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SHAMATTAWA: The Structure of Social Relations
Northern Algonkian Band

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SHAMATTAWA BAND

INTRODUCTION

History

Shamattawa is a Swampy Cree community situated 500 miles north-east of Winnipeg near the Ontario-Manitoba border where it approaches Hudson Bay (Figure 1). The settlement (Figure 2) is situated at the convergence of the God's and Echoing Rivers which then flows north north-east as the God's River until it meets the Hayes River and flows into Hudson Bay at York Factory. 'Shamattawa' is derived from the Cree shamataw, or 'convergence' (literally, 'where two rivers meet'). The local Cree call the stretch of river from this convergence to the next (i.e., the Hayes), the Shamattawa. Our older informants said the site of the present settlement was a base camp where people convened during the summer months to prepare for trips to York Factory. This had always been the case as far as they knew. The people who came together in this manner regarded themselves as the Shamattawa Band, referring to themselves collectively as ininuk (people).

The earliest reference to the Shamattawa people is by Andrew Graham who, in his 'Notes on Indians' (in Rich, ed. 1949), lists a Shumattaway 'tribe' of the Attawawa 'nation' which traded at York Fort, Fort Albany and Fort Severn. References to the band occur throughout the York Factory Post Journals of the Hudson's Bay Company which had been operating in the area on a permanent basis since 1714. The Factory or fort was officially ceded to the English in that year by the Treaty of Utrecht. Originally established by Radisson and Groseilliers for the French in 1682, the fort was situated on the south bank of the Hayes River 10 miles from where it flows into the Bay (Voorhis 1932: 122). The fort, called Fort Bourbon by the French, changed hands a number of times as first a British and then a French, then again a British war ship and so on would arrive in the area until it was finally placed in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company. (See Douglas and Wallace 1926: 1-13.) One old informant at Shamattawa, Sammy Anderson, tells a story of a large French ship, the 'Moosol' (unlocatable in the Hudson's Bay Company accounts of York Factory) exploding in the Bay just off the fort and of houses being blown up at the fort itself. Such 'recollections' of British and French conflicts are a part of Shamattawa folklore.

From the earliest years of Fort Bourbon the Shamattawa River appears to have been an important inland waterway, connecting this post with the Severn River and the fort there (established 1685).

The route referred to from Hayes r. is still used, going up Shamattawa tributary, over a portage, and Beaverdam tributary of Severn r. (Douglas and Wallace 1926: 35 f.n.)

