and probably represented a Plains Woodland mortuary complex, circa A.D. 1 to A.D 1000. Although the property had a high potential of containing burial sites related to Big Hidatsa Village occupation, at the time Holm had other priorities on his mind, besides which purchase of the Krieger parcel went beyond the development ceiling authorized by Congress. Furthermore, he felt that NPS acquisition of the Krieger property would not significantly enhance management of Knife River. Holm recommended to his superiors that if Krieger sold the land to someone else, that NPS contact the new owner and discuss issues of professional concern for the preservation of any cultural resources and land use practices that could degrade the historic scene.[514]

Apparently the situation changed dramatically in 1987 when Jessie Krieger mined gravel on his property[515] and sold it to the Mercer County Highway Department to keep his family farm operating. Gravel mining had taken place here even when his father Forrest owned the property. So when Jessie was offered $40,000 for the gravel by the county, he saw no problem with it, especially since he was facing foreclosure of his property.[516]

As it turned out, the gravel that Jessie Krieger sold to Mercer County contained human remains that may have originated from the Stanton Mounds. Although North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Jim Sperry halted the project temporarily, it appeared that Mercer County was not violating any state preservation law in accepting gravel from the Krieger property. Fortunately, Krieger and Sarah Vogel from North Dakota Attorney General's office were able to convince Senator Quentin Burdick that it was important to acquire part of Krieger's land (100 acres where the mounds were located) for KRIV for $50,000—an action that at first Sperry and Superintendent Holm did not want to happen because it would divert development funding for KRIV for land acquisition.[517] RMRO Director Lorraine Mintzmyer agreed with their opinion and wrote Burdick, clearly informing him that the position of the National Park Service was that the

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[514] By this date, only five and one-half mounds remained of the original eight mounds. Michael Holm to Regional Director, RMR, 23 October 1985, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings); "Knife River Indian Villages NHS Issues and Activities, 1988," n.d. File H14 (Area History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[515] As early as 1980, Forrest Krieger, Jessie's father, had mined gravel from this land and had sold it to a mobile home park development project in Stanton, and by 1984, the Krieger gravel pit was encroaching on to the southernmost of the smaller burial mounds. Stanley A. Ahler to Walt Bailey, 21 November 1980, Stanley A. Ahler to Chris Bill, 30 January 1984, File H22 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[516] Oral History of Jessie Krieger, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[517] Jessie J. Krieger to Quentin Burdick, 5 August 1987; C. Mack Shaver to Regional Director, RMR, 10 August 1987; Nicholas J. Spaeth to Quentin Burdick, 11 August 1937, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

integrity of these features had been largely destroyed or compromised by land-disturbing activities such as gravel mining and that the Krieger property was unnecessary to the mission of the NHS. Simply put, NPS did not wish to acquire Krieger's lands, nor would it seek the means to do so.[518]

Acquisition of Krieger Parcel, 1988

As definitive as Mintzmyer's letter appeared to be on purchase of the Krieger property, the following year, the Krieger property issue flared up because of pressure from groups and individuals interested in seeking action for the preservation of these resources, such as the Three Affiliated Tribes, Senator Burdick, and KRIHF. NPS officials decided to take a second look[519] and saw the value of land acquisition at this time.

Instead of a 100-acre discontiguous parcel of land containing just the remaining Stanton Mounds, which would result in the cessation of damaging the burial grounds, NPS proposed acquiring some 400 acres of Krieger's land. Such a purchase would not only preserve the Stanton Mounds but also would secure the viewshed and park setting and would provide optimum boundaries for resource protection and park administration. At the same time, NPS saw the possibility of adding the Running Deer Site to KRIV, which in 1983, Byron Grannis offered to NPS in exchange for a former cultivated field south of the east-west road near the ex-Grannis house visitor center. The Running Deer Site was clearly significant, according to Ahler, because it contained two components that suggested that it was functionally different from the nearby Big Hidatsa Village. The 1986 August GMP had studied this issue and recommended acquisition as well.[520]

But Krieger was not interested in selling most of his farm. His motivation in negotiating the sale of the 100-acre parcel was to leave himself a big enough farm to be able to realize a small income.[521] To resolve the disparity in what the park desired and what Krieger needed to continue his ranching operation, Superintendent Holm and Krieger met in mid-April, and then in early May, Holm met with RMRO archeologist Ann Johnson and others to discuss options for boundary expansion.[522] By the end of the month, all parties came to a mutual agreement whereby NPS would purchase approximately 329

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[518] Lorraine Mintzmyer to Quentin N. Burdick, 8 September 1987, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[519] "Knife River Indian Villages NHS Issues and Activities, 1988," n.d. File H14 (Area History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[520] Thomas D. Thiessen to Files Re: "Meeting Concerning the Research Program for Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 25 May 1983, File H22 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research) "Potential Acquisition of Krieger Property-Addition to Knife River Indian Villages NHS," circa March 1988, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[521] Jessie Krieger to Bruce McKay, 22 March 1988, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Jessie Krieger, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[522] Michael Holm to Regional Director, RMR, 14 April 1988; Jack W. Neckels to Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 6 May 1988, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

acres of Krieger land in fee only, and Krieger would retain approximately ninety-five acres of his current farmstead adjacent to the park boundary that included an artesian well. The remaining parcel of Krieger farmland, along with forty-one acres owned by Laverne Grannis that contained remnants of the Running Deer Site, would be included in the proposal as future purchases on a "willing seller basis," a proposition that Superintendent Holm insisted upon. He felt there had been enough hurt in the community and that it was not worth going down those old roads again. NPS had put fifteen years behind them on the land acquisition for the park, and Holm did not want NPS again to be perceived as doing another "land-grab." Funds would be sought for the land, fencing, surveying, site reclamation, cleanup, and archeological investigation. All that was needed was legislative action. This proposal to add 465 acres of privately-owned land to KRIV was forwarded on to Burdick so that he could draft the necessary legislation as soon as possible.[523]

Other Duties

Land acquisition talks consumed a good deal of Superintendent Holm's time in 1988, but he could not ignore his other duties—general administration and park funding, resource management, public use, and interpretation. Staffing needs of four permanent positions (two full-time and two part-time) consumed close to 89 percent of the park's base funding, leaving 5 percent for fixed costs and the remaining 6 percent for other expenses. As the park moved closer to the development of its new facilities, there would be a greater need for personnel and operational dollars. In addition to these constraints, active programs of cultural and natural resource management were taking ever-increasing blocks of staff time.[524]

There was also UND's curation contract for KRIV and MWAC to supervise. Under contract with MWAC, UND was tasked with repackaging KRIV artifacts from previous years' surveys and excavations for more permanent storage. The archeological materials then had to be assigned catalog accession numbers suitable for the NPS. In 1988, this $100,000 project was nearing completion, but no home was yet built to house the collection at KRIV, although 1,920 square feet was planned in the new visitor/administrative center for museum storage and a small research laboratory.[525]

Staffing time was also spent on public use and interpretation programs. Visitation to KRIV increased 5 percent in 1988 to 19,410 persons, including a marked increase in out-

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[523] Michael O. Holm to Regional Director, RMR, 24 May 1988; C. Mack Shaver to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region, 26 May 1988; Michael O. Holm to Laverne Grannis, 21 June 1988; Jack W. Neckels to Chief, Office of Legislation, Washington Office, 1 July 1988, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[524] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1988, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[525] Ibid.; Katherine Cole to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 9 July 1984, F.A. Calabrese to Assistant Manager, Central Team, Denver Service Center, 16 March 1987, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

of-state travelers. This change was attributed to the increase in promotion by the state tourism office. KRIV served as the focal point for the 1988 National Lewis and Clark Foundation Convention in Bismarck, where park staff, in cooperation with the community of Stanton, provided site tours, a special presentation of the historic drama "Lewis and Clark Among the Earthlodge People," and an evening banquet. The emphasis of KRIV's interpretive program under Superintendent Holm continued to focus on the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*. With a state effort to identify Lewis and Clark sites and development of the "American Legacy Tour," one KRIV wayside specifically related the story of the explorers' contact with the villages. Furthermore, winter site visitation was also up dramatically due to the grooming of ten miles of cross-country ski trails.[526]

In 1989, unveiling the new visitor center scale model in April, which gained the support of the state tourism bureau, plus groundbreaking ceremonies in May and the prospect of construction on the new visitor/administrative facility, were the highlighted activities at KRIV. But like other small NPS parks, KRIV continued to "grapple with insufficient human resources to meet increased resource and visitor demand."[527] In June 1989, Superintendent Holm lost a key staff member when Bill Haviland transferred to Great Sand Dunes National Park, Alamosa, Colorado. Haviland's transfer left the park with only seasonal staffing that summer because Fred Armstrong from Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico, was not hired to fill the vacancy until November.[528] In the meantime, the National Register archeological district nomination for Knife River[529] was reviewed and accepted, requiring that KRIV's SFM be revised accordingly with this official information. The new SFM was approved in July with no significant changes. Natural resource management programs had to be deferred due to a lack of funding or development of a vegetation management plan. What's more, Superintendent Holm also pointed out the need for a collections management plan, especially as the cataloguing of the park's archeological collection by UND neared completion. When completed in the fall of 1991, more than 226,000 items would be transferred to the park's new facilities. In the interim, KRIV continued to see a significant number of regional travelers. In 1989, park visitation rose 11 percent, with cross-country skiing bolstering the park's winter visitation numbers. The most successful individual program was still the Lewis and Clark drama (1,177 persons), followed by Fur Trade days (750).[530]

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[526] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1988, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[527] Michael O. Holm to Associate Regional Director, Administration, RMR, 27 February 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Michael Holm, 19 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[528] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1989, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[529] Thomas D. Thiessen, *National Register Of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Archeological District*, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND.

[530] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1989, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Expansion of KRIV's Northern Boundary: Krieger Parcel, 1989-1992

In 1989, the expansion of the park acreage by 435 acres to protect the Stanton Mounds archeological site went unresolved.[531] In February, an on-site meeting was held between Holm, Krieger, Senator Burdick's congressional aide, and other interested parties, and it was decided to go forth with legislation. In March, RMRO drafted a report on the issue. It provided justification for action by Burdick, along with an acquisition cost estimate of close to $300,000 for Stanton Mounds and the Running Deer sites. These figures were estimates because no appraisals had been completed for the properties.[532] Of concern to Holm at this time was the fact that Krieger was allowing local folks to cut trees from his river bottomland. Holm believed that this excellent stand of cottonwood, ash, and elm trees would complement the natural resources that park now had.[533]

On June 20, 1989, Senator Burdick introduced S. 1230 into the 101st Congress. He stated for the *Congressional Record* that the Stanton Mounds would be a valuable addition to the study of prehistoric Plains Indian cultural development, change and impact on other cultures." Burdick stressed the importance of KRIV, saying, "Knife River is the only unit of the National Park Service that was created specifically to commemorate the culture and history of the Plains Indians, and to interpret their lifestyle."[534] Burdick's statement indicated that he had adopted the expanded archeological mission for the park espoused by Calabrese and Ahler, which centered on the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*.

In June, Congressman Dorgan introduced a similar bill, H.R. 3074, into the House of Representatives. A month later, Dorgan entered testimony into the House record in support of the bill. At that time, Dorgan inserted language in his bill to increase the overall park development ceiling from the 1974 figure of $2.268 million to $4 million, and acquisition of lands from $600,000 to $1 million. A local North Dakota newspaper highlighted this development and interviewed Holm and Krieger regarding the possibility of Krieger selling his land to NPS. "Since the property that composes the park was acquired by condemnation back in the 1970s," Holm said it was "always his belief that any new acquisitions had to be between a willing seller and a willing buyer." Krieger spoke of how the State Historical Society had shut down his gravel mining operation when human bones had been disinterred in the mining process. In the end, Krieger decided to parcel his land so that the park would end up with a continuous boundary, while he still held on to ninety-five acres as a homestead tract for himself.[535]

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[531] Ibid.

[532] Regional Director, RMR to Chief, Office of Legislation, Washington Office, 6 March 1989, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[533] Michael Holm to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, 14 March 1989, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[534] "Burdick Introduces Bill to Expand Knife River Boundaries," 20 June 1989, File L1417 (Acquisition of Lands and Boundary Adjustments), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[535] "Krieger Land May Go to Knife River Site," *Hazen Star* 6 July 1989; Oral History of Jessie Krieger, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

Thereafter, on September 12, 1989, Superintendent Holm testified before the Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks and Forests, in support of the bill.[536] NPS Associate Director of Cultural Resources Jerry Rogers also testified that day, concurring with the authorization of acquisition of the lands, contingent on the condition that the properties proposed for addition to the park did not contain any hazardous substance that posed a threat to human health or the environment.[537] However, no action was taken on either congressional bill that year.

Senator Burdick took the lead on this issue the following year. On March 8, 1990, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources recommended that the Senate pass S. 1230 with several key amendments.[538] In the committee hearing, Burdick testified that "Many North Dakotans don't know that our state's history goes far back more than 100 years.... [And that] there were prehistoric settlements along the Missouri River. Knife River Indian villages and the nearby Stanton Mounds offer a wealth of information about the Plains Indians and prehistoric settlements in North America. I'm optimistic for speedy enactment of any bill to expand this site and preserve this important piece of history."[539] S. 1230 had been amended with language raising the development ceiling for the visitor/administration center to $4 million, and land acquisition to $1 million in order to acquire the Stanton Mounds. The amended S. 1230 also included a map of the proposed additional lands. However, the phrase that "no such lands may be acquired without the consent of the owner thereof" was inserted as well.[540] This last phrase was put into the bill because Laverne Grannis, owner of the forty-acre Running Deer Site, was unwilling at the time to sell her land. NPS cautiously did not object to this provision "unless unforeseen action jeopardized the resources in question."[541]

Eight days later, on March 20, 1990, with the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) opinion that enactment of S. 1230 would have no inflationary impact on the national economy, S. 1230 was considered by the Senate. Burdick spoke on behalf of the bill stating, "As a nation, we owe it to these early inhabitants of our land to protect forever their sacred burial grounds. Without this action, there is the grave possibility that the area in which the mounds are buried could be mined for gravel. We must prevent this from happening."[542] S. 1230 as amended passed the Senate on March 30, 1990, and was

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[536] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1989, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[537] United States, Senate, *Senate Report 101-256, "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota,"* 22 March 1990, 2nd Session, 101st Congress, "Statement of Jerry Rogers Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks, and Forests on S. 1230."

[538] *Senate Report 101-256, "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota,"* 3-4.

[539] "Committee Approves Burdick Bill to Expand Knife River Boundaries," File L1417 (Acquisition of Lands and Boundary Adjustments) TRNP, Medora, ND.

[540] *Senate Report 101-256, "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota,"* 3-4; *Congressional Record*, 28 March 1990, S3440-S3441; Terry [?] Tays to Chris Turk, 8 March 1990, File L1417 (Acquisition of Lands and Boundary Adjustments), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[541] "Testimony of Jerry Rogers, Associate Director, Cultural Resources, National Park Service Before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee," 21 June 1990, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[542] *Congressional Record*, 28 March 1990, S3440-S3441.

set for a hearing.[543] On June 21, 1990, the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands held a hearing on S. 1230 and House companion measure, H.R. 3074, at which Congressman Dorgan and NPS Associate Director Rogers testified.[544] Superintendent Holm, having command of the resources of this park and knowledge of the special problems that attended to this legislative issue, was a supporting witness.[545] Dorgan testified that Knife River was the "only unit of the National Park Service that was specifically created to commemorate the culture and history of the Plains Indians" and that "the prehistoric villagers from the Stanton Mounds area represent a different form of adaptation to the Plains environment [Woodland Period predating Mandan and Hidatsa settlement]. This unique site is currently not represented in the Knife River Park, [and] enactment of this legislation to authorize the additional land acquisition would significantly contribute to the preservation of the heritage of the Plains Indians."[546] NPS Associate Director Rogers reiterated much of Dorgan's testimony regarding the Stanton Mounds' uniqueness. Rogers also indicated NPS concerns that if Krieger and Grannis did not sell their land to NPS sometime in the future, there was a good chance of adverse development contiguous to the park.[547] In response to the testimony, Chairman Bruce F. Vento expressed his concern that the companion bill from the Senate did not provide the opportunity for the NPS to acquire the identified lands only on a "willing seller" basis. Vento believed that NPS must be able to acquire lands if the resources contained within these lands were threatened. Rogers made it clear to Vento that this was NPS' position, and Chairman Vento indicated to the subcommittee that he would probably recommend such language be included in the House version.[548] As anticipated, there was no opposition to H.R. 3074 at the congressional hearings.

Back in Congress, on July 19, 1990, the Joint Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute to the House bill and favorably referred it, as amended, to the full committee. As promised by Chairman Vento, the bill contained an amendment with the clause, "that no such lands may be acquired without the consent of the owner thereof unless the Secretary determines that, in his judgment, the property is subject to, or threatened with, uses which are having, or would have, an adverse impact on the archeological, historical, or other values for which the site was established."[549]

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[543] "Senate OKs Adding to Knife River Site," *Bismarck Tribune* 30 March 1990.

[544] "Testimony of the Honorable Byron L. Dorgan Before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee," 21 June 1990, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[545] Assistant Director, Legislative and Congressional Affairs to Regional Director, RMR, 5 July 1990, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[546] "Testimony of the Honorable Byron L. Dorgan Before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee," 21 June 1990, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[547] *Congressional Record*, 28 March 1990, S3440-S3441.

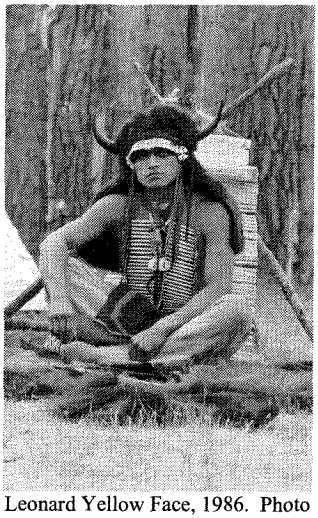
[548] Michael O. Holm to Regional Director, RMR, 26 June 1990, File L1425 (Acquisition of Lands, Holdings), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[549] United States, House of Representatives, *"House Report 101-638,"* 30 July 1990, 2nd Session, 101st Congress.

On July 20, 1990, Senate Report 101-256 concurred with House Report 101-638 on this substitute bill, and on October 15, 1990, the 101st Congress enacted Public Law 101-430. This legislation provided for additional authorizations for development at KRIV and for the acquisition of approximately 435 acres, as described by an attached map entitled "Proposed Boundary Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site." Public Law 101-430 also contained the provision that the Interior Secretary had the right to step in if there were any adverse impacts on this land purchase adjacent to KRIV's northern boundary. KRIV now awaited appropriations to complete the transaction. However, during Senate hearings on S. 1230, Rogers had pointed out that purchase of these lands had an "extremely low priority measured against the Administration's national land acquisition objectives," and therefore NPS did "not expect to budget funds for purchase of these properties in the foreseeable future."[550] Over the course of the next two years, the Krieger property was appraised at $66,000[551] and was finally purchased in 1992.

Declining Visitation Numbers, KRIHF Membership, and Inadequate Physical Staff

While passage of S. 1230 was good news in the fall of 1990 and Capitol City Construction began building the visitor/administration that fall as well, visitation at KRIV had declined a drastic 32 percent during the year.[552] A number of factors contributed to this decrease.



Leonard Yellow Face, 1986. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library.

First, there was the absence of a major special event, such as the Lewis and Clark drama. Leonard Yellow Face, one of the lead actors in the drama, had been murdered on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation.[553] KRIHF had previously and enthusiastically sponsored this drama. After Yellow Face's death, they could not muster enough support to continue the drama. Membership in KRIHF thereafter began to decline for another reason as well. KRIHF's original purpose was to serve as a lobbying group for KRIV and local economic development. Once they succeeded in obtaining funding for facility development, the activity level of this organization slowed down.[554] This situation greatly discouraged the group's president, Judy Lang. She had spent anywhere from twenty to sixty hours a week volunteering. Burnt

[550] *Congressional Record*, 28 March 1990, S3440-S3441.

[551] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1991, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[552] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[553] Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008; Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[554] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

out by that time, she reduced her involvement in the group.[555] Subsequently, a small core group, led by the group's new Co-Chairpersons Donna Buchmann and Calvin Grinnell from the Fort Berthold Reservation, continued to be involved in KRIV's special programs and events, especially volunteering for Fur Trade Days and a new event. "Northern Plains Indian Culture Festival." The new event represented a subtle shift toward the "regional" perspective now associated with the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. On the other hand, KRIHF continued to campaign for the park at statewide tourism meetings and to print and distribute brochures on the park. In their effort, the organization also put up signs in 2003-2004 in the silhouette shape of Sakakawea to advertise the park to tourists passing through the area—a reflection of the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*.[556]

There were also other reasons visitation at KRIV decreased. In the early 1990s, tightening school budgets forced the cancellation of numerous on-site tours during the fall and spring months. Additionally, in 1990, gasoline prices had escalated during the year, which forced many people to cut back on personal travel. Lastly, and perhaps the most notable explanation for the decline, was a change in reporting methods from previous years that indicated previous figures had been somewhat inflated. Meanwhile, to bring numbers up, the park extended its evening hours to encourage more local use of the park, but few took advantage of the opportunity.[557]

Meanwhile, two new publications became available at KRIV. First, there was a trail guide to *Awatixa*, or Sakakawea Village, in the form of a free self-guiding handout, which supplemented the personal guided tours that KRIV's one permanent and three short-term seasonal employees conducted each day. The second publication was a children's book on village life entitled *Mouse Raid*, written by Marlene Burr Ward, Joyce Burr, and Janet G. Ahler and illustrated by Marcia Goldenstein. Published by TRNHA, *Mouse Raid* entertained as well as educated kids about the history and culture of Native Americans by telling the story of a "mock" food raid by Indian children in their village to teach them how to hone skills they would probably use in the future against enemy Indian villages.[558]

But as each year passed, the disparity between what needed to be done and what KRIV staff could physically accomplish grew greater. By 1990, of the $146,730 of base funding available for operation of the park, 88 percent was needed to cover personnel services and another 4.5 percent was required for fixed costs. There was little time or funding to address active forest management (KRIV's forests were severely impacted by insect defoliation, decay, drought, and lack of regeneration), grassland fuel buildup (by this time a serious threat of wildland fire), and control of noxious weeds (KRIV began

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[555] Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[556] Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[557] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[558] Jenny Nash, "Goldenstein Illustrates 'Mouse Raid'," n.d., File KNRI—The Mouse Raid, MWAC, Lincoln, NE. In 2000, it was reprinted by the Midwest Archeological Center. Bruce A. Jones to Carl Fox, 13 January 2000, File KNRI—Area General Files/Mouse Raid, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

relying on TRNP staff for this activity). Furthermore, UND had finished cataloguing the cultural resource collection, but without any facilities at the park, it still had to be stored at UND. Moreover, there was still the need for some type of structural maintenance storage area at the park. The park had outgrown the trailer house and wooden barn on the former Grannis property that served as the park's storage area. With the collection of vehicles and equipment lined up outside the park's maintenance shop, it was clear that the park needed a garage as well.[559] Despite the above shortcomings, an operations evaluation conducted in July of 1990, the first since 1985, when Holm had just arrived, indicated that Superintendent Holm had gained good experience and developed solid management skills and that the site looked good, the facilities were well-kept, the area was clean, and visitors were being well served. Over all, the park received high marks.[560]

Park Interpretation and Operations Accomplishments, 1991-1992

The year 1991 was marked by the construction and near completion of the new visitor/administrative facility. HFC had contracted with former KRIV park technician Gerard Baker and Nellie Hall to serve as tribal consultants on exhibits and audiovisual productions for the new center. Their contract was part of a larger interpretation effort associated with the new museum/interpretive center that included the preparation of museum collections, exhibits, programs, demonstrations, and publications for KRIV over the course of the next few years. In 1991, Eleanor Robinson and her family from Garrison, North Dakota, generously donated to KRIV a major ethnographic collection associated with the Mandan and Hidatsa people. It included seventy-four items that allowed the park to develop an excellent museum exhibit area in its new facility.[561]

The year 1992 was perhaps the most significant in KRIV's history in terms of accomplishments. Following years of struggle, planning, and anticipation, KRIV staff moved into the new visitor center/administrative facility in February and dedicated it on a sunny June day. During the year, the final design and plan for the visitor center exhibits were submitted to RMRO for final approval, and plans for the earth-lodge construction were progressing. Furthermore, the park's extensive archeological collection had been returned to the park with the completion of the new facility, and the Robinson collection was going through conservation efforts at the Harper's Ferry Center prior to serving as a major component of the new exhibits at the center. In 1992, NPS also finally acquired the Krieger property. The additional 325 acres brought the park's total to 1,758 acres.[562] But by this time, relationships between NPS and Jessie Krieger had deteriorated over a

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[559] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[560] Michael Holm to Regional Director, RMR with Attachment, "Operations Evaluation Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 9-11 July 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[561] Michael O. Holm to Eleanor Robinson, 13 July 1991, File H18 (Biographical Data and Special Collections Permanent), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[562] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1992, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

dispute over payment for government use of his property during a cleanup effort. Because of the incident, Krieger wrote hostile editorials to the local newspaper. He also began placing discarded machinery along the park boundary, which he later removed.[563]

Despite this local landowner confrontation, visitation increased 35 percent compared to 1991, due to several contributing factors, such as the dedication ceremony, which drew 1,500 attendees. Other factors included a successful annual two-day Fur Trade Days (600 people), new signage along Interstate Highway 94 and State Highway 83, and North Dakota's Department of Tourism's "American Legacy Tour" placing Knife River as one of its four stops.[564]

Regardless of these accomplishments, 1992 ended on a sour note when Mick Holm, after seven years as KRIV's superintendent, accepted a position as assistant superintendent at Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky, starting on November 11, 1992. At the same time, Chief of Interpretation Fred Armstrong, who had been at KRIV for three years, accepted a position as resource management specialist at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas, starting on the same date. Holm and Armstrong received special achievement awards for their role in park development over the previous three years. Their positions would remain vacant until the spring of 1993.[565]



Superintendent Michael Holm, 2008. Note Bullet-ridden NPS Boundary Sign from KRIV in Background. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

Wrapping Up Loose Ends and Running a Park, 1993-2002

Over the course of the next ten years, the new park superintendent Charles "Chas" Cartwright (1993-1998)[566] and his successor Lisa Eckert (1999-2002)[567] wrapped up loose ends, insofar as completing facilities and interpretation development, moving forward on a number of resource management programs, and managing the park's operation on a day-to-day basis according to a series of updated SFMs.

Charles Cartwright came to the park in March 1993. At about that time, the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), in a cooperative project with Colorado

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[563] Oral History of Jessie Krieger, 30 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[564] As North Dakota approached its centennial year, state tourism officials sought the renovation and restoration of a number of historic sites in western North Dakota and worked with National Park Service officials to seek additional funding for these projects from Congress for what they called the American Legacy Tour. See Jim Fuglie to Byron Dorgan, Quentin Burdick, Kent Conrad, 18 September 1987, File H14 (Administration History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[565] Betty Boyko to Regional Director, RMR, 8 March 1993; File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence); Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1991, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Green, "Knife River Villages," 8-10.

[566] In 1996, Cartwright transferred to Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming.

[567] Lisa Eckert came to KRIV in January 1999 from Denali National Park.

State University, graded each park in the National Park System "A" through "F" in seven critical areas. KRIV received the following grades: natural resources area (air, water, native and endangered species) "C+"; cultural resources (site and structure preservation, ruin stabilization) "B"; infrastructure (condition of campgrounds, roads, trails) "B+"; information quality (quality of visitor information and programs) "B+"; law enforcement (crime, emergency response, theft of resources and artifacts) "B"; workforce and budget issues (employee morale, workforce size, budget adequacy) "B"; and availability of special programs (school children, senior citizens, minorities) "B". KRIV's grades were far better than the overall grade point average of just over a "C," and the report concluded that the "preeminent examples of our nation's natural and cultural heritage should all rank in the "A" or "B" range. Yet most parks are graded "C" for their overall capability to accomplish their mission."[568]

KRIV's good grades were probably related to the newness of the park and its programs. In 1993, the new visitor center exhibits were installed and a contract was awarded to Yellowstone Traditions for constructing the earth-lodge exhibit. During the next two years, the final component of the interpretive development (the earth-lodge) was completed, furnished, and opened to the public on Memorial Day 1995.

Construction of Maintenance Storage Shed, 1985-2000

A new maintenance storage facility, the last remaining building block of overall park development, soon followed. But like the visitor center, design and construction were impeded because of concerns regarding significant archeological sites.

At first, the National Park Service wished to build a 1,500-square-foot facility in the Grannis farm area, and in 1985 made overtures in this direction. They removed an old metal trailer and a dilapidated barn there, relocated existing fuel tanks, and re-graded and graveled the existing parking lot in anticipation of constructing a new maintenance storage shed. RMRO officials wished to build the maintenance facility on top of a portion of Taylor Bluff archeological site behind the Grannis farmhouse. NPS Associate Regional Director for Planning and Resource Preservation Richard Strait proposed covering the new building site area with eighteen inches of gravel extending approximately five feet beyond the building line to protect all archeological resources underneath the building. Strait admitted that such an undertaking would remove from availability for scientific study that portion of the resource under the slab, but he believed that no harm would come to the resources located under the building.[569] Strait's proposal met stiff resistance from archeologists. Stanley Ahler strenuously objected to the

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[568] National Parks and Conservation Association, Paul C. Layden, and Michael J. Manfredo, *National Park Conditions: A Survey Of Park Superintendents, Summary Of Findings* (Washington, DC: The Association, 1994), A-1-A-2, C-6.

[569] Richard A. Strait to Alois B. Spielman, 3 June 1985, Alois B. Spielman to Richard A. Strait, 20 June 1985, File KNRI—Maintenance Facility HQ and Parking Lot (prior to 1992), MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

proposal when commenting to SHSND officials about the project's impact, but since no building plan was before them, SHSND withheld comment on the building proposal.[570]

In 1994, Superintendent Cartwright revived Strait's earlier proposal to build a new maintenance storage facility on top of a portion the Taylor Bluff archeological site. This time, North Dakota SHPO Sperry strongly objected, giving his opinion that construction of this facility there would have an adverse impact on this highly significant site, which was within KRIV's National Register archeological district.[571] By this date, recent work at Taylor Bluff indicated just how significant the site was, and MWAC archeologist Thiessen warned Cartwright that if the project proceeded, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) would certainly object, and costly mitigation for the affected archeological resource would then follow. Thiessen strongly urged that consideration be given to the alternative of locating both the planned building and the existing nearby maintenance building to "non-site" land outside the National Register district.[572] The project was once again dropped.

Five years later, KRIV officials once again alerted the North Dakota SHPO to the park's need for a new maintenance shed to protect exposed supplies, materials, and equipment. Cartwright argued that the building was required to eliminate an unsightly "bone yard" visible from County Highway 37 and the park's hiking trails. This time, Cartwright proposed that the new structure sit on the old visitor center location (Grannis farmhouse), which still included a portion of the Taylor Bluff site.[573] North Dakota SHPO archeologist Fern Swenson immediately responded. Swenson pointed out to MWAC archeologist Thiessen that the SHPO's office had opposed this project three times in the past.[574]

A letter from North Dakota SHPO Samuel J. Wegner followed, which commented directly on the adverse nature of this project. Wegner was concerned not only with the problem of construction of structures on significant archeological resources and the impacts associated with this action but also the visual impacts to the Taylor Bluff and Big Hidatsa sites as well. It seemed to him from past correspondence that both the NPS and State of North Dakota had a mutual goal of enhancing the cultural landscape as well as preserving these significant properties and that "adding yet another structure to this property seems counterproductive to this goal."[575]

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[570] Stanley A. Ahler to Chris Dill, 22 April 1985, Stanley A. Ahler to Harvey Wickware, 23 April 1985, File KNRI—Maintenance Facility HQ and Parking Lot (prior to 1992), MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[571] James E. Sperry to Susan V. Garland, 26 August 1994, File KNRI—Construction Maintenance Storage Facility, Pkg. #117, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[572] Thomas D. Thiessen to Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 27 October 1994, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[573] Bill Lutz to Sam Wegner, 22 April 1999, File KNRI—Maintenance Facility HQ and Parking Lot (prior to 1992), MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[574] Tom Thiessen to Bill Lutz, 5 May 1999, Fern E. Swenson to Tom Thiessen, 17 May 1999, File KNRI—Maintenance Facility HQ and Parking Lot (prior to 1992), MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[575] Samuel J. Wegner to Bill Lutz, 17 May 1999, File KNRI—Maintenance Facility HQ and Parking Lot (prior to 1992), MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

This time, MWAC archeologist Thiessen came to the project's defense. In light of his belief that archeological test excavations in the proposed building location would not reveal substantial new information about the nature of the subsurface cultural deposits beyond that of the 1985 study and his belief that the emplacement of the compacted gravel layer above a filter fabric would serve as an effective means to preserve cultural deposits in that location, Thiessen supported the project, against North Dakota SHPO objections. With regard to visual intrusion, Thiessen recognized the historical reasons why the park maintenance facilities were concentrated in and around the former Grannis farmstead, but over the long term, he hoped that all of these maintenance activities would eventually be relocated to a suitable non-site area of the park or possibly outside the park.[576]

The issue of continuing the park's maintenance operation at the former Grannis farmstead continued to be contentious between KRIV and the North Dakota SHPO. Nevertheless, in 2000, the building project proceeded when Hager's Homes of Hazen, North Dakota, completed the new maintenance storage building. This building housed all supplies that had been outside in the weather, including those supplies in another location called the "bone yard." By 2002, an above-ground gasoline/diesel fuel storage containment system to service the park's fleet, which included a fire truck, was funded and constructed, completing all critical needs at the maintenance area. Only one other construction project occurred thereafter, a sheltered picnic/interpretation area erected adjacent to the visitor center in 2003.[577] This interpretive shelter was needed to provide additional space to accommodate large groups of visitors who wished to view the park film at one time as well as to provide a platform for moonlight and evening programs.[578]

Interpretation Development: Roads, Trails, and Exhibits

During the Cartwright-Eckert administration years, interpretation development also grew. Visitation figures were one way of measuring a park's organizational effectiveness and were important under Goal IV of the Government Performance Results Act of 1993. In 1993, visitation numbers at KRIV dropped slightly from the previous year, a change that was primarily due to inflated visitation figures (18,980 persons) resulting from the 1992 visitor center dedication. In addition, adverse weather conditions dampened attendance at the special annual event, now called "Indian Trade Days" and not "Fur Trade Days."[579] The name change possibly reflected a subtle interpretation shift away from the National

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[576] Thomas D. Thiessen to Superintendent, Knife River Indian Village NHS, 18 May 1999, File KNRI—Maintenance Facility HQ and Parking Lot (prior to 1992), MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[577] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1993-2002, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (Denver: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992).

[578] Assessment of Actions Having An Effect On Cultural Resources: Interpretive Shelter, 3 October 2003, File KNRI—Area General File Interpretation Shelter, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[579] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1993, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Park Service theme, *Contact with the Indians*. However, the next few years saw a steady decline in visitation numbers. In 1994, for no apparent reason, visitation slowed somewhat to 17,361 persons, even though KRIV hosted the two-day Northern Plains Indian Culture Festival with 830 visitors attending. In 1995, visitation numbers were down to 16,599, and then in 1996 to 15,411 persons.[580]

Approaching Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial Raises Park Awareness

This downward spiral in visitation statistics was halted in 1997, when total visitation increased by 69 percent to 22,417 people. For the most part, this increase was due to installation of traffic counters at the three peripheral parking lots, providing for the recordation of actual recreational use for the first time. Prior to their installation, estimates for these areas were based on 10 percent of the visitors coming into the visitor center. Other factors contributed to the substantial increase. One may have been better fishing at the Sakakawea parking lot because of higher than normal water conditions in the late spring and early summer. Another factor may have been the grand opening of the North Dakota Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center (NDLCIC) north of Washburn, North Dakota, which placed special emphasis on the time that the explorers spent at Fort Mandan during the winter of 1804-1805.[581]

The new figures appeared accurate. Over the next few years, visitation climbed steadily to 37,000 in 1999, then to just under 40,000 people in calendar year 2000. Increased annual visitation was definitely accounted for by raised awareness of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and a soaring national interest in the American Indian. Most KRIV visitors took in the visitor center and earth-lodge; some hiked or cross-country skied the ten miles of park trails through mid-grass prairie and woodlands, especially along two nature trails that went through mature river bottomland forests. Visitation at KRIV thereafter leveled off at this figure. Visitation would never reach the figures of 48,000 to 85,000 as predicted in the 1971 EIS for KRIV.[582]

From 1993 to 2002, KRIV provided a number of interpretive exhibits and experiences for the park visitor. There were the regularly scheduled earth-lodge programs, weekend demonstrations, guided walks, and off-site programs, as well as annual programs such as Indian Trade Days and the two-day Northern Plains Indian Culture Festival. For these events, KRIV was dependent on a successful VIP program as well as the efforts by and cooperation with a number of organizations such as TRNHA and KRIHF. Year after year, volunteers under the VIP program provided a thousand or more hours of labor to help the seasonal park ranger/interpreters with just interpretation. In turn, year after year, TRNHA continued to provide a funding source for the park to enhance its interpretive

[580] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1994-1996, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.
[581] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1997, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.
[582] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1998-2000, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

programs through its book and craft sales at both the former and new visitor center. TRNHA funding was used to fund the park's primary special event, the Northern Plains Indian Culture Festival. In 1994, TRNHA funding was also used to publish *Me-Ecci Aashi Awadi*, which was Hidatsa for KRIV, the first book by TRNHA about the park geared to the general public.[583]

On the other hand, the support of local organizations was not as steady. In 1995, KRIHF, the local friends group, managed to produce a tourism brochure on KRIV but was more or less moribund until the group was resurrected in 2000, with Superintendent Lisa Eckert playing an integral part. In that year, KRIHF purchased a small parcel of land just south of the park from the Santa Fe Railroad and intended to host educational activities on their site. KRIV staff thereafter maintained cooperative relations with this park friends group by serving on their board of directors.[584]


KRIHF Co-chair Donna Buchmann, 2008. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc

Much of the interpretation success at KRIV lay in the hands of Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management Bill Lutz (1993-2000) and Terrence L. O'Halloran (2000-2008), who not only supervised the general interpretation programs but also oversaw several special KRIV projects.