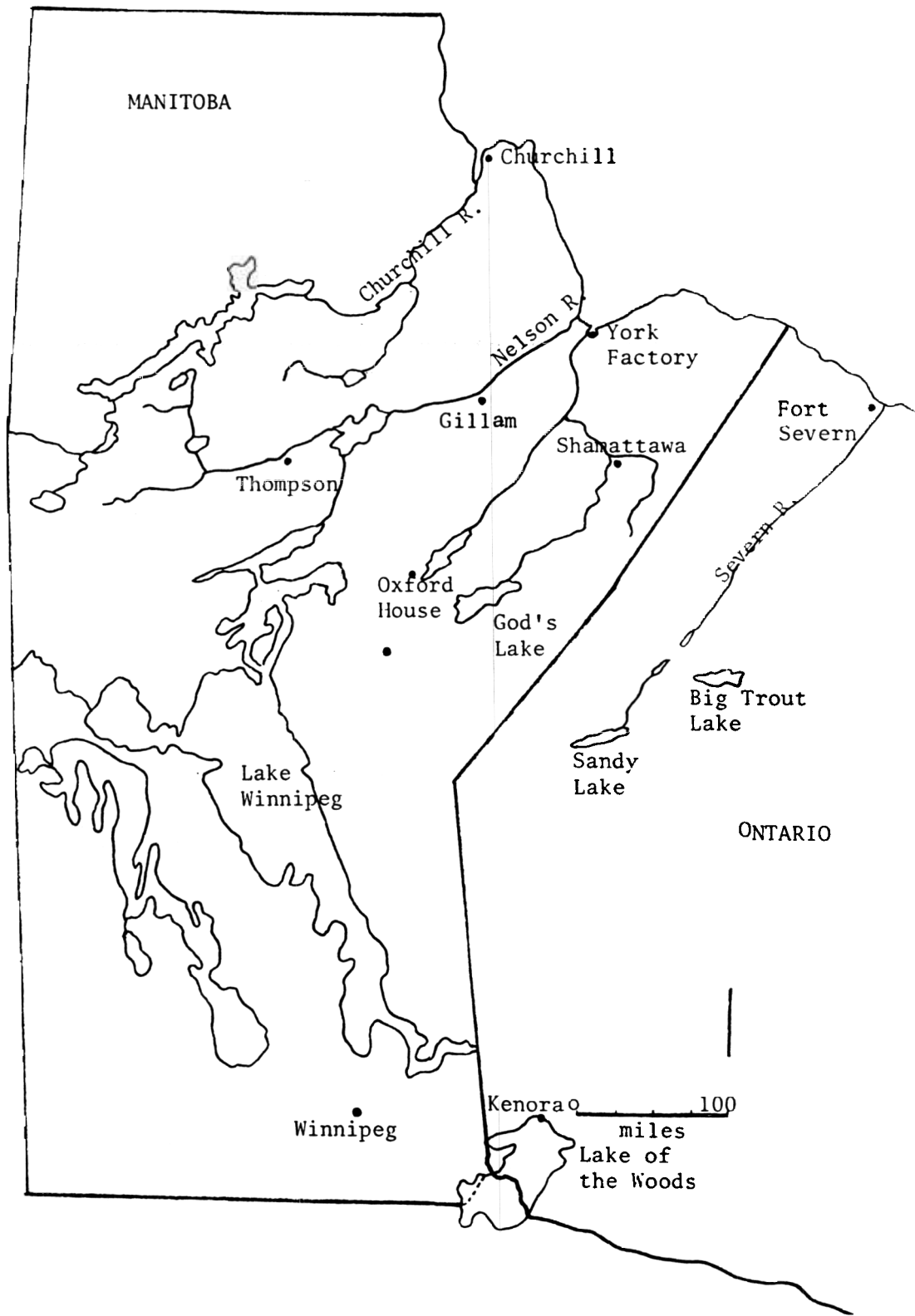


Figure 1 Map of Manitoba and North-west Ontario

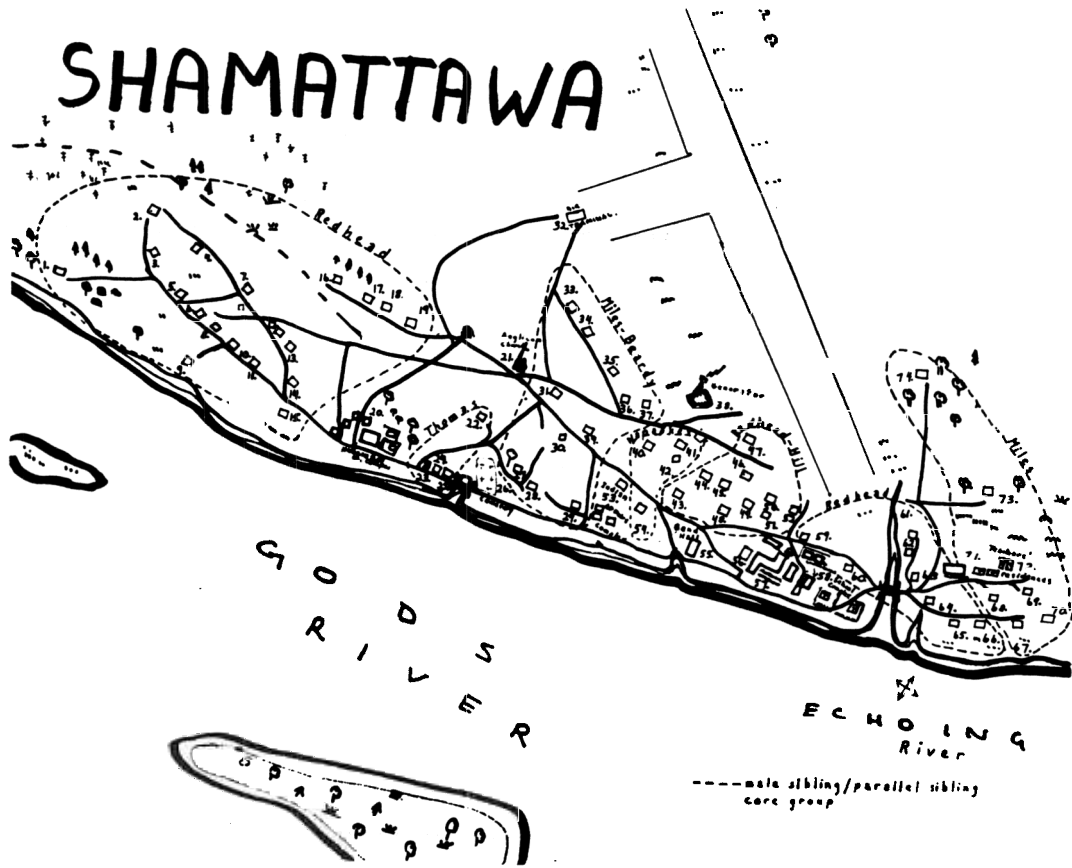


Figure 2 Map of Shamattawa

The inland route was preferred to travel on the Bay.

The coast voyage is the death of our miserable trappers--and they know it--After the sickness of last summer I count on having some difficulty the ensuing season, to get voyagers to volunteer for the trip to York Factory. (HBC Arch B239/a/182, January 28, 1871. Correspondence from William Stewart of Trout Lake to York Factory).

A direct reference to Shamattawa as a base camp is found in the November 13, 1878 York Factory Post Journal:

The men report no deer in that locality, but they saw a few tracks on this side of the Samataway Cache (HBC Arch B239/a/182).

There are many references to the Shamattawa people in Post Journals of this period including one to a Shamattawa 'chief'.

...'Beardy' the Samataway chief renounced heathenism, discarded six of his wives and got married by McKinley to the seventh (HBC Arch B239/a/182, June 18, 1876).

Reference is also made to various Shamattawa 'bands' or 'parties', sub-units of the larger Shamattawa group.

Party of Samataway indians arrived (Napaokesick's band) bringing nearly 500 MB¹ (HBC Arch B239/a/182, July 25, 1878).

Swanson in trading room. Samataway Indians having arrived ten of whom only averaged 18 MB; (Beardy's party) (HBC Arch B239/a/182, June 2, 1880).

A party of Samataway Indians arrived yesterday bringing in some fresh venison. They reported plenty deer about the 'Rapid' in that river (HBC Arch B239/a/182, September 16, 1880).

The Samataway party did pretty well bringing in about 1500 MB including 15 silver foxes (HBC Arch B239/a/182, May 18, 1878).