For instance, in 1998, under Lutz's direction, KRIV developed its first webpage, which included the teaching lesson, *Knife River: Early Village Life on the Plains*. This was the very first lesson ever produced under NPS' Teaching with Historic Places Program (THPP). In 1993, Fay Metcalf, an educational consultant, developed the lesson plan format that THPP used in its initial series. She prepared this very popular teacher's guide to start the series. THPP's program goal was to help teachers use historic properties listed in the National Register to enrich classroom instruction in history, social studies, and other required subjects. *Knife River: Early Village Life on the Plains* allowed students to discover the complex culture and trading economy of the Hidatsa and Mandan tribe in North Dakota during the eighteenth century, as seen by archeologists, anthropologists, and artists. It clearly emphasized the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. In 2001, KRIV's website had more than 10,000 visitors in its first year, and *Knife River: Early Village Life on the Plains* was downloaded nearly a thousand times during its first year on the park's website.[585]

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583 Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1993-2002, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

584 Ibid.; Oral History of Judy Lang, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

585 Carol D. Shull and Kathleen Hunter to Chas Cartwright, 17 December 1993, File H32 (National Register of Historic Places); Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1993-2002, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. "The website also included a Teacher's Guide that was developed in-house by Ken Woody and others. This guide was replaced in 2007 by the current Teacher's Guide." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

On the other hand, under O'Halloran and interpretive specialist Dorothy Cook, KRIV developed and coordinated an ever-expanding on- and off-site school program that reached more than 3,700 students in 2001. In that year, KRIV offered two new special events. "A New Beginning" was offered on April 8, 2001, to celebrate the re-opening and re-dedication of the earth-lodge exhibit and to highlight Hidatsa and Mandan contributions to the success of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Chief of Interpretation O'Halloran also helped initiate the Trails and Rails program with Amtrak on the passenger train "The Empire Builder." Under this program, volunteer interpreters rode the train from Minot, North Dakota, to Shelby, Montana, and exposed passengers to the Lewis and Clark Expedition for the upcoming bicentennial, the Mandan and Hidatsa lifeways, and the natural history of the prairies. These programs somewhat shifted interpretation back to the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*, but in the same year, Jerome Kills Small presented "Ohiyesa" at KRIV, a program that demonstrated Dakota culture and traditional medicines and added balance to the growing emphasis on the Lewis and Clark Expedition.[586]

Statements for Management and Interpretation, 1993-2002

To manage KRIV's cultural and natural resources and properly interpret them, Park Superintendents Cartwright and Eckert followed various updated SFMs (March 1986, July 1989, April 1992, and December 1994). Each SFM analyzed monthly and weekly visitation, accounted for changes in administration, and discussed the status of planning efforts, existing management zoning, major management issues at Knife River, and the needs of its cultural and natural resources, and protection thereof.

In 1989 and again in 1992, the KRIV's SFM covered operations and staffing. Each time, the SFM noted inadequate staffing to perform maintenance, resource management, interpretation, and law enforcement functions. Each SFM also noted inadequate funding necessary to meet basic operational needs such as utilities, maintenance agreements, etc., and inadequate equipment necessary to perform maintenance functions. Facilities and space for park management and administrative staff were also deemed inadequate to meet needs effectively and efficiently.[587]

But in May 1994, prior to the preparation of the 1994 SFM, KRIV held a three-day management assessment workshop with participants from the park area, the regional office, and the public with Mike Snyder from RMRO playing a leading role as facilitator in leading the discussion. In this session, there was no grumbling about inadequate

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[586] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1993-2002, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; "Lewis and Clark Featured Aboard Amtrak Rails," *Rapid City Journal*, 23 July 2000: Eloise Ogden, "All Aboard: National Park Service Looking for Volunteers to Ride the Rails and Talk About History," *Minot Daily News*, 17 October 2000; "State Shows Off to Travelers," *Bismarck Tribune* 22 July 2001.

[587] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (Denver: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1989).

resources, since the park now had sufficient budget and facilities to perform its mission. Rather, park officials and stakeholders tried to clearly define the park's purpose, significance, management objectives, obstacles, owners, and actions. This information was then incorporated into the park's 1994 SFM and formed the basis for developing and justifying future regional programs and identifying how funding and staffing would be allocated. A clear problem emerged at the workshop. Of all the participants, MWAC archeologist Thiessen appeared to be the only person who had any institutional memory or knowledge regarding the long history of the legislation and origins of the park, as well as interpretive needs.[588] Superintendent Cartwright, who had been in the post, led the workshop. Without an administrative history to guide them, they started by first looking at the park's legislation in an effort to clearly define the park's purpose and significance.

Considering all the legislation affecting the National Park System, such as the 1916 Organic Act, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NHPA, and the Endangered Species Act, which influenced every unit in the system, and a scattering of other documents, they tried to discern the legislative intent for Knife River. Eventually, they derived an inventory of twenty-five statements of significance that workshop participants believed captured the essence of KRIV's important natural and cultural heritage. These statements covered most of the significant issues discussed during the legislative process that enabled the park but wavered between the NPS themes, *Indian Villages and Communities* and *Contact with the Indians*. For instance, they included important statements regarding preserving some of the few remaining and best-preserved examples of earth-lodge villages and aboriginal cultural landscapes in the Northern Great Plains, as the archeological resources represented a record of several millennia of human use of the Upper Missouri. On the other hand, the participants noted that KRIV represented the scene of the first sustained contact between the United States government and native peoples of the Northern Great Plains when the Lewis and Clark Expedition passed through the area.[589]

But with a lack of institutional memory regarding protecting, preserving, and interpreting the archeological purpose of the park, a new, more "generic" mission evolved. The 1994 SFM concluded that the *legislative intent* for Knife River was to simply to "protect and conserve the scenic, natural and cultural resources in order to promote scientific and public interests while leaving them unimpaired for the enjoyment of present and future generations." Though this generic purpose statement was supplemented by the workshop's inventory of significant statements and captured the essence of KRIV's important cultural heritage, equal emphasis was now placed on protecting, preserving, and enhancing the park's natural and scenic qualities as well. A period of re-evaluation of this mission statement would be in the offing in the post-2002 period.

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[588] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (Denver: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), 1-7.
[589] Ibid., 9-20.

Silver Anniversary Celebration, 1999

On August 18 and 19, 1999, KRIV celebrated its 25th anniversary as a park. Invitations were mailed out to more than 100 people, from North Dakota's congressional delegation to local citizens. For the anniversary program, KRIV had an open house. Michael Terry,[590] of Seminole descent, did ongoing popular presentations, using an array of Indian material cultural items to explain the history and myths about Plains Indian culture from 1750 to 1870. In addition to Terry's presentation, Amy Mossett, an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, staged her "Sakakawea: Her Life and Legend" twice on both days; Lyle Gwinn, a Mandan/Hidatsa storyteller and descendent of Mandan Chief Four Bears, did two presentations about the history of the Three Affiliated Tribes; and Keith Bear, Mandan/Hidatsa traditional storyteller, hand-carved flute maker, and musician, provided flute music at the open house. At the dinner held at the Stanton Civic Center, Beth Prine, an archeologist who helped the park immensely with its museum collection, was the featured speaker. After the conclusion of the daytime activities, a memorable evening ceremony was held back at the park. Superintendent Eckert hosted the event with Three Affiliated Tribal elder Cora Baker (Gerard Baker's mother), who gave a traditional blessing, followed by greetings from Deputy Director of the Midwest Region Dave Given and Chairman of the Three Affiliated Tribes Tex Hall. Byron L. Dorgan, now North Dakota's junior senator, was the keynote speaker. Special guest speaker and Hidatsa tribal member Gerard Baker, who was then Chickasaw National Recreation Area superintendent, followed the senator. As Baker's talk ended, Keith Bear movingly played his flute on top of the earth-lodge exhibit for all. In the end, approximately 800 people enjoyed the two-day celebratory event. In addition to this event, the seventh annual Northern Plains Indian Culture Festival attracted close to 1,100 people over the two days, despite the high-90s temperatures. (In 1998 there had been only 900 visitors)[591]

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[590] Since 1991, Michael Terry had used his knowledge and expertise to emphasize the impact of the Hidatsa and Mandan had on other Plains Indians and educated the public in a way that allowed audiences to more fully understand and appreciate the lifestyle of Native Americans that lived on the Plains. Terry served as the Native American technical advisor, actor, stunt rider, and coordinator on more than thirty films, including *Last of the Mohicans, Son of the Morning Star,* and *Dances with Wolves*. "Michael Terry to Visit Knife River Indian Villages," 10 September 2000, *News Release: National Park Service*, File K3415 (Press Releases, NPS), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[591] Memorandum from Lisa E. Eckert to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, 3 July 1999, 2 September, 1999, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Oral History of Gerard Baker, 17 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT. Many people, including Gerard Baker and Thomas Thiessen, distinctly remembered the event. Thomas Thiessen recounted it this way, "Keith Bear's music started at the conclusion of Gerard Baker's remarks and just as the sun was setting, outlining him against the sky atop the earth lodge replica. His hauntingly beautiful music made it a very memorable moment. Gerard's elderly mother gave the introductory blessing in Hidatsa, which also contributed much to the occasion." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

"A New Beginning"—Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, 2000-2004

Starting in 2000, people interested in exploring the trail of explorers William Clark and Meriwether Lewis began to take greater interest in KRIV. After all, the two explorers had spent their first winter across the Missouri River from Knife River and interacted with villagers such as Sakakawea. National exposure in magazines and the opening of the NDLCIC at Washburn in June 1997 helped increased visitation to KRIV as well. In 2000, visitors to KRIV were spilling out of their cars and recreational vehicles bearing license plates from every state of the union. There was also an increase in school groups, whose teachers downloaded KRIV's teacher's guide from the park's website.[592] Over the course of the next few years, park interpretation efforts shifted to the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*, to take advantage of the commemoration.

In January 2000, the United States Mint in Philadelphia issued the new Sakakawea golden dollar coin, adding to KRIV's popularity. As a trading center of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and because Sakakawea, or Bird Woman, had lived at *Awatixa* (Sakakawea Village) in the early spring of 1805 before joining the Lewis and Clark expedition, KRIV, in cooperation with KRIHF, made 200 coins available for trade to the public on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The 200 available coins were traded in just twenty minutes. The event was so popular that a second trading day was held the next month. In fact, all that year, the doorbell chimed constantly at KRIV, a sound announcing people coming through the front door that park staff heard more than ever. In 2000, 33,500 people visited KRIV a 2.1 percent increase over the previous year, and this increased visitation was handled with the same permanent staff of four that the park had since the visitor center was opened.[593] However, to prepare for additional visitation at KRIV due to the upcoming Lewis and Clark bicentennial in 2004, Congress authorized a $180,000 increase to KRIV in 2001. These funds were earmarked specifically to address visitor services, which included interpretation/education programs, special events, salaries for rangers, maintenance and law enforcement summer operations, and planning for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.[594]

During the year 2001, a number of events at KRIV featured the Lewis and Clark Expedition. First, as part of this growing interest in Lewis and Clark, KRIV began showing films regarding the famous journey, including A&E Biography's *Lewis and Clark: Explorers of the New Frontier*, and Ken Burns's *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*.[595] Next, in April, KRIV held a special program called "A New Beginning" at the park's visitor center to celebrate the opening of the reconstructed earth-lodge for the season and to commemorate the departure of the Lewis and Clark

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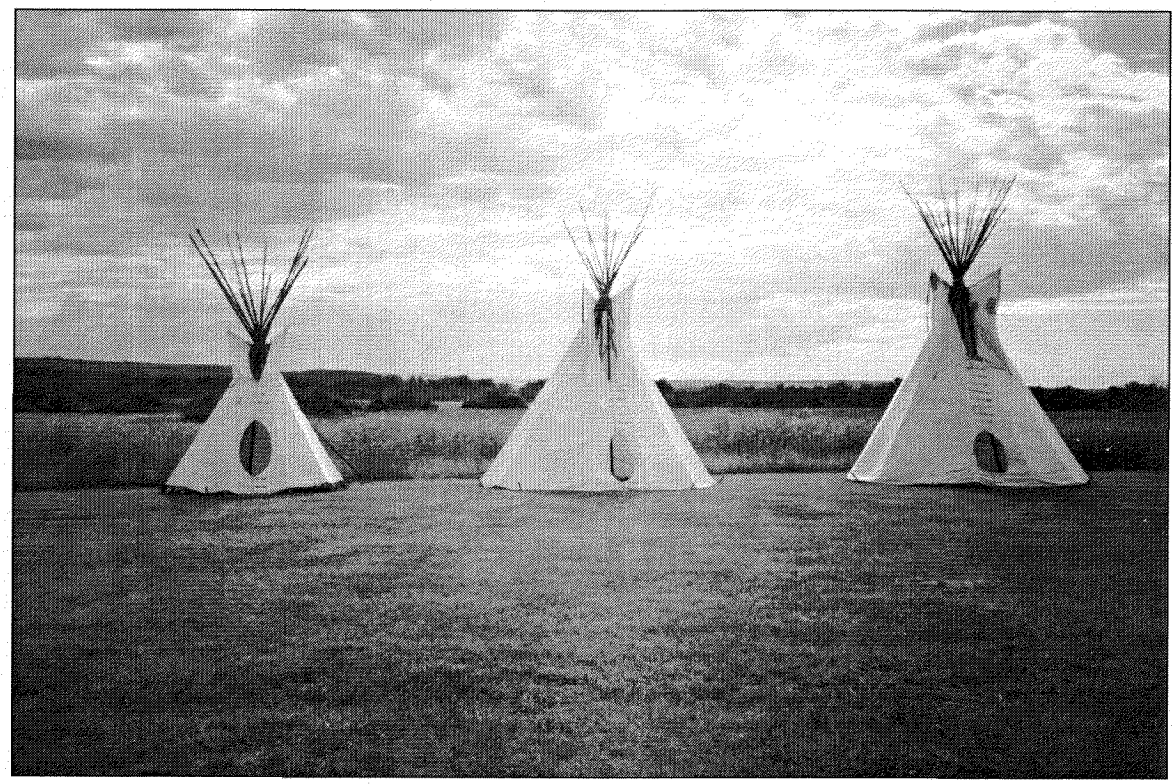
[592] Lauren Donovan, "Visitation Increases at Knife River Villages," *Bismarck Tribune* 25 July 2000.

[593] "Swap Silver for Gold at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 27 January 2000, 10 February 2000, *News Release: National Park Service*, File K3415 (Press Releases, NPS), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; "Sakakawea Gold Coins for Trade Today," *Hazen Star* 15 February 2001.

[594] "FY 2001 Budget and Annual Performance Plan for Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 16 March 2001, *News Release: National Park Service*, File K3415 (Press Releases, NPS), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[595] "Films Showing at Knife River Indian Villages," *Minot Daily News*, 6 March 2001.

Expedition from their winter camp at Fort Mandan 196 years ago. This event was coordinated with NDLCIC.[596]



Tipis After Northern Plains Cultural Festival, Unknown Year. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library

That summer, the annual Northern Plains Indian Cultural Festival at KRIV was more meaningful than ever as it celebrated the rich history of North Dakota's indigenous peoples with a variety of demonstrations and activities. TRNHA monies continued to cover most of the expenses of the annual event, for which Dorothy Cook was the park coordinator. Demonstrations included archeology talks, flint-knapping, bead working, porcupine quill working, brain tanning of hides, Indian flute music, ceremonial dance demonstrations, and teepee raising/folding. While at KRIV, visitors were encouraged to stroll along the trails through acres of native grasslands and vegetation that had been a part of the area's flora for thousands of years.[597] This festival and the day-to-day operations during the summer could not have been accomplished without considerable volunteer help from the VIP program and a number of other programs such as YCC and the Student Conservation Association. As at most NPS parks, seasonal workers, supervised by park rangers Cook and John Moeykens, provided the warm greetings, friendly faces, and extra pair of hands to help get the job done. Jobs ranged from

[596] "KRIV Commemorates Lewis and Clark Expedition, *Hazen Star*, 5 April 2001; "Explorers Departure Celebrated This Weekend," *Bismarck Tribune* 5 April 2001.
[597] "Knife River Indian Village Preserves History and Culture," *Bismarck Tribune*, circa 28 July 2001.

working at the front desk and running the video presentation to answering questions during the daily earth-lodge program.[598]

Meanwhile, visitation at KRIV continued to increase, topping at 37,000 in 2001, a 10 percent increase from the previous year. Chief of Interpretation O'Halloran thought it would not begin to slow down until 2006. In talking to visitors, he said that most of the people that came were traveling the Lewis and Clark Trail through North Dakota.[599]

By 2002, for Lewis and Clark enthusiasts who wished to retrace the 2,500-mile canoe trail, KRIV was considered a "must see" by tourism directors and the NDLCIC in Washburn. In the spring of that year, KRIV and NDLCIC cooperated in a two-day event called "New Beginning" as recognition of the day the Lewis and Clark Expedition left Fort Mandan.[600] Cedar and Nicole Henry, daughters of the Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation Tourism Director Amy Mossett, were among the presenters. Cedar portrayed the legendary Sakakawea for the first time and presented "A Conversation with Sakakawea," while her younger sister, Nicole, gave an educational presentation entitled "Mandan and Hidatsa Gardens" that discussed agriculture in the villages.[601]

In addition to ever-increasing visitation numbers, in 2001 and 2002, KRIV saw a definite increase in tourism from Germany, with that number to increase.[602] In 2001, an exhibit at the Linden Museum in Stuttgart entitled "The Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara" opened, with artifacts on display from the State Historical Society of North Dakota, the Three Affiliated Tribes Museum, and Fort Berthold Community College. The museum exhibit focused on the history and lives of the three Indian nations from early history to modern times.[603] Speaking of German visitation to KRIV,[604] O'Halloran said, "They know a great deal about the Mandan and Hidatsa. The Germans have a tremendous interest in the American West." With a Lewis and Clark "signature event" planned for Bismarck in 2004, O'Halloran believed that KRIV would see a tremendous impact and expected "10's of thousands of visitors."[605] To contribute to the celebration, NPS awarded thirteen grants going to ten organizations totaling $624,000 for projects commemorating the Lewis and Clark Expedition in North Dakota. The grants were part of $5 million

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[598] "Seasonal Workers Add A Special Touch," *Hazen Star*, 30 August 2001.

[599] "KRIV Gear Up for Exciting Time as Visitation Increases," *Hazen Star* 18 April 2002.

[600] "Cooperative Efforts Are A Must," *Hazen Star* 28 March 2002.

[601] "New Beginning at KRIV," *Hazen Star* 11 April 2002; "Henry Sisters Present at 'A New Beginning,'" *MHA Times*, 12 April 2002.

[602] "KRIV Gear Up for Exciting Time as Visitation Increases," *Hazen Star* 18 April 2002.

[603] "Exhibit is Popular in Germany," *Bismarck Tribune* 16 June 2001.

[604] "German interest in American Indians is very strong and long-standing (take Prince Maximilian of Wied, for instance)," Thomas Thiessen recalled. "In the spring of 1977, Ralph Thompson escorted Hans Lang, a German, to Knife River Indian Villages and Clay and I gave him a tour. Later, with Ernst J. Klay, Lang published a book in Germany about the artist Rudolf Kurz, entitled *Das Romantische Leben der Indianer* (Verlag der AARE Solothurn, 1984)." Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[605] "KRIV Gear Up for Exciting Time as Visitation Increases," *Hazen Star* 18 April 2002.

appropriation that Senator Dorgan secured for Lewis and Clark bicentennial projects for North Dakota.[606]

O'Halloran's optimism was perhaps quelled when in July 2002; Lisa Eckert left KRIV to become the superintendent for Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming. The position of superintendent at KRIV was vacant for more than a year. During this interim period, Chief of Interpretation O'Halloran was acting superintendent from July to September of that year. Thereafter, Facility Manager Rodney Skalsky served as acting superintendent from October 2002 until February 2003. Finally, Chief of Interpretation O'Halloran was made acting superintendent from March 2003 until the arrival of the new superintendent, Cheryl A. Schreier, in July of 2003.

While the superintendent position was vacant, Skalsky, O'Halloran, park staff, and 109 volunteers who donated over 2,600 hours to interpretation and resource management did a remarkable job to compensate. During that time, a number of events at KRIV relating to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial occurred, but some of them probably could have been better attended. For instance, "A New Beginning" was held for the third year that April to celebrate the return of spring in the villages and the start of a new adventure for Sakakawea, Toussaint Charbonneau, and their son. Only fifty visitors attended. Then there was the annual two-day Northern Plains Indian Cultural Festival. It, however, attracted only 704 people to the park that year. Finally, there was the second annual "Fond Farewell" event. It was held in mid-August to commemorate the 197th anniversary of the Corps of Discovery's departure from the Knife River villages and their fond farewell to Sakakawea and family. Only fifty-seven persons attended this program.[607]

Despite disappointing event attendance, visitation in calendar year 2003 was 37,211, an increase of nearly 15 percent from the previous year. Nearby Lewis and Clark Bicentennial events and visits from individuals traveling the Lewis and Clark Trail were factors contributing to the increase in visitation.[608] Furthermore, a study conducted in July of 2003 under the NPS visitor services project indicated that 98 percent of visitors to the park rated the overall quality of visitor services at Knife River as "very good" or "good," with most of the visitors coming to the park for the first time. Visitors rated the visitor center exhibits and the earth-lodge programs as the best facilities or services in the park, but some felt improvements were needed regarding informational signage along the trails and that KRIV needed more living history.[609] One highlight of the year occurred in June, when historical artist Michael Haynes unveiled his painting "Knife River Spring" at

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[606] "Park Projects Awarded $624,000," *Minot Daily News* 28 April 2002.

[607] Newly-hired education specialist Craig Hansen, who may have contributed to a more successful outcome for these summer events, instead was detailed to the Corps of Discovery II traveling exhibit for four weeks, where he helped set up and dismantle the exhibit, presented interpretive programs, and assisted visitors. Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2003-2004, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[608] Ibid.; "Visitation Increased in 2003 at Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 12 January 2004, *News Release: National Park Service*, File K3415 (Press Releases, NPS), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[609] "Results of Visitor Study at Knife River Indian Villages NHS Released," 13 May 2004, *News Release: National Park Service*, File K3415 (Press Releases, NPS), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

KRIV. Commissioned by TRNHA, it depicted an early morning scene in a Hidatsa village in the early 1800s. Artist Haynes was nationally recognized for his exacting research and the accuracy of his paintings, and several of his works were displayed in the NPS traveling exhibit, "The Corps of Discovery II."[610]

In 2004, KRIV was fully staffed to experience the expected surge in visitation resulting from interest in the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Volunteers played a significant role in the park that year, with 122 volunteers donating more than 3,800 hours to the interpretation and other park programs. Superintendent Schreier represented KRIV at the governor's Lewis and Clark Advisory Committee, and park staff members Terrence O'Halloran, Craig Hansen, and Dorothy Cook participated as Corps of Discovery II committee members in preparation for the traveling exhibits that would debut in North Dakota that October. Furthermore, in August, the national meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation was held in Bismarck. As a side trip for the meeting, 550 members of the organization traveled to Knife River for a catered lunch. Raymond Wood addressed them at the park, and there were demonstrations of Native American crafts and traditions by members of the Three Affiliated Tribes and the Three Tribes Museum. Meanwhile, attendance for the fourth annual "A New Beginnings" program tripled from the previous year, the two-day Northern Plains Indian Culture Fest drew 1,100 people (400 more than the previous year), and the third annual "A Fond Farewell" program of traditional games, a round dance, and presentations by the Northern Lights Drummers, and Frankee Hall as Sakakawea and Clay Jenkinson as Meriwether Lewis drew another 125 persons.[611]

In addition to the above annual events, several special events related to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial took place at KRIV. The park exhibited "The Geology of the Lewis and Clark Trail in North Dakota," which was on loan to the park by the North Dakota Geological Survey. The exhibit highlighted some of the fascinating geology recorded by Lewis and Clark on their journey through North Dakota, a map showing the expedition's campsites and significant features, photographs of the sites mentioned in their journals, quotes from their writings, and samples of some of the rocks and minerals found by the explorers.[612]

Not Just Another Lewis and Clark Park?

When Superintendent Holm came to KRIV in March 1985, he did not wish to see KRIV become "just another Lewis and Clark park." Yet once UND's Phase I archeology research program was completed that year and the visitor/administration center was on line in 1992, KRIV's archeological program and the park's broader Northern Plains

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[610] Ibid.

[611] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2004, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[612] "Geology Exhibit at Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 11 March 2004; "Knife River Indian Villages Launches New Nickels," 13 April 2004, *News Release: National Park Service*, File K3415 (Press Releases, NPS), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

cultural orientation based on the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities* was slowly overshadowed by the competing theme, *Contact with the Indians*. By the time the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial occurred in 2004, the transformation was nearly complete, although even with the special events, the daily interpretive program remained centered around the earth-lodge and the village sites, interpreting the lifestyles and culture of the Mandan and Hidatsa period, particularly prior to continuous Euro-American influence.

KRIV focused greater attention on the Hidatsa and Mandan people. Park managers involved Native Americans in designing and programming the visitor center as well as participating in park programmed events such as the historical drama "Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery Meet the Earth-lodge People," "Fur Trade Days," and "New Beginning." These activities made the Hidatsa and Mandan people only one of many participants in a brief American contact period of some thirty or so years, yet, below the park's ground and in the visitor center's museum basement vault was evidence of 8,000 years of occupation of the Knife River valley by the ancestors of these people! Park superintendents that followed Holm, lacking the institutional memory and/or perhaps educational background to understand the purpose and importance of Stanley Ahler's visionary research program, had placed interpretation of the park's archeological resources to better understand the culture and history of these people—a Congressional mandate—on the back burner.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCE RESEARCH PROGRAM AT KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, 1974-2004

In 1978, when University of North Dakota (UND) archeologist Stanley Ahler developed a viable research design to guide archeological research at Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site NHS, the state of archeological research at KRIV was in a nascent stage. Though archeologists had been aware with Knife River since 1883, when Theodore Lewis visited the villages on behalf of MHS, real knowledge of their potential did not come until NPS established the NHS. The first priority at the time was saving Sakakawea Village from eroding away into the Knife River. Thereafter began a planning and surveying process to evaluate the state of knowledge of the area's prehistory and to initiate a comprehensive program for data acquisition in order to solve various park problems. This process resulted in Ahler's *A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of Knife River Indian Villages NHS.* It optimistically proposed a three-phase research design over a twelve-year period. In actuality, Phase I, which took six years (1978 to 1984), was the only phase to be completed. Augmenting and made possible by the research for Phase I were a cultural resource reconnaissance program for KRIV, completion of a Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP), and placing KRIV's archeological resources in a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) archeological district. More importantly, in 1993, the Phase I research program was summarized and published for the scholarly and academic communities.

Afterwards, other archeological work at KRIV centered mostly on continued stabilization of the Knife River bank, pre-construction of the Knife River administrative/visitor center, and the evaluation/mitigation of other sites to determine whether a project adversely affected individual sites. Related to this post-1994 "archeological management period" were projects that involved compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 and the development of a Collection Management Plan (CMP) for KRIV's museum. There was also an attempt to bring the NPS interpretive theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*, directly to the public through various publications.

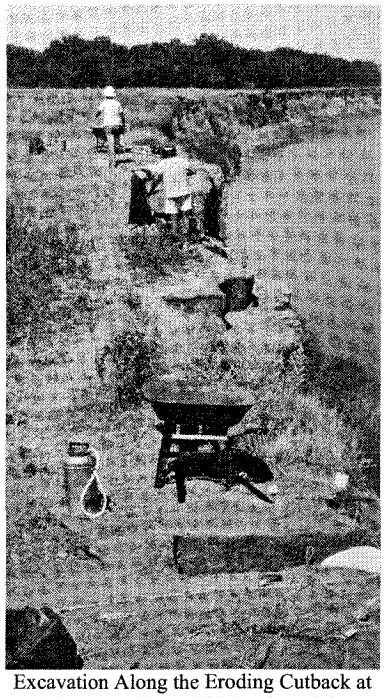
Saving Sakakawea Village Site, 1974-1979

With the establishment of KRIV, the first order of business was to stop the wearing away of Sakakawea Village from the natural processes of the Knife River. This state of affairs was caused by several factors. First, there were spring runoffs with accompanying ice jams that caused erosion at that location and along all the park's riverbanks. There were also problems caused by the hydroelectric dam on the Missouri River above KRIV. The

dam system frequently caused changes in water levels, and increased discharge from Garrison Dam upstream backed water up into the Knife River.[613]

By March 1975, several earth-lodges had already been eroded away from Sakakawea Village since the founding of the park in October of the previous year. To start to address the situation, Theodore Roosevelt National (Memorial) Park (TRNP) Superintendent John Lancaster requested funding for approximately 1,500 feet of bank stabilization to prevent further erosion. While funding was being sought, the erosion of the nearly vertical bank at Sakakawea Village became ever more serious in July. Stabilization measures were needed as soon as possible.[614]

Therefore, MWAC outlined a program to salvage archeological information from the cutbank. Eventually, Rocky Mountain Regional Office (RMRO) received $33,000 for the project—$30,000 for planning but only $3,000 for the archeological work. Because the planning money was of a year-end nature, RMRO elected to transfer these funds directly to Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) to augment the amount available for the archeological work for the entire park, not just saving Sakakawea. This action provided the initial funding for KRIV's research program. However, by the spring of 1976, it was clear that even $33,000 would not be sufficient to meet all of Knife River's needs. MWAC faced the dilemma of accomplishing goals, such as stabilizing the Sakakawea Village site, within the constraints of the Center's budget and personnel ceilings. Waiting for year-end funding was no way to manage the extensive archeological work needed at Knife River.[615] Meanwhile, during the summer of 1976, a MWAC crew, under the direction of archeologist Robert Nickel, worked on the task of salvaging the eroding Sakakawea Village. Preservation through salvage was necessary to comply with NPS policies regarding management of cultural resources and the congressional mandate included in the act establishing the park.[616]



Excavation Along the Eroding Cutback at Sakakawea Village, 1976. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

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[613] Development/Study Package #114, "Sakakawea Village Site Management Plan," 27 March 1986, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[614] Development/Study Package #103, "Stabilization Bank of Knife River," 11 March 1975, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[615] F.A. Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," in Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part I: Objectives, Methods, And Summaries Of Baseline Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993), 3.

[616] Development/Study Package #106, "Natural Erosion Archeological Salvage," 2 December 1976, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Fortunately, in June 1976, NPS signed a contract for five years with the UND, whose "objectives were to provide flexibility for a long-term research program that could change priorities and directions as new research results and shifting management needs and funding levels warranted." The ultimate purpose of this cooperative contract was to illuminate KRIV's archeological story, which had already begun with the salvage operations at Sakakawea Village. By July 1976, the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) presented four alternatives for riverbank stabilization. Each plan centered on the comparative values of using either a permanent and/or a temporary berm. North Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) James E. Sperry reviewed the plans and agreed that the project was beneficial and necessary, and advised NPS that historic and visual integrity be considered as well as cost.[617] Prior to selection of an alternative, MWAC archeologist Nickel and his staff completed their summer's investigation. After the 1976 field season, NPS had a better idea of the complicated nature of that site. Consequently, NPS felt that it was time to consider all the archeological needs of the park and to begin structuring a relationship between the various parties concerned (e.g., MWAC, KRIV, and UND) to ensure a timely flow of information as research progressed.[618]

On December 1, 1976, Ahler from UND, Nickel and F.A. Calabrese from MWAC, and Thomas D. Thiessen from KRIV met with TRNP Superintendent John Lancaster and Area Manager Clayton Alderson at Stanton, North Dakota, to discuss many subjects, including land acquisition and the master plan. Prominent among them was also the continued archeological investigation at Sakakawea Village in preparation for stabilization. Although bank stabilization was planned to arrest any destructive erosion, the need for pre-stabilization archeological work continued. Data recovery had to be accomplished prior to initiation of the program. During the 1976 season, research methods used at Sakakawea Village included systematic pedestrian survey and surface collection, aerial photographing, proton magnetometer techniques, and soil coring—all methodologies that subsequently would be used to evaluate other major village sites and areas of archeological interest within the park boundary.[619]

During the 1977 field summer, Ahler and Nickel jointly conducted fieldwork at Sakakawea Village prior to beginning ACOE stabilization work in 1978. They conducted limited archeological excavations in selected areas of Sakakawea Village that had been magnetically surveyed the previous summer in order to verify and aid in the

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[617] James E. Sperry to Lynn H. Thompson, 1 July 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[618] Robert D. Powell to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 14 October 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[619] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 4; F.A. Calabrese to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, Rocky Mountain Region, 4 February 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Development/Study Package #114, "Sakakawea Village Site Management Plan," 27 March 1986, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

interpretation of the previous year's results of a magnetic survey.[620] Furthermore, the archeologists completed profiling the exposed portion of Sakakawea Village. This profiling was a continuation of activities performed in the south and central parts of the cutbank in 1976 and 1977 and involved controlled removal of samples of cutbank material, as well as cleaning and documentation of the site cutbank exposure. During these two summers archeologists profiled and excavated blocks of earth along the cutbank that had become detached from the site and were in imminent danger of slumping during construction activities. All in all, this cutbank exposure offered a unique cross-section through the site, and its documentation received high priority. Also, efforts were made to relocate Donald Lehmer's earlier test excavations at the site.[621]

By the end of the 1977 summer season, RMRO Director Bean signed off on an ACOE design directive for KRIV bank stabilization, whose design and construction cost $192,000. Remarkably, this amount was less than the $250,000 estimated by the *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives* in 1969. The next year, ACOE designed two revetments adjacent and parallel to a stretch of bank line of approximately 1,680 feet. So as not to disturb the historic site, the structure design was formulated to preclude construction activities along the high bank where Sakakawea Village was located. Construction was initiated in April and completed in September 1979.[622]

Initial Archeological Research Planning and Program, Phase I: 1976-1978

While the Sakakawea Village stabilization situation was brought under control, Ahler outlined a comprehensive research design for a long-term archeological research program within KRIV, which was tentatively outlined in December 1976,[623] drafted in December 1977,[624] and formalized in February 1978[625] as *A Research Plan for Investigation of the*

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[620] Ibid.

[621] Ahler, *A Research Plan For Investigation Of The Archeological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 44-45; Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, February 2, 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[622] National Park Service, *Operation And Maintenance Manual: Knife River Bank Stabilization Project: Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site Near Stanton, North Dakota* (Omaha, Nebraska: US Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, 1981). Though ACOE's design and this construction action temporarily halted the immediate destruction, several factors still affected the long-term preservation of Sakakawea Village. First, overland water runoff continued to cause "sloughing" of the site. Second, recreational users and vandals continued destroying exposed artifacts. And third, there was a lack of adequate interpretation at this unique site. Therefore, in March 1986, Superintendent Michael Holm proposed a Sakakawea Village site management plan to mitigate the damage. To him, such damage represented an irreplaceable loss of cultural resources that the park was mandated to protect in its enabling legislation and sites that were in the National Register Archeological District. Development/Study Package #114, "Sakakawea Village Site Management Plan," 27 March 1986, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. However, apparently this management plan never received final approval or funding.

[623] F.A. Calabrese Trip Report-Stanton, North Dakota, 22 December 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[624] Ahler, *A Program For Investigation Of The Archeological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site.*

Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site and offered a long-term plan for three-phased, multidisciplinary research. The final research plan was a product of collaboration and reflection between Ahler, Nickel, and Thiessen over the course of late 1976 to February 1978.[626] Interestingly, the role of the Knife River archeologist was almost completely ignored throughout the document, which irritated Area Manager Alderson, who thought that the staff archeologist represented the park manager and the superintendent of TRNP in all matters concerning the archeological program in the park. In Alderson's opinion, this required that the archeologist be intimately involved in all aspects of planning, fieldwork, and analysis. Eventually, this point would create friction between Ahler and Alderson.[627]

Phase I focused on refinement of analytical techniques important to the overall research program and identification and definition of the archeological and environmental data base through a series of coordinated inventory, reconnaissance, testing and mapping programs. This methodology had really begun with the Sakakawea Village stabilization project but was officially designated as beginning in the spring of 1978. Emphasis during Phase I was placed on collecting baseline data and locating, identifying, and inventorying all cultural resources within KRIV.[628]

During Phase I, procedures grounded in the physical sciences were developed for attacking major theoretical problems outlined in *A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS.* These procedures sought to establish village chronologies, to identify ethnic or sub-tribal identities of occupants of each village and compare and contrast Mandan and Hidatsa culture histories, and to define native subsistence, technology, trade, settlement, and ceremonial subsystems and the evolution of these cultural subsystems through time. Phase I also set out to provide information for efficient planning and location of buildings and other construction, to locate and preliminarily evaluate off-KRIV cultural resources, which were of special interest to the in-park research program, to develop and refine techniques for dating KRIV archeological materials, to analyze existing archeological collections, and to establish a database concerning natural environmental conditions at the time of historic contact and during the prehistoric period.[629]

A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS outlined a number of specific programs designed to accomplish these goals. They included a mapping and remote sensing program that had begun in the

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[625] Ahler, *A Research Plan For Investigation Of The Archeological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, Contents, 60.

[626] F.A. Calabrese to Stanley Ahler, 11 January 1977, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[627] Clay Alderson to Chief-MWAC, 31 January 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Oral History of Clayton Alderson, 30 October 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[628] Ahler, *A Research Plan For Investigation Of The Archeological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, Abstract, 35, 40-41.