We learn very little, however, of the composition of these groups, not even if they were groups of males or of males and females. The Hudson's Bay Company records do establish, nevertheless, that there was a Cree collective known as the Shamattawa people, a camp known as Shamattawa and that these people mentioned are continuous with the present population of the Shamattawa settlement--at least from the early 1800's on.

An 1827-1829 list of 'native' traders into York Factory (HBC Arch B239/z/1M903) includes a Neepin, a Spence, and a Nipetebaw. An 1830 list has a Sanders, an Ousitican, a Masson, a Napokesick, and a Mouss (Moosoukoot) (HBC Arch B239/z/1M904). With the exception of Nipetebaw and Mouss (Moosoukoot) these surname groups were all listed as part of the York Factory Band by the Department of Indian Affairs in 1910, the year the York Factory Band signed Adhesion to Treaty Number 5 (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Treaty Paylists 1910-1975). The name 'Mous' appears in the 1916 list and the Nipetebaws are currently part of the Gillam Band, an offshoot of the York Factory people (below). The York Landing Band is also an offshoot of this larger group.

Treaty payments to members of a unit officially known as the 'Shamattawa Band' were first made at Shamattawa in 1944. A 'Gillam Band' received its payments at Gillam in the same year while a 'York Factory Band' received its payments at the fort. This was later to become the 'York Landing Band' located on the eastern side of Split Lake.

Prior to the closing down of the Hudson's Bay post at York Factory in 1955, then, there existed a single unit known as the 'York Factory Band', which was recognised as such by the Administration, the Hudson's Bay Company and the people themselves. This band was distinguished from other bands in the area such as the Fort Severn Band, the Oxford House Band, the Bearskin Lake Band and the Big Trout Lake Band. According to informants the York Factory Band covered or ranged over an area of land no different from that of the present Shamattawa Band. Both the Gillam and York Landing Bands chose to live on land outside the old York Factory Band's recognised range.

Prior to 1955 and probably through the fur trade era a number of Shamattawa people seem to have spent most of their time close to York Factory, trapping or hunting in its immediate vicinity within easy supply distance of the fort. Informants said a number of people regularly proceeded to York Factory in the summer encampment period rather than to Shamattawa. But this was a logistic division within the band, not a structural one. The trapping and hunting range covered a large area (Figure 3) and in any given season groups of people could be found working in opposite corners of the range. Informants insisted that people were not in any sense bound to one trapping area or another and could move about with some degree of freedom. Some people, however, would prefer to work in the same area in successive seasons rather than go to a different area every season. If this was the normal pattern (see part 2 of this chapter for a discussion of hunting-trapping practices) the gravitation of certain groups to York Factory was certainly not incompatible with it. Informants active during the York Factory period estimated that roughly a quarter of the band remained near the fort while the rest dispersed farther upstream.

This pattern explains why the band eventually sub-divided into three divisions. The availability of those who congregated closer to the fort for wage labour eventually would have tied these people even more closely to that part of the range. Those more engaged in trapping and hunting for a livelihood would be more firmly attached to outlying areas like Shamattawa. The people who moved to Gillam in the 1940's would have found more opportunities

for wage labour there as would the group that remained at York Factory. After York Factory closed the latter group also moved to an area closer to a centre of European settlement. A Shamattawa informant said that the Split Lake site was chosen specifically because of government promises of wage labour and new houses there, promises which, he said, have not yet been fulfilled.

The 'move' then of the Shamattawa Band from York Factory to the site of the present settlement was not really a move at all, in the sense of a people shifting their place of residence to a completely new spot. All that really happened was that the York Factory Band people, who were more involved in the hunting and trapping aspect of the economy, simply stopped going to the fort to trade after it closed down. In so far as they always convened in the summer months at Shamattawa following the hunting and trapping season, they were always 'Shamattawa people'. They were York Factory Indians only in the context of Hudson's Bay Company trading patterns and in so far as they preferred wage labour at the fort. In terms of the range over which trapping and hunting activities took place everything remained the same for this segment of the band after the post closed as before.

The Shamattawa people are now, however, gradually drawing away from the other two sections of the band. First, there is the residential factor--the Shamattawa people now live separately from the rest of the York Factory Band; second, there is the fact that marriages are increasingly within the Shamattawa Band itself. The Shamattawa people also regard the other two groups as being now more 'developed' in European terms and as having rejected in part, the kind of life they themselves have chosen, namely a 'bush' existence away from centres of European settlement.

It would be a mistake, then, to assume that the Shamattawa group of the York Factory Band was wholly dependent upon the Euro-Canadian economic system. If this had been the case, there would not be any people at Shamattawa today. The reasons people give for settling at Shamattawa are very much traditional--a plentiful supply of game, fish and timber in the area. It would have been impossible for them to have even contemplated living permanently at Shamattawa had a significant portion of their domestic economy not been oriented to hunting activities. Significantly, trapping and an abundance of fur bearing animals in the vicinity are not usually given as reasons for living at Shamattawa. When they trap they go far afield throughout the range and do not restrict themselves to the area around the settlement.

The Reserve

As members of the administrative unit 'York Factory Band', the Shamattawa people came under the terms of reference of Treaty Number 5 in 1910, although it was not until 1970 that their land allotment was fixed and the present site of the settlement selected as part of their reserve allocation. The Shamattawa Band at Shamattawa population of April 1, 1970 (436) and the treaty entitlement of 32 acres per person were used to calculate a total area of 13,952 acres or 22 square miles (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development File 578/30-52, vol. 1). The following year the

Band Council asked that 6,600 acres be set aside for a community (Figure 2) (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development File 5/71-72-9, Band Council Resolution, June 10, 1971). Delays in finalising this decision, however, were occasioned by other claimants for land within the reserve area. Technically the Hudson's Bay Company was a squatter, an occupant of Crown land, and could argue that this land could therefore not be claimed by the band.

The Province has not decided that the lot we have marked as Hudson's Bay Company will be transferred to Crown land...Entitlement is chosen from unoccupied crown land. The Hudson's Bay Company has a store on a Provincial permit which has a replacement cost of at least \$250,000. The lot is therefore occupied and if the Province transfers this lot, it could be disputed. The Hudson's Bay Company has apparently reversed its original statement that the store could be on Reserve Land (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development File 578/30-52, May 15, 1975, correspondence from Nicholson, Assistant Regional Director, Indian Affairs, Winnipeg to Philips, Land Administrator, Ottawa).

This claim was not without precedent. In 1951 one Oliver Lindal, a general merchant from Ilford who had been trading at Shamattawa for some five years had requested 'One acre or so at Shamattawa, Manitoba. Piece on which our trading post is located. Thanking you for your kind consideration. I remain respectfully, a Solid Liberal' (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development File 578/30-52, June 22, 1951).

In 1975 arrangements were finalised with the band to lease sites for a Hudson's Bay Company and a church and to relinquish title to land for the airstrip operated by the Manitoba government. According to members of the Band Council this severance decision was made despite considerable opposition within the community, the same kind of opposition that led to a refusal to grant title to land occupied by the Company and the church.

Such feelings are consistent with the actual relation that exists between the Shamattawa people and the surrounding country. It is clear from questioning adult members of the band that they regard all the land around the settlement (some 20,000 square miles) as their own. As one informant, Isaac Beardy, put it, 'Where people trap they think of as their land and they don't like it when people tell them it isn't. N'taskinan, our land, is roughly an area between a line drawn from the Sachigo River in the south going north to Hudson Bay along the Kettle River and a line from the Sachigo River west to the opposite side of Angling Lake and from Angling Lake northeast to York Factory (Figure 3). This area is also recognised as the Shamattawa band's land by surrounding groups. Although trappers from other communities are often encountered along the fringes of this area there is no attempt by Shamattawa people to force them outside this range or to prohibit them from trapping. Relations seem generally amicable and hospitable although people from the different bands do not

seem to trap with one another when such an encounter takes place. Although in native terms these people are 'outsiders' there is a qualitative difference in attitudes toward them and Europeans. In the former case there is a mutual realisation that occupancy of the 'other's' land is temporary and will not result in an attempt to alter the relationship of equality that exists between the two groups. With Europeans, the presence of a dominant-subordinate relationship is assumed and therefore issues relating to land use become more critical and less flexible. ✓

Negotiations for certain tracts of land are continuing between the Shamattawa people and the federal and provincial governments as they are with the Gillam and York Landing Bands (who have so far chosen allotments at Gillam and Split Lake respectively). In this monograph we will be concerned only with that segment of the York Factory Band now resident at Shamattawa, hereafter referred to collectively as the 'Shamattawa Band'. The 1975 Shamattawa population was 480 and its structure (Figure 4) exhibited two interesting features: a high proportion, 64.8%, of the population under 20 years (the figure for all of Canada is 39.3%; Canada Year Book 1974: 164) and a slight excess of males over females. We may attribute the high proportion of under-20-year-olds to the fur trade-traditional period (see Wissler 1936), to improved medical care, settlement conditions and a decline in trapping or bush activities. | ?

2 BAND ORGANISATION

Territoriality

The impression gained early in the fieldwork period was that 'territoriality' on a band level was only vaguely defined. When informants were asked to delineate Shamattawa territory the usual response was 'a person can trap and hunt wherever they want to'. The following interview was typical:

Q Is there any line of boundary marking off where the Shamattawa people trap from where the Fort Severn people trap?

A People can trap anywhere.

Q I talked to lots of people here about where they go trapping and who they go with. People from Shamattawa trap all around York Factory, Whitefish Lake and Sturgeon Lake. Do the people here think of all that area in between as their land?

A No.

Q Where is the Shamattawa land? If someone were to come here who didn't know anything about Shamattawa and he asked where is your land, what would you tell him?

A This is my land. This is where I stay (referring to the settlement of Shamattawa).

Q Where else?

A Kaska (area around where the Kaskattama River flows into Hudson Bay).

Q What about all the people in Shamattawa, where is their land?

A It all depends on the person. They can go all over the place.

Q What's the farthest people go?

A People go 'til they reach their trap line. Some people go really far.
(Sammy Anderson)

It became apparent that it was the very ambiguity of such interviews that was the clue to understanding the question of land 'ownership' and land use. If it were assumed that the only criterion of territoriality was the ability to locate distinctly discernible lines or boundaries which clearly marked off one group's territory from another's, then it would have to be concluded that there was no notion of collective territory, that the people were basically nomadic and that 'chance' or pragmatic circumstances determined where people were located from season to season.

But some interviews did indicate there might be at least one context in which territoriality did exist--a person's land seemed to be a function of where he trapped. Shamattawa territory, then, could be seen as an aggregate of the places where people trapped both today and in the past. The individual's land would be all those places where he had trapped in the past. The problem with this, however, was that several people who had trapped the same area together or in separate parties would often 'claim' the area, and that, furthermore, trapping areas were not exclusive domains. Even the regular users did not seem to exercise rights of access and control over production activities within these areas. 'Anyone can trap anywhere' was the prevailing ideology and apparently the actual practice (with certain qualifications; see pages 12-30). If there was 'ownership', then, it was not on a local level, and, if at any other level, was conceived in terms of rights to land use, perhaps within a defined range.