[629] Ibid.

summer of 1976 under the direction of Thomas Lyons of the NPS Chaco Research Center in Albuquerque in coordination with MWAC. The goal of Lyons's work, which included aerial photography and photogrammetric mapping, was to produce a map of the entire Knife River Indian Villages area, scaled at half-foot contour levels. Such a map was necessary to provide spatial control for intensive close-interval, on-the-ground reconnaissance. With the contour map in hand, a survey team next walked in close-interval transects to document the location and density of cultural materials through flagging, triangulation, written notes, and additional low-altitude aerial photography. In the spring of 1978, UND instituted a pilot survey. The results of that study, based on these techniques, were used to plan for major survey efforts in the remainder of KRIV. Thereafter, the completion of the cultural inventory became a top priority in the KRIV archeological program.[630]

In addition to cultural inventory fieldwork, mapping, and remote sensing, *A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* called for a number of other investigations. Since 1976, a magnetic survey program had been underway, whose intent was to completely survey and produce magnetic contour maps for each of the major village sites. By February 1978, archeologists had surveyed approximately 60 percent of Sakakawea but less than 10 percent of both Lower Hidatsa and Big Hidatsa in this manner. John Weymouth of the University of Nebraska directed the program. Unique to this project was an in-field computer that had been developed, which was used for data logging beginning in the summer of 1978, which considerably sped up attainment of the results. The magnetic survey program provided detailed information on the subsurface distributions of cultural remains, particularly hearths and buried structures—data that proved indispensable for planning later testing and major excavation programs for locating the visitor center within KRIV's boundary. Along with the magnetic survey program, archeologists conducted intensive surface collection within the major earth-lodge villages—data that was used to better understand the spatial distribution of various classes of archeological remains across the surface of the villages. The intensive surface collection began in the summer of 1977. By that date, approximately 25 percent of the uncultivated site surface of Sakakawea had been collected. Similar work was conducted at Lower Hidatsa and the greater Buchfink site. From this work, it became obvious that rodent activities and indiscriminant digging had redistributed and altered the artifact content exposed on the site surfaces.[631]

Alongside intensive surface collection, test excavations were begun in 1976, continued through 1977, and continued throughout all field seasons of Phase I. Test excavations were employed for many reasons. They were used to determine the debris density

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[630] This action was required by Executive Order 11593 of May 13, 1971, which made it the policy of the federal government to administer the cultural properties under its control in a spirit of stewardship and trusteeship for future generations and to initiate measures necessary to direct their policies, plans and programs in such a way that federally-owned sites, structures, and objects of historical, architectural or archaeological significance were preserved, restored, and maintained for the inspiration and benefit of the people. Ibid., 41-42.

[631] Similar work was not conducted at Big Hidatsa because vegetation covered the surface. Big Hidatsa would later be defoliated, and controlled surface collection would be conducted thereon as well. Ibid., 43-44.

occurring in various archeological sites, to explore recovery techniques in sites, to explore site stratigraphy, to determine the presence or absence of human burials in specific KRIV areas, to confirm cultural anomalies recorded in aerial photography, and to delineate the presence, absence, and composition of subsurface components. Analysis of the excavated material was thereafter conducted during off-season or during the academic year at UND, under Ahler's direction. Since the development of KRIV would inevitably involve ground disturbing and ground modifying activities, aspects of the archeological program, such as test excavations, were designed to anticipate such activities and work to minimize adverse effects on cultural resources.[632]

Besides archeological work within the boundary of KRIV, solutions to major research and interpretive questions were expected to come from work or data totally outside of the park. This approach fit with Calabrese's "loftier" vision for a regional understanding of Northern Plains Indian culture and the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. Therefore, during Phase I, research on Mandan and Hidatsa material culture in general was necessary. The objective of this research was to locate special activity locations and seasonal settlements in the areas immediately around KRIV and within the Missouri River trench between Washburn to the south of KRIV and the Garrison Reservoir to the north, and in the Knife River Valley from Stanton to Hazen, North Dakota. Data from any sites in these locations, such as Amahami, Deapolis, and Fort Clark, would be used to evaluate sites at KRIV in terms of chronologies and density of major classes of archeological remains.[633]

Then there was the question of investigating baseline data concerning climate, soils, vegetation, and faunal resources in the KRIV area at the time of Euro-American contact. This data was needed both for interpretation of the cultural ecology of the Mandan and Hidatsa and for park development purposes. Of particular interest was paleo-environmental data to better understand the development of horticulture and evolution of subsistence-settlement systems throughout the Woodland and Plains Village periods—once again, an aspect of the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. A major aspect of paleo-environmental study was geo-morphological study of the basic landforms within KRIV to provide a chronological model that could be used to determine the likelihood of certain classes of cultural remains occurring on and/or beneath particular land surfaces. These geo-morphologic studies would also provide basic data on the environmental (climatic) history of the KRIV area prior to and during the occupation of the area by Native Americans. Major efforts in the environmental/paleo-environmental program were well underway by the fall of 1978.[634]

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[632] Ibid., 44-45. By the end of 1978, KRIV planning personnel were supposed to announce a number of alternative locations to be considered for construction of a permanent visitor center, and UND archeologists were then expected to investigate these locations for any possible adverse impacts on cultural resources by such development. However, as noted in previous chapters, the schedule for site selection and construction of the visitor center was delayed time and time again by many unforeseeable circumstances and factors.

[633] Ibid., 45-47.

[634] Ibid.

As stated previously, establishment of absolute and relative chronology both between and within village occupations was a key research question and of primary importance to the success of the archeological program. Because many of KRIV's sites were of relatively recent age, they were not subject to Carbon-14 dating. Therefore, the feasibility of two new dating procedures was explored. The first was thermo-luminescent dating, advocated by David W. Zimmerman of Washington University. The other was archeo-magnetic dating, promoted by Daniel Wolfman of Arkansas Technical University. These techniques, as well as others, such as the application of hydration dating of obsidian and Knife River flint (KRF), dendro-chronology, amino acid-racemization, seriation, and other potentially useful techniques were proposed in Ahler's *A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS.*[635]

Finally, Ahler's research plan called for an extensive analytical program of existing archeological collections located elsewhere that were identified with the Mandan and Hidatsa. The initial goal for this project was the objective differentiation of Knife River Phase pottery and Heart River Phase pottery through micro-stylistic analysis of ceramic remains. The Amahami Site and the Deapolis Site were among key collections to be analyzed. Additionally, collections from Donald Lehmer's 1965 tests at Sakakawea and Lower Hidatsa, and Raymond Wood and Lehmer's tests of sixteen sites in the upper Knife-Heart region would be examined. Finally, the substantial collections from Knife River Phase and Heart River Phase sites located in the SHSND collections would be analyzed. UND archeologist Ahler expected that the above analysis at UND would be conducted during the academic years 1978-1979 and 1979-1980.[636] He thought that only when the above baseline studies were achieved in Phase I, as described above, could archeologists begin to answer general and specific questions about the significance of KRIV's archeological resources and record.

Stanley Ahler and Summer Field Research, 1978

With the completion of *A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* as a guiding document, Ahler and his seasonal field teams set out to accomplish many of the tasks outlined in it and did so. As a young archeologist, Stanley Ahler brought vitality and formulated research to answer questions that other archeologists hadn't even thought of in the field of Northern Plains Indian archeology. Ahler had a very serious personality when conducting his UND field school and was known to many students as "Darth" Ahler.[637]

Ahler and his students accomplished much in the summer of 1978. While MWAC archeologist Nickel completed a magnetic survey of Sakakawea Village, as well as a limited experiment in electronic resistivity surveying, Ahler directed his students and completed cutbank profile recording. To reach the staging area during the construction of

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[635] Ibid.
[636] Ibid.
[637] Oral History of Thomas Thiessen, 14 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

the stabilization berm at the Sakakawea site, a temporary access road was needed for heavy equipment. Therefore, the UND field crew completed test excavations on the nearby Elbee Site to address any adverse effects resulting from this activity. That summer, problem-oriented test excavations were also made on the Lower Hidatsa Village, Poly (32ME407), and Scovill sites. These excavations provided preliminary information on the archeological remains present in proposed development areas near these sites. Additionally, Ahler's archeological crew began systematic surface reconnaissance at the Buchfink cultivated tract. The purpose of this work was to first identify all archeological resources of the park as required by Executive Order 11593 and also to specifically evaluate potential building sites for park visitor facilities selected by RMRO (Areas A-D) that year.

Ahler used a point-quarter technique[638] that was judged to be a relatively efficient and accurate method for generating detailed and objective data on surface artifact distributions with relatively small tracts of land. While he did so, Nickel continued his magnetic survey at Big Hidatsa Village. That summer, UND geologist/graduate student Jon Reiten also initiated geo-morphological investigations in the park. Under the direction of Ahler and UND geologist Lee Clayton, KBM, Inc. of Grand Forks, North Dakota, also worked on remote sensing activities for the park. By the end of the summer, black-and-white aerial photographs of the entire park were produced. They were subsequently used to produce a contour map that served as the archeological base map of the park.[639]

The 1978 field research program was a success from nearly all perspectives. The test excavation program resulted in substantial artifact and chronometric sample collections from four important sites within the park. Mitigation programs were accomplished in relation to upcoming ACOE construction at Sakakawea. Sufficient data was also collected to provide preliminary evaluations of all four RMRO-proposed development sites within KRIV. Additionally, the Executive Order inventory and surface reconnaissance program identified at least fourteen new sites, and the computer-produced maps of surface artifact densities were extremely useful aids for planning future research directions and park development as well.[640]

However, there were problems in the areas of scheduling, in-park coordination, and analysis. In the area of scheduling, there were problems in synchronizing UND's annual academic fieldwork and analysis with the annual federal fiscal year funding sequence and cycle. Without such synchronization, there would be severe discontinuities and

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[638] Stanley A. Ahler and Timothy Weston, *Point-Quarter Archeological Surface Reconnaissance At The Knife River Indian Villages NHS* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: University of North Dakota, 1980).

[639] Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1978*, 3-26, Manuscript #304, North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Bismarck, ND; Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 6-7; Stanley A. Ahler to F.A. Calabrese, 19 July 1978, F.A. Calabrese to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region, 25 July 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research) TRNP, Medora, ND.

[640] Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1978*, 2, 25-28.

interruptions in both research activities and appointments of key personnel. In the area of coordination, there was a real need for both tangible and intangible support for the KRIV archeological program from all levels of in-park administration (KRIV, TRNP, and RMRO staff). Apparently, cooperation between park personnel (namely, Area Manager Alderson) and UND staff was not always optimal. Ahler sensed there wasn't "genuine acceptance on the part of park staff of the KRIV archeological research program as an integral, important, and necessary part of park development, rather than as an impediment to the park operation." He believed that a remedy for this difficulty would be necessary prior to another UND fieldwork season. Finally, in the area of analysis, there was a monumental backlog of excavated and collected materials from KRIV that awaited examination. With close to 200 boxes of collected materials already sitting at UND, Ahler recommended that emphasis be placed on analysis of these materials and generation of reports documenting the results of research to date during the next contract period.[641]

MWAC chief archeologist Calabrese acknowledged that from an administrative standpoint, the KRIV archeological research program did not always proceed smoothly. "The program always received solid support from the Chief Archeologist in the Washington Office," according to Calabrese, "but was often viewed critically by personnel in the Rocky Mountain Regional Office and, to a lesser extent, by some of the managers who superintended the park during the life of the Phase I research." To Calabrese, this "lack of enthusiasm" at KRIV was "fostered in large part by a traditional bias toward Southwestern archeology in the National Park Service." In 1993 Calabrese in hindsight wrote, "It was, and continues to be, difficult for some managers to understand the wisdom of expending extremely finite funds on nearly invisible Plains archeological sites while highly visible Southwestern prehistoric ruins are eroding away at a frightful rate. In short, there is always intense competition for the Service's few archeological research dollars, most of which have traditionally been directed to the many parks in the Southwest which contain spectacular ruins to be interpreted to visitors for which the Service has long held management responsibilities. Research at Knife River simply did not stack up as a high priority in the eyes of officials in Denver."[642]

Summer Field Research, 1979

In the summer of 1979, Ahler and his UND students returned to KRIV under the terms of its contract with MWAC, which was set to expire in May 1980. During the previous winter, dialogue problems between KRIV staff and UND personnel were reviewed, addressed, and resolved. As a solution, Alderson and Ahler agreed to establish a fixed schedule for weekly meetings to brief each other on their activities.[643] However, as it

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[641] Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1978*, 2, 25-28.

[642] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 4-5.

[643] Chief, Midwest Archeological Center to Regional Directors, Midwest and Rocky Mountain Regions, 16 November 1978, File H14 (Administration History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

turned out, in April 1979, Earle Curran replaced Alderson as Area Manager. Curran and Ahler must have gotten along because by the end of the 1979 field season, Ahler reported that coordination and cooperation between the park staff and UND/MWAC crews were excellent throughout the summer, contributing greatly to the success of the field season.[644]

Meanwhile, during the winter and spring of 1979, it became apparent to all that Phase I field activities would have to be reorganized. RMRO insisted that primary emphasis be placed on intensive testing and evaluation of several areas identified as possible visitor center construction locations within KRIV. As discussed in an earlier chapter, in the winter of 1979, the DSC planning team identified four alternative locations for possible construction of visitor and administration facilities within KRIV. By the spring of 1979, Ahler was informed that two of the four RMRO supported areas, Area B and Area C, were the most desirable locations and would need intensive archeological testing and evaluation programs to determine the precise nature of possible construction impacts on cultural resources on these areas. During the 1979 field season UND evaluated Area B and Area C using widely-spaced test excavation units, a systematic sample of the plow zone and features below, and a proton magnetometer survey in conjunction with hand coring and selectively located hand excavations to locate, identify, and investigate additional subsurface features. This work was done in accordance with goals initially set forth in Ahler's *A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS*, including recovering samples useful for chronometric dating and for determination of basic artifact densities, site stratigraphy, and cultural-historical placement. Evaluation of these two alternative areas consumed considerable amounts of time and resources of UND/MWAC crews that summer, leaving little room to accomplish other Phase I tasks. Nonetheless, test excavations were conducted in the Buchfink, Hotrok (32ME412), and Forkorner (32ME413) sites. UND used methodologies at these three sites similar to its visitor center evaluative process in order to provide a certain amount of comparative data by which to judge the content and significance of the visitor center investigations. In the end, the 1979 summer field season verified the existence of significant cultural resources in the Area C alternative and the absence of significant resources in the Area B alternative.[645] In addition to this essential work, during the 1979 field season, systematic surface reconnaissance continued, primarily in the southern portion of the park, and Jon Reiten completed his geo-morphological investigation.[646]

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[644] Stanley A. Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1979* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: University of North Dakota, 1979), 3-4.

[645] Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1979*, 3-8, 47; Donald A. Purse to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 23 February 1979, File H3015 (Historic Sites and Structures Management), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[646] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 7.

Summer Field Research, 1980: Phase I Research Questioned

In the spring of 1980, the UND/MWAC contract was renewed for another year, with plans to complete the Phase I work recommended in Ahler's twelve-year research program. While working on the completion of analysis and report preparation for the data collected from Sakakawea Village during the 1976 to 1978 field season, during the academic year 1979-1980, MWAC and UND decided that Phase I efforts in the upcoming 1980 field season and analysis period should be concentrated on a number of important projects. They included test excavation of the important Big Hidatsa site, completion of all surface reconnaissance in KRIV, preparation of major final reports on the Executive Order 11593 inventory, and additional test excavations at the Lower Hidatsa, Poly, Scovill, and Elbee sites.[647]

However, during the 1980 field season, UND reached only a few of these goals. Ahler's UND student crew completed test excavations at Big Hidatsa Village and the nearby Running Deer Site. That summer, they also completed the systematic surface reconnaissance for KRIV. But further test excavations elsewhere had to wait until the 1981 field season because by September 1980, according to Calabrese, "discontent with the program had reached full blossom, to the extent that the successful attainment of Phase I goals was in question." The program was being criticized as "too costly" and not meeting the "management needs" of the new park.[648] By this time, it had also become apparent that tribal disputes over burial encounters would most likely derail RMRO's preferred selection of Alternative Site C for KRIV's visitor/administration facilities. On September 23, 1980, Lorraine Mintzmyer of RMRO requested a status update for all work undertaken at the NHS during the past five years. She wrote, "As you know, we have no clearance beyond Phase I of the multi-year research program." According to the NPS contract with UND, "Phase I should be finished, or nearly so, when the terms of this contract are met June 1981. It also appears that all other projects should be finished by that time.... Most importantly, we need to know what still needs to be done to complete Phase I."[649]

In defense of KRIV's archeological program, Calabrese sent to Mintzmyer a long memorandum on the subject. In it, he stated:

> The Knife River Program is on track toward completion of Phase I, which is, however, far from completed. From the beginning, the project was never funded to the level outlined in the research plan. Consequently the Service was never able to meet all of the objectives outlined in the research plan. In addition, during the 1979 field season, funds designed for Phase I data collection were diverted to evaluatory

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[647] Ahler, *Archeological Field Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Summer 1979*, 47.

[648] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 5, 7.

[649] Lorraine Mintzmyer to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 23 September 1980, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

> testing of the visitor center complex, delaying Phase I objectives.... It must be decided before the end of the year how much is to be accomplished at Knife River. Full development of the park is dependent upon completion of Phase I research as well as the long-range objectives of Phase II and III to provide sufficient data for park interpretation.... The program's design is soundly conceived, the fieldwork meticulously executed and the resultant data analysis conducted and reported in a timely manner. The energetic execution of this program...has provided the Service with solid baseline data for management decisions and a wealth of information for long range planning, interpretation and development, while at the same time fulfilling scholarly ideals and objectives.[650]

RMRO did not fully agree with Calabrese's assessment. They believed that there was a need to review the progress and administrative standing of KRIV's archeological program. A meeting was set up for later in the year.[651]

Reaganomics Affects KRIV, 1980-1984

Meanwhile, in November 1980, Americans elected Ronald Reagan to the presidency. His election and a Republican majority in the Senate brought sweeping changes to Washington. The new administration's attention was focused upon the domestic economy, upon fulfilling the president's campaign promise of reduced taxes, increased defense spending, and a balanced budget. To this end, the Reagan administration worked for and achieved unprecedented tax and budget cuts in its first year in office. The cuts signaled that policy-making during the Reagan years would be conducted through presidential budget requests, budget resolutions, and the funding programs in appropriation acts.

In early December 1980, a meeting was called between Washington Office representatives and RMRO, MWAC, and UND to discuss the future of the KRIV research program. At this Denver meeting, it was decided "that it would not be in the Service's best interest to discontinue the project without completing analysis and reports of the work accomplished to date." All agreed that funding would be provided to bring the project to completion at the end of Phase I, as defined in Ahler's *A Research Plan for Investigation of the Archeological Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS.* Furthermore, it was agreed to go beyond the "strict scope of Phase I by analyzing and interpreting all data available at that point in time; i.e., the goal was set of meeting Phase II and Phase III interpretive objectives as much as possible using data sources from Phase I research as well as out-of-park research."[652]

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[650] F.A. Calabrese to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region, circa late September 1980, File H22 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research Files), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[651] James B. Thompson to Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, 13 November 1980, H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[652] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 5, 7.

Despite this agreement, by the beginning of 1981, the handwriting was clearly on the wall. NPS, along with other federal agencies, was being asked to cut its budget. By February 1981, the Washington Office notified its regional directors that immediate reductions in cultural resource preservation funds were necessary in the amount of 4 percent for Fiscal Year 1982. To this end, MWAC agreed to reduce the Knife River archeology funding by 6 percent, or $10,300 that year.[653]

On June 15, 1981, UND was awarded a new contract for a three-year research program to complete all Phase I investigation, with Ahler designated as principal investigator.[654] In that three-year period, test excavations were conducted in 1981 at the Youess (32ME415), Forkorner, Hump (32ME414), Buchfink, Lower Hidatsa Village, and Sakakawea Village sites. These excavations provided datable charcoal and ceramic samples. Additionally, during this three-year period, all magnetic survey activities in the park were completed. Greater emphasis was placed on Lower Hidatsa Village and lesser effort devoted to Sakakawea and Big Hidatsa Villages.[655] Reports on these excavations, and others, trickled out over the next few years.[656] Laboratory analysis of artifacts by UND continued as well.[657]

On May 13, 1983, MWAC held a meeting at KRIV concerning the completion of all Phase I research (archeological and ethnohistorical). MWAC archeologists Calabrese, Nickel, and Thiessen attended along with Ahler, KRIV Superintendent Hellickson-Key and UOMC ethnohistorian Raymond Wood. Much of the discussion at the meeting centered on the nature of the final synthesis of the Phase I investigations. Calabrese emphasized that the final synthesis document should outline program objectives, accomplishments, and problems of all Phase I research, as well as future research needs and prospects that were apparent then. Ahler stressed that the ethnohistorical studies (discussed in the next chapter) were also an important part of the overall research effort and should be documented in the final synthesis in a manner similar to the archeological

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[653] Jimmie L. Dunning to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region, 19 February 1982, File H3015 (Historic Sites and Structures Management), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[654] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 5, 7.

[655] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 7.

[656] See, for example, Stanley A. Ahler and Timothy Weston, *Test Excavations At Lower Hidatsa Village (32ME10), Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology and Archeology, University of North Dakota, 1981); Stanley A. Ahler, *Archeological Investigations At The Elbee Site, 32ME408, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology and Archeology, University of North Dakota, 1984); Stanley A. Ahler and Anthony A. Swenson, *Test Excavations At Big Hidatsa Village (32ME12), Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, 1985); Stanley A. Ahler, *Archeological Mitigation At Taylor Bluff Village (32ME366), Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, 1988).

[657] Stanley A. Ahler, *Archeological Research In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, 1980-1981 Progress Report For The Period January 1, 1984 Through March 31, 1984* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology and Archeology, University of North Dakota, 1984).

components of the research program. By the end of the meeting, it was agreed to merge both approaches. A deadline was set for completing the document in mid-1984.[658]

Publication of Phase I Research Program, 1984-1993

It took another ten years before all the Phase I research was finally gathered together and published in its entirety. It was worth the wait, because the publication edited by Thomas D. Thiessen concisely summarized the scholarly story of the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians in a comprehensive manner. The publication of this material in 1993 as part of MWAC's *Occasional Studies in Anthropology* also set the background for both NPS themes, *Indian Villages and Communities* and *Contact with the Indians*.

The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site was issued in four parts. Part I described the "overall program in general, particularly emphasizing the objectives and methodology employed in the research"[659] and contained material previously published, including an overview of KRIV's archeological program written by Calabrese,[660] and an article describing the integration of cultural resources, research, and management at KRIV by Thiessen. Part II recapitulated "a series of ethnohistorical studies that complemented the archeological research and provided an ethnohistorical backdrop against which the archeological record of Hidatsa culture change could be interpreted." Part III summarized the "analysis of various classes of material remains recovered during the research program, principally the pottery, lithics, modified and unmodified fauna, and Euro-American trade goods." And Part IV broadly interpreted "the park's archeological record and offered a revised cultural-historic taxonomy for what was proposed as the Knife region of the Middle Missouri sub-area."[661] Though most of the writing for *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* took place in 1985-1987, in actuality, it was largely based upon three important documents completed previously.

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[658] Thomas D. Thiessen to Files Re: Meeting Concerning the Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 25 May 1983, File H22 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[659] Thomas D. Thiessen, editor, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part I: Objectives, Methods, And Summaries Of Baseline Studies* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1993), vii.

[660] Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archaeological Program: An Overview," in *Perspectives On Archaeological Resources Management In The "Great Plains,"* edited by Alan J. Osborn and Robert C. Hassler (Omaha, Nebraska: I & O Publishing Company, 1987), 135-157; Thomas D. Thiessen, "The Integration of Cultural Resources, Research, and Management: An Example from the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota," in Conference on Research and Resource Management in Parks and on Public Lands, William E. Brown, and Stephen D. Veirs, *Partners In Stewardship: November 16-20, 1992, Jacksonville, Florida* (Hancock, Michigan: The George Wright Society, 1993), 58-61.

[661] Thiessen, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Part I: Objectives, Methods, And Summaries Of Baseline Studies*, vii.

The first document was Steven Lovick and Stanley Ahler's *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance in the Knife River Villages NHS* (February 1982). This report successfully summarized KRIV's cultural resource reconnaissance program that was conducted in the period 1976-1980. The reconnaissance program identified a total of fifty-five archeological and historic sites in the KRIV that covered a total of 25 percent of KRIV land surface. Lovick and Ahler's functional/descriptive classification system yielded three major village sites, five village periphery zones, twelve off-village activity areas, thirteen less prominent villages, twelve cemeteries, four trail complexes, nine farmsteads or homesteads, five other historic sites, and twenty artifact scatters or concentrations. In the end, Lovick and Ahler's report offered several important recommendations relevant to future management, preservation, development, and research activities pertaining to archeological sites, along with development and construction of a new, permanent visitor/administration center to serve KRIV.[662]

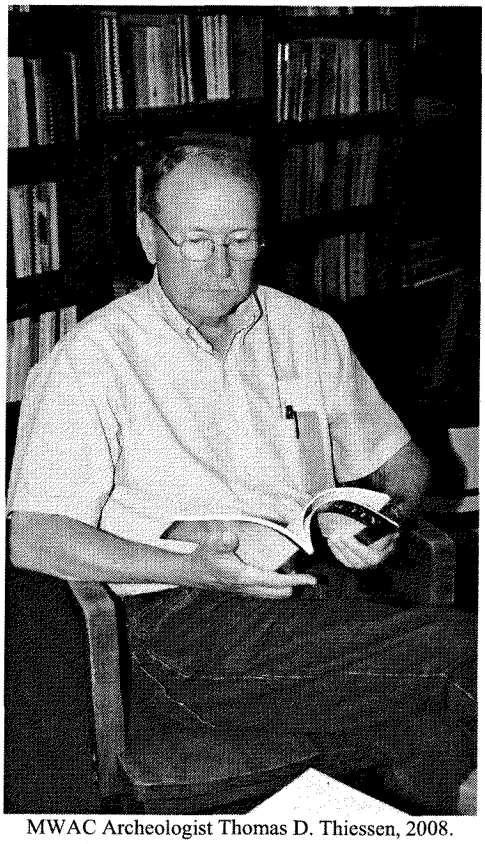
The next important document that contributed to *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* was the completion in 1983 of the report *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site.* CRMPs are action plans that are long-range in scope. They identify, summarize, and evaluate a park's cultural resource and related needs. Research for KRIV's CRMP began in 1980. By the time of its finalization three years later, *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* fully described for park management the known cultural resources within the park and addressed specific problems bearing on the management of those resources. In three major components, the CRMP also listed specific research needs and management documents required to affectively manage KRIV's cultural resources. The first component, entitled "Management Policies," reviewed the legislation and policy guidelines pertinent to the management of the park's cultural resources. The second section, entitled "Cultural Resource Inventory," provided brief descriptions of the known cultural resources within the park and the current state of knowledge regarding them. The third unit, entitled "Cultural Resource Management Problems Assessment," identified problems pertinent to the management of the park's cultural resources and proposed solutions. Except for unexpected emergency situations, all management actions pertaining to KRIV's cultural resources were to conform to this CRMP. According to the CRMP, in establishing KRIV, Congress clearly anticipated an "on-going program of archeological research in the park," and that the park was "created to serve the purpose of continuing research, and the responsibilities and opportunities that this entails must be considered in planning the management of the park's cultural resources."[663]

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[662] Lovick and Ahler, *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance In The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site.*

[663] Hellickson-Key and Thiessen, Cultural *Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, I-1-I-3.

The third and final important document to influence *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* was the preparation in 1987 of an NRHP archeological district nomination for KRIV by Thiessen. On October 26, 1974, the park was automatically placed on the National Register on the date of Congressional authorization,[664] and in 1978, the SHSND nominated KRIV to the state registry.[665] However, after 1978, no follow-up nomination form had been provided to document the significance of the park's archeological resources or the actual boundaries of the National Register property. Thiessen's archeological district nomination accomplished this purpose. It was based largely upon Lovick and Ahler's *Cultural Resource Reconnaissance in the Knife River Villages NHS*, and *Cultural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* and broadly defined the significance of KRIV as the "only unit of the National Park System that was created primarily to commemorate the history and prehistory of the Plains Indians."[666]



MWAC Archeologist Thomas D. Thiessen, 2008.
Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

In the end, Thiessen believed the Phase I archeological research program benefited the park in three ways. First, it greatly "expanded knowledge of the park's archeological resources," and the resulting inventory information was "complete enough to constitute a valuable tool for park management to use on a day to day basis, not only in planning development and maintenance activities within the park, but also documenting compliance with historic preservation mandates and procedures." Second, the research program "in addition to achieving the overall goal of acquiring baseline information," was flexible enough to accommodate changing management objectives, such as considering the most promising location for the visitor center and allowing park development to take place with minimal physical impact to the park's archeological resources. Another area that greatly benefited from the park's research program was the emergence of a new scientific and historical synthesis of the Hidatsa and Mandan

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664 Thiessen, *National Register Of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Archeological District*, Section 8.

665 Louis N. Hafermehl to National Park Service, 3 May 1978, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Richard A. Strait to Louis N. Hafermehl, 9 June 1978, File H3015 (Management and Preservation Compliance) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

666 Thiessen, *National Register Of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Archeological District*, Section 8.

Indians. It led to a "dramatic new understanding of the regional culture-history, the respective roles that these peoples played with one another in prehistoric and early historic times, and the nature of their interaction with early Euro-American visitors."[667] Thiessen clearly embraced Calabrese's vision of a "loftier" regional interpretation goal for KRIV and grounded KRIV in the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities.* On the other hand, he also acknowledged the importance of the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians.*

Mitigation Project at Taylor Bluff Site, 1982-1988

With the preparation of the above documentation either underway and/or completed, the archeological program at KRIV turned from Phase I research to mitigation projects to solve particular problems. The first major problem involved mitigation fieldwork on the Taylor Bluff Site, which was threatened in two ways: erosion along its contact with the Knife River and modification of Mercer County Route 542.

In 1979, ACOE, under the authority of the Stream Bank Erosion and Demonstration Act of 1974 (Public Law 99-251), proposed placing riprap in the Knife River for a bridge replacement adjacent to KRIV.[668] Nothing further happened regarding this project until 1982, when the bank line erosion reached within six feet of the local access road. This erosion not only threatened the county road, which served as the only access for visitors and employees to the park and for local residents to their homes and property, but had already destroyed 70 percent of the Taylor Bluff Site and now threatened the Big Hidatsa and Bihohka (32ME310) archeological sites. Riverbank erosion had occurred at the Elbee, Hadu Nowassa (32ME467), and Madman Bluff (32ME312) sites during that year as well. Because of this dire situation, Superintendent Hellickson-Key made stabilization of the Taylor Bluff Site the number one priority for funding in 1982. She pleaded with her superiors that "failure by the Park Service to complete any significant development at KRIV, as 'promised' during land acquisition and master plan hearings has left a very negative feeling in the community. To now ignore this problem will place a heavy burden on local residents who must rely on this road to conduct their daily lives."[669]

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[667] Thiessen, "The Integration of Cultural Resources, Research, and Management," 60-61.

[668] Richard A. Strait to Design Engineering, Inc., 26 March 1979, File L7423 (River Basin Studies and Activities), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[669] NPS, "Environmental Assessment for Riverbank Stabilization Project, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, Stanton, North Dakota," July 1984, File L7617 (Statements and Studies Concerning NPS Areas); Development/Study Package #110, "Protect Road and Major Archeological Site," 30 April 1982, Development/Study Package #113, "River Erosion Park General," 27 March 1986, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.



Excavation in Progress at Taylor Bluff Village, 1983. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

But before construction could take place, an evaluation of nearby cultural resources needed to be undertaken. This happened in 1983, when, under the direction of Ahler and Dennis L. Toom of the University of North Dakota, excavations were conducted at Taylor Bluff Village in order to mitigate the impact of ACOE riverbank stabilization measures. Two years later, road construction-related test excavations were conducted there as well.[670] The Ahler-Toom project secured the onsite preservation of the nearby Big Hidatsa archeological site, and alleviated the need for high- cost road relocation. In 1988, an Ahler report entitled "Archeological Mitigation at Taylor Bluff Village, Knife River Indian Villages NHS" provided excellent documentation on the significance of the Taylor Bluff Site. It supported his interpretation that the site was occupied by Sakakawea villagers after the 1834 burning of their village and provided a logical explanation for historical references to the continued existence of the "Middle" or *Awatixa* village after 1834.[671]

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[670] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 9.

[671] F.A. Calabrese to Stanley A. Ahler, 14 April 1988, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

Pre-Construction Archeology for New Visitor Center, 1987-1989

With the final selection of expanded Alternative Site B for the visitor center, in June of 1987, it was anticipated that additional information was still needed regarding the new impact area prior to construction work. Ahler proposed investigations of the impact area in two phases. Phase I excavations specifically addressed the question of the feasibility of the site and any added impacts from construction thereon. Initially, SHSND Superintendent Sperry expressed concern over the finding of "no effect" for these Phase I mitigative actions. Sperry believed it was a case of "adverse effect" because two affected properties; Lower Hidatsa West (32ME499) and Hotrok Site had already been nominated to the National Register under Criteria A and D. He argued that if the sites had been nominated only under Criterion D, the testing project could be considered a "no effect" because testing the sites would recover the scientific data that made the sites eligible. But under Criterion A, the two properties would certainly be affected by the presence of the visitor center. However, so as not to delay the project, NPS and SHSND signed an MOA concurring with the "adverse affect" determination.[672]

With no further delays, Phase I pre-construction visitor center work was completed that year under the direction of Ahler and MWAC archeologist Steven L. DeVore. Results from the Phase I investigation recommended a slight shift of the project to avoid a small part of the Lower Hidatsa West site and also recommended a preferred construction zone.[673] By April 1988, Calabrese advised Ahler that his office had received notification from RMRO to conduct mitigative archeological investigations within the entire area that Ahler had delimited as the "preferred construction zone."[674] However, before Phase II of the visitor center pre-construction project could begin the following year, which included stripping the plow zone of the site and excavation and recovery of artifacts from exposed sub-plow zone cultural features, RMRO initiated Section 106 consultation with the North Dakota SHPO on all developments associated with the visitor/administration complex at KRIV, including water, sewer, and electricity hookups, landscaping, a future interpretive earth-lodge, parking, and KRIV's trail system and wayside exhibits.[675] Phase II was completed in 1988, again under the direction of Ahler and Toom. In 1989, they reported on their fieldwork. The pre-construction visitor center project contributed considerable new research knowledge on KRIV cultural resources, and fortunately no burial sites were discovered—a major concern of the Three Affiliated Tribes in locating the visitor center at KRIV.[676]

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[672] James E. Sperry to Richard A. Strait, 27 July 1987, Richard A. Strait to James Sperry, 31 July 1987, File H3015 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[673] Picha, Toom, and Ahler, *1987 And 1988 Archeological Investigations Related To Visitor Center Construction In Area B At The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 1.