When the frame of reference shifted from within the Shamattawa band to without, it became apparent that a sense of collective territory, albeit a weak one, did exist. Hunters and trappers are aware when they are in another band's territorial range and members of other bands are aware when they are in Shamattawa's. But pinning down this collective sense proved a most difficult task during fieldwork. It was a problem even to phrase questions so that the topic could be broached. It was only when talking to band leaders about welfare and the future state of the community that things began to be clarified.

Government officials had apparently suggested that if the band wanted to control its own development it would first have to define its 'resource base'. When asked what this was the band leaders and old men together mapped out the area which marked the furthest extensions of where Shamattawa people had always trapped and hunted. As Figure 3 shows, this range does not coincide with a mere aggregate of trap line areas, nor does it coincide with European established boundaries such as the Ontario-Manitoba border. What

resolves the collective, aggregate, local and individual expressions of territoriality is a residential/concrete-production criterion of 'ownership'. People 'own' where and with whom they are now producing, have produced in the immediate past and where their 'ancestors' (not necessarily in a biological sense) produced. It is only on issues which involve the autonomy and interests of the band as a whole where the sense of collective territory is expressed. The question simply does not arise in most other contexts.

It should not be thought that since the notion of collective 'ownership' is expressed mainly in the context of discussions of local autonomy and resource development it must be new and European-induced. Both the aggregative and collective senses of territory were probably long standing features of the trapping-hunting system with each being manifested to a different degree depending on the type of production being performed. In a context where the economy revolves around the activities of relatively small trapping groups, there is more likely to be a marked concern for aggregative territorial notions and less for the collective aspect. This would be particularly the case through the fur trade period when there was increasing individualisation of production, and increasing concern for exclusive rights to specific trap lines (Hickerson 1967b: 313-43).

Although it may be impossible to know what conditions were like 200 or more years ago prior to and during the early fur trade period, we would expect the Shamattawa people, like other Algonkians, convened during the summer months as a collective to engage in production-related activities such as the arrangement of marriages, hunting partnerships and allocation of hunting territories (see Rogers 1969a: 46, Bishop 1974: 8). There is some evidence of such groups at York Factory and at the Shamattawa site in the more modern period (see pages 30-31). With the fur trade this collective would have become more and more permanently settled until it developed into a 'community' (paradoxically, production was simultaneously becoming increasingly individualised). The band, then, comes to take its definition from the place where this occasional collective became permanently settled. It is in this sense that the Shamattawa people distinguish themselves from the God's Lake and Fort Severn people.

The Contemporary Scene

Although the Shamattawa Cree have been involved in the fur trade since at least the 17th century, the registered trap line system as such only came into effect in the area some 30 years ago: 'During the early 1940's the Shamattawa area was designated a Registered Trapline Area. As a result, traplines were established' (Manitoba Department of Northern Affairs File 1975:5, Shamattawa local fur Council Second Group Project #46304). Through this system each trapper was assigned a particular area over which he could trap after consultation with representatives of the Forestry Division of the Manitoba Department of Mines and Resources. Each man holds a permit for basically one area, for which he pays a nominal fee of three dollars. The consequences of this kind of system in other Algonkian speaking areas have been the development of 'family hunting territories' and inheritance patterns which stress the continuity between father and son (Leacock 1954:

1-4, Dunning 1959: 104-07, Hickerson 1967a: 41-43). Whether or not such developments were intended consequences is open to debate, but intended or not these consequences have not followed in the Shamattawa area.

Although Shamattawa trappers were registered for specific trap lines and penalties could be brought to bear in the event a trapper worked a trap line for which someone else was registered, this did not prevent a high degree of flexibility in the operation of the system. Partnerships among people registered for different areas were common and an invitation was all that was necessary for people to trap on other lines than their own. However, the system did introduce an element of structure into trapping that was not present before. Older trappers who remember the pre-registration pattern claim a preference for it because no restrictions were placed on movements. They say people could go where they wanted to trap. As one man, Alan Redhead, described it, 'before the registered trap line system everything was in one whole piece'. The retention of the partnership system undermined any potentially fundamental change which might have followed the imposed system and reduced it to little more than a troublesome annoyance. ✓

Interviews were carried out with 47 trappers and former trappers in an effort to determine where and with whom people actually trapped. About 60% (30) of those interviewed were current trappers (1974/75). In only one case did a man list only his own registered trap line as the only one over which he had ever trapped, and trappers did not always return to their own line in successive seasons. Where a man trapped was determined not merely by his partner's registered trap lines but also by the lines of people with whom the partners had recently trapped--in other words, by the principles of formation of hunting-trapping networks, not merely by the principles of trap line ownership and partnership formation. Formation and operation of such networks is, however, more characteristic of the recent past than the present.

Today there is a tendency for men to work singly or in pairs without the aid of a larger co-operating group--not even their own 'family'. Perhaps two-thirds of the current trappers work in this way.

Reconstruction of the composition of trapping groups in the recent past and observation of those larger ones that did form during the field-work period indicated that at their core was a man, his wife, their unmarried sons and daughters and, often, the man's unmarried brothers. This core would sometimes be accompanied by the man's married daughters and husbands as well as by his married sons and their wives. There is a consistent distinction made between the members of the domestic group (basically 'of origin') who 'come along' to trap and hunt and the people with whom one forms partnerships. The latter are called nwiciwagan or niscas, a category which only occasionally includes members of the domestic group of origin (Table VI). ✓

A significant development to the present day seems to be the growing relevance of the trapping partner over the domestic group in trapping activities. In other words, when people trap with other people today they choose formal partners over 'family' members. This appears to be a response ✓

to problems peculiar to institutionalised life. Children must stay in school if welfare payments are to be obtained, and with the price of beaver and muskrat and trapping activities declining (Tables I- V, Figure 5), these payments have become a major source of cash income within the community (Table IV).

Hunting-trapping partnerships are almost always formed between married men in independent, if sometimes closely related, domestic groups (Table VI). The degree of relatedness varies in closeness from men originally in the same domestic group (married brothers, father and married sons) to those in different domestic groups but same patronymic surname group (married parallel siblings¹⁰, father's siblings) to those in domestic groups which have recently intermarried (a group to which the man's has given a spouse or one from which his has received a spouse) to those in domestic groups which have intermarried one or two generations ago, to those in groups which have intermarried with one's own domestic group of origin to those unrelated in genealogical or affinal terms. Domestic groups are continuous through time only in so far as the 'surname' is passed on through the male line (father to children, with daughters changing their name on marriage) and as trap lines were passed from father to son. Unmarried sons or brothers are not considered hunting-trapping partners until they marry and break from the domestic group of origin. To this point, and frequently somewhat beyond it, they labour within the domestic group of their birth and share in the products of its collective efforts.

When he marries, a son may live in the same house as his father or build a new house nearby. (He will thus be near his unmarried and married brothers who have done likewise). The consequence of this pattern is easy access to the instruments of production (guns, ammunition, traps, fish, nets, snares, etc.) which are for the most part held by those who produce together, and easy access to people with whom a close relationship has already been established. For a time, however, it is usual for the couple to live with or near the wife's domestic group of origin. Again, this makes for easy access to production tools and for established ties to be maintained (i.e., between the wife and members of her domestic group of origin). The length of time a couple spends in this uxori-local arrangement depends mainly on practical considerations such as the number of people already living in the wife's parents' house or how many are in the husband's father's house (a large number will encourage him to remain with his wife's kin. Sometimes post marital residence is taken up patrilocally from the beginning. Rarely, though, does a young couple live in their own house immediately after marriage. When this does occur it is usually when one of the pair has already been married and has a separate residence.

Whether post-marital residence is patrilocal or uxori-local, the young couple is given a separate room or section of the house as their own until they change location. It should be noted that present marriage practices involving cohabitation prior to marriage do not alter this residential pattern. In fact, they make it more probable that the immediate post-marital residence will be uxori-local because it is the young man who invariably goes to live with his sweetheart in her house and not the reverse. There does, however, seem to be a definite preference for a period of

Table VI continued

Trapper	Partner	Genealogical or Affinal Relationship	Patronymic/domestic group Relations
Alex Redhead	Joseph Redhead	FB	Redhead
	Harry Napaokesik	FFB SDS	Redhead female married Napaokesik

uxorilocal residence immediately after marriage. A frequent response to the question 'Does a new couple live with the man's parents or the woman's parents?' was 'After a man gets married he goes to live with the wife's parents'. The decisions to reside either patrilocally or uxorilocally were very much determined by practical considerations: ✓

People moved back and forth between the man's and woman's parents. Lots of people did that. I did it too. I looked after her parents (pointing to his wife) and then went back to my parents. I lived with whoever needed help. The things they couldn't get I got for them. (Stephen Redhead)

This was the response of an older informant and basically described the situation in the fur trade-traditional, rather than the contemporary, period. Post-marital residence seems to have been quite flexible in this period and often involved an alternation between patrilocal and uxorilocal arrangements.

Prior to the advent of southern-style frame housing, the type of dwelling most commonly used, the mihigwam, or tent-shaped log building, could be easily constructed in a day and was suited to transitory inter-group residence. By contrast, contemporary dwellings inhibit flexibility. When someone decides they want a new house they inform the Band Council which once a year submits its requests to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and although the sites are determined by the future occupants, once built, they are permanently situated.

The following Table shows the proportion of houses with one married couple to those with more than one married couple, along with the breakdown of the latter group into patrilocal and uxorilocal residence.

Table VII Residence Pattern, Shamattawa 1975

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
Houses with one married couple	38	65.5%	
Houses with at least two married couples	20	34.5%	
	9		45%
	11		55%
Total	58	100.0%	

Of those living in houses considered to contain a single married couple, 28 (of the 38) had unmarried children, six had children married and living elsewhere and four were widows or widowers. With only five exceptions (nos. 9, 17, 56, 61, 73, Figure 2) the positions of all the houses in Shamattawa can be explained either by reference to the retention of residence near one's own group (domestic and patronymic) or with reference to the group into which one marries (men residing with wives in same domestic or patronymic group as core). In three of the exceptional cases the people were residing with spouses who were siblings of spouses of core members.

It is probably incorrect to infer 'residence rules' from frequentative patterns of behaviour in a community like Shamattawa and it is certainly incorrect to impute any sort of directing role to rules once the inference has been made. The aggregation, dispersal and reconstitution of production units should not be seen as being derived from more abstract cultural norms dealing with residential practices. Rather, residential patterns should be seen as a product of the principles which govern the configuration of labour, the same principles which, on examination, govern the formation of hunting-trapping partnerships. Certain kinds of people are simply made more available for selection as co-residents and as hunting-trapping companions than others by circumstances peculiar to the production process. It is to an examination of this process that we now turn.