[674] Michael O. Holm to F.A. Calabrese, 11 April 1988; F.A. Calabrese to Stanley Ahler, 18 April 1988, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

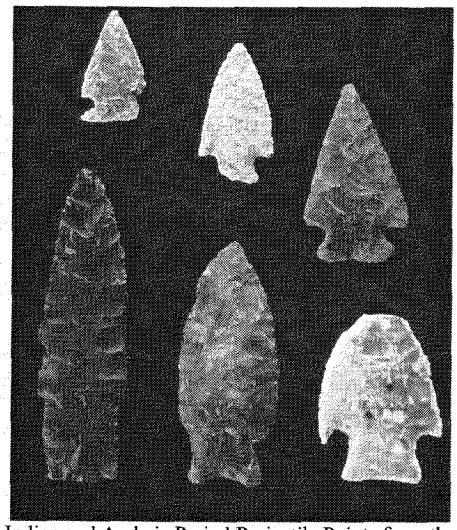
[675] Rodd L. Wheaton to James Sperry 23 December 1987, File H3015 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[676] Calabrese, "A History and Overview of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Phase I Research Program," 9; Department of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, "Proposal for Additional Archeological Test Excavation and Archeological Mitigation at Visitor/Administration Facility Site B,

KRIV and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990-1994

By the time the pre-construction visitor center project at KRIV was completed, there was a nationwide outcry over the disturbance of Native American burial sites. In 1990, this strong and widespread reaction resulted in the passage of NAGPRA. Three years later, NPS entered into a formal compliance phase with NAGPRA and published draft regulations pertaining to the act. Because of the sensitive and controversial issue, RMRO issued a direct memorandum to RMRO superintendents that declared a "moratorium on the analysis of American Indian human remains falling under the care and responsibility of the Rocky Mountain Regional parks." RMRO superintendents were also to deny any applications for research projects of this nature (destructive and non-destructive) on Native American human remains, including the analysis of Archaic/Paleo Indian period remains.[677]

In 1994, KRIV Superintendent Cartwright began the consultation process with the Three Affiliated Tribes. Part of the NAGPRA process was to determine the cultural affiliation of artifacts in order to return items to rightful tribal groups. In accordance with NAGPRA, KRIV completed a comprehensive list of all inventory and summary objects in the park's museum collection. There were a total of thirty human remains fragments (inventory objects) from nine archeological sites. There were also nineteen summary objects, including pipes, pipe stems, pipe bowls, and a dance wand, bags, a dance stick, came from the some of which collection donated Robinson 1991. Thereafter, to the park in KRIV sole-source in November 1994, Mardell contracted with Plainfeather of Little Bighorn College, Crow Agency, Montana, to conduct a cultural affiliation study of NAGPRA-related objects in the park collection.[678]



Paleo-Indian and Archaic Period Projectile Points from the Knife River Region. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa*

Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 19 June 1987, File H3015 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[677] Robert M. Baker to Superintendents, Rocky Mountain Region, Directorate and Division Chiefs, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, 1 October 1993, File H18 (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[678] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1994, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

In addition to these measures, Superintendent Cartwright consulted with members of the North Dakota Intertribal Reinterment Committee (NDIRC). This group was made aware of the list per an MOA that Cartwright signed with them in February and finalized in April 1995. Afterwards, Grace Henry (New Town), Edwin Benson (Halliday) and Clement Baker (Mandaree), three tribal members selected by the Three Affiliated Tribal government because of their individual expertise, came to the park to look at KRIV's summary and inventory cultural items. Subsequently, they informed Three Affiliated Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) Elgin Crows Breast of their findings. Based upon Crows Breast's recommendation, in July 1995, the Three Affiliated Tribes Council requested their repatriation, and KRIV complied in August of that year. Any inadvertent discovery of human remains after this date would be handled under an MOA with the tribe that stipulated the conditions and steps necessary for repatriation in future instances. Signed in early 1995, this MOA ensured that human remains and burial goods were handled in an appropriate manner.[679]

Other tribes were also interested in whether or not KRIV's museum contained items affiliated with their tribes. Therefore, in December 1995, a consultation meeting was held with a number of other tribal representatives at KRIV, with elders such as Henry, Benson, and Baker in attendance. The other tribal consultants from the Cheyenne, Crow, and Lakota were requested to examine artifacts from storage and some artifacts on exhibit in the park museum at KRIV. The coordinator and the consultants sat around a large table in the basement near the storage area with the superintendent and a park ranger in attendance. The park curator brought out the items and laid them on the table for examination. The artifacts were then handled one at a time. Careful examination followed as the group discussed each object in terms of cultural affiliation. At KRIV, twenty-six items were examined. The park reported ten unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. Out of the twenty-six items, seven were of unknown tribal affiliation. Five remained unknown, and two were thereafter assigned to tribes after consultation.[680]

KRIV's Collection Management Plan, 1989-1998

The issue of repatriation of human and burial goods from the KRIV's museum collection revealed the need for a CMP, which had been advocated by Superintendent Holm as early

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[679] Mardell Plainfeather to Grace Henry, 14 November 1994, Chas Cartwright to Russell Mason, 26 June 1995, Christopher D. Quale to Chas Cartwright, 18 July 1995, Chas Cartwright to Paul Friesema, 29 August 1995, File H18 (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act); Chas Cartwright to Russell Mason, 14 December, 1994, File A44 (Memorandums of Agreement with Federal, State, and Local Agencies); Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1995, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[680] Little Bighorn College, *Cultural Affiliation Of Collections At Little Bighorn Battlefield NM And Knife River Indian Villages NHS*, 31 October 1995, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND. An additional NAGPRA case arose in 2001 when a skull was returned to Knife River Indian Villages from Montana. After publication in the *Federal Register*, it was determined that the Three Affiliated Tribes had cultural affiliation with the remains and they were repatriated. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

as 1989. Holm recognized the need for a site-specific working tool to guide the day-to-day management and preservation of KRIV's archeological and ethnographic collection. But at the time Holm made his recommendation, the items were in storage 300 miles away at UND and would not be returned to KRIV until the completion of the new visitor/administration facility in 1992.[681]

Two years later, Superintendent Cartwright gave the need for a CMP a number two priority for the park. At this time, the majority of the park's 226,000-item museum collection was catalogued in extremely large lots. This situation created two serious problems: routine management activities, especially those that involved conducting collection inventories (e.g., the NAGPRA list), were difficult to perform, and accessibility was hindered regarding interpretive and scientific use of the collection as well. Cartwright proposed that a CMP be prepared as soon as possible in order to provide overall direction for the proper administration of the park's museum collection. He asked for regional assistance for the CMP.[682]

In 1994, Cartwright submitted a development/study package proposal to RMRO for the preparation of a CMP for the park's 750+-cubic-foot museum collection. Besides making the collection more accessible for routine and interpretive purposes, a CMP would help guide day-to-day management and preservation of this significant resource, addressing subjects such as collection storage, museum exhibits, maintenance schedules, and program staffing and funding.[683]

However, no official CMP was immediately forthcoming. Instead, in 1996, KRIV's museum collection was upgraded by reorganizing the large-lot catalogs to standardized material types within each site, greatly facilitating their use for research and interpretive purposes. At the same time, physical storage of objects was upgraded to provide chemical and mechanical stability by properly storing all objects in padded plastic containers. During this project, two human fragments and nine cultural objects that had been overlooked in the first inventory list provided to the Three Affiliated Tribes were discovered and subsequently repatriated to the tribe. In 1997, the museum reorganization project was completed.[684]

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[681] Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages NHS to Associate Regional Director, Planning and Resource Preservation, Rocky Mountain Region, 19 November 1990, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research); Michael Holm, "Outline of Planning Requirements: Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 27 April 1992, File D18 (Planning Program Records); Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1992, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[682] KRIV, "Fiscal Year 1994, Outline of Planning Requirements, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 20 January 1994, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[683] Development/Study Package #116, "Prepare Collection Management Plan," 24 January 1994, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management Plan), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[684] Development/Study Package #119, "Upgrade Museum Collection/Accountability/Management," 24 January 1994, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management Plan), Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1996-1998, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Meanwhile, in 1997, Catherine Hawks, a freelance conservator, was contracted to prepare a draft CMP.[685] In reviewing the draft CMP, Thiessen insisted that throughout the plan, the research value of the archeological collection and its associated archival records be emphasized. He continued:

> The archeological collection resulting from the research program conducted between 1976 and the late 1980s is a unique resource of paramount importance to resolving future research questions about the prehistory and early history of the park and the surrounding region. It resulted from rigorous, and systematic, carefully-reasoned application of a variety of investigative techniques, with a minimum of disturbance to the park's archeological resource base. It has played a central role in reassessing and revising our understanding of Native American cultural adaptations, technological and culture change, and the historic fur trade of a large part of the Northern Plains. The collection is extremely important not only for the light it has already shed on the park's archeological story, but also for its potential to answer archeological and historical questions raised in the future.[686]

Hawks completed *Knife River Indian Villages NHS Collection Management Plan* the following year.[687]

Revived Interest in Pursuing Phase II Research, 1984-1994

Just prior to the completion of Phase I in 1984, Superintendent Hellickson-Key presented Development/Study Package #111, "Phase Two-Ongoing Basic Archeological Research," to RMRO for funding, giving it the park's second highest priority. The second phase of Ahler's research program, which this package called for, sought to answer general and specific questions, such as: Which tribe and/or sub-tribe lived in which village, and for how long? When and why were the villages abandoned? And/or could special activity locations be identified, such as garden plots and butchering areas? With Phase II research, archeologists such as Ahler hoped to be able to interpret the relationship and evolution of the subsistence and technology of these people. This information was considered central to all the primary interpretive themes identified in the park's master plan and interpretive prospectus. Development/Study Package #111 argued that as a result of Phase I, NPS knew where the cultural sites were and some of the dates they were occupied. However, NPS knew nothing of who lived there, or when, or what they did there. "All existing information was based on the historic period," Package #111 passionately argued, "which is 300 years out of 6,000 years of history. A simile could be drawn in trying to interpret the history of a modern city with dated maps and no other information." Furthermore, Package #111 stated that this research was the

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[685] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1996-1998, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[686] Thomas D. Thiessen, Review Log No. 32: Midwest Archeological Center Comments on the Draft Collection Management Plan for Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 5 December 1997, File KNRI—Collections Management Plan, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[687] NPS, "Knife River Indian Villages NHS Collection Management Plan, 1998," File KNRI—Collections Management Plan, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

top priority of the park's 1983 CRMP. Ahler's 1978 research plan originally proposed that Phase II be funded for four years and cost $908,000 ($227,000 per year). It was to be followed by Phase III, which involved the initiation of major excavations, continuing analysis, interpretation programs, and living archeology.[688]

But in 1984, though Thiessen concurred and sympathized with the need for the implementation of Phase II, he felt that Phase II investigations should be initiated only after the completion of Phase I of the research program in December 1984. Furthermore, in view of the reality of increasing economic constraints, Thiessen realistically recommended that Phase II be funded for four years at $65,000 per year.[689] This attitude did not prevent MWAC chief archeologist Calabrese from attempting to obtain larger amounts for KRIV. In early January 1985, Calabrese informed RMRO that a total of $1.75 million was actually needed to implement Phase II investigation. Of this amount, $1.625 million was needed for the execution of a research program entailing four years of archeological field investigations and one year of comprehensive analysis and synthesis as well as any problem-solving fieldwork that might be necessary. Specific Phase II objectives would be refined at the conclusion of Phase I synthesis but would include problem-oriented test excavations at the Lower Hidatsa, Big Hidatsa, Sakakawea, Elbee and Youess sites as well as in special activity areas adjacent to the primary villages in the park and at key nearby sites located outside of the park. Calabrese noted that the $1.75 million was largely in agreement with the earlier 1979 cost estimate when adjusted for the effects of inflation, which was presumed at 10 percent per annum.[690]

But as noted in the previous chapter, this figure was much too high a price to pay for research when the park still did not have a visitor center. Eventually, some funding was diverted to finance an expanded Phase I that incorporated some Phase II objectives and, as noted, led to the publication of the four-part *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (1993). Essentially, this synthesis provided only the baseline cultural resource information that was necessary to plan and develop the new visitor/administration facility.

However, in 1994, the issue of repatriation of human and burial goods under NAGPRA and the CMP may have revived interest in conducting Phase II research. In that year, Superintendent Cartwright submitted an updated Development/Study Package #111. It contained many of the previous justifications for the project, stating that Phase II research was necessary so that the basic who, what, when, where, why, and how questions could be answered. The primary benefit of implementing this project, according to the resubmitted Package #111, was to acquire the ability to comprehensively interpret the prehistory of this nationally significant area. This project was also needed to provide information concerning chronology, cultural affiliation, regional context, and other

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[688] Development/Study Package #111, "Phase Two-Ongoing Basic Archeological Research," 30 May 1984, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[689] Ibid.; Thomas D. Thiessen Comments on KNRI-10-238 for Phase II, Ongoing Archeological Research Pkg. 111, 20 June 1984, File KNRI—Archeological Program, Phase II, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[690] F.A. Calabrese to Chief, Division of Cultural Resources, Rocky Mountain Region, 11 January 1985, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

related issues. According to Cartwright, failure to implement this project would result in continued inadequate interpretation of the "park's compelling story by telling merely 300 years of a history spanning several thousand years."[691] Clearly, his argument was based on the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*, and not just the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*.

In truth, Cartwright was only partially correct. The four-part, massive technical report, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, brought together the products of a wide array of scientific studies of the history and prehistory of the human populations of the Knife River. However, as early as 1987, Ahler and Thiessen were already aware that this information was not available in a form readily accessible and/or comprehensible to the visiting public at KRIV. They realized there was a significant need to transform some of the most important parts of the technical database into a series of educational documents and other products, which by their nature, were more accessible and readily understood by the public at large.[692]

People of the Willows and *Me-Ecci Aashi Awadi*

To fill this need, in 1991, Ahler, Thiessen, and Michael K. Trimble published *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians*, a layman's synthesis of the archeological and historical resources of the park. This manuscript was produced in 1989 through a cooperative agreement between UND and NPS. The Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association (TRNHA) intended to print and sell it at KRIV, but as the length of the manuscript grew beyond the scope of the original planned document, TRNHA did not wish to assume the cost burden of publishing such a lengthy book. Therefore, UND Press assumed publication rights, but only after two other university presses turned the manuscript down. In terms of works on the Hidatsa, one reviewer of it felt that it duplicated in some respects the popular volume, *The Hidatsa* (1989) by Mary Jane Schneider.[693] Consequently, TRNHA hired two freelance writers, Noelle Sullivan and Nicholas Peterson Vrooman, to write and publish a shorter, well-illustrated booklet on KRIV. In 1995, TRNHA published *Me-Ecci Aashi Awadi: The Knife River Indian Villages* (1995), which reflected on the history of the site and the continuing story of the indigenous peoples who once lived there. Both *People of the Willows* and *Me-Ecci Aashi Awadi* were lay-oriented archeological and ethnohistorical publications. They summarized the cultural history and traditional lifeways of Native American groups known to have occupied the sites within KRIV. However, they were no

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[691] Development/Study Package #111, "Conduct Phase II Archeological Research," 24 January 1994, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[692] Stanley Ahler, "A Proposal for Development of Archeological and Ethnohistorical Educational Information for the Knife River Indian Villages NHS, North Dakota," 7 December 1987, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[693] Stanley A. Ahler to Jean Hopkins, 7 December 1989, Daniel J.J. Ross to Stanley A. Ahler, 23 April 1990 with attachment, "University of Nebraska Press Review of People of the Willows," File KNRI—People of the Willows, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

substitute for a scholarly interpretation of the park's prehistory and history, which still awaited Phase II investigation.

Archeological Management at KRIV, Krieger Parcel Inventory, 1994-2007

After 1994, little or no archeological research work took place at KRVI for more than a decade. Archeological resource management replaced archeological research at KRIV.

For instance, with the acquisition of the 300-acre Jessie Krieger property in 1992, a Class III cultural inventory of the parcel was needed, including limited testing for the purpose of determining National Register eligibility.[694] Of the park's 1,758 acres, 1,458 acres had already been intensively inventoried for cultural resources as part of Ahler's Phase I archeological research program conducted from 1976 to 1985. However, the Krieger parcel inventory was needed to fulfill the National Park Service's management policy, which required the park manager "to locate, identify, evaluate, preserve, manage, and interpret qualified cultural resources in such a manner that they may be handed on to future generations unimpaired." The Krieger inventory was also needed to carry out Section 106 and Section 110 responsibilities under NHPA, Executive Order 11593, and NPS-28 regulations.[695]

In May of 1994, Metcalf Archeological Consultants conducted a surface survey and limited subsurface exploration of the Krieger parcel that contained the Stanton Mounds, which ethnohistorian Wood and archeologist Lehmer explored in 1969 and believed that the Stanton Mounds had been heavily used prehistorically, especially during the Plains Village Period. Then in 1978, KRIV archeologist Taylor made several informal visits to the Krieger parcel. Taylor made no formal report on his work but collected artifacts that were put under curation at KRIV. However, during the UND reconnaissance survey of the entire park (1976-1980), two sites were located within KRIV that possibly extended into the Krieger parcel. They were the Hidatsa Northern Trail Complex (32ME476), of which several branches of the trail complex traversed the Krieger parcel, and the Rokhohl Site (32ME474), which was characterized as a pre-village lithic scatter. Additionally, in conjunction with the larger study of KRIV, an eagle trap and low mound was photographed at a location known as 32ME1421 on the Krieger parcel, and during 1982, in an attempt to locate historic forts, one may have also been discovered there. However, a second recording of this site did not officially occur until 1987. At that time, J. Signe Snortland-Coles from SHSND visited the site to assess gravel pit damage to the site.[696]

The Krieger parcel project had several objectives. First and foremost, the project sought to provide preliminary evaluations of National Register significance of specific sites

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[694] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1994, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence),

[695] Development/Study Package #118, "Cultural Resource Inventory/Krieger Parcel," 18 June 1993, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[696] Michael D. Metcalf, *Knife River Indian Villages NHS: Cultural Resource Inventory Of The 300 Acre Krieger Parcel*, January 1995, 1-2, 5-6, KRIV NHS Library, Stanton, ND.

within it, which were found variously eligible under Criteria A, C and D. This research was made as compatible as possible with previous research efforts in the park, as summarized in the four-volume *Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (1993). Another project objective was to make recommendations to Superintendent Cartwright regarding proposed planned management activities. Future activities included reclaiming an old gravel pit, rehabilitating former agricultural land, and controlled burning of the upland prairie. In the end, inventory results confirmed three of Ahler's research questions relevant to the northern expansion of KRIV's park boundaries. Ahler had suggested that a level of study equivalent to what had occurred at KRIV be continued into the northern acquisition area to fill the data gap concerning pre-village occupations in the park and its environs, that the linear mound complexes and the high potential of the Stanton Mounds could significantly contribute to this end, and that there was a likelihood that soil deposits on the Krieger parcel held potential for studies of changing adaptations to local and regional resources within the context of regional environmental or climatic changes.[697] Thomas Thiessen also recommended to Cartwright that the Krieger land be inventoried with the same methodology employed by UND elsewhere at KRIV. He provided a cost estimate of about $100,000 for this, a figure that far exceeded what money Cartwright had available to inventory the tract.[698]

With the Krieger parcel surface survey and limited subsurface exploration inventory complete, Superintendent Chas Cartwright believed it important to update the 1987 National Register archeological district nomination prepared by Thiessen, because the existing nomination encompassed only two-thirds of the park.[699] Thiessen's National Register district took in only site areas as opposed to non-site areas, and Cartwright wanted to revise the boundaries to encompass the entire park, including non-site areas. The logical strategy for accomplishing this revision was to employ a cultural landscape approach followed by an updated nomination. MWAC agreed that it was time to reconsider and redefine the district boundary. This action was particularly needed since the synthesis of the Knife River Indian Villages Phase I had been provided key information that was not available at the time Thiessen prepared the district nomination. However, at this time, NPS was undergoing reorganization, workloads were heavy, and work was frequently interrupted due to new assignments and other demands. MWAC

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[697] Metcalf, *Knife River Indian Villages NHS: Cultural Resource Inventory Of The 300 Acre Krieger Parcel*, 26-34; Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1995, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[698] Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[699] Thomas Thiessen recalls, "At the time that I prepared the first nomination I wanted to use the boundaries of the park to delimit the archeological district. However, no one in the RMRO or with the NRHP staff in Washington concurred with this, so I ended up gerrymandering the district boundary around site boundaries as defined during the UND work. I strongly believe that the nomination should be revised and the district boundary extended for several reasons, among them the cultural landscape perspective." Notwithstanding Thiessen's viewpoint, the Krieger Tract was added to the National Register in 2007 through the efforts of Historical Landscape Architect Roberta Young of MWRO. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

suggested waiting until a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) on KRIV, which recently had gotten underway, was completed.[700]

Knife River Indian Villages: Cultural Landscape Reports, 1996-2004

Starting in 1996, Cultural Landscapes Program Leader Sherda Williams and Historical Landscape Architect Marla McEnaney began drafting CLR reports for KRIV. Their intention was to have a report completed by January 1997 and to tailor it to easily fold into the required revision to the archeological district nomination.[701] In the meantime, in early 1999, Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan developed *A Guide to Cultural Landscapes Reports* for the National Park Service in general, which helped to provide guidance.[702] Thereafter, a draft Level II CLR for KRIV was submitted in September 1999. This document was prepared using the Service-wide database, the Cultural Landscapes Automated Inventory Management System (CLAIMS), which found the "parent landscape" of Knife River Indian Villages NHS eligible for National Register status, with individual emphasis placed on contributing component landscapes of the major villages of the late prehistoric and/or historic period, Big Hidatsa, Lower Hidatsa, Sakakawea, and Taylor Bluff. According to the CLR for Knife River Indian Villages NHS, the landscape at Knife River "retains the very general character and feeling of the prehistoric and historic period for which it was known. Although some features of the village sites are no longer extant, the landscape offers a reflection of what once was present. Earth-lodge footprints, travois trails, the relationship to the rivers and adjacent landforms, and other details tell the story of the Hidatsa people that once inhabited the Missouri River Valley. Features such as visual connections between the village sites enable visitors to imagine what life was once like for the tribes and how a landscape dotted with earthlodges may have looked like."[703]

Archeological Management at KRIV, Elbee Site, 2001-2004

In 2001 and 2002, Skalsky and O'Halloran became very concerned about the increasing erosion at the Elbee Site. An on-site meeting was arranged with Stan Ahler, Fern

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[700] Chas Cartwright to Manager, Midwest Archeological Center, 4 September 1996; Mark J. Lynott to Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 11 September 1996, File H32 (National Register of Historic Places), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[701] Chas Cartwright to Manager, Midwest Archeological Center, 4 September 1996, File H32 (National Register of Historic Places), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[702] Associate Director, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships to Regional Directors, 31 March 1999, File H3015 (Management Preservation, Maintenance, List of Classified Structures) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[703] Tom Thiessen to Roberta Young, 9 September 1999; David N. Given to Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages, 3 December 1999, File 3017 (Special Studies) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; NPS, *Taylor Bluff Village Site, Knife River Indian Village NHS, National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory* (Draft), 1999, File H3015 (Management Preservation, Maintenance, List of Classified Structures) KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; NPS, *National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory 1999: Knife River Indian Villages: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

Swenson, and Paul Picha of the SHPO office, Thomas Thiessen and Virgil Noble of MWAC, and Skalsky and O'Halloran. At this meeting, it was determined that there was definite risk to the site and additional data about the site was needed to make decisions about mitigation options. In September 2002, William Volf of MWAC conducted a fluxgate magnetometer survey of the site, which showed area with high probability of having subsurface features.[704]

Following the determination that archeological resource management needed at the Elbee Site, in the summer of 2004, Dennis Toom and the UND field school conducted archeological excavations at the site. Their testing was selectively based on a magnetic survey conducted the previous fall by William Volf of the northern part of the Elbee Site. Excavations uncovered three Plains Village archeological features, including two large undercut storage pits and one basin-shaped central hearth feature. The UND field school project determined that the northern part of the Elbee Site contained the remains of a single Plains Village archeological component, radiocarbon dated to the mid-1500s. There were also several features that might be linked to an early occupation at Knife River by the Hidatsa. Testing also indicated two substantial points: First, there was approximately a thirty-meter cushion of non-archeological land between the Elbee Site and the newly discovered Hidatsa features, and second, the Elbee Site appeared not to be seriously threatened by erosion for some time to come.[705]

Though UND's report seemed to alleviate concerns about erosion of the Elbee Site, UND suggested four alternatives to protect the Elbee Site from riverbank erosion. The first alternative was no action, based on a low discovery of artifacts near the riverbank. The river could be allowed to take its natural course until other infrastructure or cultural resources were threatened. The second alternative was to monitor bank retreat and act if known artifacts appeared threatened. The third alternative was to attempt soft protection, using bioengineering if low-value cultural resources were present. The fourth, and most costly, alternative was to seek funding for hard protection if high-value cultural resources were deemed present. Two locations on the Knife River had already received hard bank protection work (Sakakawea Village and the Taylor Bluff Site), one using a combination of riprap and berm construction, and the other utilizing interconnecting concrete blocks. In both cases, protection methods needed annual maintenance to replace pieces that had been damaged from spring ice breakups.[706]

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[704] Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[705] Cheryl Schreier, Terry O'Halloran, Rod Skalsky to Tom Thiessen, 3 December 2003, File KNRI—Archeology, MWAC, Lincoln, NE; Dennis L. Toom, *Elbee Village Site (32ME408): 2003 Archeological Test Excavations, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, Mercer County, North Dakota* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: Dept. of Anthropology, University of North Dakota, 2004), iii.

[706] Richard Inglis to Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 12 September 2003, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

"Missouri Mafia Tradition"

From its inception, the archeological resource research program at KRIV, as conceived by Ahler and promulgated by MWAC archeologists such as Calabrese, saw a wider vision to the research and interpretation of KRIV's archeologist resources. As members of the "Missouri Mafia," they wished to extrapolate what they learned from the 1,758-acre NHS at Knife River to better understand and piece together Missouri River Valley prehistory and history of Northern Plains Indian culture in the broadest tradition of previously noted archeologists such as Donald Lehmer.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ETHNOHISTORICAL RESOURCE RESEARCH PROGRAM AT KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, 1974-2004

From the beginning, the National Park Service (NPS) concluded that ethnohistory, or the use of historical documents and the historical methodology in anthropological research, was important to guiding the development of Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS). Though archeological research was primary to understanding KRIV's resources and significance related to the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*, the role of ethnohistorical research and the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*, should not be diminished.

Prior to the establishment of the NHS in 1974, ethnohistorians had conducted considerable research on the historic Hidatsa (*Hidatsa*-proper, *Awatixa*, and *Awaxawi*). Much of this knowledge was derived from Euro-American contacts with the Hidatsa and Mandan, starting with the French traders in the 1700s and ending with more detailed and increasing documentation in the 1830s and beyond. When Knife River became a NHS, some of this material was already known, thanks to early Western frontier historians, cartographers, and ethnologists. But, still there were significant gaps that needed attention. After 1977, an ethnohistorical resource research program designed for NPS by W. Raymond Wood helped fill many of these areas.

Based on *Historical Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historical Site* (1977), Wood's research program was not as ambitious as that espoused for archeological research at KRIV, nor did the Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) to the same degree financially support it. Nevertheless, individual scholarly efforts, at times indirectly and/or directly supported by NPS, were able to fulfill parts of Wood's research goals.[707] For instance, scholarship on the origins of the Hidatsa, the impact of fur trade on Hidatsa lives and material culture, and the spread of smallpox among them all pertinent to the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*, matured during the period 1980 to 1986. Even so, MWAC's inability to find substantial financial support to continue the program killed most additional effort. Thereafter, many of the remaining goals in KRIV's ethnohistorical research program went unfulfilled.

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[707] W. Raymond Wood's graduate students conducted much of the ethnohistorical research and received some financial support from MWAC. For instance, both Jeffrey R. Hanson and Michael "Sonny" Trimble completed Ph.D. degrees based on academic problems related to Knife River Indian Villages. Wood also often inspired students to pursue Knife River Indian Villages-related research that could not be supported financially by MWAC. An example of this is Stephen A. Chomko's "The Ethnohistorical Setting of the Upper Knife-Heart Region" in *Papers in Northern Plains Prehistory and Ethnohistory*, edited by W. Raymond Wood, Special Publication No. 10, Sioux Falls, South Dakota: South Dakota Archaeological Society. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

Ethnohistorical Research and W. Raymond Wood, 1977

Early on, NPS realized the need to evaluate all available historical documentation related to the Hidatsa. Specific consideration was given to the necessity to locate significant resource materials, to the reliability of this material, to the procedures and time necessary to obtain that material, and to finding individuals capable of carrying out this research. Prior to 1976, scholars with individual interest in the subject, such as University of Missouri-Columbia (UM-C) anthropology professor Raymond Wood, had accomplished a great deal in the field of historical/ethnohistorical research pertaining to KRIV. Naturally, when the time came to pursue the subject in more depth, NPS turned to Wood for KRIV's ethnohistorical resource research program initial investigation.[708]

In 1977, according to Wood, an adequate library for the park covering basic published ethnographic sources would "run no less than about 1,000 items—including books and individual articles, and including some sources relating to the local geology and environmental setting." In addition to these published historical resources, Wood pointed out to NPS officials that there was also a great deal of archival resources relevant to Knife River Indian Villages that had yet to reach print, or had been published only in part, and were considered vital to interpretation of the NHS.[709]

One major repository was New York City's American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), which housed ethnographer Gilbert L. Wilson's field notes and interviews of Hidatsa and Mandan Indians conducted between 1908 and 1918. In 1977, Raymond Wood estimated that between one-third and one-half of Wilson's notes had yet to be mined for important information on Hidatsa culture, "especially in the spheres of material culture and cultural ecology." In addition to his notes, AMNH's collection included several hundred Hidatsa artifacts and items of ethnographic interest. Another Wilson-related repository was at the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), which contained Wilson's photograph album with four hundred images taken on and around the Fort Berthold Reservation between 1903 and 1918. Besides collections pertaining to Wilson, several other repositories contained additional critical ethnohistorical material. For instance, the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) museum in Bismarck contained archeological collections from most of the sites in the vicinity of Knife River and the villages themselves, maps of these sites, and a large collection of Hidatsa and Mandan ethnographic material culture. Or for example, the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska, held the papers and related documents from Prince Maximilian's visit to the upper Missouri River in 1833-1834, including his original diary, the original field sketches and watercolors made by Karl Bodmer, Maximilian's artist, and related items, such as a set of maps of the Lewis and Clark's Expedition. Finally, UM-C contained historical research conducted by Wood and archeologist Donald J. Lehmer in the early

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[708] Stanley A. Ahler to Tom Thiessen, 9 December 1976, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview."

[709] Wood, "Historical Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 12-20.

1970s, when they investigated different aspects of the history and prehistory of the upper Knife-Heart region together.[710]

In 1977, Wood signed a contract with MWAC to develop an ethnohistorical research program for KRIV. Under this contract, Wood reviewed the state of ethnohistorical research pertaining to the NHS in *Historical Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages National Historical Site* (1977). This volume eventually became part of MWAC's development plan for interpreting the park. In *Historical Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages*, Wood concluded that though a "good start" had been made in the direction of understanding Hidatsa history, "a great deal" remained to be done. Wood recommended four independent ethnohistorical studies.

First, Wood argued that a new synopsis of Hidatsa and Mandan ethnohistory was "badly needed" and that even existing standard studies needed careful study and possible revision. At the very least, he thought that a new look at Hidatsa origin traditions and later documentation was "mandatory," that the "effects of smallpox and other epidemic diseases on the population and lifeways of Central and Northern Plains Indian groups" was essential, that a new look at the relations between the Crow and the Hidatsa needed investigation, and that traders' journals, such as David Thompson's notes from 1797-1798, required reconsideration.[711]

Second, the UM-C anthropology professor thought that a study of Hidatsa material culture was vital, especially given the extent of the existing collections at AMNH, SHSND, and other museums, such as the Heye Foundation Museum of the American Indian in New York City, the University of Colorado and the University of Michigan museums, the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC), the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at Harvard (Boston), and Carnegie Museum (Pittsburgh). He suggested that a specialist in Plains material culture could prepare an account using historical sources at these institutions that would "trace the changes that took place during the traumas accompanying Euro-American acculturation."[712]

Third, Wood proposed that a detailed study of the ecology of the Hidatsa be undertaken, a cultural ecological study that "clearly and unambiguously analyzed the role ecological

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[710] Ibid. In addition to American repositories, there were repositories of relevant ethnohistorical information in several archives in Canada (Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Toronto), which held original journals written by Canadian traders who came to the Mandan-Hidatsa villages to trade for furs and horses. The work that Raymond Wood and Thomas Thiessen did with these materials resulted in their book, *Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains*, which was one of the major products of the ethnohistorical research program. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[711] Wood, "Historical Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 21-29. The prehistory of the Crow Indians related to the Knife River Indian villages has been a research concern since 1968, when Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Surveys were being conducted on the Missouri River. See, for instance, *A Review Of The River Basin Surveys Smithsonian Institution Museum Of Natural History For The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee*, Lincoln, Nebraska, 30-31 January 1968, 59-60, Personal Papers of Thomas Thiessen, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[712] Wood, "Historical Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 21-29.

factors had in shaping the society as it is known to us from the archeological and historical record." And fourth, ethnohistorian Wood pointed out that the entire Maximilian-Bodmer collection needed a complete restudy, including retranslating Maximilian's journals and publication of all of Bodmer's sketches and watercolors. To accomplish the ethnohistory and cultural ecology studies, Wood recommended that such studies be undertaken at a university, where graduate students with an interest in the subject matter might be employed. For the study of material culture, he suggested that Mary Jane Schneider, a professor at Grand Forks, North Dakota, specializing in the area, might undertake the study. In Wood's opinion, employing Schneider would be practical because of her proximity to Ahler, the archeological coordinator of the park's research master plan. For the restudy of the Maximilian-Bodmer collection, Wood advocated that NPS solicit noted Plains historian John C. Ewers for the project, once he retired from the U.S. National Museum.[713]

Cartographic Research and W. Raymond Wood, 1978

A year later, anthropologist Wood, again under contract with MWAC, reviewed early historical maps in the vicinity of Knife River Indian Villages NHS. His report, *Notes on the Historical Cartography of the Upper Knife-Heart Region* (1978), looked at all known relevant published cartographic data on the Knife River region, plus he obtained new data during a visit to the National Archives and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Wood's *Notes on the Historical Cartography of the Upper Knife-Heart Region* eventually became a guide for NPS to information contained on early maps of the region. It was especially relevant to the identification of historic and/or archeological sites within the NHS and nearby areas.

In his cartographic study, Wood started out first by looking at French and British maps available before 1804 and then moved on to maps produced during and after the 1804-1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition, War Department and other Missouri River maps, and General Land Office (GLO) survey maps. Wood also perused manuscript maps in MHS and SHSND collections by early archeologists such as Theodore Lewis, Frank J.V. Kiebert, Orin G. Libby, and A.B. Stout, and maps produced by Native Americans, including Wolf Chief, Goodbird, and Buffalo Bird Woman. Wood concluded the study with a working paper and guide to the existing literature relevant to Knife River. This working paper was useful to the NPS for a variety of planning reasons and significantly augmented the written documentation available for the upper Knife-Heart Region. Ultimately, Wood recommended that the "original journals of early explorers to the area be reexamined for information which may have been deleted or modified by earlier

[713] Ibid. Neither W. Raymond Wood nor MWAC made any progress with the Prince Maximilian materials, but a definitive edition of the Prince's journal has been in the works for years and is only now beginning to appear in print. For instance, in 2008 the University of Oklahoma Press published *The North American Journals Of Prince Maximilian Of Wied* edited by Stephen S. Witte, Marsha V. Gallagher and William J. Orr. Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

transcriptions and translations" as the next step in ethnohistorical research for Knife River Indian Villages NHS.[714]

Insufficient Funding, 1979

Both of Wood's 1977 and 1978 reports were highly desirable and necessary documents that provide valuable information to the both KRIV's archeological and interpretive programs. These reports outlined the urgent need to formally initiate additional ethnohistorical and ethnographic studies. Furthermore, Wood informed MWAC chief archeologist F.A. Calabrese that he had two competent and informed UM-C students ready to inaugurate such studies as soon as funding was available.[715] At the same time, there was also a need and desirability to conduct an oral history survey of Stanton area residents, who held important information regarding the history of the park area that needed recording. However, try as he might, Calabrese simply could not find funding for either of these worthwhile ethnohistorical and oral history projects.[716]

For the record, in 1979, Calabrese wrote in frustration that "we were not able to support to the degree anticipated the ethnohistorical research as outlined by Wood. Then, too, the ethnohistorical research requires the diligence of one or two individuals pursuing specific leads rather than teams of scientists trying to resolve major problems." He concluded that "in total the ethnohistorical data compiled with meager financial support have great potential for re-assessing the long-term interaction between Euro-American and natives of the Knife River area and the resultant changes wrought in native culture.[717] Simply put, MWAC had insufficient funding to pursue the NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*.

Ethnohistorical Literature Gaps Filled, 1980-1986

Fortunately, MWAC archeologist Thiessen, anthropologist Wood, and several other scholars took an interest in the subject of *Contact with the Indians*. In the 1980s, they took it upon themselves to conduct the necessary research, with direct or indirect NPS support, to fulfill many of the ethnohistorical studies recommended in the historical resources research plan outlined in *Notes on the Historical Cartography of the Upper Knife-Heart Region*.

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[714] W. Raymond Wood, *Notes On The Historical Cartography Of The Upper Knife-Heart Region* (Columbia, Missouri: American Archaeology Division, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1978).

[715] Wood, *Notes On The Historical Cartography Of The Upper Knife-Heart Region.*

[716] Chief, Midwest Archeological Center to Regional Directors, Midwest and Rocky Mountain Regions, 16 November 1978, File H14 (Administration History), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. As an alternative, a training lecture on oral history was conducted at KRIV for Park Service personnel, perhaps in hopes of gathering important information in the future.

[717] Calabrese, "Knife River Indian Villages Archeological Program: An Overview," 24, 27.

For instance, in the early 1980s, Thiessen edited a number of studies that filled in the gaps in several areas of fur trader knowledge related to KRIV. Edited works by Thiessen included "Charles McKenzie's Narrative of the Mississourie Indians: A New Transcription" (1980), "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account of a Visit to the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians in 1806," (1980), and "Notes on Surrounding Historic Sites," (1982). Thiessen in 1981 also compiled "Excerpts from the Brandon House Post Journals Relating to Trade with the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians, 1793-1830." On the other hand, Wood followed up his cartographic studies with "The John Evans 1796-97 Map of the Missouri River," (1981) and, along with G.E. Moulton, produced "Prince Maximilian and New Maps of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers by William Clark" (1981). Thereafter, the two scholars prepared *Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains: Canadian Traders Among the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians, 1738-1818: The Narratives of John Macdonell, David Thompson, Francois-Antoine Larocque, and Charles McKenzie* (1985), a history of the fur trade between the Hidatsa and Mandan and traders based in south-central Canada. Thiessen also addressed the subject in "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River" and "Historic Trading Posts Near the Mouth of the Knife River, 1794-1860." These publications summarized the available published and unpublished data on the nature and location of several trading posts in the vicinity of Knife River Indian Villages NHS.[718]

Meanwhile, Wood took the lead with regard to understanding the origins of the Hidatsa. Working with his graduate student, Jeffrey R. Hanson, whose dissertation was *Hidatsa Culture Change from 1780 to 1845: A Cultural Ecological Approach* (1983), and under the auspices of MWAC, Wood and Hansen published *The Origins of the Hidatsa Indians: A Review of Ethnohistorical and Traditional Data* (1986). This study systemized what was known to date regarding the traditional accounts of their origin and placed that information in "a consistent and testable frame of reference."[719] Furthermore, Michael K. Trimble, another student of Wood's, in a paper entitled "Infectious Disease and the Northern Plains Horticulturists: A Human-Behavior Model" (1986), addressed Hidatsa responses to the introduced diseases as well as the significant population decline in their history.[720] Trimble later published *An Ethnohistorical Interpretation of the Spread of Smallpox in the Northern Plains Utilizing Concepts of Disease Ecology* (1986) and was a co-author of *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians* (1991) with Ahler and Thiessen.

Despite the above spate of ethnohistorical research, by 1986, many of the recommended ethnohistorical study goals made by Wood had yet to be reached. A formal study of Hidatsa material culture had not been undertaken. A new edition of Maximilian's journals and Bodmer's paintings had not been pursued. Finally, the critical need for a thorough study of Hidatsa ethnohistory went unfulfilled, although in 1986, Hanson

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[718] Wood, "The Ethnohistory Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 2, Thiessen, "Early Explorations and the Fur Trade at Knife River," 29-46, Thiessen, "Historic Trading Posts Near the Mouth of the Knife River, 1794-1860," 47-74.

[719] Wood, "Hidatsa Origins and Relationships," 11.