Within the career of a trapper there is a developmental process with respect to the configuration of his labour and the constitution of his hunting-trapping partnerships. After a man marries he begins to look for partnerships outside his own domestic group but continues to maintain ties to the men of his own group, at least until his own sons are able to work. A mature trapper will usually have several sons available with whom he can trap. In all interviews practical considerations were given as to why partnerships were formed, the typical reasons being to avoid overcrowding in an old area, to learn about trapping in another area, to remain close to certain people, and to work with a particularly good trapper. On the surface, such practical considerations appear to determine partnerships, but beneath such choices lies a structure of previous alliances and partnerships which define the range within which pragmatic choice takes place.

Prior to his own marriage, while he is working as a member of his father's domestic group, a young man becomes familiar with the trappers who have formed partnerships with his father as well as with their domestic groups, which may often include members of still other groups who have 'married in'. He, of course, also grows up with members of his own domestic group of origin. By the time he is married and is ready to form his own partnerships he will be familiar with an extensive range of potential trapping partners--so much so that he will probably never have to trap with anyone with whom he has not been on a trap line before. (Table VI shows only four cases where a genealogical or affinal relation could not be traced between partners.)

It follows, of course, that if a man comes to form partnerships with his married brothers or his father, then in the next generation his sons will have an already established range of people with whom they have production and social ties--their father's brothers and their sons. It is this

process which structures the choice of partners within the patronymic. It also follows that when a man marries and enters the sphere of interaction of his wife's domestic group his sons will also come into contact with the same range of people but on the wife's side. In this way a man may come to form partnerships with people who have not married into his own domestic or patronymic groups. It is this process which structures the choice of partners outside both one's patronymic and one's domestic group of origin. Both processes together, then, provide over a lifetime an ever-expanding network of working relations within which choices can be exercised. Having spent time with certain people in the past and having learned where they go and what they do, they are likely to come to mind as possible partners when circumstances dictate that partnerships be formed.

One of these circumstances, according to informants, is simple overcrowding. If a man's father is already trapping with married sons or has a number of unmarried sons and partners from other sources, it may not be economical for him to stay with his father but to set himself up independently on another trap line. From here he may be able to form intermittent partnerships with his father or brothers as circumstances alter. As one informant said,

People trapped in different places after they got married. If they didn't there would be too many people. Someone else must invite the newly married man to trap with him. (Zaccharius Thomas)

And another,

I don't trap in any fixed pattern. I trap wherever I can. I used to trap with my father but not any more. (David McKay)

Another circumstance is the interests of the wife's father. If he has few or no sons or wishes to retain his daughter's services for a time after marriage, the husband is likely to feel some pressure toward forming a partnership with him. One trapper, for instance, said that before he was married his wife wanted to stay with her family so that for a few years he trapped where they trapped. The people in our sample who did trap with the wife's father usually did so for some two to five years.

A third circumstance is more practically tied to the hazards of bush life:

It's better to have a partner in case of emergency. When people are partners they can go everywhere together. (Isaac Beardy)

To this point in the discussion it has been unnecessary to relate processes of hunting-trapping group formation to ecological factors. The existence of an ample supply of game has simply been taken for granted. And even if that supply were fluctuating sufficiently to affect the social organisation of production it would be the market situation that determined which fluctuations in which domains were relevant and which were not.

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In the current situation it is the market, not the ecology, which is producing important changes in the production system--and both are currently changing. Shamattawa trappers say that the supply of beaver is currently increasing but since the price paid for pelts has been steadily declining so many would have to be obtained to gain a reasonable living (relative to what they have been able to gain under more favourable conditions) that many are finding it is not worthwhile to continue trapping. And those who still do trap are faced with still another non-ecological factor which mitigates against the formation of traditional production groupings, namely the school system. Children must remain in the settlement during the winter months and cannot be taken on the trap lines; and wives must be left behind to take care of the children. And as the size of production groups decreases to the point of one or two individuals so does their effectiveness and ability to continue from season to season, year to year, generation to generation.

Shamattawa trappers are now in the process of devising a solution to deal with this situation. They are now abandoning the registered trap line system (Manitoba Department of Northern Affairs File, 1975: 5, Shamattawa Local Fur Council Second Group Project #46304) and want to build base camps in areas where there is consistently good trapping. Five or six trappers will be able to go to each base camp, form partnerships and proceed to trapping areas in the vicinity and be able to return frequently to the base camps for supplies, extra help, consultations and so forth. This system has the advantage of giving each trapping unit a range of trapping areas rather than one or two registered lines and permits them to utilise areas known to be particularly plentiful and requiring more trappers in the unit.

In 1975-76 the first two base camps were to be built with others added later as needs arise. Everyone questioned agreed the new system was superior to the government imposed one because it 'allows people to trap wherever they want', that is, over a wide range if still within certain limits. Trappers will still be required to operate within the context of a registration system to the extent that they must note the trap line number on which they trapped their beaver but they will no longer be required to lease and restrict their activities to particular lines. The base camps will also be more convenient places for visits by wives and children during the winter months and may do something to involve the younger people in this aspect of Shamattawa life. But the system will not bring the domestic group back into operation in a trapping context, nor will it raise the price of furs. So long as the young people are in school for most of the trapping season production relations will be formed between, rather than within, domestic groups. The base camp, in effect, replaces the domestic group in providing warmth, shelter and companionship, comforts which cannot now be had during the trapping season without returning to Shamattawa.