[720] Trimble, "Infectious Disease and the Northern Plains Horticulturalists: A Human-Behavior Model," 75-129.

provided a brief paper entitled "Hidatsa Ethnohistory, 1800-1845." Hanson's synopsis provided a "generalized overview of the Hidatsa cultural system as it operated during the period 1800 to 1845," and discussed the "archeological potential of the ethnographic/ethnohistoric data." He also offered suggestions regarding the "role of Hidatsa ethnography as an aid and complement to the archeological studies of the Hidatsa and Mandan peoples."[721]

The period from 1980 to 1986 was a productive period for ethnohistorical research pertaining to KRIV. However, in 1986, when Calabrese tried to obtain $100,000 in funding to support further ethnohistoric research and a study of Hidatsa-Mandan material culture, he failed again to do so.[722]

Ethnohistorical Research Pertaining to Knife River, 1986-2006

Because of a lack of available funding, the subject of ethnographic studies fell off the research radar between 1986 and 1990, although a number of oral histories were recorded and transcribed by Shirley Nave from Fort Berthold Community College of approximately twenty-five Mandan, Hidatsa, and/or Arikara people from the reservation for possible use in an audio-visual program.[723] Then in 1993, under Thiessen's editorship, MWAC published its four-part study of the research program at Knife River Indian Villages NHS entitled *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages NHS.*

Interestingly, when Stanley Ahler and Carl R. Falk (former Chief of MWAC from 1972-1975) had proposed the project to Calabrese, they had envisioned a book-length synthesis of Hidatsa culture history based on KRIV research. But to his credit, Calabrese resisted that idea. Instead, he thought that what was needed was a synthesis of all the research on Knife River to date, including ethnohistory.[724] Therefore, it was not surprising that Part II of this study was devoted specifically to reviewing the state of ethnohistorical studies at the park. Part II of *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* recapitulated a number of the ethnohistorical studies discussed above as a backdrop to the archeological record of Hidatsa culture change. It stated that this research would be of "substantial interest to Plains scholars and considerable utility in telling the story of the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians to the public." Part II also concluded "a good start has been made toward a comprehensive study of Hidatsa ethnohistory. A number of working papers have been prepared that substantially upgrade our knowledge of their history, and new, more reliable editions of many of the basic

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[721] Hanson, "Hidatsa Ethnohistory, 1800-1845," 130-153.

[722] F.A. Calabrese to Chief, Division of Cultural Resources, Rocky Mountain Region, 11 January 1985, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[723] Jerry Ward to Shirley Witt/Mary Ann Kave, 19 March 1990, Mary A. Kave to Shirley Mason, 11 October 1990, File H2217 (Special Studies Permanent), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[724] Oral History of Thomas Thiessen, 14 July 2008; Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

documents dealing with that history are now available in manuscript, some of which are now in press."[725]

A year later, hope for additional ethnographic work at KRIV came when in the spring of 1994, Washington Office senior ethnographer Muriel "Miki" Crespi called for competitive proposals for applied ethnography projects for ethnography studies. To take advantage of the nationwide potential funding of $346,000 for ethnographic studies, Superintendent Cartwright submitted Development/Study Package #120 proposing a comprehensive ethnographic overview and assessment study to focus on Native American associations with the park's cultural and natural resources. The package requested $35,000 for this ethnographic research. The study would include conducting background research and oral interviews with Three Affiliated Tribal members and the preparation of a report on its findings. KRIV officials hoped to gain a list of the park resources used by Indian peoples, a better understanding of the use of each type of resource, including the frequency and size of the socio-cultural and/or subsistence use, and to learn about the group's access to the park's resources. This information was needed to meet management needs for ethnographic information on associated peoples.[726]

To justify the need, Package #120 stated that the overall significance of the park to contemporary Indian peoples, such as the Three Affiliated Tribes, was not completely understood and that, in the absence of an ethnographic overview and assessment, the park could not ensure that present visitor use was compatible with Native American concerns. Furthermore, because the park was the only one within the National Park System that recognized Plains Indian peoples, Package #120 was needed in order to manage the park with the requisite degree of sensitivity. The study was also needed to fulfill NPS' management policy to locate, identify, evaluate, preserve, manage, and interpret qualified cultural resources. Furthermore, it would help KRIV carry out its responsibilities under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Executive Order 11593, and NPS-28 regulations. All together, the Rocky Mountain Regional Office (RMRO) submitted eleven proposals to the Washington Office for consideration. However, the KRIV proposal was ranked seventh and was not funded.[727]

Another opportunity to conduct ethnographic research at Knife River came in 2003 during Cheryl A. Schreier's time as KRIV superintendent. At that time, the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) contracted with the University of Arizona's Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology to conduct a cultural affiliation/traditional association determination statement and ethnographic resource assessment and resource inventory for three North Dakota parks. They included Knife River Indian Villages NHS, Fort Union Trading Post NHS, and Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The University of Arizona study of these parks provided NPS with data to aid it in the "development of consultation

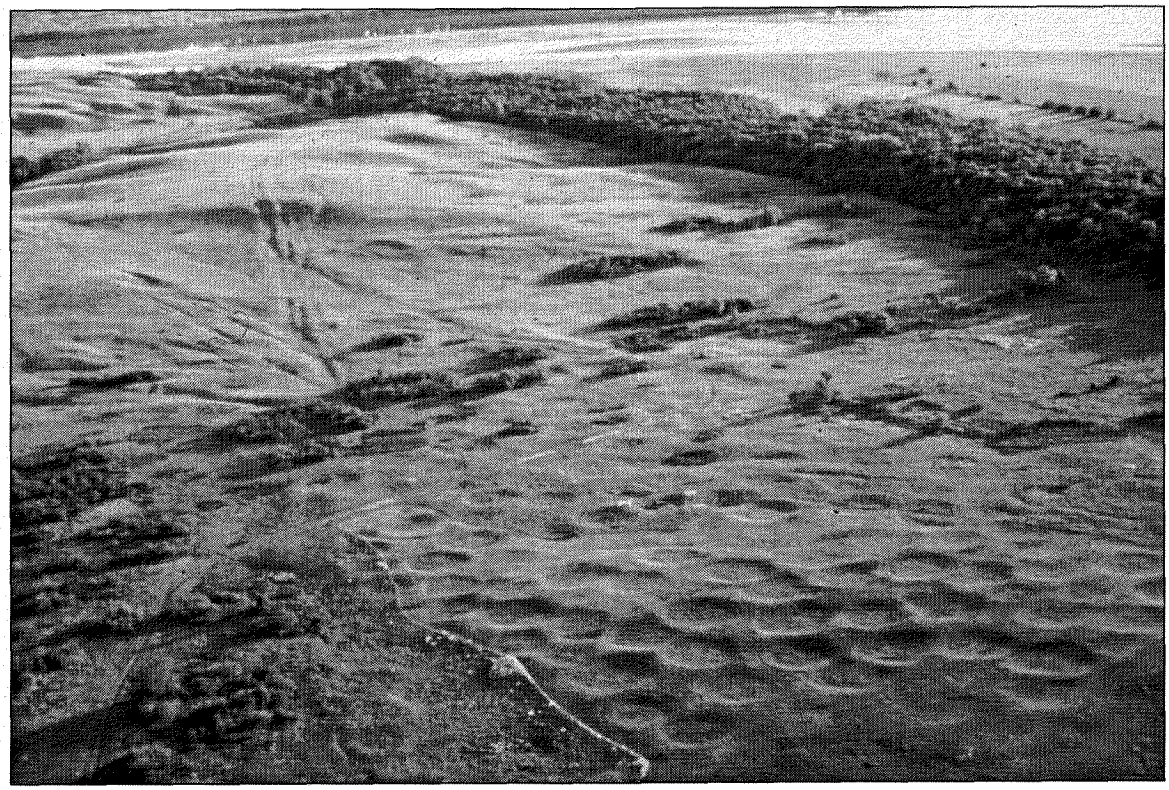
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[725] Thiessen, *The Phase I Archeological Research Program For The Knife River Indian Villages Historic Site: Part II, Ethnohistorical Studies*, v, 6.

[726] Associate Director, Cultural Resources to Regional Directors, March 1994; Development/Study Package #120, "Prepare Ethnographic Overview and Assessment," 27 April 1994, File H30 (Historic Sites and Structures Management and Preservation), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[727] Ibid.

protocols and future cultural and natural resource studies, interpretation, program objectives, and park management decisions." The final study, entitled *Cultural Affiliation Statement and Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study Final Report: Knife River Indian Villages NHS, Fort Union Trading Post NHS, and Theodore Roosevelt National Park* (December 2006), was also designed to "document contemporary connections between park resources and culturally affiliated or traditionally associated tribes" in order to meet Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) requirements and other legislation, policy, and regulations that addressed peoples traditionally associated with KRIV's resources.[728]



Big Hidatsa Village (Foreground) with Trails and Cemetery Areas in the Left Background. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS Library.

Not surprisingly, *Cultural Affiliation Statement and Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study Final Report* formally determined that Hidatsa, Mandan, Arikara, and Crow tribal groups had cultural affiliations with Knife River Indian Villages NHS. The report also made several park-specific recommendations regarding resource assessments. According to the University of Arizona study, the single most evident data need for the park was a systematic ethnobotanical report. It reasoned, "Certain plant habitats only exist in the

[728] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 7, 9-11. The National Park Service report was the second multi-tribe cultural affiliation study conducted for North Dakota. A year earlier, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation commissioned Mary Jane Schneider to undertake a similar study. Mary Jane Schneider, *Cultural Affiliations Of Native American Groups Within North And South Dakota: An Ethnohistorical Review; Final Revised Report* (Grand Forks, N.D.: University of North Dakota, Anthropology Research, 2002).

parks [such as KRIV], and thus constitute an invaluable source of knowledge to preserve for future generations." Other recommendations were made as well. For instance, it suggested expanding and updating all exhibits and interpretive materials of the affiliated tribes as well as tribal views of the park. In this regard, it recommended consultation with tribal elders regarding certain aspects of exhibits. The University of Arizona study also suggested proactively engaging students from tribal schools in educational programs and that KRIV issue permits to affiliated tribal groups to collect ceremonial resources or use of the park for rituals. Additionally, the report pointed out that if NPS wished to "present a balanced view in their exhibit and interpretive materials, then tribal views about the parks' history and significance must be recorded."[729]

In its final analysis, the ethnographic overview and assessment generally focused on KRIV as a central place in the lives of the Northern Plains tribes, thus supporting the NPS theme, *Indian Villages and Communities*. It relished the concept of the Knife River as the historical center of the earth-lodge villagers' homeland, unifying the views of all ethnic group representatives but particularly the Three Affiliated Tribes. KRIV, as a whole, was central to the identity, history, religion, and culture of the Three Affiliated Tribes. Furthermore, the villages allowed contemporary tribal members to reinforce their connection with their ancestors and to learn from the past.[730]

Regarding management issues, Three Affiliated Tribal consultants to the University of Arizona study stated that they were generally pleased with the condition of the park. At the same time, they were concerned with several aspects of the park's exhibits and interpretation. First, they objected to the park bringing "outsiders or 'Hollywood Indians,' such as Michael Terry, to their festivals and cultural activities to explain Mandan and Hidatsa history to the general public." They considered the use of a "pan-Indian" approach to explaining Hidatsa/Mandan/Arikara history, religion, and culture damaging to the individuality of each tribe and ethnic group. It not only destroyed diversity, according to them, but also spread information that was "just plain erroneous." The Three Affiliated Tribal consultants also pointed out that NPS sometimes portrayed a "museum-like image of the Hidatsa and Mandan" in their exhibits. They suggested that KRIV embrace the Three Affiliated Tribes as a modern people who survived tremendous hardships and that current exhibits include more of their contemporary cultural life so that the public may understand that they have not lost their culture despite the changes in the world around them.[731]

On the other hand, Crow tribal consultants expressed their concern that KRIV should explain the ancestral relationship between the Crow and the Hidatsa at Knife River, which the Crow called *Bichie Asha*. Despite the time lapsed, the Crow had never lost their connection with KRIV. Both the Crow concern and the Three Affiliated Tribal concerns emphasized the unfulfilled research suggestions made in 1977 by W. Raymond

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[729] Zedano, et al., *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study*, 3, 5-6.
[730] Ibid., 187-188, 197-200.
[731] Ibid., 187-188, 197-200.

Wood for a new look at ancestral relations between the Crow and the Hidatsa and for a comprehensive Hidatsa and Mandan ethnohistory.[732]

Ethnohistory Opportunity

In 1993, Part II of *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* described the state of ethnohistorical research as hopeful. Nonetheless, in the last decade and a half, KRIV has not achieved a single pertinent ethnohistorical research program goal as set forth in 1977 by W. Raymond Wood because of a persistent lack of funding. There still is a huge need for a comprehensive Hidatsa and Mandan ethnohistory related to KRIV. Such a document could weave a rich tapestry from available primary and secondary ethnohistorical sources, and explain what *Contact with the Indians* really meant to Hidatsa/Mandan culture and history.

[732] Ibid. A "theme" issue on Crow origin problems was published in *Archaeology in Montana* in 1979 (Volume 20, Number 3).

CHAPTER NINE

NATURAL RESOURCE RESEARCH PROGRAM AT KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, 1974-2004

Though Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS) is noted primarily for its unique cultural resources, the NHS also contains a variety of vegetation and wildlife that are of ecological interest. Despite its long history of human settlement and development prior to land acquisition by the National Park Service (NPS), KRIV contains native grasslands and riparian woodlands that NPS is required to analyze, protect, manage, and interpret for the general public. Management of prime natural areas of Missouri River bottomlands and mid-grass native prairie was and still is a primary concern for park officials.

Prior to NPS land acquisition; no formal natural resource management took place on the lands that eventually became KRIV. During the Euro-American period (1861 to 1973) a variety of human land-use activities caused minor and major changes to the natural landscape. These changes ranged from nineteenth-century wood yards that provided fuel for Missouri River steamboats to the establishment of farmsteads starting in the early 1880s. By 1976, a number of key natural resource management subjects emerged at KRIV that required integrated management consideration. However, efforts toward natural resource management planning did not materialize until almost a decade later. In 1984, Superintendent Sandra Hellickson-Key organized the park's first Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) entitled *Natural Resource Management Plan: Knife River Indian Villages NHS.* This NRMP contained a priority ranking of natural resource management problems, provided a recommended program for addressing the most urgent ones, contained a research needs section that was directly tied to resource management and interpretive needs, and outlined a time schedule for accomplishing each resource management objective. Essentially, the NRMP guided park natural resource management through the critical years of initial development and resource inventory.[733]

Unlike early park development in the 1970s and 1980s, which favored cultural resource over natural resource management, the 1990s placed greater attention on the latter. For instance, in 1992, a natural resource management specialist position was created to initiate a park-wide resource management program. Three years later, a working (planning) document entitled *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village NHS* (1995) described park natural resources and directly explained current and future natural resource management issues, needs, and problems. Stressing the need for a comprehensive resource management program, it interfaced with other management planning documents attuned to the protection, preservation, and interpretation of the park's cultural resources.

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[733] Sandra Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1984), 5.

Ultimately, the history of KRIV's natural resource research program was a blending of the 1986 and 1995 documents, as well as related materials. The delineation of the history of each management issue (water, vegetation, wildlife, fire, air quality, and viewshed concerns) is addressed chronologically below.

Water Management and Knife River Control Issues, 1977-1997

At first, water resource management at KRIV involved just administrative control of the lower Knife River. Authority over the lower Knife River was a fundamental necessity in order to protect KRIV's lands and their historic values. In 1977, Area Manager Alderson was the first to confront this issue, when the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) proposed a low-head re-regulation dam be built on the Missouri River ten miles below the existing Garrison Dam—very close to the NHS. This project concerned Alderson because stream channelization below the structure could affect existing Knife River banks already eroding Sakakawea Village and could also alter the natural historic scene. Alderson argued that the ACOE project could also change KRIV ground-water hydrology; thereby seriously affecting future NPS development plans for Knife River. These adverse impacts on KRIV's integrity, along with Thiessen's assessment of adverse impact to cultural resources, were passed along to Rocky Mountain Regional Office's regional director and chief of compliance and assistance. Consequently, NPS' opposition to the project helped to kill the ACOE project.[734]

Over the course of the next two decades, no other Missouri and/or Knife River water projects significantly affected KRIV natural resources. However, in 1996 and 1997, KRIV officials were again forced to exercise their administrative authority over the lower Knife River in order to protect park values when a private landowner applied for an ACOE permit to construct jetties along the Knife and Missouri Rivers to protect his property against flooding. In that case, both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and NPS successfully opposed the project. Superintendent Cartwright, representing NPS interests, recommended that ACOE deny the permit because of potential adverse impacts to the park, including loss of land, visual intrusion, and other reasons.[735]

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[734] Clay Alderson to John Lancaster, 21 October 1977; John O. Lancaster to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region, 7 November 1977, Thomas D. Thiessen to Chief, Compliance and Assistance, Rocky Mountain Region, 30 December 1977, File L7423 (River Basin Studies and Activities); Glen T. Bean to Chief, Division of Park Planning, and Environmental Compliance, Washington Office, 6 July 1978, File L7621 (Environment Impact Reviews of Statements); Superintendent, TRNP: Comments on the Revised Draft Environmental Statement, 19 June 1978, File L7617 (Statements and Studies Concerning NPS Areas), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[735] Superintendent, North Dakota NPS Group to Director, Midwest Field Area, 23 February 1997, File A2615 (Narrative Reports and Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. Apparently, Cartwright often "ruffled feathers" among locals and was known for wanting everything "to blend into the park and look natural," and at one time he recommended to Stanton officials to paint the water tower brown so it would not be obtrusive to the park's viewshed. Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

Water Management and Knife River Erosion Issues, 1977-1995

Though administrative control of the lower Knife River was a key issue in the park's early history, riverbank erosion was KRIV's most important water management concern. Since the mouth of the Knife River and three and one-half miles of the lower Knife River were located within the park, spring runoffs, flash flooding, and the typical meandering of prairie streams frequently resulted in riverbank erosion. As noted many times previously, these processes often threatened cultural resources, such as Sakakawea Village, and also park facilities and improvements, such as roads and trails within the park. Therefore, during its early history, KRIV superintendents and staff worked closely with ACOE to alleviate the problem, but they did not formally address the problem until 1984, when KRIV's *Natural Resource Management Plan*, or NRMP, prioritized the stabilization of the Knife River bank to protect the Taylor Bluff and Big Hidatsa sites as the number one water management projects at KRIV. In July 1984, an environmental assessment was completed,[736] and the project was accomplished the following year.[737]

The second noteworthy natural resource water management problem related to erosion was development of a policy/plan of action for archeological resources threatened by future erosion. Because of insufficient baseline information, this threat of unknown proportions was difficult to undertake. In 1984, KRIV's NRMP stated, "It should be stressed that the need to stabilize more of the Knife River would be based on 'protection of cultural resources'; however, the impacts of controlling the natural process of a meandering stream have far reaching implications for the natural resources." The 1984 NRMP suggested research to support an environmental assessment of the cumulative efforts of bank stabilization on the natural resources of Knife River with special attention given to the changes in flooding patterns and the impacts on aquatic resources.[738] That environmental assessment came two years later. *Environmental Assessment (Revised), General Management Plan* (March 1986) concluded that existing rip-rap and other river erosion improvements near the Taylor Bluff Site and Sakakawea Village would be maintained. But in the future, the General Management Plan (GMP) recommended that material allowing re-vegetation



Excavated Dirt Loaded for Water-screen Processing. Adapted from Ahler, Thiessen, Trimble, *People of the Willows: The Prehistory and Early History of the Hidatsa Indians.*

[736] NPS, "Environmental Assessment for Riverbank Stabilization Project: Knife River Indian Villages NHS," July 1984, File L7617 (Statements and Studies Concerning NPS Areas).
[737] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1985, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.
[738] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 10-11, 43-52.

be used to give the appearance of a natural landscape. On the other hand, the GMP initially suggested that riverbank erosion without known cultural resources be allowed to continue without mitigation. Four months later, the *Revised General Management Plan* (August 1986) dropped this statement altogether.[739]

Ten years later, river erosion was characterized as still one of two greatest threats to the integrity of the park's total resources. According to *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village NHS* (1995), this threat included immediate repair of the bank stabilization structure at Sakakawea Village after a spring 1994 ice break-up revealed extensive slumping of the upstream paving. The *Resource Management Plan* (RMP) also expressed concern regarding continued river erosion of other archeological sites, such as the Taylor Bluff Site. However, the RMP made no general policy statement regarding riverbank erosion and cultural resource management.[740] As late as 2001, spring flooding continued to be a problem at Sakakawea Village. In that year, Knife River flooding took out seventy linear feet of the rip-rapped berm that protected Sakakawea Village. Facility Manager Rod Skalsky thereafter acquired emergency funding from the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) to repair the damage.[741]

Water Quality Management Issues, 1980-1997

Beyond administrative control of the Knife River and erosion matters, there was also the general environmental impact on water resources from park facilities and management to consider—Hellickson-Key's third priority.

Prior to land acquisition for KRIV, the lower Knife River had always been considered a good sport fishery, abundant with channel catfish, walleye, sauger, northern pike, and white bass. The lower Knife River also played an important role as a feeding area for and the reproductive cycle of several species of Missouri River zooplankton. Because the Knife River was so environmentally significant, water quality was a key management consideration for KRIV officials. For instance, in 1980, park managers conducted an inventory of KRIV's water system to better understand park-related water quality issues.[742] From this inventory, NPS staff realized early on that improper management of the park's artesian wells and the ground-water resources had the potential to pollute the Knife River. Subsequently, in 1984, when Superintendent Hellickson-Key prepared the park's NRMP, she recognized the need for a comprehensive management plan to identify

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[739] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 14, 32; NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, August, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 5.

[740] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, 23, C-011-012, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

[741] Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[742] Harvey D. Wickware to Jack Long, 24 March 1980, File L54 (Water Matters, Permits, Rights-of-Way Reports), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

the park's water resources, threats, and best management practices to reduce the possibility of any irreversible damage to the resource.[743]

Despite this concern, two years later, KRIV still lacked an overall park-wide facility water management plan. The *Environmental Assessment (Revised), General Management Plan* (March 1986), which revised the 1978 master plan, again pointed out this need to identify the resources, threats, and best management priorities. Such a water management plan would also identify database voids and inventory needs.[744] Subsequent Statements for Management (SFMs) in 1989 and 1992 denoted this lack of a water management plan as well.[745] And in 1995, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village NHS* also raised the issue. This working document indicated that no water quality monitoring was currently taking place at KRIV and that no research had yet been undertaken to describe or even map the park's hydrology. Therefore, the resource management plan (RMP) recommended that NPS undertake a detailed study of the KRIV's hydrology and the surrounding area, especially with regard to the north forest area, where it appeared that the health of the forest was dependent on water flowing near the surface through the forest.[746] Two years later, the National Park Service's Water Resources Division conducted a baseline water quality data inventory and analysis for the park but stated that no specific data was collected within the boundary of KRIV because of a lack of information. According to the division report, "without adequate data" it was "difficult to make a definitive statement regarding recent water quality within the study area."[747] By 2004, KRIV still did not have a comprehensive water resource management plan.

Historic Prairie Restoration, Vegetation Management and Baseline Data, 1977-1986

An important element emphasized in the 1968 feasibility study, *Knife River Villages: A Study of Alternatives*, was that all land presently used as farmland at KRIV would be restored to prairie grasses in order to recreate an aboriginal environment for the NHS. This vegetation/development management issue was discussed again in December 1977, when Stanley A. Ahler and F.A. Calabrese discussed the long-term research program for

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[743] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 64-65; NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 49. At this time, no permanent facilities had been constructed, and the main domestic water supply came from a 70-foot well that served the 1915 Grannis farmhouse. Sewage was handled by a septic tank/leach field system. There were also four capped artesian wells located within the park on former sites of historic farmsteads. Their intended purpose was to serve as a supply source to suppress wildfire.

[744] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 18.

[745] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (1989); NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Statement For Management* (1992).

[746] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, 15, 23, C-011-012, N-009, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

[747] NPS, *Baseline Water Quality Data Inventory and Analysis: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* July 1997, File L54 (Water Markers, Water Rights, Compacts), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

Knife River Indian Villages NHS. At this time, they delineated the need for information on existing ecological (floral and faunal) resources within KRIV boundaries and on past environmental settings and biological resources in the KRIV area, specifically the period of emerging Euro-American contact and greatest archeological and historical significance (circa 1800 to 1830). Present-day data was required to evaluate the degree of alteration of the natural setting from this early historic contact period to 1977. On the other hand, past biophysical data was required for comparison with modern conditions so that environmental restoration planning could take place.[748]

In 1978, KRIV's first master plan reiterated this same need to return the environment to a facsimile of what it may have been when the villages were inhabited by Native Americans.[749] Because grasslands were the most extensive native vegetation type in west-central North Dakota, the 1978 master plan assumed that grassland restoration of former cropland to the historic period of circa 1804-1805 would be the essential vegetation goal at KRIV. Archeologists such as Ahler and Calabrese placed emphasis on managing the vegetation to aid cultural resource interpretation and considered this era to be the most active at Knife River; hence, that interpretive efforts should focus on that historic time period.

If only it were that simple, for early park officials lacked "sufficient insight" to "realize that returning the area to the 'natural scene' typical of the 1804-1805 period, as called for in the master plan, would mean clear cutting the entire area's timber and creating a barren, dusty scene around the village areas." Furthermore, during the first decade of the park's existence, this goal was difficult to achieve because of improper seeding techniques, old-field succession, the absence of a historical fire regime, and the lack of grazing, which created large tracts within the park that had very little or no native grass or woodland components.[750]

Mistakes began as early as 1974, when NPS required landowners to reseed their former croplands with a permanent grass cover, but it did not specify any requirements. In turn, the landowners obliged and reseeded their former cropland with smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) and/or crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristata*). Along with Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), these cool grasses altered every facet of native prairie ecosystems because they sprouted first in the spring, giving them a head start on the native species.[751]

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[748] F.A. Calabrese to Regional Chief Scientist, Rocky Mountain Region with attachment "Scope of Work for Preliminary Biophysical and Environmental Investigations within the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," 7 December 1977; Stanley A. Ahler to F.A. Calabrese, 16 December 1977, File KNRI—Floral and Faunal Resources and Paleo-environmental Studies, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[749] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: Master Plan*, 21.

[750] Sandra Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Lincoln, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1984), 10-11, 53; "Assessment of Actions Having Affect on Cultural Resources: KNRI Native Grass and Prairie Restoration," 1 March 2004, File KNRI: XXX Forms, Native Grass/Prairie Restoration, 2004, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[751] Assessment of Actions Having Affect on Cultural Resources: KNRI Native Grass and Prairie Restoration, 1 March 2004, File KNRI: XXX Forms, Native Grass/Prairie Restoration, 2004, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

Additionally, park officials realized that the grasses would eventually turn to weeds if they were not harvested, grazed, and/or burned, and recommended haying the fields in the future as the solution.[752]

Meanwhile, by 1982, weeds, particularly leafy spurge, had become a resource management and public relations problem for Superintendent Hellickson-Key. The issue escalated in seriousness when the local weed control officer issued the KRIV superintendent a directive to cease and desist hauling of dirt in the park until it was cleared up. But because the Washington Office prohibited the use of chemicals such as Tordon, control efforts were limited to physical methods.[753]

By early 1984, the mosaic vegetation pattern at KRIV in no way resembled and/or approximated a time relevant to the anthropological interpretations of Native American, explorer, and trader activity in the vicinity. KRIV's *Natural Resource Management Plan* acknowledged this fact. But before management goals could be addressed, a study was required to understand what plant communities comprised a "historic scene," and to ascertain what management actions were needed to establish and/or maintain that scene. To do so, KRIV needed a vegetation inventory with a research program to identify present-day vegetative communities and to provide research on optimum historic vegetation. Two additional vegetation management goals were adopted. First, KRIV vigorously pursued several poison ivy and weed control measures. Second, KRIV staff briefly investigated management of vegetation cover near archeological sites by horses similar to those used by the Mandan and Hidatsa people, as suggested in the 1978 master plan.[754]

In May 1984, North Dakota State University (NDSU), through the University of Wyoming-NPS Research Center, contracted with Gary K. Clambey to conduct research on past and present vegetation at KRIV, which became the park's first vegetation and/or ecological study.[755] Clambey's study had four objectives: to inventory KRIV's flora and establish a reference plant collection for the park, to describe current vegetation or plant communities within the park, to clarify vegetation patterns that may have existed in the early nineteenth century, and to assess contemporary plant cover relative to various management considerations, including controlling undesirable plant species, the use of prescribed burning, grassland restoration on several former cropland areas, and maintenance or rejuvenation of previously grazed woodlands.[756]

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[752] Associate Regional Director, Park Operations, RMR to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial, 3 March 1978, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[753] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1982, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[754] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 12-13, 30-31, 53-55, 74-75.

[755] David L. Olson to James M. Sugihara, 31 May 1984, File H2217 (Special Studies Permanent), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1984, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[756] Gary K. Clambey, *Vegetation Baseline Study For The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (Fargo, North Dakota: Dept. of Botany/Biology, North Dakota State University), 1.

During the summer of 1984 and in July 1985, botanist Clambey conducted his fieldwork and reported his findings in *Vegetation Baseline Study for Knife River Indian Villages NHS* (1985). A total of 257 different plant taxa were deposited at KRVI headquarters, including "inhabitants of prairies, riparian forests, shrublands, river edge communities and ruderal areas." Pertaining to nineteenth-century vegetation patterns, Clambey believed that the "floodplain areas would have been largely wooded, while at higher elevations native grasslands were the rule." According to Clambey, "Local Indian villages were located at the interface of these two vegetation types, thus offering an assured supply of water and wood, land suitable for fields and access to the surrounding prairies." To restore, or maintain remnants of this earlier native vegetation, Clambey made specific management recommendations relative to prescribed burning, weed control, woodland regeneration, and grassland re-establishment.[757] The Clambey study laid the groundwork for management considerations for years to come.

For instance, with regard to prescribed burning, Gary Clambey noted there were significant amounts of standing dead and fallen plant material that had accumulated over the past several years because of occasional fires and a lack of grazing. This fuel load not only heightened hazardous conditions but also blocked the restoration of the land to its former native prairie. Therefore, Clambey recommended that properly timed prescribed burns would not only reduce the problem of wildfires but could reduce the encroachment of unwanted woody plants and some exotic herbaceous grassland species.[758]

Weed control was another vegetation management consideration. Plant species considered undesirable because of their aggressive growth pattern, lack of utility, and interference with interpretation of the site included leafy spurge, poison ivy, Canadian thistle, and field mustard. For spurge, Clambey recommended a variety of mechanical, biological, and/or chemical treatments. While biological treatment was the ideal form of management, there was no known effective agent to be found, and Clambey considered mechanical treatment as only a temporary solution. In the end, Clambey recommended herbicides such as Roundup or Tordon. Poison ivy posed a different problem because it was a native plant found in a variety of habitats within the region and within the park. From a practical standpoint, Clambey suggested that the park limit control measures to places with visitor use. Finally, concerning other species, the biologist suggested either periodic mowing or re-establishment of a preferred perennial cover.[759]

On the other hand, woodland regeneration, which occupied about a fourth of the park, was a variable condition at the park requiring different approaches. The green ash forest northeast of Big Hidatsa Village, an even-aged stand, would recover by itself, and the five small patches of cottonwoods near the river bottoms were in relatively good condition but gradually would be replaced by ash, box elder, and elm. The major concern was the current state of the park's ash/box elder woodlands. Earlier grazing and timber

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[757] Ibid.
[758] Ibid.
[759] Ibid. I, 60-69.

harvesting had created conditions allowing smooth brome to become the dominant understory constituent, which impeded desirable tree reproduction. To enhance the recovery chances for the forest, Clambey recommended a combination of selective cutting of experimental areas and protecting them sufficiently from livestock grazing to recover on their own.[760]

Finally, with regard to grassland re-establishment, Clambey recommended that replanting take place using grass seed of good quality and derived from sources close enough to KRIV so that the plants were adapted to the conditions of the region. He warned that the diversity of native grasslands, including numerous forbs, could not be readily regained in such a replanting because many species of seed were not available or were very expensive. However, he believed that at this point, re-establishment of good grass cover with several species was most important. Subsequently, other species would appear naturally as a result of seed dispersal.[761]

Subsequent to the Clambey baseline vegetation study, new vegetation management goals were established at KRIV. Unlike the vegetation management goals in the 1978 master plan, which advocated that the entire park be returned to a "historic" vegetation scene, KRIV's 1986 SFM and its August 1986 GMP (revised) called for creation of historic natural vegetative patterns only within the park's 641-acre cultural resource subzone. To implement this goal, research would be conducted in conjunction with mechanical, biological, and prescribed burning programs. Research would monitor the effects of vegetative treatment on cultural resources, and as information was collected, vegetative management programs would be modified to meet desired objectives. In the natural zones of the park, vegetation was to be managed to allow the continuance of present-day processes. Fire reduction practices were not to be employed, and all wildfires would not be suppressed. Additionally, poison ivy would not be controlled, in the hope that natural succession would suppress the species. Finally, noxious weeds would be managed with spot controls in cooperation with state and local governments.[762]

Park-wide Vegetation Management Delayed, 1986-1995

In late 1986, KRIV Superintendent Holm submitted a study package for developing a park-wide Vegetation Management Plan (VMP).[763] Though the need for a VMP at KRIV was clearly evident, it went unfunded. In fact, natural resource management programs, such as the study sought by Holm, were deferred from 1986 to the early 1990s. Instead, during this period, KRIV officials concentrated their attention and funding on the

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[760] Ibid.

[761] Ibid.

[762] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 14-14, 20, 32; NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, August, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 6.

[763] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1986, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

construction of the park's headquarters/visitor center. Minimal vegetation management efforts did take place. For instance, in 1992, a wildlife enclosure was constructed in an area of heavy tree mortality to serve as a control area for forest regeneration,[764] and in 1992-1994, Fort Lewis College biologist Debra Kendall conducted fieldwork and prepared a report on insect (e.g., cankerworm infestation) and pathogen populations and their effects on the forest tracts in KRIV. Kendall's research provided baseline data on insect species and forest diseases for the park.[765] Then again, "Mother Nature" did not wait. As time passed, Knife River NHS' forest became severely impacted by insect defoliation, decay, drought, and a lack of regeneration, making development of an active forest management program, as well as a VMP, all the more necessary.[766]

KRIV staff was more successful with regard to prairie restoration and management efforts prior to 1995. In 1993, a North Dakota Natural Heritage Inventory completed a vegetation map of KRIV. It discovered that KRIV contained approximately 300 acres of native mixed grass prairie, mostly on the newly acquired Krieger parcel; 150 acres of small, scattered prairie plots, which were threatened by invading exotic plants; and several small native prairie fragments associated with the floodplain forests. The native prairie units were in varying states of health but could serve as a seed bank of native grasses and forbs for restoration efforts in other parts of the park. In an effort to restore previously cultivated areas back to prairie, in 1994 and 1995 the park experimented with a small greenhouse operation to establish seedlings of native grasses and forbs. This experiment was deemed a success, given the facilities and equipment.[767]

Despite this progress, in 1995, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village NHS* emphasized the fact that KRIV needed a VMP to address both prairie and forest ecosystems. Additionally, instead of relying upon existing "natural processes" to continue, the report suggested research in the role of fire, grazing, and floods in developing and maintaining ecosystems. The RMP hoped that by doing so, it would increase the possibility of more rapidly restoring native plant communities. But with regard to the control of noxious weeds, the RMP recommended the application of broadleaf herbicides for immediate control of these exotic plants. However, the long-term goal was to implement an integrated control approach that included mechanical methods, controlled fire, and the establishment of native plants to out-compete the exotics, as well as herbicides. In addition to recommending exotic plant management, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village NHS* urged the hiring of a prairie management expert, on a temporary basis, to work with park staff in drafting a Prairie Management Plan (PMP). However, without such help and with the lack of a PMP,

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[764] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1992, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[765] Deborah M. Kendall, *Annual Report: Insects And Pathogen Populations And Their Effects On The Forest Tracts In Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, 1993-1994*, KRIV Library, Stanton, ND.

[766] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[767] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, 15, 23, N-001.001, N-003-001-N-003-006, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

prairie areas within the park were inventoried, monitored, and managed as best as possible with the current expertise of the park staff.[768]

Unrealized Goals, 1996-2004

Despite the strong recommendation for a VMP and a PMP, KRIV received funding for neither management documents. Therefore, park staff addressed the park's prairie and forest ecosystems with available funds and maintenance crews.

From 1996 to 2004, the park's vegetative management efforts focused on yearly weed control with herbicides applied by maintenance crews. For instance, in one year alone, seventy-five acres of noxious, weed-infested land was treated to eliminate leafy spurge, Canadian thistle, and wormwood. In addition to chemical spraying to manage leafy spurge, KRIV also had thirty-five bio-control release sites of flea beetles, which eat the weed. Park personnel also used mechanical treatments against exotic Chinese and Siberian elms, Russian olives, and other noxious weeds. By 2001, 96 percent of the parklands were free of exotics or contained only small isolated controlled patches. Since 1995, the park also conducted remedial efforts to eliminate Dutch elm disease. Due to the creation of the Garrison Dam and the lack of natural flooding, the park's riparian/flood plain forests were undergoing a transition from a willow/cottonwood forest to an elm/ash old-growth forest. The lack of flooding and the forest's tight crown space created ideal conditions to harbor this disease. By 1997, more than 2,000 healthy trees were marked, and 625 dead and 109 infected elms were removed and burned to mitigate the spread of the disease, because removal and immediate incineration of the infected trees was the most effective method of stopping the spread of Dutch elm disease within the park's borders and into neighboring properties. Funding for this program came from the National Park Service's insect and disease control program, and was part of an overall program of forest rehabilitation.[769]

Wildlife Management and Development, 1977-2004

In 1977, the initial concerns of National Park Service officials involved hunting and fishing on KRIV lands. Area Manager Alderson easily handled these worries because under Title 36 CFR—Parks, Forests, and Public Property, he had the authority to regulate and control such activities and to initiate certain closures and restrictions. Alderson also had the authority to enforce U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and State of North Dakota regulations to control water activities as well, such as boating and fishing. Under these guidelines, Alderson could designate a boating channel, regulate speed to discourage activities such as waterskiing, etc., and enforce North Dakota fishing regulations. However, Alderson was mindful that, in the past, local fishermen had access to certain areas of the riverbank. He and other NPS officials did not wish to raise their ire by

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[768] Ibid.

[769] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1995-2002, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

closing the banks of the river to their best "fishing hole," especially at a time when many community members were still angry over land acquisition issues. So, instead, they believed it best to channel this activity to locations of the National Park Service's choice, indicating and providing specific access routes.[770] This decision created a dilemma for park officials because it committed NPS to continuing this activity along the Knife River.

To compound matters, in 1981, the National Park Service established an official public fishing access to the Knife River at the north end of the Sakakawea bank stabilization project, with barriers and refuse containers installed.[771] This was not the best decision by Superintendent Hellickson-Key because sport fishing thereafter became even more popular for the local residents. As a consequence, this activity not only posed a threat to the archeological resources at Sakakawea but also conflicted with future planned interpretive activities there. The National Park Service tried to remedy the situation by conducting a fishing inventory to determine what fish were being caught and if an alternative "fishing hole" could be developed.[772] But finding no alternative, park staff substantially adjusted to the status quo.

At about the same time, park officials had more significant wildlife management worries—compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Starting in 1981, park staff began investigating whether or not there were any threatened and/or endangered species that used the park. In cooperation with the Mandan-Bismarck Bird Club, KRIV over the course of two years formulated an interim bird list, which included more than eighty-five nesting and migrating avian species.[773] They learned that one endangered species, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), was on their list. For many years, the FWS had conducted surveys and monitored bald eagle population trends, noting that bald eagles wintered along the Missouri River and were occasionally sighted within the NHS. Though no other threatened and endangered species was known to inhabit the park, Superintendent Hellickson-Key recommended that NPS fund a study to identify any rare, threatened, or endangered species of both animals and plants within KRIV and that after identification, a management plan be developed as soon as possible.[774]

One animal that was not threatened but was actually thriving at KRIV was the northern pocket gopher (*Thomomys talpoides*). By 1984, each of the major villages in the park

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[770] Robert D. Powell to Superintendent, 28 January 1977 File L54 (Water Matters, Permits, Right-of-Way), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. Interestingly, prior to Park Service acquisition of the land, one winter local activity included people driving up and down the frozen Knife River with cars and snowmobiles with their kids in tow on toboggans, which the Park Service discouraged once it acquired the park. Summer bonfires and picnics along the river, another local pastime, was discouraged as well. Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

[771] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1981, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[772] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 67-69.

[773] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1981-1982, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[774] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 79-81.

(Big Hidatsa, Lower Hidatsa, and Sakakawea) had large resident populations of these burrowing rodents. These areas appeared to be favored pocket gopher habitats, presenting a major problem to park officials and of concern to archeologists as well.[775] Over long periods of time, faunaturbation, or the disturbance of soils by animals and by implication any cultural material they contain, destroyed intact archeological deposits and re-deposited displaced artifacts in new contexts unrelated to the original human habitations of the villages. Control attempts consisted of periodic mowing to encourage raptor predation of the rodent population and seeding village sites with natural grasses to lessen the attractiveness of the habitat to pocket gophers. These efforts were largely unsuccessful. There was clearly a need for a park-wide pest management plan. But in the meantime, park officials relied on vegetative management, chemical treatment, and mechanical measures to reduce the rodent populations within the park.[776]

In 1987, Superintendent Holm expressed increasing concern regarding the extent to which these rodents were impacting cultural resources.[777] Holm's concerns were raised by a report by biologist Robert E. Moore of Montana State University in September of the previous year on the impact of increasing pocket gopher mound counts on Big Hidatsa's cultural resources.[778] To answer this question and others, in 1989, Moore conducted a broader discussion of the fish, terrestrial vertebrate, and endangered and threatened species at KRIV.

In his *A Survey of the Vertebrate Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS* (1989), Moore extensively described the fishes, terrestrial vertebrates (mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles), and endangered and threatened species that potentially used and/or were likely to frequent KRIV, including the bald eagle, least tern, piping plover, and sharp-tailed grouse. In addition to these threatened birds, a number of other animal species of concern, according to Moore, might be found within the park. They included the pallid sturgeon, shovelhead catfish, Plains spadefoot toad, false map turtle, brown soft-shell turtle, ferruginous hawk, merlin, burrowing owl, yellow rail, white-throated sparrow, and the river otter.[779] Moore's report completed the park's research need for baseline data on flora, fauna, and archeological resources.[780]

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[775] Ahler, *A Research Plan For Investigation Of The Archeological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 49.

[776] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 88-91; NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, August, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 10.

[777] Michael O. Holm to Adrienne Anderson, Cultural Resources, Rocky Mountain Region, 26 March 1987, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND.

[778] Robert E. Moore, "Proposal for Supplementary Study to Survey the Vertebrate Resources of the Knife River Indian Villages NHS," 21 March 1987, File H2215 (Cultural Resource Studies and Research), TRNP, Medora, ND; Robert E. Moore and Robin Kistler Moore, *Supplementary Study To A Survey Of The Vertebrate Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Final Report* (Bozeman, MT: National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Visitor Services Project, 1987).

[779] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, 15, 23, N-004.000, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

[780] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1987-1988, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

As requested, Moore also grappled with three pertinent subjects. First, he discussed the management of the park toward a "natural" state. He prescribed fire as a consideration when trying to manage the vertebrate resources of the park, and he thought KRIV needed to review the advantages and disadvantages of fall and spring prairie burns. Next, the biologist offered guidance pertaining to sensitive sites and appropriate maintenance of habitat for threatened and endangered species. Moore advised KRIV to maintain tall cottonwoods bordering the Missouri River as perching sites for wintering bald eagles. He also suggested protecting Missouri River islands as nesting sites for least terns, piping plovers, and sharp-tailed grouse, especially during springtime. Finally, he reflected on how to best interpret the natural history of KRIV to the public. Moore's ideas included maintaining KRIV's dirt roads and trails so that individuals could comfortably hike through the park to observe birds or other wildlife, using the nature trail in "Grannis" woods along the northeastern boundary as an accessible biking area for visitors to view wildlife, and developing visual and written informational programs to present to visitors.[781]

In 1995, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village NHS*, KRIV's working overview of current programs and needs, covered both threatened and endangered species and fishing management. The RMP noted that without a baseline inventory to identify actual threatened and endangered species within the park, it was difficult to prepare and implement a management plan. Regarding fishing management, the RMP called for an inventory to evaluate seasonal fish populations, habitats, and migrations in the river to determine whether there was an alternative area to fish within the park, and the development of an action plan thereafter. However, this proposal had the lowest ranking in park's priority list.[782]

Early Fire Management and Development Issues, 1979-1985

Both Clambey's vegetation study (1985) and Moore's vertebrate study (1989) called attention to past fires as once being an important feature contributing to the biological characteristics of the area. Up until these studies, KRIV officials followed traditional approaches to fire management. So in 1979, when four small fires occurred within the park, three caused by children and one by a fisherman, park personnel and crews from the Stanton Rural Fire Department extinguished them promptly. After that, NPS entered into a cooperative agreement with the local fire district to supply fire protection to parklands. Over the course of the next few years, the Stanton fire department suppressed small wild grass fires when they occurred at the park. In addition to suppression efforts, park personnel set up a firebreak around the Grannis farmhouse park headquarters, and as a

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[781] Moore, Gould, and Moore, *A Survey Of The Vertebrate Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 110-117.

[782] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, 15, 23, N-004.000, N-015.000, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

fire suppression measure, they also began mowing large park areas to remove fuel buildup on former croplands.[783]

Mindful that this accumulation of grassland and riparian fuel buildup increased the risk of catastrophic wildfire at the park, in November 1983, Superintendent Hellickson-Key authorized KRIV Chief of Information and Resource Management William Haviland to conduct the first controlled burn for grassland management. Because of the increasing threat of wildfire to both park and private properties, this controlled burn was conducted without any consideration for potential damage to the park's archeological resources. But Hellickson-Key also realized that KRIV needed a comprehensive fire management plan (FMP) for the park's natural, cultural, and development zones—one that gave particular care to fire's role in maintaining the most desirable vegetation cover and that did not harm archeological sites. While protection of property was paramount in the development subzone, Hellickson-Key needed two types of fire impact information—fire ecology data to assess the role fire could play in restoring the park's historic vegetation in the park's natural subzone, and prescribed burning documentation to assess any potential adverse impacts that fires could have of the park's valuable archeological resources in the park's cultural subzone.[784]

Prescribed Fire Impacts on Cultural Resources, 1986-1990

Though an FMP did not materialize during Hellickson-Key's time at KRIV, the need was broached. Superintendent Holm continued the discussion. The 1986 SFM accentuated the need for an FMP for both grassland and forest management,[785] and in 1987, Holm submitted a proposal to determine fire's effect on KRIV's cultural resources.[786] In 1987 and 1988, Holm's proposal was funded, put out for bid, and awarded to UND and their research team, consisting of Rodney Sayler, Robert W. Seabloom, and Stanley Ahler.[787] In 1990, they completed their study, entitled *Impacts of Prescribed Burning on Archeological and Biological Resources*, and *Park Science* carried the research project as a feature article that year.[788]

During 1988 and 1989, the study team of Sayler, Seabloom, and Ahler conducted literature reviews, field studies, and burning experiments to investigate two points. First,

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[783] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1979-1981, 1983, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[784] Dana K. Mount to William Haviland, 1 November 1983, File Y1421 (Prescribed Fire), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 59-61.

[785] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 9, 15.

[786] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1986, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[787] Michael O. Holm to Adrienne Andersen, RMR-PE, 10 November 1987, File Floral and Faunal Resources and Paleoenvironmental Studies), MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[788] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

in order to determine the potential impact from prescribed burns on archeological resources at KRIV, they studied the impacts of prairie fires on ten representative archeological materials in four experimental plots established in mixed-grass prairie at UND's Oakville Prairie Natural History area. These experiments indicated that fire-related impacts to buried artifacts were negligible but that, depending on fire conditions and artifact type and size, the effects on surface-exposed artifacts could be significant. Based on these results, they next developed a recommended burn program for vegetation management at KRIV. Their phased burning program recognized three categories of artifact densities and relative importance, or sensitivity, to burning. First, Sayler, Seabloom, and Ahler recommended that village sites were not to be burned until a "thorough and professional collection of surface-visible artifacts is completed that will preserve this valuable information for future analysis." Second, the study team concluded that moderate artifact density sites should be surveyed to determine whether surface collection was warranted to mitigate fire damage. Finally, on areas and portions of the park that had low artifact densities, Sayler, Seabloom, and Ahler felt that burning and other vegetation management programs could begin as soon as feasible.[789]

With this new scientific data, KRIV staff desired to move forward at once with a prescribed burn plan. However, they were prevented from doing so because in January 1989, an NPS national directive stated that in order for a park to conduct prescribed burns, it must have a current, approved fire management plan as well as an approved burn plan for each burn.[790]

Since an FMP was not in the immediate offing because of budget issues, park staff decided to hay the entire park to reduce fuel loading and to control noxious weeds at the same time. In 1991, KRIV was divided into six parcels. Then, local farmers were selected by random drawing to conduct the work under agricultural special-use permits. However, four ten-acre plots were left un-mowed to serve as a control area for a future prescribed burn plan. Fortunately, the haying was completed prior to a 15-acre wildland fire that a local youth started while playing in the park.[791] By the time KRIV's RMP was written in 1995, no prescribed burns had taken place because an FMP had yet to be funded and written. However, the RMP, or working overview of projects, did note that prescribed fire could be utilized to reduce fuel loading, to restore native biotic communities, to manage fuel near facilities, park boundaries, and other areas designated as critical, to manage native species where appropriate, and to conduct fire research.[792]

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[789] Rodney D. Sayler, Robert W. Seabloom, and Stanley A. Ahler, *Impacts Of Prescribed Burning On Archeological And Biological Resources Of The Knife River Indian Villages NHS: Final Report* (Grand Forks, North Dakota: University of North Dakota, 1989), i. In 1991, this research was summarized in an article in *Archaeology in Montana* 32(2) 15-28, by Paul R. Picha, Stanley A. Ahler, Rodney D. Sayler, and Robert W. Seabloom, entitled "Effects of Fire on Selected Artifact Classes."

[790] Associate Director, Operations to Regional Directors, 9 January 1989, File Y1421 (Prescribed Fires), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[791] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1991, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Chief Ranger to Superintendent, KNRI, 19 April 1993, File L3015 (Land Use Agriculture), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[792] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, N-002.000, N-015.000, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

KRIV's Fire Management Plan and Prescribed Burns, 1997-2004

The preparation, completion, and approval of *Knife River Indian Villages NHS: A Fire Management Plan* finally came in July 1997. This FMP expanded the management actions listed in the 1995 RMP by providing a thorough description of the park area by stating KRIV's fire management objectives and strategies and by describing the park's management situation regarding its cultural and natural resources. KRIV's FMP also contained special sections on the park's wildfire program, particularly its management-ignited prescribed fire/burn program,[793] leading the MWRO director to comment to Superintendent Cartwright that the "constraints of the prescribed fire program in dealing with cultural resources will indeed be a management challenge."[794]

With an approved FMP, Superintendent Cartwright wasted little time in conducting the first prescribed burn at KRIV. In October 1997, nearby residents were notified that a controlled burn would be conducted on approximately 150 acres on the former Krieger parcel at the north end of the park to reduce dead fuel levels and to promote native species. A spring 1998 survey of the burn area revealed that all goals for the prescribed fire had been exceeded, with a greater than 95 percent reduction of noxious and exotic weeds.[795]

The above burn was part of a five-year cyclic program of annual burns that KRIV staff planned at various times of the year for selected locations throughout the park. Under the direction of Superintendent Lisa Eckert, a second burn was planned for the spring of 1999 of approximately 350-400 acres on the south half of the Krieger parcel.[796] However, this second burn was postponed for several reasons. First, MWAC archeologist Thiessen had lingering concerns regarding the need for a pre-burn survey and surface collection prior to the burn. Thiessen also was anxious about the potential adverse effects of prescribed burns on highly significant archeological resources located on this portion of the Krieger parcel as well.[797] Then, in May 2000, the Washington Office declared a moratorium on all prescribed burning on national parks following the disastrous Cerro Grande fire at Bandelier National Monument, named after Cerro Grande Mountain, a prominent geographic feature of the area. The Cerro Grande fire began as a

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[793] NPS, *Knife River Indian Villages NHS: A Fire Management Plan*, July 1997, File Y14 (Wildland Fuel Management), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[794] Regional Director, Midwest Region to Superintendent, Knife River Indian Village, 29 July 1997, File Y14 (Wildland Fuel Management), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[795] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1998, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[796] Chas Cartwright to Jane Clayton, 2 October 1997, Lisa Eckert to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Graves, 13 April 1999, File Y1421 (Prescribed Fire), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND; Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1998, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[797] Tom Thiessen to Lisa Eckert, 22 March 2000, File KNRI Archeology/Fire Management, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

prescribed fire there, but evidently escaped prescription and blossomed into a major disaster in New Mexico.[798]

During 2001, there were no prescribed burns at KRIV. However, the Sakakawea Village site burn plan was completed, along with site preparation of this 262-acre burn. Prepping involved mowing around three high-density archeological sites and contacting SHSND about the burn.[799] In 2002, prescribed burning resumed on KRIV but not on sensitive archeological sites such as Sakakawea. Instead, during 2002 and 2003, burns took place in woodland and prairie regions to reduce fuel loadings, reinvigorate reproduction of native vegetation, and combat the spread of brome grass. A spring 2002 prescribed burn on the peninsula area of the park produced favorable results, including a large resurgence of big bluestem grass where very little or none had been previously observed. This was the first year that park staff began to notice the revival of native grasses to this location as well.[800] In the fall of 2002, a second yearly burn took place in an area called the "North Prairie," which was located on the extreme northern end of the park, just beyond the end of the North Forest hiking trail.[801] By 2003, out of the park's 1,750 acres, KRIV staff had conducted prescribed burns on approximately 700 acres.

In 2004, concerns remained regarding the impact of prescribed burns on the most significant archeological sites within KRIV. By this date, Thiessen stepped in and recommended the following unofficial policy. For sites classified as high density (e.g., Big Hidatsa, Lower Hidatsa, and Sakakawea), he recommended manual removal of fuel load instead of subjecting them to prescribed burning. For medium-density sites, Thiessen suggested making controlled surface collections in the southern end of the park, with a view of assessing existing ground-cover conditions and how exposed surface artifacts could contribute to increased knowledge of the park's archeological records. However, prescribed burns should be conducted periodically across sites classified as low-density sites without any further archeological investigation.[802] Based on this direction and KRIV's FMP, prescribed burns on low-density archeological sites within

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[798] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2000, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. "In its most extreme state on May 10, the Cerro Grande Prescribed Fire was carried by very high winds, with embers blowing a mile or more across the fire lines to the north, south, and east, entering Los Alamos Canyon towards Los Alamos, New Mexico. The towns of Los Alamos and White Rock were in the fire's path and more than 18,000 residents were evacuated. By the end of the day on May 10, the fire had burned 18,000 acres, destroying 235 homes, and damaging many other structures. The fire also spread towards the Los Alamos National Laboratory, and although fires spotted onto the facility's lands, all major structures were secured and no releases of radiation occurred. The fire also burned other private lands and portions of San Ildefonso Pueblo and Santa Clara Pueblo. As of May 17 the fire was uncontrolled and approaching over 45,000 acres." www.nps.gov/cerrogrande/executive_summary.htm.

[799] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2001, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[800] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2002, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[801] "Prescribed Fire Planned at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site," *News Release: National Park Service*, 11 September 2002.

[802] Tom Thiessen to Rod Skalsky, 16 August 2004, File KNRI: Archeology/Fire Management, 2004, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

KRIV resumed. In 2004, five separate plots totaling 116 acres in the central portion of the park were ignited to increase native grass and forb cover.[803]

Air Quality Issues, 1974-2004

Throughout KRIV's existence, there have been a number of challenges to the park's air quality and historic viewshed. These disputes derived from regional energy and coal mining development. In fact, KRIV was located in the heart of an energy corridor that provided gas, coal, oil, and hydroelectric power for a good part of the United States, and in 1978, when KRIV's master plan was written, the cumulative effects of the existing and proposed energy development in the area was unknown. Under the 1977 amendments to the Clean Air Act, a Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) program was instituted, with a classification system for various areas. Under this system, KRIV was considered a Class II area, which allowed a moderate amount of deterioration. However, new or modified sources of air pollution were not to exceed air quality baseline concentrations of particulate matter and sulfur dioxide set for Class II areas. These regulations were fine in theory, but in 1978, there were no air quality monitors in the immediate vicinity of KRIV to take measurements to ascertain whether neighboring energy development was in compliance with these Class II standards.[804]

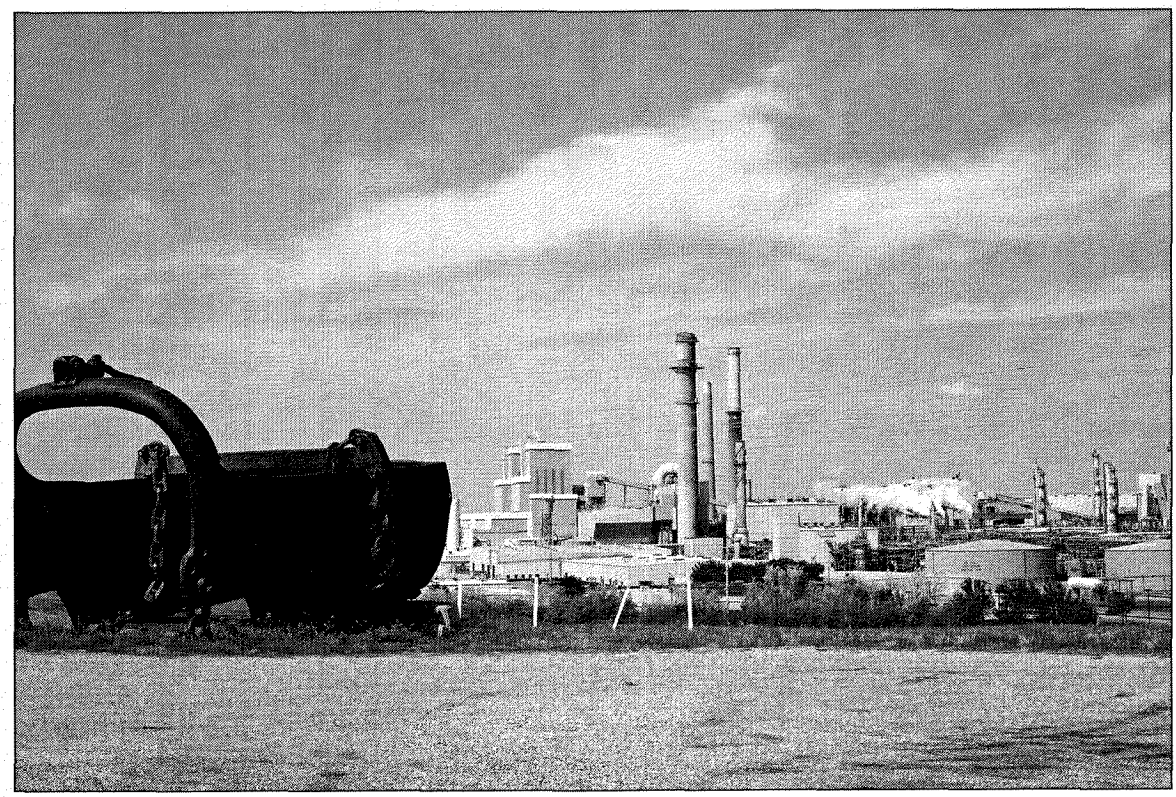
Nonetheless, with the many coal-fired power plants planned for the Knife River region, in 1978, TRNP and KRIV staff discussed the matter of air quality at KRIV. They suggested that NPS establish visual points for air quality observation, much as was being done in other national parks. They also deliberated the issue of visual impacts from proposed energy transmission lines that might be erected in the next few years. For instance, in late 1977, Basin Electric Power Cooperative had applied for a transmission power line to run from its Leland Olds Station, only a few miles southeast of Stanton and KRIV, to its Antelope Valley Station at Beulah, twenty-six miles to the west. Area Manager Alderson attended the public meeting on the subject. At the meeting, Basin Electric Power Cooperative's draft environmental impact statement (EIS) made no

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[803] "Prescribed Fire Planned at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site on May 4th, 2004," *News Release: National Park Service*, n.d. Shortly afterwards, MWAC archeologists (Thomas Thiessen and Jay Sturdevant) participated in an experimental burn arranged by Rod Skalsky of Knife River Indian Villages to revisit the question of how fire affects surface-exposed artifacts. SHSND chief archeologist Paul Picha also participated in the experiment and made the visual inspection of artifacts following the burns. Following this, Sturdevant sought and obtained funding for a multi-park experimental fire research project which included Knife River Indian Villages, and he and Skalsky have worked closely together to implement the research. It was determined that fire had negligible impacts on surface artifacts. Jay T. Sturdevant, *Initial Recommendations For Treatment Of Medium Density Archeological Sites During Prescribed Burns Based On Data From The 2005 Experimental Prescribed Burn Program, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 9 May 2006, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[804] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 82-84.

mention of KRIV's existence in its testimony or in the exhibits presented. NPS was not even listed among the federal agencies to consult during the application process.[805]



Antelope Valley Coal Power Plant, Beulah, North Dakota. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

Alderson reported the above to TRNP Superintendent Lancaster, who immediately wrote the Public Service Commission (PSC) questioning why NPS was not given an opportunity to comment on the environmental analysis. His letter expressed the National Park Service's concern that the lines would be near enough to KRIV that "extreme care should be taken to protect the visual integrity of the park."[806] Lancaster later asked that visual impact on KRIV be included in the fact-finding process.[807] However, the supplement to the draft EIS for the Antelope Valley Station transmission line, and a new alignment, did not alter the National Park Service's position regarding location of the power transmission line.[808] Fortunately, the new alignment did not cause major visible

[805] Clay Alderson to John Lancaster, 29 November 1977, File L7621 (Environment Impact Reviews of Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[806] John O. Lancaster to Ed Englerth, 2 December 1977, File L7621 (Environment Impact Reviews of Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[807] Superintendent, TRNP to Sirs, 1 May 1978, File L7617 (Statements and Studies Concerning NPS Areas), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[808] Clay Alderson to Gayle Smith, RMRO, 22 August 1978, File L7617 (Statements and Studies Concerning NPS Areas), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

impact on the historic resources of the NHS.[809] Internally, KRIV Area Manager Alderson and TRNP Superintendent Lancaster concluded that little could be done for the park in cases such as the transmission line, except to continue to respond in writing to any proposals made at public meetings concerning similar subjects.[810]

This lack of consideration for KRIV was evident on other energy-related projects in the area, such as the ANG Coal Gasification Company's proposed plant at Beulah, North Dakota, which intended to run a product pipeline within one-half mile of KRIV.[811] Then there was the issue of the Falkirk strip mine proposed by United Power Association (UPA) across the Missouri River from KRIV, which was outlined in a BLM draft EIS entitled "West-Central North Dakota Regional Environmental Impact Study on Energy Development." Prompted by a letter from Area Manager Alderson, RMRO Acting Regional Director Bean animatedly pointed out that KRIV had been overlooked in almost all segments of this draft EIS. Bean expressed National Park Service's objections to the negative impacts from the Falkirk Mine on KRIV's archeological sites, visual aesthetics, Knife River stream flow, air quality, and strip mining land reclamation presented in the EIS for the Falkirk mine.[812] Thereafter, the National Park Service's views were taken under consideration in development of that mine.

Meanwhile, degradation of air quality as a result of energy-related development in the area was still a concern at KRIV as late as 1995, when KRIV prepared its working document on needed research and projects. KRIV was within forty miles of eleven PSD increment-consuming sources that emitted more than 210,000 tons of sulfur dioxide, 2,000 tons of fine particulates, 8,500 tons of carbon dioxide, and close to 120,000 tons of nitrogen oxide in 1992 alone. But the North Dakota State Department of Health, which monitored the air quality in KRIV's part of the state, recorded no violations of Class II standards under the PSD program.[813]

Viewshed Issues, 1974-2004

National Park Service responses to impacts on the KRIV's viewshed were important as well. Eventually, they caught the attention of energy developers in the region. However, by 1984, air quality was still an immediate threat to the park. KRIV Superintendent Hellickson-Key acknowledged the potential degradation of the park's air quality as a

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[809] Clay Alderson to Basin Electric Power Corporation, 6 June 1978, File L7617 (Statements and Studies Concerning NPS Areas), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[810] Associate Regional Director, Park Operations, RMR to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial, 3 March 1978, File D18 (Planning Program Records), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[811] Regional Director to Joel Zipp, Public Service Commission, 7 December 1977, Regional Direct, Bureau of Reclamation to Regional Director, National Park Service, 29 March 1978, File L7621 (Environment Impact Reviews of Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

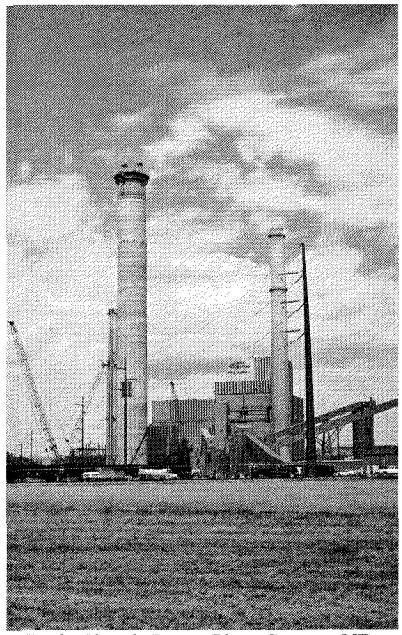
[812] Clay Alderson to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region, 10 April 1978, Glen T. Bean to State Director, Bureau of Land Management, 5 May 1978, File L7621 (Environment Impact Reviews of Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[813] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, N-008.000, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

result of energy-related development in the area—not just from the ten current regional energy/coal mining sources within 150 miles of KRIV, four of which were located within thirty miles of KRIV but also from the pending six additional sources whose permits were pending. To address the problem, KRIV's 1984 RMP urged that the National Park Service's Air and Water Quality Division help KRIV staff develop a monitoring program at KRIV in order to protect the air quality-related resources of the historic site.[814] Fortunately, by the time KRIV established its GMP in 1986, the park had several air quality monitoring stations in the vicinity of the park. Nonetheless, the GMP proposed continued consultation with Denver Service Center's regional air quality coordinator and the Air Quality Division. KRIV also started working closely with the State of North Dakota to periodically monitor air within the park whenever monitoring stations in the vicinity indicated potential problems.[815]

While air quality has not been a problem since 1986, viewshed issues continued to plague the park. These challenges came from private lands that surrounded the majority of KRIV. Though KRIV had several hundred acres of scenic easements protecting the park, they were insufficient to fully project its viewshed from roads, residences, and extensive agricultural improvements surrounding it. In fact, there was little potential for the visitor to experience primitive, unconfined recreation and solitude because of nearby evidence of man's culturally modified environment.[816]

Despite this fact, KRIV superintendents were vigilant in attending local meetings of the Stanton Town Council, the Mercer County Commissioners, and the Mercer County Land Zoning Board, as well as state task force meetings on recreation and Missouri River planning, to assure that park viewsheds were protected when and wherever necessary. Each superintendent selectively and judiciously gauged NPS involvement in local issues that might affect KRIV, for undue action might stir ongoing anti-park sentiment in the area and stymie efforts to improve public relations.



Basin Electric Power Plant, Stanton, ND, 2008. Photo Credit: U.S. West Research, Inc.

For example, over the course of his administration, Superintendent Holm walked a tightrope between when and how to advocate the park's position on viewshed matters. In one 1987 case, he backed off from making comments on an application before Stanton officials for a non-farm residence (trailer) on

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[814] Hellickson-Key, *Natural Resource Management Plan And Environmental Assessment For Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site*, 82-84.

[815] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 17, 33, 53-54.

[816] NPS, *Environmental Assessment, Revised General Management Plan, March, 1986: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota*, 13.

private land adjacent to the park. Even though the trailer was clearly visible from the highway paralleling the park boundary, it was beyond KRIV's scenic easement. Therefore, Holm refrained from comment. On the other hand, three years later, Superintendent Holm was successful in protecting the park's viewshed. At that time, he convinced the Mercer County Planning Commission to require two non-farm residences adjacent to the park boundary to plant vegetative screening between the new residences and the western boundary of the park.[817]

Even working with the Planning Commission on local land zoning issues could backfire. In 1990, the Mercer County Planning Commission requested that park staff prepare guidelines for compatible land use adjacent to the park. With the assistance of Cathy Sacco from the regional office, they prepared a document to assist the Planning Commission in land-use planning adjacent to the NHS. However, when the Planning Commission invited public input on the NPS recommendations, they were not well received. Many landowners adjacent to the park objected to the Commission adopting any Service recommendations, resulting in no action taken by the Commission, and a feeling that NPS was trying to gain undue control and influence in the community. Holm was even less successful on a matter along the eastern boundary of the park. A decade earlier, landowner William Russell had purposely and vindictively placed abandoned vehicles along his boundary with the park. To remedy the situation, in 1990, Holm had Boy Scouts plant some 300 trees in observance of Earth Day to screen KRIV's eastern view of these abandoned vehicles.[818] Unfortunately, the trees did not survive because of winter weather, drought, vandalism,[819] and/or deer.[820]

Ongoing Threats to KRIV's Natural Resources, Post-1995

With regard to adjacent land uses, KRIV's RMP outlined the continuing problems and threats that KRIV's ecosystem faced from regional development. Ever since 1995, natural and human-caused phenomena occurring on neighboring lands constantly influenced the park's environment. A number of coal-fired power plants and related electrical transmission lines existed within the park's viewshed and continued to impose upon the historic scene. Agricultural chemical use from weed control and soil fertilization around the park constantly threatened Knife River's water quality. Development of mineral leases adjacent to the park was also a continual threat to park resources, vistas, air quality, and water quality. Finally, seed and vegetative parts of

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[817] Michael O. Holm to Superintendent, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, 3 November 1987, File L7621 (Environment Impact Reviews and Statements), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[818] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1990, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[819] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1991, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[820] According to one local resident, the trees did not survive because they were not fenced, and the deer ate the seedlings. Oral History of Donna Buchmann, 29 July 2008, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

uncontrolled noxious weeds and exotics were being dispersed into the park by natural processes from adjacent agricultural fields and rights-of-way.[821]

Without an official land protection plan, the RMP pointed out, park superintendents could only monitor adjacent land uses to detect potential impacts to park resources, participate locally in the development and management of zoning ordinances, and help minimize impacts on scenic vistas through coordination with local, state, and other federal agencies.[822] However, one eyesore continues to this day to plague the park's viewshed—the so-called "dead car cemetery" created by William Russell in protest to the condemnation of his lands for the park. This 33-acre triangular piece of property adjacent to the park was directly in Sakakawea Village's viewshed, and since its creation, various superintendents have been unable to formulate a successful strategy to eliminate it.[823] However, some changes have occurred with William Russell's son, Lonnie. Although the "dead car cemetery" still exists, a vegetative fence line has been planted that will eventually obscure the vehicles. It was planted as a result of a five-year cooperative agreement with Lonnie Russell. While the vegetative fence is on the Russell property, National Park Service personnel maintain it.[824]

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[821] NPS, *Resource Management Plan Knife River Indian Village National Historic Site*, N-005.000, MWAC Library, Lincoln, NE.

[822] For instance, in 1996, when a commercial feedlot located adjacent to the park boundary and the City of Stanton was proposed, intensive public contact work defeated the plan. Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1996, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. Thereafter, KRIV's superintendent served as the City of Stanton's representative on the Mercer-Oliver County Economic Development Board, which allowed them to keep an eye on economic developments that might adversely affect park resources and viewshed. Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 1997-1998, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[823] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2000, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[824] Ron Cockrell to Anthony Godfrey, 2 February 2009, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.



Knife River Indian Heritage Group, 2006. Photo Credit: KRIV NHS.

CONCLUSION

In 2003, after a year of a vacant Superintendent position, whereby park staff compensated for this vacant position and worked together as a team to accomplish their work and by working closely with the other two parks in the North Dakota Group (Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site), a new Superintendent was hired. Cheryl A. Schreier was selected and transferred from Bryce Canyon National Park to Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS), and arrived in July 2003. A month earlier, Craig Hansen joined the staff as the park's first Education Specialist. His job was to work with teachers and school administrators, the park staff, and cooperating organizations to increase on-site and off-site education programs and to develop more in-depth distance learning programs.[825]

As Superintendent Schreier settled into her new position, and the park enjoyed a surge in visitation that began in 2003 (36,605) and crested in 2004 (40,166) as a result of the public's interest in the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial and more visitors discovering North Dakota and the relationship between the state and the Lewis and Clark Expedition,[826] she and the park staff faced a new challenge. On March 23, 2004, the National Park Service Washington Office issued Director's Order No. 2-1: Resource Stewardship Planning to all superintendents and managers of the Midwest Regional Office (MWRO). This order noted that there was a large gap between the broad requirements for the General Management Plan (GMP) and a park's required five-year strategic plans for "foreseeable" park budgets. The Washington Office wished to address this gap by replacing the required Resource Management Plan (RMP) with a new plan called a Resource Stewardship Plan (RSP). The RSP was to provide a "mechanism to develop and document well-defined and integrated natural and cultural resource condition objectives and comprehensive strategies for meeting them to guide park management decision-making." Furthermore, a RSP would provide a "linkage between the general, conceptual treatment of resources in GMP's and the specific detailed activities described in park strategic or implementation plans." A park's RSP was to reiterate the desired future resource conditions in the GMP to ensure that they provided appropriately quantifiable, measurable objectives to develop management strategies and to measure the success of management actions, and to discuss the park's long-term, science-and-scholarship-based strategies to achieve and maintain the desired future resource conditions. Once developed, a park would base its five-year strategic plan on the 10-to-20-year strategies set forth in the RSP.[827] Coincidently, at same time that this Director's Order was issued, KRIV celebrated its 30th anniversary, making this an opportune time to formulate long-term guidance for Knife River Indian Village's future in virtually all areas of management and interpretation.

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[825] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2003, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence, KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[826] Annual Report, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, 2004, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence, KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[827] Al Hutchings to Superintendents and Managers, Midwest Region, 23 March 2004, File KNRI—Desired Future Conditions Meeting, 2004, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

On April 6-8, 2004, an important and exceptionally productive planning meeting was held at Beulah, North Dakota, to formulate long-term guidance for KRIV related to a future RSP, as well as other documents, such as a revised Fire Management Plan (FMP). Besides KRIV core park personnel, which included Superintendent Cheryl A. Schreier and staff members Terry O'Halloran (Chief of Interpretation), Dorothy Cook (Interpretation Specialist), Craig Hansen (Education Specialist), Rod Skalsky (Facilities Manager) John Moeykens (Natural Resources/Law Enforcement) and Nancy Rime (Administrative Support Assistant), staff from the neighboring parks and MWRO attended the meeting as well. They included Theodore Roosevelt National Park Superintendent Valerie Naylor and staff members Chad Prosser and Cody Wienk and Beth Card, and Fort Union Trading Post NHS Superintendent Andy Banta, as well as Rod O'Sullivan, Roberta Young, and Steve Cinnamon from MWRO, and Thomas Thiessen from Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC). State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) chief archeologist Paul Picha came as well, and contributed North Dakota's views regarding park management. Absent from the meeting was any representative from the Three Affiliated Tribes.[828] This "think tank" meeting resulted in a response to DO 2-1, which was drafted between June 2004 and April 2005. It outlined an interim Desired Future Conditions (DFC) for KRIV, along with statements regarding strategic activities to foster certain overriding fundamental values. This document clearly indicated the "state of park" thinking at that time.

The April 2005 DFC opened with one purpose sentence for Knife River Indian Villages NHS: "To preserve, protect, and interpret the culture and agricultural lifestyles of the northern Great Plains Indian peoples and to conduct archeological research to further the understanding of their culture." This purpose statement, and four subsequent significance statements sanctioned National Park Service (NPS) theme, *Indian Villages and Communities* as the primary mission of the park. These statements indicted that KRIV contained some of the best preserved, surviving examples of earth-lodge village sites which once numbered in the hundreds along the Missouri River in North and South Dakota; that Big Hidatsa, Lower Hidatsa, and Sakakawea Village sites represented virtually pristine examples of these village sites; that KRIV stood for the abundance and diversity of natural resources at the confluence of the Knife and Missouri Rivers that fostered the semi-sedentary agricultural lifestyles in the northern Plains of the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians; and that Knife River Indian Villages served as an important center of trade before and after the arrival of Europeans.[829]

On the other hand, there were several interpretive thematic statements in the draft document that still broadly linked KRIV to NPS theme, *Contact with the Indians*. The draft statements noted that Hidatsa and Mandan peoples shared knowledge and material support to visitors that promoted intercultural relationships and commerce; that Knife River Indian Villages played an important historical role in continental exploration,

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[828] "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Conditions Meeting – April 5, 7 & 8, 2004, Beulah, North Dakota," File KNRI—Desired Future Conditions Meeting, 2004, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[829] "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Interim Desired Future Conditions Scoping Session," 5 April 2005, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence, KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

international commerce, artistic documentation, and 19th century European and American perceptions of American Indians; and that the Hidatsa and Mandan Indians welcomed eighteenth and nineteenth century explorers, traders, artists, and others, who produced some of the best historical documentation of the life of northern Plains Indians.[830] In the final document, these statements were condensed into one sentence, which read: "The quality and abundance of ethnographic information on the Hidatsa and Mandan fosters a growing understanding and appreciation of intercultural diversity in the past and present."[831]

Following upon these significance statements and interpretive themes, the DFC addressed three areas of fundamental values to be maintained by particular stewardship strategies.

Thomas Thiessen, Paul Picha, Cheryl Schreier, and Terry O'Halloran developed the first DFC fundamental value—Archeology. The stewardship statement for this value broadly read: "Knife River Indian Villages archeological, ethnographic, and museum collection resources are preserved and maintained in accordance with NPS cultural resource guidance and museum standards in order to facilitate the interpretation and research of the culture and agricultural lifestyles of the northern Great Plains Indian people and their antecedents." Individual implementation actions for this general statement focused on park archeological, ethnography, and museum needs. In the realm of archeological needs, the study team wished to broaden archeological research at the park by developing an archeological overview, by completing work on individual sites, by protecting KRIV sites through monitoring and management measures in cooperation with the Three Affiliated Tribes and the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and by making management decisions based on appropriate knowledge of archeological resources and potential impacts to them. In the area of ethnographic research, the study team outlined plans to develop a cultural affiliation study, an ethnographic overview, a park-wide ethnographic resources inventory, an ethnobotany program, and perhaps an ethnographic and historical scholarship program. Finally, in the area of museum research, the team recommended that funding be sought for a full-time curator, who could conduct a condition assessment survey of the museum collection and in-ground archeological resources and develop a collection conservation plan.[832]

Roberta Young, Chad Prosser, Rod Skalsky, Cody Wienk, and Andy Banta developed the second DFC fundamental value—Landscape and Integrity. They outlined a plan to manage the cultural landscape and its associated features, to monitor viewsheds within

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[830] Cheryl A. Schreier to Study Team, 28 May 2004, with attachment "Knife River Indian Villages Purpose/Significance/ Desired Future Conditions Statement," File KNRI—Desired Future Conditions Meeting, 2004, MWAC, Lincoln, NE.

[831] "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Interim Desired Future Conditions Scoping Session," 5 April 2005, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence, KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

[832] Cheryl A. Schreier to Study Team, 28 May 2004, with attachment "Knife River Indian Villages Purpose/Significance/ Desired Future Conditions Statement," File KNRI—Desired Future Conditions Meeting, 2004, MWAC, Lincoln, NE; "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: Interim Desired Future Conditions Scoping Session," 5 April 2005, File A2621 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence, KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND.

and outside of park boundaries, and to restore and/or maintain landscape connections between villages, river corridors, and significant park features. To achieve these goals they proposed several implementation actions, such as developing a cultural resource planning/treatment document, coordinating treatment activity with other disciplines (e.g. fire, pest, plant, and wildlife management), developing a viewshed management plan, and using archeology and historical documentation to determine the extent of the visual and physical landscape connections. Additionally, they sought to restore non-native grassland tracts to representative native prairie and maintain tracts dominated by native species, to restore and maintain vegetative structure and composition to resemble the natural vegetation pattern present upon the arrival of the Hidatsa, and to research and monitor the health of the ecosystem of the park, including water and air quality.[833]

Finally, Nancy Rime, John Moeykens, Craig Hansen, and Valerie Naylor worked on the third and last DFC fundamental value—Sense of Place and Visitor Experience. Together, they devised the statement that KRIV "cultural and resource programs together with its interpretive and education programs are integrated to the extent that their goals and management actions provide opportunities for visitors to experience the park at their own pace and to make their own connections." Stewardship activities in this regard included first developing a comprehensive interpretive plan and other documents with a strong emphasis on retaining the natural and cultural integrity and serenity of the historic site, and second, expanding on-site and off-site educational and interpretive programs to understand the importance of the park and to raise awareness of KRIV issues throughout North Dakota. To meet these goals, the study team recommended a visitor survey to define visitor expectations, an education plan, an expanded educational outreach and off-site programs for children and adults, revising and updating the KRIV teacher's guide, working with the Knife River Indian Heritage Foundation (KRIHF) to raise awareness about issues affecting KRIV and to provide cultural demonstrations and sale of traditional merchandise, and finally increasing KRIV's relationship with tribal members of the Hidatsa-Mandan tribes, which included increased Native American representation on park staff.[834]

Since the 2004 Beulah meeting and subsequent development of the April 2005 DFC, Superintendent's Schreier and Brian McCutchen have pursued and accomplished some of the goals set forth. For instance, under DFC fundamental value—Archeology, much has been accomplished. In 2006, M.N. Zedano, et al., of the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (University of Arizona) prepared *Cultural Affiliation Statement And Ethnographic Resource Assessment Study, Final Report December 8, 2006: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site,* ND, which also addressed similar needs for Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site, and Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Zedano is also currently preparing a comparable ethnobotany study for KRIV. Since 2004, KRIV has also completed work on protecting, monitoring and managing individual archeological sites as well. This work included Jay T. Sturdevant's *Site Conditions Assessments* (2005-2006), Steven DeVore's *Geophysical Inventory of the Elbee Site*

[833] Ibid.
[834] Ibid.

(2006), and Lucy Ellis' *Geomorphological Assessment of Bank Erosion Along the Knife River* (2006). Additionally, a number of experiments were performed regarding the impact of prescribed fires on medium density archeological remains (2005-2008) at KRIV and elsewhere, and incorporated in *Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Fire Management Plan* (2008), and the Krieger Tract was given National Register of Historic Places designation (2007). Under DFC fundamental value—Landscape and Integrity work has been accomplished as well. This work included important research, such as Shaun DeKeyser, et.al.'s *25 Years of Non-Disturbance at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (n.d.), and a number of NPS management studies. They included: *Northern Great Plains Exotic Management Plan and Environmental Assessment* (2005), *Prairie Restoration Plan Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site* (draft) and *Prairie Management Plan* (2008), and a viewshed analysis study. Finally, in the area of DFC fundamental value—Sense of Place and Visitor Experience, a number of actions were taken. In 2004, a visitor use analysis study was conducted. In 2005, a proposal was submitted for an amphitheater to accommodate large groups of visitors that were expected to come to KRIV because of higher interest in North America's indigenous peoples following the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial.[835] And, in 2006, KRIV signed a general agreement with KRIHF to formalize the Park's relationship with the group, which had recently purchased a small parcel of land near the park boundary with the intention of building a trading post and sales area for Friends Group. In this five-year agreement, NPS recognized the Foundation as a Friends Group and partner organization well suited to raise funds or other resources for KRIV, and obligated NPS to keep KRIHF informed of projects, programs, and objectives relating to the Park that were suitable for private sector support.[836]

As stated, the DFC planning sessions were utilized for plans related to the park's Resource Stewardship Plan, as well as a variety of other planning documents, such as KRIV's Fire Management Plan, Vegetation Plan and other park planning endeavors. However, a new GMP is scheduled for the near future. The new GMP will replace the currant plan, which was approved in 1978 and revised in 1986. Since that time, significant changes had occurred, which warranted a new GMP. KRIV's acreage had increased by thirty-five percent with the addition of the Krieger parcel (1990); a new visitor center had been constructed (1992) with a full-sized reconstruction of an earth-lodge (1995), which brought major opportunities for park visitors; there was a need for a new comprehensive interpretive plan based on new archeological and ethnohistorical research at KRIV; and several major resource management issues needed to be addressed as well, such as prescribed fire, native prairie restoration, cultural landscapes, and management of the museum collection for future use for display, education, and research. Finally, since 1986, there had been increased cooperation and partnerships with state agencies, local organizations, and the Three Affiliated Tribes that need to be explored and formalized. For instance, the Three Affiliated Tribes have a strong desire to be more

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[835] Briefing Paper, National Park Service: Amphitheater Proposal for Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, 20 June 2006, File 2615 (Narrative Reports and Related Correspondence), KRIV NHS, Stanton, ND. However, this proposal was never funded.

[836] "General Agreement Between the National Park Service and the Knife River Indian Heritage Foundation," 29 July 2006, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

involved in identifying the interpretive themes and important cultural aspects of their history, and to be involved in telling their own stories. Ultimately, the next GMP will have to account for these and other concerns, and guide the park for the next 10 to 15 years.[837] Understanding the administrative history of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site over the course of its existence is a first step forward toward reaching this future goal.

[837] "Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site GMP Statement," 19 December 2006, KRIV Project Files, USWR, Salt Lake City, UT.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

KEY PARK LEGISLATION

Public Law 93-486, October 26, 1974, an Act of Congress to Established Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV) National Historic Site (NHS)

Public Law 93-486
93rd Congress, H. R. 13157
October 26, 1974

An Act

88 STAT. 1461

To provide for the establishment of the Clara Barton National Historic Site, Maryland; John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Oregon; Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota; Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Massachusetts; Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, Alabama; Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, New York; and Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site, Washington, District of Columbia; and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Historic sites and national monument. Establishment.

TITLE I

Land acquisition.

SEC. 101. (a) Unless otherwise provided hereafter, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to acquire by purchase with donated or appropriated funds, donation, exchange, or by transfer from another Federal agency such lands and interests in lands as hereafter provided for establishment as units of the national park system, as follows:

Clara Barton National Historic site, Md. 16 USC 461 note.

(1) for establishment as the Clara Barton National Historic Site, Maryland, those lands depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, Clara Barton National Historic Site, Maryland", numbered NHS-CLBA 90,001 and dated February 1974, which shall include the land and improvements occupied by Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross located at 5801 Oxford Road, Glen Echo, Maryland: *Provided*, That the above-mentioned land and improvements may be acquired only by donation: *And provided further*, That the donation of any privately owned lands within the historic site may not be accepted unless and until the property is vacant;

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Oreg. 16 USC 431 note.

(2) for establishment as the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Oregon, those lands depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument", numbered NM-JDFB-20,014-A and dated June 1971: *Provided*, That the national monument shall not be established unless and until the State of Oregon donates or agrees to donate the Thomas Condon-John Day Fossil Beds, Clarno, and Painted Hills State Parks: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall not acquire a fee title interest to more than one thousand acres of privately owned lands except by donation or exchange: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall designate the principal visitor center as the "Thomas Condon Visitor Center";

Thomas Condon Visitor Center, designation.

Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, N. Dak. 16 USC 461 note.

(3) for establishment as the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota, those lands depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota", numbered 468-20,012 and dated July 1970;

Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Mass. 16 USC 461 note.

(4) for establishment as the Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Massachusetts, those lands depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, Springfield Armory National Historic Site, Massachusetts", numbered NHS-SPAR-91,003 and dated January 1974, the oldest manufacturing arsenal in the United States: *Provided*, That the historic site shall not be established unless an agreement is executed which will assure the historical integrity of the site and until such lands as are needed for the historic site are donated for this purpose;

(e) Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, $185,000 for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands and $2,722,000 for development; and

(f) Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, $213,000 for acquisition of lands and interests in lands and $2,737,000 for development.

TITLE II

Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site, D. C.

SEC. 201. In order to preserve for the benefit and inspiration of the people of the United States as a national historic site, the Sewall-Belmont House within the District of Columbia, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement to assist in the preservation and interpretation of such house.

16 USC 461 note.

SEC. 202. The property subject to cooperative agreement pursuant to section 101 of this Act is hereby designated as the "Sewall-Belmont House National Historic Site".

Cooperative agreement.

SEC. 203. The cooperative agreement shall contain, but shall not be limited to, provisions that the Secretary, through the National Park Service, shall have right of access at all reasonable times to all public portions of the property covered by such agreement for the purpose of conducting visitors through such property and interpreting it to the public, that no changes or alterations shall be made in such property except by mutual agreement between the Secretary and the other parties to such agreement. The agreement may contain specific provisions which outline in detail the extent of the participation by the Secretary in the restoration, preservation, and maintenance of the historic site.

Appropriation.

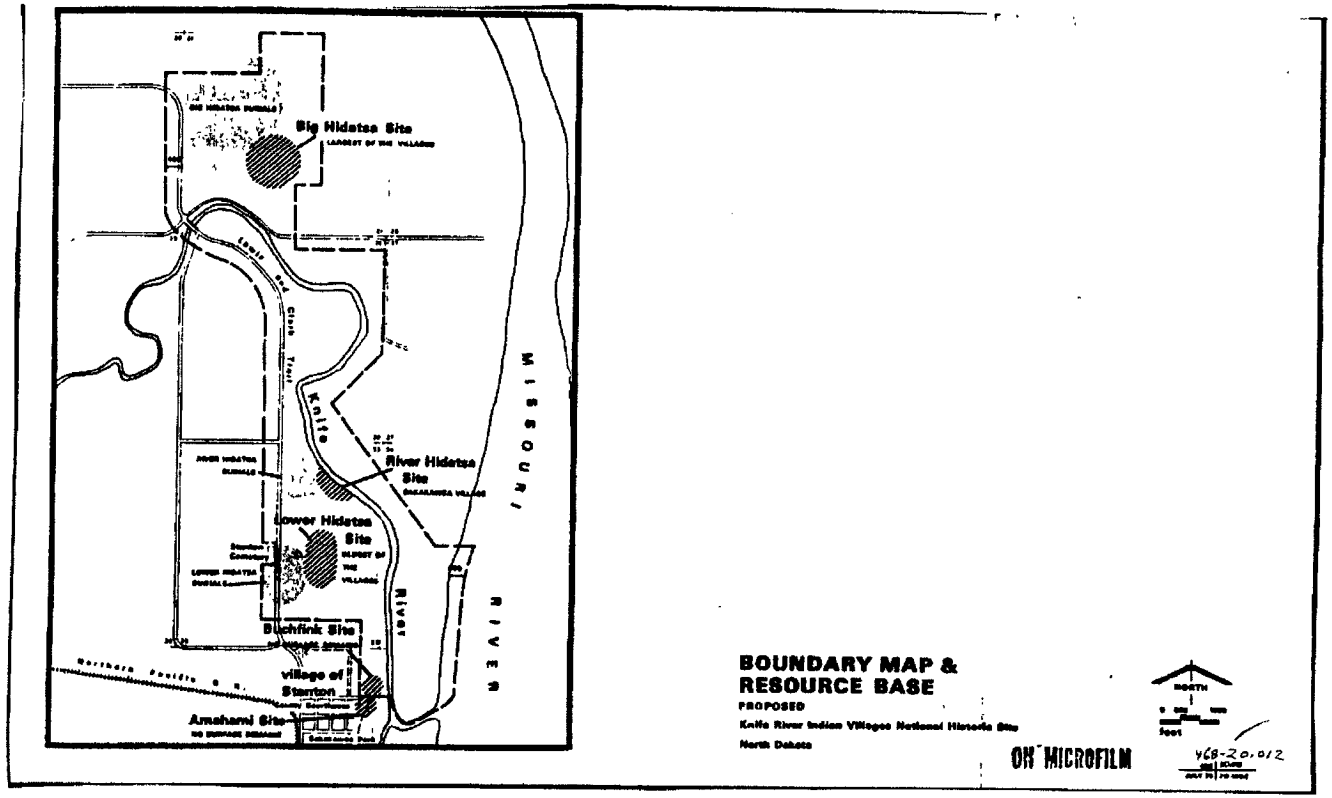
SEC. 204. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act, but not to exceed $500,000.

Approved October 26, 1974.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

HOUSE REPORT No. 93-1285 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs)
SENATE REPORT No. 93-1233 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs)
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 120 (1974):
Aug. 19, considered and passed House.
Oct. 8, considered and passed Senate, amended.
Oct. 16, House concurred in Senate amendments.

GPO 38-139


Big Hidatsa Site
Knife
River Hidatsa Site
Lower Hidatsa Site
Missouri
River
Bluffink Site
village of Stanton
Amahami Site
BOUNDARY MAP &
RESOURCE BASE
PROPOSED
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site
North Dakota
NORTH
feet
ON MICROFILM
468-20,012

KEY PARK LEGISLATION

Public Law 101-430, October 15, 1990, an Act of Congress to Provide for Additional Authorizations for Development at KRIV and for Acquisition of Land

Public Law 101-430
101st Congress

An Act

To authorize the acquisition of additional lands for inclusion in the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, and for other purposes.

Oct. 15, 1990
[S. 1230]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

North Dakota.
Government property.
16 USC 461 note.

SECTION 1. ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL LANDS.

(a) The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire by purchase with donated or appropriated funds, donation, or exchange the lands comprising approximately 465 acres and described in subsection (b) as an addition to the Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota: *Provided,* That no such lands may be acquired without the consent of the owner thereof unless the Secretary determines that, in his judgment, the property is subject to, or threatened with, uses which are having, or would have, an adverse impact on the archaeological, historical, or other values for which the site was established.

(b) The lands referred to in subsection (a) are those lands depicted on the map entitled "Proposed Boundary Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site" numbered 468-80,039A and dated July 1990.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATIONS.

Section 104(c) of Public Law 93-486 (88 Stat. 1462) is amended by striking "$600,000" and inserting in lieu thereof "$1,000,000" and by striking "$2,268,000" and inserting in lieu thereof "$4,000,000".

Approved October 15, 1990.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1230:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 101-638 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).
SENATE REPORTS: No. 101-256 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 136 (1990):
Mar. 28, considered and passed Senate.
July 30, considered and passed House.
Oct. 2, Senate concurred in House amendments.

O

49-139 O - 90 (430)

APPENDIX B

LIST OF PAST AND PRESENT NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PERSONNEL

AREA MANAGERS

Russell C. (Clay) Alderson	August 1975 – March 1979
Earle Curran	April 1979 – December 1980

SUPERINTENDENTS

Sandra Hellickson-Key	December 1980 – September 1984
Michael (Mick) O. Holm	March 1985 – November 1992
Charles (Chas) Cartwright	March 1993 – March 1998
Lisa Eckert	January 1999 – July 2002
Terry O'Halloran (Acting Superintendent)	July 2002 – September 2002
Rodney Skalsky (Acting Superintendent)	October 2002 – February 2003
Terry O'Halloran (Acting Superintendent)	March 2003 – July 2003
Cheryl A. Schreier	July 2003 – March 2006
Terry O'Halloran (Acting Superintendent)	March 2006 – February 2007
Brian McCutchen	March 2007 – Present

ARCHEOLOGISTS

Thomas D. Thiessen	July 1976 – August 1977
John F. Taylor	June 1978 – June 1980

RANGERS

Michael (Mick) O. Holm	December 1977 – July 1979
Robert Appling	June 1980 – May 1982
Position converted to	
Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management	January 19, 1983

INTERPRETATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

William (Bill) Haviland	January 1983 – June 1989
Fred Armstrong	November 1989 – November 1992
Bill Lutz	April 1993 – October 2000
Position converted to	
Chief of Interpretation	October 2000

CHIEF OF INTERPRETATION

Terrence L. O'Halloran	July 2000 – February 2008

Addendum to Appendix B:

A complete list of permanent employees of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site was omitted from *Contact with Northern Plains Indian Villages and Communities: An Administrative History of Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, North Dakota.*

Following are permanent staff, as of Spring 2009:

Brian K. McCutchen, Superintendent

Mindy Coy, Administrative Support Assistant

Maureen McGee- Ballinger, Chief of Interpretation and Cultural Resources Management

Dorothy Cook, Park Ranger (Interpretation)

Craig Hansen, Education Specialist

Charles Folk, Acting-Facility Manager

John Moeykens, Park Ranger (Law Enforcement & Natural Resources)

Rod Skalsky (ND Group Fire Management Officer – Based at Theodore Roosevelt NP)

CHIEF OF INTERPRETATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Maureen McGee-Ballinger	November 2008 – Present

CHIEF OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

John Moeykens	October 2000 – Present

APPENDIX C

OFFICIAL ANNUAL PARK VISITATION FIGURES[838]

Year	Recreational Visitation
2008	22,798
2007	22,558
2006	24,235
2005	31,079
2004	40,166
2003	36,605
2002	31,662
2001	36,280
2000	33,048
1999	32,455
1998	23,523
1997	25,206
1996	15,987
1995	17,116
1994	16,929
1993	17,472
1992	18,849
1991	13,845
1990	12,534
1989	18,824
1988	16,912
1987	16,265
1986	11,757
1985	12,391
1984	7,895
1983	8,373
1982	4,858
1981	4,616

[838] U.S. Department of the Interior (n.d.). National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office. Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site (NHS). http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/viewReport.cfm.

INDEX

m = Map
n = Note
p = Photograph

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), 107, 109, 181
Ahler, Janet G., 177
Ahler, Stanley A., 6, 6n, 7, 9, 11, 11n, 12-13, 15-18, 20-21, 34-35, 43, 51, 51n, 116-126, 126n, 127, 129, 132-134, 141, 141n, 142-143, 145, 150-152, 154n, 156, 164-166, 170, 173, 180, 193-194, 196-198, 200-210, 212-213, 217-224, 228, 230-231, 240-241, 250-251
Alderson, Russell C. "Clayton," 122, 124, 141n, 146-147, 147n, 148, 148n, 149-150, 150n, 151-153, 190n, 196, 198, 203-204, 237, 246, 254-256
Amahami (32ME8) Village, 15, 19m, 20, 21n, 22, 28m, 30, 34, 42-43, 43n, 44, 46, 50, 75, 81, 90, 97, 103m, 200-201
American Anthropological Association (AAA), 52
American Fur Company, 22, 32
American Museum of Natural History, 44, 118, 226
Andrews, Mark, 83, 87, 87n, 91, 94, 96-97, 99
ANG Coal Gasification Company, 256
Antelope Valley Station, 254-255, 255n
Appleman, Roy E., 63-64
Appling, Robert, 153-155, 157
Arikara Indians, 14m, 20, 20n, 22, 22n, 23m, 29, 35, 40-41, 43, 49, 52, 56, 139, 146n, 157, 190, 231, 233-234
Arkansas Technical University, 201
Armstrong, Fred, 140p, 172, 179
Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), 51, 52n, 69, 84, 100, 107, 109, 196-197, 197n, 202, 211-212, 237-238
Assiniboine Indians, 24, 41n
Audubon, John James, 2, 36, 40, 64
Awatixa, 13, 13n, 15-18, 19m, 20, 22, 24, 30, 34-35, 42, 52, 124p, 177, 188, 212, 225
Awaxawi, 13n, 17-18, 19m, 20, 24, 30, 34
Awigaxa, 15, 15n, 16, 18, 24
Baker, Anson, 96, 98p, 140
Baker, Clement, 215
Baker, Cora, 187, 187n
Baker, Gerard, 121-122, 129, 129p, 130, 142, 152-154, 154n, 178, 187, 187n
Baker, Howard, 69-70
Banta, Andy, 262-263
Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC), 91-92, 254-255, 257p
Bean, Glen T., 110, 122-123, 146, 154, 197, 256
Bear, Keith, 140p, 187, 187n
Bears Arm, 49
Beaubien, Paul L., 53-54
Beckwith, Martha Warren, 49
Belitz, Larry, 143
Bell, William, 136
Benson, Ben, 49
Benson, Edwin, 215
Big Hidatsa (32ME12) Village, 1, 15-16, 18, 19m, 21, 21n, 22, 28m, 30-31, 34-35, 39, 42-45, 45p, 46-48, 50, 53-59, 61-62, 65, 67n, 72-73, 75-76, 80-81, 83, 89-91, 97, 100, 103m, 113, 115, 119, 129n, 132, 155, 158, 162, 165, 168-170, 181, 199, 199n, 202, 205, 207, 211-212, 218, 222, 233p, 238, 243, 248, 253, 262
Bihohka (32ME310) Site, 211
Blackcat (32ML5) Site, 21, 21n
Blackfeet Indians, 31-32, 41n
Blake, Charles, 156
Bodmer, Karl, 2, 32-33, 64, 118, 159, 226. 228
Bohlen, E.U. Curtis, 88-90, 94-95
Bollman, Roger D., 148
Borner, August, 38, 47
Borner, Max, 67n, 76, 91, 106
Borner, Maynard, 82-83, 91-92
Borner, Richard, 47-48
Borner family, 47-48, 83-85, 91, 106
Bowers, Alfred W., 49-51, 51n, 118
Boyko, Noel, 130-132
Brackenridge, Henry M., 31
Brian, Dallas A., 74
Brower, Jacob Vredenberg, 42
Buchfink, George, 55, 59, 67, 67n, 76, 82, 93, 109, 119, 156
Buchfink, George Sr., 38
Buchfink (32ME9) Site, 15, 44, 46, 67n, 70, 72, 72n, 75, 81, 90, 97, 103m, 124, 127, 162, 199, 204, 207
Buchfink family, 40, 44
Buchmann, Donna, 69n, 177, 184p
Buffalo Bird Woman, 44, 156, 228
Bullis, Harold O., 106
Bunney, Gary E., 86

Burdick, Quentin N., 54, 57, 69, 78, 81, 81p, 83-85, 87, 89, 91-95, 98, 98p, 99, 111, 136-137, 169-171, 173-174
Burns, Ken, 188
Burr, Joyce, 177
Busch, Tom, 138
Calabrese, F.A., 108, 110, 110n, 111, 117, 119, 121-122, 124, 126-127, 151-152, 173, 196, 200, 203, 205-208, 211, 213, 218, 224, 229, 231, 240-241
Caldwell, Warren W., 56
Card, Beth, 262
Card, Steve, 37
Cartwright, Charles "Chas," 179, 181-182, 185-186, 214-216, 218-219, 221, 232, 237, 237n, 252
Catlin, George, 2, 32, 40, 64, 87
Causey, North Dakota, 37-38
Causey, Peter C., 37
Cerro Grande fire, 252-253, 253n
Charbonneau, Toussaint, 27, 30, 64, 191
Cheyenne Indians, 24, 215
Cinnamon, Steve, 262
Clambey, Gary K., 242-244, 249
Clark, William, 29, 32, 53, 188, 230
Clark's Creek (32ME1) Site, 15
Clayton, Lee, 202
Clean Air Act, 254
Clifford, Thomas J., 93
Cole, Faye-Cooper, 49
Collie, George L., 49
Collier, John, 50n
Columbia Fur Company, 32
Columbia University, 50, 50n
Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), 151
Congressional Budget Office (CBO), 174
Congressional Legislation:
H.R. 3074 (June 1989), 173-174
H.R. 5199 (March 1973), 91, 94-95, 99
H.R. 12082 (December 1971), 83, 86-87
H.R. 13157, 100
S. 1230 (June 1989), 173-176
S. 1468 (April 1973), 91, 94-96, 98, 101
S. 2954 (December 1971), 83, 86-87
Connally, Ernest A., 93
Conrad, Kent, 136
Cook, Dorothy, 185, 189, 192, 262
Corbett, John M., 57
Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 106
Cree Indians, 24, 41n
Crespi, Muriel "Miki," 232
Cronenberger, Richard J., 142-143
Cross Ranch Site, 157
Crow (River) Indians, 1, 1n, 17, 17n, 24, 31, 35, 41n, 64, 215, 227, 227n, 233-235
Crows Breast, Elgin, 168, 215
Crows-Flies-High Site, 52
Curran, Earle, 122-124, 153, 155, 204
Dana College, 56, 58n
Darling Foundation, 53
Davis, Denis, 124
Deapolis (32ME5) Village, 21, 21n, 29, 46, 52-53, 200-201
Deegan, Denby, 138
DeKeyser, Shaun, 265
DeVore, Steven, 264
Dickenson, Russell E., 99, 131, 131n
Dietrich, Joseph, 37
Dolan, Susan A., 222
Donovan, Lauren, 168
Dorgan, Byron L., 131-132, 136, 173, 175, 187, 191
Double Ditch State Historic Site (32BL8), 57, 146n, 157
Eckert, Lisa, 179, 182, 184-185, 187, 191, 252
Edwards, Billy, 37
Eggan, Fred, 51
Elbee (32ME408) Site, 4, 120, 163, 202, 205, 211, 218, 222-223, 264
Ellis, Lucy, 264
Endangered Species Act of 1973, 186, 247
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 107
Erickson, Chuck, 141
Evans, John T., 27, 29, 230
Evans, Roger, 113
Ewald, Paul A., 55-58, 58n, 59, 61-62, 69-70, 93, 102, 161
Ewers, John C., 118, 228
Fagergren, Fred C., 62-63, 69, 72-73
Falk, Carl R., 231
Federal Highway Administration (FHA), 107
Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago), 50n
Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), 107
Flaming Arrow (32ML4), 12-13
Flynn, Rhonda. 153
Ford, Gerald R., 101-102
Forkorner (32ME413) Site, 204
Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, 134, 141, 146, 151, 157
Fort Berthold Community College, 166, 190, 231
Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and Indians, 22-23, 36, 41, 43-44. 49, 52n, 65, 93, 96, 118, 132, 135, 146, 155, 167-168, 176-177, 226
Fort Clark, 21n, 22, 22n, 32-35, 61, 146, 146n
Fort Clark (32ME7) Village, 21-22, 33-35, 46, 61, 146n, 200
Fort Clark Historic Site, 92, 146, 157
Fort Clark State Park, 84
Fort Lewis College, 245

Fort Mandan Historic Site, 29, 64, 74, 84, 146, 157, 183, 189-190
Fort Stevenson, 36, 36n, 37, 41
Fort Tilton, 32
Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site, 33, 37, 41, 41n, 42, 64, 87, 129, 148n, 167, 232-233, 261-262, 264
Fort Vanderburgh, 31
Four Bears, 22, 35, 187
Four Dancers, 49
Fox, Wayne, 140p
Fur trade, 2-3, 20-22, 25, 25n, 26-27, 29-34, 40, 52, 64, 71, 75, 217, 225, 227n, 230
Garrison Dam and Reservoir, 20, 24, 52, 52n, 56, 59, 63n, 81, 195, 200, 237, 246
General Services Administration (GSA), 113
Gilbert, Cathy A., 222
Giles, Robert L., 90-91
Gillette, Austin, 129
Given, Dave, 187
Goldenstein, Marcia, 177
Good Bear, Mrs., 49
Goodbird, Edward, 44, 228
Gordon, Jack, 138
Government Performance Results Act of 1993, 182
Grahl, James L., 92
Grandmother's Lodge (32ME59) Site, 15
Grannis, Bryon and farmstead, 39, 54, 59, 61-62, 67, 67n, 73, 76, 91, 93, 100, 112-113, 130, 134, 138n, 148, 153-156, 158, 162-163, 170, 178, 180-182, 240n, 249
Grannis, Fred, 39
Grannis, Laverne, 162, 168, 171, 174-175
Greenshield (32OL17) Site, 49
Greenslit, John, 79, 81
Grinnell, Calvin, 168, 177
Guy, William L., 56-59, 62-63, 69-70, 73, 78-79, 81, 81p, 88
Gwinn, Lyle, 187
Hadu Nowassa (32ME467) Site, 211
Hall, Frankee, 192
Hall, Nellie, 178
Hall, Tex, 187
Hansen, Craig, 191n, 192, 261-262, 264
Hanson, Jeffrey R., 225n, 230-231
Hartzog, George B. Jr., 57-58, 69-70, 74, 77-78, 84-85, 89
Hauck, Michael F., 95
Haviland, William "Bill," 159, 161-162, 172, 250
Hawks, Catherine, 217
Haynes, Michael, 191-182
Hecker, Thad C., 51, 53
Heinemeyer, Edward, 37
Hellickson-Key, Sandra, 6, 126-127, 129-130, 132, 136, 155-157, 159-160, 207, 211, 217, 236, 239, 242, 247, 250, 256
Henry, Alexander, 30, 40, 230
Henry, Cedar, 190
Henry, Grace, 215
Henry, Nicole, 190
Hensler (32OL18) Site, 49
Heye Foundation Museum of the American Indian, 227
Hidatsa Indians/Tribe/Villages, 1, 1n, 2-3, 5, 8, 12-13, 14m, 15-16, 18, 19m, 20-22, 23m, 24-27, 29-37, 40-41, 41n, 42-44, 49-51, 51n, 52, 54, 56, 59, 63, 65, 70, 73, 76, 84, 87, 107, 110, 117-118, 136, 139, 141-143, 152, 154, 156-159, 165, 169, 175, 178, 184-185, 192-193, 198, 200-201, 208, 210, 219, 222-223, 225-227, 230-231, 233-235, 242, 262-264
Hidatsa Northern Trail Complex (32ME476) Site, 220
Hidatsa-proper, 13n, 16, 16n, 17-18, 19m, 35-36
Hjella, Walter, 59
Hjelle, John, 105
Holder, Preston, 54
Holm, Michael "Mick" O., 134-137, 140-142, 150, 152-153, 159-162, 165-167, 167n, 175, 178-179, 179p, 192-193, 197n, 215-216, 244, 248, 250, 257-258
Hotrok (32ME412) Site, 204, 213
Hudson, Charles, 124
Hudson Bay Company, 27, 29
Huff Indian Village, 84, 146n
Hulett, Stanley W., 88-90, 96
Hump (32ME414) Site, 207
Huny, Bill, 148n
Interagency Archeological Salvage Program (IASP), 51-52, 52n
Jackson, Henry M., 96
Janssen, Mrs. Ben, 48
Johnson, Ann, 162, 170
Joslyn Art Museum (Omaha, Nebraska), 118, 159, 226
Kalin, Jeffrey, 141-143
Kendall, Debra, 245
Kennedy, Frances, 146n
Kennedy, Roger, 146n
Kiebert, Frank J.V., 228
Kills Small, Jerome, 185
Kipp, James, 32
Knife River Indian Heritage Foundation (KRIHF), 135-137, 140, 166, 170, 176-177, 183-184, 188, 264-265

Knife River Indian Villages (KRIV), National Historic Site (NHS):
Administration issues, 150-155, 159-160, 171-172, 179-180
Archeology (see also individual KRIV and related regional sites):
Archaic, 1, 3, 7-11, 24, 214
Charred Body complex, 12-13
Early ethnography and mapping, 41-44
Elbee site management, 222-223
Field research, 1978, 201-203
Field research, 1979, 203-204
Field research, 1980, 205-206
Heart River complex, 16
Knife River complex, 17-24
Krieger parcel management, 220-222
Middle Missouri complex, 13-15
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 214-215
Painted Woods complex, 15-16
Paleo-Indian, 3, 7-9, 11, 214
Phase I Research Plan, 117, 156, 162, 164, 192, 194, 197-201, 203-211, 213, 217-221, 231, 235
Phase II Research Plan, 117, 164-165, 206, 213, 217-220
Phase III Research Plan, 117, 206, 218
Pioneer excavation, park building, and ethnography, 44-50
Pre-Village tradition, 3, 7, 8-11, 24, 220-221
Sakakawea Village erosion and mitigation, 194-197
Scientific excavations, 50-54
Taylor Bluff mitigation, 211-213
Visitor/Administration Center, 213-214
Woodland tradition, 3, 7-8, 10-11, 24, 175, 200
Collection Management Plan (CMP), 215-216
Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), 222
Earth-lodge exhibit, and programs, 4, 104, 114,140-144, 154, 158, 163, 165, 178, 189, 183, 185, 187-188, 190-191, 193, 213, 265
Environmental impact statement (EIS), 79-81, 86,107-108, 132, 150, 167, 183
Establishment, 55-103
Ethnohistorical studies at Knife River Indian Villages NHS:
Cartographic research, 228-229
Funding, 229
Literature gaps, 229-230
Research design and studies, 226-228, 231-235
Feasibility study (1968), 55, 57-64, 74, 100, 240
Fur Trade Days, 159-160, 167, 172, 177, 179, 182, 193
General Management Plans (GMP), 144, 159, 161-167, 175, 238-239, 244, 257, 261, 265-266
Guides for archeological/ethnohistorical research, 116-119
Interpretation planning and programs, 1,4, 54, 63-65, 67, 69-71, 74-75, 80, 87, 90, 97, 110, 113, 115-118, 123-124, 141, 143, 145-146, 149-153, 155-159, 163, 165, 171, 178-179, 182-185, 188. 191-193, 200, 206, 211-212, 218-220, 224, 226, 233-234, 236, 241-243, 261, 263
Krieger parcel acquisition, 168-171, 173-176
Land acquisition, 4-5, 65, 71, 76-77, 79-80, 83, 85-86, 90, 96-99, 101-102, 104-109, 111-112, 145-146, 150, 169-171, 173-176, 196, 211, 220-221, 236, 239
Legislative history, 81-103
Lewis and Clark bicentennial, 188-192
Lewis and Clark drama, 160-161, 167, 172, 176, 193
Local landowners reaction and meetings (see also individual landowners), 62-63, 82-85, 92-94, 99-100, 104-106
Maintenance storage shed, 180-182
Master planning, 4, 69, 72-76, 78, 81, 83-87, 99, 104, 114-115, 119, 24, 127, 141, 156, 159, 162-164, 196, 211, 217, 228, 240-242, 244, 254
National Historic Landmark (NHL) status, 54-56, 59, 80, 85, 89
Natural resource management:
Air quality issues, 254-256
Fire management and development, 249-254
On-going threats, 258-259
Vegetation management, 240-246
Viewshed issues, 256-258
Water quality and management issues, 237-240
Wildlife management and development, 246-249
North Dakota land donation, 88
Northern Plains Culture Festival, 177, 183-184, 187, 189, 189p, 191
Public Law 101-430, 175, Appendix A
Public Law 93-486, 1, 4, 101, 103m, 104-105, 108, 111, Appendix A
Silver anniversary, 187

Statement for Managements (SFM), 145-146, 148-150, 156, 1161-162, 172, 185-186, 244, 250
Study of Alternatives, 60m, 63-66, 66m, 67-68, 68m, 69-72, 77
Tribal relations, 121-123, 129-129, 131-132
Visitors and visitation, 2, 4, 25, 65, 67, 71, 75-77, 79-80, 84, 102, 124, 133, 137-138, 142, 144-145, 150, 154, 156-160, 162-168, 171-172, 176-180, 182-185, 187-192, 203, 211, 219, 222, 232, 243, 249, 257, 261-262, 264-265, Appendix C
Visitor/Administrative Center, 4, 75, 104, 111, 115, 119-138, 139p, 140-114, 145, 150, 152-153, 155, 157-158, 160-163, 165-166, 168, 170-172, 174, 176, 178, 180-184, 188, 192-194, 199, 202, 204-205, 209-210, 213-214, 216, 218, 245, 265
Volunteer in Parks (VIP), 161, 166, 183, 189
Knife River Indian Village Site Advisory Committee, 81-83
Knoop, George, 38
Knoop, Herbert, 61
Kranz, Audrey and Doug, 147n
Krieger, Forrest, 61, 73, 106, 169n
Krieger, Jessie, 168-169, 169n, 170-171, 173, 175-176, 178-179, 220-221, 245, 252, 265
Krieger, Olga, 61, 67n, 73, 76, 91
Krieger, Violet, 148
Krieger family, 38, 148
Kroeber, Alfred Lewis, 50n
Kurz, Friederich Rudolph, 36, 190n
Lake Sakakawea State Park, 24, 84, 148, 157
Lakota Indians, 215
Lancaster, John, 88, 92, 99-102, 104-105m 110, 110n, 145-147, 148n, 195-196, 255-256
Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, 96
Lang, Judy, 130, 130p, 135-136, 176
Lehmer, Donald J., 11n, 12-13, 56-57, 58n, 197, 201, 220, 224, 226-50
Leland Olds Station, 254
Lennius, Herman J., 39, 76
Leppart, Gary, 92-93, 98
Lewis, Meriwether, 29, 53, 188, 192
Lewis, Theodore Hayes, 41-42, 59n, 194, 228
Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, 145, 183, 188-193, 261, 265
Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition, 2, 4, 28-30, 40, 46, 48, 53-54, 63-64, 67, 70-71, 73-74, 87, 97, 107, 146, 150, 157, 160-161, 183, 185-186, 188, 190-192, 226, 228
Lewis and Clark Trail Committee (LCTC), 53, 56-57, 74, 82
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, 81, 192
Lewis and Clark Trail Highway/System, 46, 53, 56, 59, 60m, 65, 70-71, 74, 76, 79-81, 86, 128, 190-191
Libby, Orin G., 42, 42n, 43, 46-49, 56, 161, 228
Like-A-Fishhook Village, 2, 23m, 35-37, 41, 47p, 49, 52, 73
Link, Arthur A., 81, 81p, 83, 87-89, 92-95, 99, 105, 107
Lisa, Manual, 30-31
Little Bighorn College, 214
Little Owl, Sammy, 137
Little Soldier, Nathan, 78-79, 82, 98p
Lobodi (32ME411) Site, 120
Loewen, Clarence, 82
Logan, Wilfred R., 55-57, 58n
Logan Museum, Beloit, Wisconsin, 49-50
Lone Fight, Edward, 136
Lovick, Stephen, 11-12, 15, 17, 209-210
Lower Hidatsa (32ME10) Village, 1, 15-16, 18, 19m, 20, 28m, 30, 43-46, 48, 50-51, 55-56, 59, 65, 67n, 75, 81, 90, 97, 103m, 109, 115, 119, 124p, 125, 127, 129n, 133, 133n, 141, 150, 155-156, 162, 199, 201-202, 205, 207, 213, 218, 222, 248, 253, 262
Lower Hidatsa East (32ME487) Site, 15
Lower Hidatsa West (32ME499) Site, 213
Lower Sanger (32OL11) Site, 49
Loy, Henry Charles, 37
Lutz, Bill, 184
Lyman Aldren (32ME3) Site, 15-16
Lyon, Thomas R., 109, 199
MacIntyre, D.C., 107
Mackay, Donald "Max," 26-27
Mackay, James, 26-27, 29
Mackintosh (Euro-American trader), 26-27
Madman Bluff (32ME312) Site, 211
Malik, Marcus P., 58, 61, 74
Malnourie, Vincent, 96, 98p
Mandan Indians/Tribe/Villages, 1-3, 8, 14m, 15, 15n, 16-18, 19m, 20-22, 23m, 24-27, 29-37, 40-41, 43-44, 46, 49-51, 51n, 52, 54, 56-57, 84, 117-118, 134, 136, 139, 146, 151-152, 154, 156-158, 165, 175, 178, 184-185, 187, 193, 198, 200-201, 208, 210, 225-227, 230-231, 233-235, 242, 262-264
Mathews, Washington, 41-42
Mattes, Merrill J., 55, 58, 61-64, 70-74, 100
Mattison, Ray H., 58, 58n, 59n
Maxidiwiac, 156
Maximilian, Prince Alexander of Wied (Germany), 2, 32-33, 40, 64, 118, 190n, 226, 228, 228n, 230
McCutchen, Brian, 264
McEnaney, Marla, 222

McGahan, Bob, 37
McGrath, Thomas and James, 38
McLean County Historical Society, 96
Me-Ecci Aashi Awadi, 184, 219
Menard (French-Canadian *voyageur*), 26-27
Mercer County, North Dakota, 20, 37-39, 43-44, 46, 48, 55, 59, 62, 71, 75, 154, 169, 257-258
Metcalf, Fay, 184
Metcalf Archeological Consultants, 220
Miller, Bill, 37
Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), 41-42, 44, 118, 194, 226, 228
Mintzmyer, Lorraine, 169-170, 205
Missouri Fur Company, 31-32
Moery, Ed, 124
Moeykens, John, 189, 262, 264
Molander (32OL7) Site, 18, 19m, 146n
Montana State University, 166, 248
Moore, Jackson W. "Smoky," 58-59, 61, 63-64, 70, 72n, 74
Moore, Robert E., 248
Morton, Rogers C.B., 96-97, 99
Moses, John, 46-48
Mossett, Amy, 187, 190
Mossett, Jim, 136
Moulton, G.E., 230
Mouse Raid, 177
Nagel, John, 37
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 186
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (Section 106 and Section 110), 80, 89-90, 96, 104, 112-113, 165, 186, 213, 220, 232
National Park Service:
- *Contact with Indians Theme*, 2, 4, 54, 56, 59, 63-64, 69, 71, 75, 87, 111, 118, 144-145, 152-153, 161, 172, 177, 183, 185-186, 188, 193, 208, 211, 219, 225, 229, 235, 262
- Chaco Archeological Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 109, 199
- Cultural Landscapes Automated Inventory Management System (CLAIMS), 222
- Denver Service Center (DSC), 123-124, 138, 149, 204, 257
- Executive Order 11593, 199n, 202, 205, 220, 232
- Harper's Ferry Center (HFC), 152, 154, 156-158, 163, 178
- *Indian Villages and Communities Theme*, 1-2, 4, 54, 63-64, 71, 75, 87, 111, 118, 144-145, 152, 157, 173, 177, 184, 186, 192, 194, 200, 208, 211, 219, 225, 234, 262
- Interagency Archeological Services Office, Denver, Colorado, 109
- Midwest Regional Office (MWRO), Omaha, Nebraska, 53, 55-58, 62, 69-74, 78-79, 82, 85-88, 90, 93, 108, 221n, 232, 239, 252, 261-262
- Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC), Lincoln, Nebraska, 58-59, 108-111, 117-121, 123-124, 127, 133, 141, 150-152, 157, 171, 181-182, 186, 195-196, 199, 201, 203-208, 213, 218, 12, 223-225, 227-231, 252, 262
- Rocky Mountain Regional Office (RMRO), Denver, Colorado, 100-102, 104-105, 109-115, 119-124, 126-128, 133, 143, 145-146, 152, 154, 156-157, 159, 162, 169-170, 173, 178, 180, 185, 195, 179, 202-206, 213-214, 216-218, 232, 256
- Teaching with Historic Places Program (THPP), 184, 184n
- Washington Office, 57, 59, 61, 63, 78, 85-86, 89, 93, 95, 97, 146, 203, 206, 232, 242, 252, 261
- Western Service Center (WSC), 55, 58, 72, 74

National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), 179-180
National Science Foundation (NSF), 110
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, 194, 214, 215n, 216, 218, 233
Nave, Shirley, 231
Naylor, Valerie, 262, 264
Neckels, Jack, 92, 95, 105
Neuman, Benjamin, 67n
Nickel, Robert, 109, 151n, 195-196, 198, 201-202, 207
Nixon, Richard M. administration, 88-89, 96-97
Noble, Virgil, 223
North Dakota, State of, 21n, 47-48, 61, 63n, 76, 80-81, 84, 87-92, 96, 112, 134, 138, 181, 246, 257
North Dakota Archaeological Association (NDAA), 133
North Dakota Department of Health, 256
North Dakota Department of Tourism, 179
North Dakota Heritage Center, 157
North Dakota Historical Society, Inc. (NDHSI), 83. 96
North Dakota Humanities Council, 160-161
North Dakota Intertribal Re-Interment Committee (NDIRC), 215
North Dakota Lewis and Clark Council, 96
North Dakota Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center (NDLCIC), 183, 188-190
North Dakota State Highway Department, 107

North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), 113, 133n, 169, 181-182, 196, 213, 223, 263
North Dakota State Historical Board, 73
North Dakota State Park Service, 107
North Dakota State University (NDSU), 242
North Dakota Women's Coalition, 96
North West Company, 27, 29-30
O'Halloran, Terrence L., 184-185, 190-192, 222-223, 262-263
O'Sullivan, Rod, 262
Oberlander, Herbert, 67n, 76, 106, 119
Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 81, 95-97
Olds, Nate and family, 45p, 48, 53-54, 61, 112
Olsen, Allen, 126
On-A-Slant Village, 141, 151, 151n
Page, Robert R., 222
Payton, Duane, 69n, 76, 93, 93p, 106, 112
Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at Harvard (Boston), 227
People of the Willows, 219-220
Picha, Paul, 223, 254n, 262-263
Plainfeather, Mardell, 214
Poly (32ME407) Site, 202, 205
Porter, Joseph, 159
Prine, Beth, 187
Prosser, Chad, 262-263
Public Service Commission (PSC), 255
Rahm, William, 67n, 76
Raybell, Glenna, 96
Reagan, Ronald administration, 128, 131n, 153, 206
Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646), 77, 80, 85, 105
Reid, Russell, 48, 53, 70
Reiten, Jon, 202, 204
Reynolds, "Lonesome Charley," 36-37
Richner, Jeff, 151n
Rime, Nancy, 262, 264
Robinson, Eleanor, 178
Robinson, Harry, 55-56, 72
Robinson, Sheila, 96, 98p
Rock Village, 20, 22
Rogers, Jerry, 174-176
Rokhohl Site (32ME474) Site, 220
Running Deer (32ME383) Site, 15, 18, 162-163, 165, 170-171, 173-174, 205
Russell, Henry, 47
Russell, Lonnie, 259
Russell, William, 67n, 76, 78-79, 88, 92, 99-100, 106, 120, 258-259
Russell family, 39-40, 47
Sagan, Marc, 163
Sagehorn, George H., 45, 55, 59, 156
Sakakawea, 46, 46n, 48, 53, 64, 76, 87, 96, 131, 161, 167p, 177, 187-188, 190-192
Sakakawea (32ME11) Village, 1, 19m, 20-21, 21n, 22, 28m, 29, 34-35, 42-48, 50, 55-56, 59, 59n, 61-63, 63n, 65, 67, 67n, 69n, 72-73, 75-76, 81, 83-84, 87, 90, 97, 100, 103m, 107, 109, 114-115, 119, 125, 127, 129, 129n, 141, 146, 149p, 150, 156, 162-163, 177, 194-195, 195p, 196-197, 197n, 198-199, 201-202, 205, 207, 212, 218, 222-223, 237-239, 247-248, 253, 259, 262
Sanstead, Wayne, 97, 98p, 99, 140
Satrom, Joe, 79, 92
Satrom, Kathy, 94-95
Sayler, Rodney, 250-251
Schneider, Mary Jane, 219, 228, 233n
Schreier, Cheryl A., 191-192, 232, 261-264
Schrieber, Ricky, 76
Schweigert, C.F., 47
Scovill (32ME409) Site, 120, 123, 202, 205
Scullin, Michael, 141-143
Seabloom, Robert W., 250-251
Shafer, George F., 48
Shaver, Mack, 136
Short, Don Livingston, 54
Sinner, George, 136
Sioux Indians, 20, 22, 34-35
Skalsky, Rodney, 191, 222-223, 239, 254n, 262-263
Skubitz, Joe, 97, 99
Slatkavitz, Roy C., 123-124
Smallpox epidemics and disease, 18, 20-22, 26, 34-35, 57, 87, 225, 227, 230
Smith, Vernon, 76, 93, 106
Smithsonian Institution, 50n, 51-52, 52n, 56, 63n, 118, 227
Smithsonian Institution-NPS' River Basin Surveys (SIRBS), 52, 108n, 227n
Snortland-Coles, J. Signe, 220
Snyder, Michael D., 162, 185
Soil Conservation Service (SCS), 107
Sperry, James E., 58, 58n, 62, 62p, 73, 79, 81-82, 86-87, 94, 96-97, 98p, 105, 113, 140, 169, 181, 196, 213,
Spinden, Herbert J., 43
Spotted Bear, Alyce, 131-132
Stagner, Howard R., 57
Standing Rock Indian Reservation, 44
Stanton, North Dakota, 1, 20, 25, 37-38, 46-48, 59, 61, 63, 71, 73, 75, 80-85, 87, 92-93, 95, 99, 101, 104-105, 119n, 124, 127, 129-130, 132-133, 147, 153, 155, 161-162, 172, 187, 196, 200, 229, 249, 254, 257, 259n
Stanton Community Action (SCA), 130-133, 135, 161

Stanton Mounds (32ME104) Site, 169-170, 173-175, 220-221
State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND), 42, 42n, 43, 46-49, 51-53, 55-57, 58n, 61-62, 107, 113, 114n, 118, 132, 146, 146n, 181, 201, 210, 213, 226-228, 253
Steifel, Jacob, 76
Steifel, Janet, 67n
Steifel (32ME202) Site, 15
Steinbrueck, Ernst R., 42-43
Stout, A.B., 43, 228
Strait, Richard A., 127, 180-181
Stream Bank Erosion and Demonstration Act of 1974 (Public Law 99-251), 211
Strong, William Duncan, 50, 50n, 51
Stroup, George, 61
Stroup, Robert L., 93
Stuart, Russell, 79
Sturdevant, Jay T., 254n, 264
Sullivan, Arthur L., 58-59, 62, 63n
Swenson, Fern, 181, 222-223
Taber, Jim, 124
Taylor, John F., 150-151, 151n, 153, 220
Taylor, Roy, 96
Taylor Bluff (32ME66) Site, 4, 15, 18, 22, 28m, 34, 44, 122n, 180-181, 211, 212, 212p, 222-223, 238-239
Terry, Michael, 187, 187n, 234
Theodore Roosevelt National (Memorial) Park, 48, 58, 62, 63n, 73-74, 79, 81-83, 85-86, 88, 92, 99-100, 102, 104, 110, 112, 122-123, 127, 129, 131, 136, 145-146, 157, 178, 195-196, 198, 203, 254-256
Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association (TRNHA), 150-151, 177, 183-184, 189, 192, 219
Thiessen, Thomas D., 6, 109, 110n, 129n, 141, 141n, 146n, 147n, 150, 150n, 151n, 153n, 157, 166, 181-182, 186, 187n, 190n, 196, 198, 207-208, 210, 210p, 211, 217-219, 221, 221n, 223, 227n, 229-231, 237, 252-253, 254n, 262-263
Thompson, David, 2, 29, 52, 227, 230
Thompson, James B., 73-74, 79, 81-83, 85-86, 123
Thompson, Lynn H., 100-101, 104
Thompson, Ralph, 52-53
Three Affiliated Tribes, 4, 23, 36, 41-42, 52n, 78, 82, 91, 96, 120-122, 124, 126, 128-129, 129n, 133, 136, 138, 146, 157-158, 160-161, 167, 170, 187, 190, 192, 213-215, 215n, 216, 232, 234, 262-263, 265
Toom, Dennis L., 212-213, 223
Trimble, Michael K., 219, 225n, 230-231
Udall, Stewart, 53-54
United Power Association (UPA) Falkirk Mine, 256
United States Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), 107, 138
United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 151n, 153, 155, 256
United States Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR), 62, 65, 74, 107
United States Bureau of Reclamation, 51, 95, 233n
United States Coast Guard (USCG), 246
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), 107, 155, 237, 247
United States Forest Service (USFS), 162
United States Geological Survey (USGS), 107
United States National Museum, 118-119
United Tribes of North Dakota Development Corporation (UTND), 74
United Tribes Technical College, 166
University of Arizona, 232-234, 264
University of California, 50n
University of Chicago, 49
University of Colorado, 227
University of Idaho, 51
University of Mary, 166
University of Michigan, 227
University of Missouri-Columbia, 6n, 56, 118-119, 151, 226
University of Montana, 118
University of Nebraska, 54, 58n, 151n, 199
University of North Dakota (UND) at Grand Forks, North Dakota, 42, 42n, 109-110, 116-117, 120-122, 126-129, 132, 133n, 141, 150-151, 157, 162, 165-166, 168, 171-172, 178, 192, 194, 196, 199-200, 200n, 201-207, 216, 219-221, 223, 250-251
University of Wyoming, 242
Utley, Robert M., 88-90
Vento, Bruce F., 175
Vogel, Sarah, 169
Volf, William, 223
Volz, J. Leonard, 79, 82, 85-86, 88
Walker, Ronald H., 88-90, 92, 94, 105
Ward, Marlene Burr, 177
Washington University, 201
Watkins, Anna Whitfield, 124
Wegner, Samuel J., 181
Weymouth, John, 199, 151n
Wickware, Harvey D., 112, 122-123, 129, 131, 157
Wienk, Cody, 262-263
Will, George F., 43, 48, 51, 53
Williams, Sherda, 222
Wilson, Gilbert L., 44, 49, 141-142, 154, 226
Wise, John, 157
Wolf Chief, Henry, 44, 49, 142, 228

Wolfman, Daniel, 201
Wood, W. Raymond, 6n, 16n, 56-57, 118-119, 150n, 151, 192, 201, 207, 220, 225, 225n, 226-227, 227n, 228, 228n, 229-230, 235
Yellow Face, Leonard, 176, 176p
Youess (32ME415) Site, 207
Young, Milton R., 54, 69, 83, 83n, 91-99, 111
Young, Roberta, 221n, 262-263
Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), 151, 154, 161, 166, 189
Yurk, Clarence, 58
Zedano, M.N., 264
Zemke, Phillip, 160
Zimmerman, David W., 201

Knife River Indian Villages

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Historic Site
North Dakota



Hidatsa village on the Knife River by George Catlin, 1810. SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

For centuries the Upper Missouri River Valley was a lifeline winding through a harsh land, drawing Northern Plains Indians to its wooded banks and rich soil. Earthlodge people, like the nomadic tribes, hunted bison and other game but were essentially farmers living in villages along the Missouri and its tributaries. At the time of contact with Europeans, these communities were the culmination of more than 500 years of settlement in the area. Traditional oral histories link the ancestors of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes living on the Knife River with tribal groups east of the Missouri River. Migrating for several hundred years along waterways, they eventually settled along the Upper Missouri. One Mandan story tells of the group's creation along the river. Coming into conflict with other tribes, the Mandan moved north to the Heart River and adopted architecture using round earthlodges.

The Hidatsa were originally divided into three distinct sub-tribes. The Awatixa were created on the Missouri River, according to their traditions. Awaxawi and Hidatsa-Proper stories place them along streams to the east. The Hidatsa moved farther north to the mouth of the Knife, settling Awatixa Xi'e Village (Lower Hidatsa Site) around 1525 and Hidatsa Village (Big Hidatsa Site) about 1600. The Hidatsa borrowed from the Mandan, learning corn horticulture and adopting some of their pottery patterns. Intermarriage and trade helped cement relations, and eventually the two cultures became almost indistinguishable. With the Arikara to the south, they formed an economic force that dominated the region.

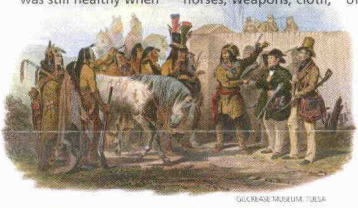
These three tribes shared a culture superbly adapted to the conditions of the Upper Missouri River Valley. Their summer villages, located on natural terraces above the river, included up to 120 lodges. These circular structures sheltered families of 10 to 30 people from the region's extreme temperatures. The villages were strategically located for defense, often on a narrow bluff with water on two sides and a palisade on the third. In winter the inhabitants moved into smaller lodges along the river, where trees provided firewood and protection from the wind.

The 1837 smallpox epidemic greatly reduced the populations of the Indian nations. By 1845 the Mandan and Hidatsa moved about 40 miles up the Missouri River to form a new village, Like-A-Fishhook. For mutual defense the Arikara joined them in 1862. In 1885 the U.S. Government forced the tribes to abandon Like-A-Fishhook and make a final move to the Fort Berthold Reservation as part of the Fort Laramie Treaty. Today their nation is known as the Three Affiliated Tribes.

Western Contact

When trader Pierre de la Verendrye walked into a Mandan village in 1738—the first recorded European to see Indians of the upper Missouri—he found an American Indian society at the height of prosperity. His arrival was the start of a relentless process that within 100 years transformed a culture. At first the three tribes remained relatively isolated, although there were increasing contacts with French, Spanish, English, and American traders. Their culture was still healthy when explorer David Thompson reached the area in 1797, but the pace of change quickened after Lewis and Clark visited in 1804. Explorers such as Prince Maximilian of Wied and artists such as Karl Bodmer and George Catlin drew sharp portraits of a society in transition. An influx of fur traders set up new trade patterns that undermined the tribes' traditional position as middlemen. The village people grew more dependent on European goods such as horses, weapons, cloth, and iron pots. Diseases brought by Europeans and overhunting of the bison further weakened the failing cultures.

Finally, the Federal Government moved the tribes to individually owned reservation plots and told them to grow wheat. Their societies and rituals were banned. Within one generation the three tribes were forced into radical changes that eroded their ancient relationship with the land and ended a way of life.



GILCREASE MUSEUM, TULSA



GILCREASE MUSEUM, TULSA

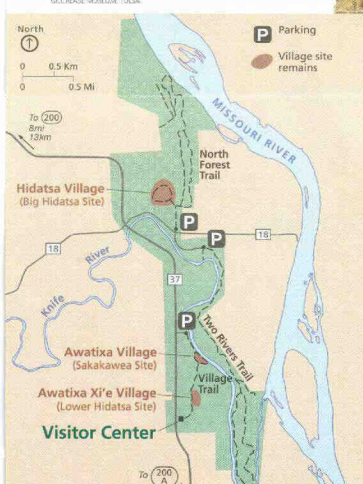
Prince Maximilian (second from right, with rifle) and artist Karl Bodmer (far right) are portrayed meeting Hidatsa Indians **(above top).**
AFTER KARL BODMER PAINTING
JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA

Steamboats following explorers carried the smallpox that devastated the Knife River villages **(above).**
WILLIAM DE LA MONTAGNE CARY
GILCREASE MUSEUM, TULSA

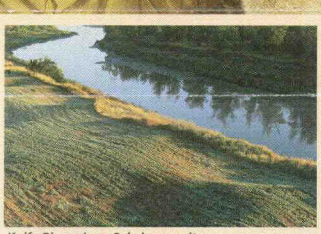
Péhriska-Rúhpa (Two Ravens), leader of the Hidatsa Dog Society, was painted by Karl Bodmer in the society's regalia **(far right).**
JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA

Sah-ko-ka, a Mandan girl, was known for her beauty **(right).**
GEORGE CATLIN, 1832
SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM





Reading the Past The story of Knife River is still being written. Long-held theories have been revised by recent archeological research. From 1976 to 1983 Dr. Stanley Ahler of the University of North Dakota directed excavations here, recovering more than 800,000 artifacts. After piecing the story together from these artifacts, Dr. Ahler believes that the Hidatsa arrived here around 1300, earlier than once thought. Evidence from village sites provides an unbroken record of more than 500 years of habitation. This period, however, represents only a fraction of the time that humans lived here. Evidence from 50 archeological sites shows that the Knife River area has been occupied for more than 11,000 years. The earliest known people were the Paleo-Indians (11,000-6000 B.C.E. [Before Common Era]). The earliest artifacts from Knife River date from this period. These nomadic tribes hunted now-extinct large game. Archaic people came next (6000 B.C.E.–1 C.E.). These people lived by hunting and gathering. Signs of semi-sedentary living and rudimentary agriculture occur in the Woodland period (1000 B.C.E.–1000). Permanent earthlodge villages and a horticultural economy characterized the Plains Village Period (1000-1885); the Knife River sites represent one of the final phases.



Knife River along Sakakawea site. NPS

Help us preserve this unique record of cultural development by leaving artifacts and site remains undisturbed. All natural and cultural resources in the park are protected by federal law.

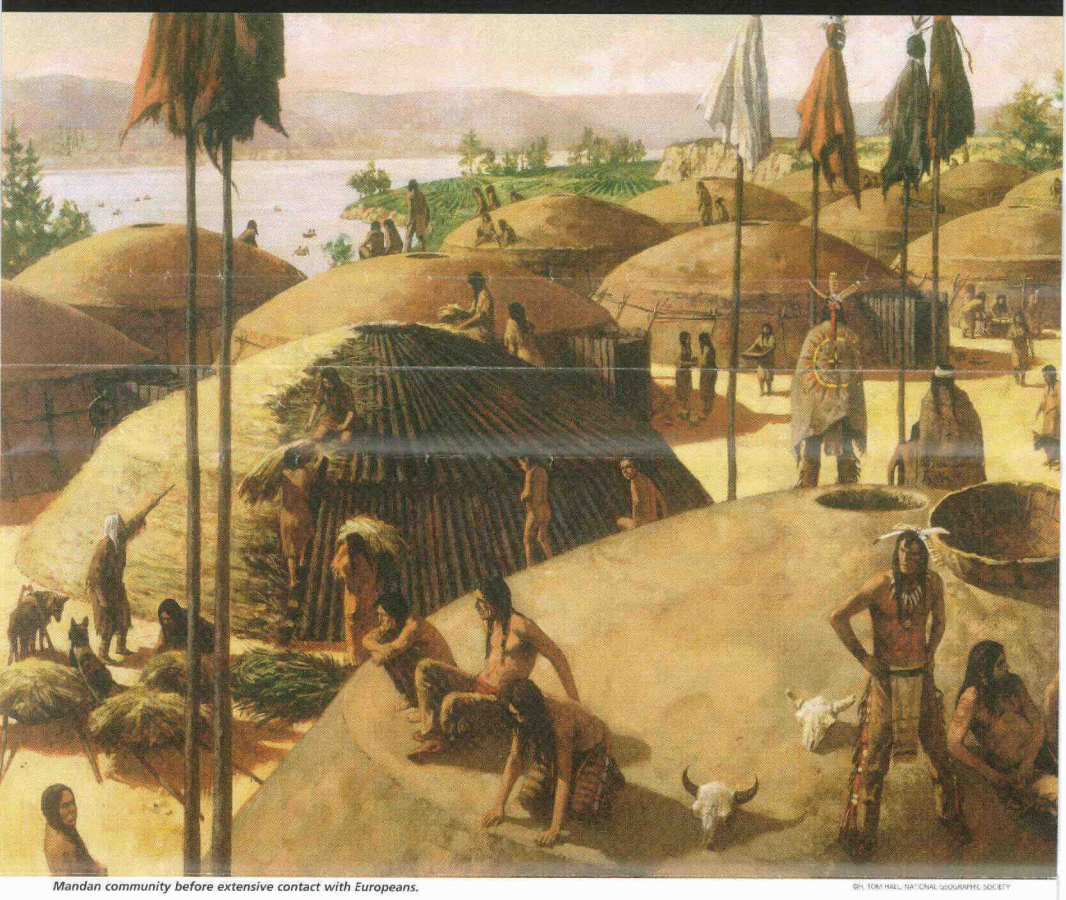
About Your Visit
The area is 60 miles north of Bismarck, N.D. The park has a visitor center, reconstructed earthlodge, (furnished with replica artifacts in summer), a film, exhibits, remains of three village sites, and trails.

More Information
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site
P.O. Box 9
Stanton, ND 58571-0009
701-745-3300
www.nps.gov/knri

Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site is one of more than 380 parks in the National Park System. To learn about national parks visit www.nps.gov.

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Village Life on the Upper Missouri



Mandan community before extensive contact with Europeans.

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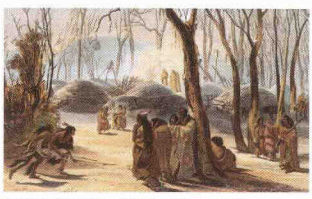
Lewis and Clark Encounter Indian Village Life

In 1804–05 Lewis and Clark's expedition, the Corps of Discovery, experienced upper Missouri village life firsthand. With orders from President Thomas Jefferson, Captains William Clark and Meriwether Lewis embarked on the adventure of their lives—to locate the Northwest Passage across the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase. After leaving St. Louis on May 14, 1804, and traveling 1,600 miles up the Missouri River, they arrived at what is now the Knife River Indian Villages. With cold weather approaching, the Corps built a fort and spent the winter among the Mandan and Hidatsa. Lewis noted in his journal, "This place we have named Fort Mandan in honour of our Neighbors."

Throughout the winter Mandan and Hidatsa people visited the fort to trade corn, beans, and squash and share information with the expedition party. Toussaint Charbonneau, a French-Canadian trader who had been living with the Hidatsa, came to the fort to ask about being hired as an interpreter. Along with Charbonneau came his Shoshone wife, Sakakawea (Sacagewea). Lewis and Clark knew that her translations of the tribal languages to the west would be invaluable. Charbonneau was hired, and the couple spent much of the winter at the fort. There Sakakawea gave birth to her first child, Jean Baptiste, who Clark nicknamed "Pomp."

On April 7, 1805, the Corps left the fort, and after many hardships reached the Pacific Ocean. To their disappointment they had discovered no waterway from St. Louis to the Pacific. The captains had hoped to reach the west coast in time to catch a boat back to St. Louis but were too late, so the expedition was forced to spend the 1805-06 winter in a structure they named Fort Clatsop. Anxious to return home, the Corps set out prematurely for St. Louis on March 23, 1806. On reaching the Rocky Mountains on June 15, they realized they would have to wait, as snow in the mountains was too deep. A couple of weeks later they made it over the mountains. By August 17, 1806, the expedition had returned to the confluence of the Knife and Missouri rivers. They bade farewell to Charbonneau, Sakakawea, and Pomp, who left the expedition to live with Hidatsa relatives. As Lewis and Clark headed downstream they noted in their journals that most of Fort Mandan had been washed away by the river and another part had burned. On September 23 Lewis and Clark reached St. Louis amidst cheers for their safe return.





Inside a Mandan earthlodge **(above top).**
A Hidatsa winter village **(above).**

KARL BODMER, BOTH PAINTINGS, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA

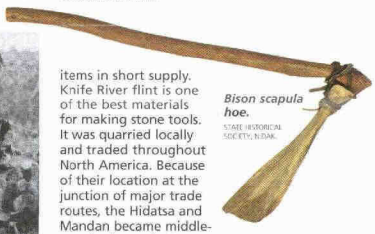
Village Economy

Agriculture underlay the economy of the Hidatsa and Mandan, who harvested much of their food from the rich floodplain gardens. Gardens, like earthlodges, were passed down through the female line. Women tended gardens, raising corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers. The size of the family and the number of women who could work in the garden determined the size of the plot. Summer's first green corn was celebrated in the Green Corn ceremony. Berries, roots, and fish supplemented their diet. Upland hunting provided bison, deer, and small game animals for meat, hides, bones, and sinew.

These proficient farmers traded their produce and Knife River flint to nomadic tribes for buffalo hides, deerskins, dried meat, catlinite (red pipestone), and items in short supply. Knife River flint is one of the best materials for making stone tools. It was quarried locally and traded throughout North America. Because of their location at the junction of major trade routes, the Hidatsa and Mandan became middlemen in the trade. Items brought into the villages for trade with other tribes included obsidian from Wyoming, copper from the Great Lakes region, dentalium shell from the West coast, and during the 1800s, guns, horses, and metal items from the Europeans.

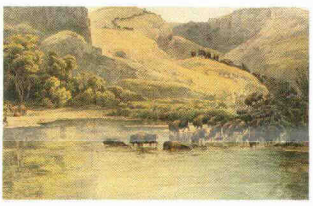


Hidatsa woman hoeing squash with bone hoe, 1912.
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Bison scapula hoe.
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, N.DAK.

Battle and Hunt

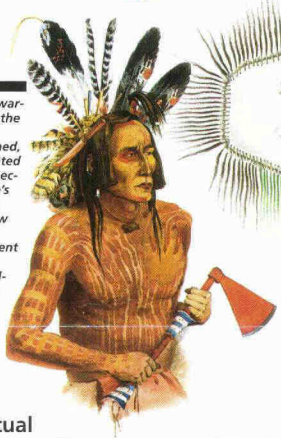


Bison and elk on the Upper Missouri River.
KARL BODMER, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA

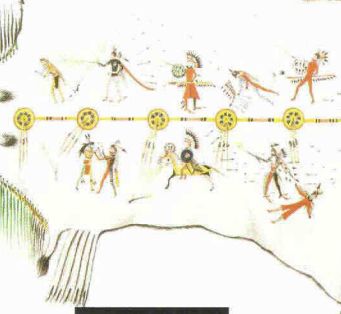
In this warrior culture, raiding and hunting were the chief occupations of the men. When conflict was imminent, a war chief assumed leadership of the village. Tangible results—horses and loot—often came from the raids. Hunting parties were also scheduled, with a respected hunter choosing participants and planning the event. Prowess in battle and hunt led to status in the village, both individually and for the societies and clans. Ambitious young men would risk leading a party—highly rewarding if successful, ruinous to a reputation if not. The primary weapon was the bow and arrow, along with clubs, tomahawks, lances, shields, and knives. Ambition did not spur every action. Warriors often had to defend the village against raids by other tribes. When the men prevailed in battle or hunt, women celebrated with dance and song throughout the village.



STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, N.DAK.



Mato-Tope, Mandan warrior and chief, shows the insignia of his battle experience. The notched, tufted, split, and painted feathers indicate respectively: cutting the foe's throat and taking his scalp; first coup; arrow injury; killing the foe. Wooden sticks represent gunshot wounds. Wooden knife symbolizes knife he wrested from a Cheyenne. Painted hand shows that he has captured prisoners **(see his sketches on buffalo robe, right).**
KARL BODMER, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA



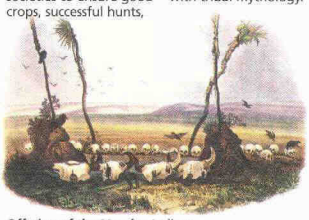
Chief Mato-Tope painted this buffalo robe to celebrate his exploits in battle. The most famous deed was slaying a Cheyenne in hand-to-hand combat **(see lower left scene).**
KARL BODMER, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA

Addih-Hiddisch, Hidatsa chief **(below).**
KARL BODMER, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA

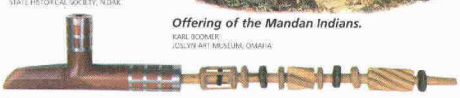


Spirit and Ritual

Spirits guided the events of the material world, and, from an early age, tribal members (usually male) sought their help. Fasting in a sacred place, a boy hoped to be visited by a spirit, often in animal form, who would give him power and guide him through life. The nature of the vision that he reported to his elders determined his role within the tribe. If directed by his vision, he would as a young man make a greater sacrifice to the spirits, spilling his blood in the Okipa ceremony. The Okipa was the most important of a number of ceremonies performed by Mandan clans and age-grade societies to ensure good crops, successful hunts, and victory in battle. Ceremonies could be conducted only by those with "medicine," which was obtained by purchasing from a fellow clan or society member one of the bundles of sacred objects associated with tribal mythology. With bundle ownership came responsibility for knowledge of the songs, stories, prayers, and rituals necessary for spiritual communication. Certain bundle owners were looked upon as respected leaders of the tribe.



Offering of the Mandan Indians.
KARL BODMER, JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA



The ceremonial pipe, or calumet, was smoked in friendship and used in spiritual rites.
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