Although the base camp system is an intelligent solution to new problems given the economic context within which it operates, certain other conditions would have to be met before it would really 'resolve' the problems which generated it, a situation recognized by some of the band leaders. First, some measure of control would have to be gained over the educational system whereby the community determined the duration of the school session so that

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children would be able to gain access to the practical knowledge of their parents. Second, trapping would have to be turned once more into a viable economic enterprise by cutting out various middlemen processors and distributors and reverting profits directly either to the trappers or to the community.

If these conditions were met the base camp system would be an effective synthesis of the fur trade-traditional and registered trap line systems, allowing more flexibility and a greater degree of autonomy at the collective level than the latter system but less flexibility and a lesser degree of autonomy at the collective level than the former system.

The Fur Trade-traditional Era

Hunting for subsistence requirements was, of course, more a feature of the fur trade-traditional period than of the contemporary scene. The hunter occupied a special place in the community during this era, as is evidenced by this 1815 comment in the District Report of the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory.

The best hunter is the most independent and respectable man--he is looked upon as the father of the family--is permitted to regulate domestic concerns and determines the route they must take in their hunting excursions (HBC Arc B239/1M783).

Two things seem implied by this statement: first, that a man's position in the community was largely determined by achieved characteristics, and second, that there were no individually or family-owned hunting territories. The skilled hunter determined the route the hunting party took; where one hunts is not pre-determined, as it would be in a family hunting territory system or a registered trap line system. It is also clear that these 'best hunters' are not the 'chiefs' referred to through the HBC and Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development records. 'Chiefs' simply did not function at the same level. As an older Shamattawa informant said,

Seventy years ago there was no chief at Shamattawa. They didn't have a chief. They only had a chief when they got together at York Factory. There was no chief when people were out trapping. There was a boss [European] at York Factory and that's where they made a chief. (David Redhead)

Another man said,

In the old days the people chose a chief between two candidates and only married people could vote. The chief was a chief for York Factory and Shamattawa. There were four councillors and sometimes two were in Shamattawa and two were in York Factory. A man was chief for as long as people wanted him. (Stephen Redhead)

In fact, the notes on a headstone in the Shamattawa cemetery show that

one man, Abraham Beardy, was chief for about 25 years. The chief seemed to function as a go-between in dealings with Europeans, but also performed certain administrative duties in the context of band organisation. As Stephen Readhead remarked,

Before Indian Affairs began building houses the chief would tell people where to live and who they should live with even when people lived in log cabins.

Another remarked, the chief told people where to trap'

A working hypothesis might be that in the fur trade-traditional period the chief functioned in an administrative or judicial capacity when a problem arose that involved the welfare of the band as a whole and required someone with a perspective that transcended the interests of the particular groups within (problems such as terms of trade with Europeans, housing arrangements in a settlement context, the movement of people around hunting and trapping areas). This would be consistent with his location at York Factory, the focal point of the collective interest and the place at which a large portion of the band convened during the summer months before they dispersed in smaller hunting and trapping groups for the fall and winter seasons.

A June 28, 1875 entry in the York Factory Post Journal states,

Only Old Massan at work among the Indians. The rest holding a 'council' (HBC Arch B239/a/182).

Almost exactly a year later another entry reads,

Indians holding their annual 'Pow-wow' from which Old Massan and his son Wm, Rob Carson, Joseph Morris, George Hall, George Henry and Joseph Beardy absented themselves (HBC Arch B239/a/182 June 24, 1896).

It seems almost certain that these 'pow-wows' were collective gatherings of members of the York Factory Band who had come in to trade their furs and prepare for the next season.

We would suggest that the York Factory Band had a reality during the fur trade-traditional period and that it was composed of those hunting and trapping groups which habitually covered a certain range and who convened in the summer months at either York Factory and/or Shamattawa. We would also suggest that the area covered by this band was 'resource independent', that is, contained a sufficient range and quantity of game and fur-bearers that self-sufficiency and autonomy was possible on the band level. Obviously such a classification is somewhat artificial in so far as fur bearers were trapped not for subsistence requirements (although they may have been eaten) but for trade. In return for furs, trappers received goods produced outside the band's range thus rendering their territory, technically, 'resource dependent'. It is resource dependent in the context of the fur trade because the goods needed to reproduce the economy, such as steel,

traps, guns, boats, etc., are derived from materials found outside the band's range and are manufactured elsewhere, as are the goods needed to reproduce the individual worker, such as canned foods, textiles and medicines. The point is, though, that there were indigenous sources of supply which could be utilised should European sources fail. In this sense the Shamattawa Band's territory (which coincided with that of the York Factory Band) was (and still is) as 'independent' as it would have been were production for subsistence requirements alone.

Informants insist that there is sufficient game to support the present Shamattawa population should the necessity arise and that the range and quantity available have not altered appreciably within memory. (Table VIII lists the main subsistence resources in the Shamattawa Band's territory.) If this is the case (we are not yet in a position to test it rigorously), then the same area would have certainly supported the much smaller population that constituted the York Factory Band in the fur trade-traditional period. Table IX shows a constantly increasing population from 1910 on for both the York Factory Band as a whole and for two of its three branches. Fluctuations in the size of the Gillam Band are due to the movements of York Factory people in and out of the town. What the population was before 1910 is difficult, if not impossible, to determine.

A hint as to what it might have been, however, is provided by an entry in the Hudson's Bay Company Reports on Districts of 1815. Here the 'number of Indians belonging to the York Department' is given as '180 of adult age' (HBC Arch B239/e/1M783). The York Department then covered an area of some 80,000 square miles, with its northern border extending in a strip from Cape Lookout in the east to the Churchill River in the west (see Figure 1). Assuming an adult is a mature hunter, or married man over 20, a 50/50 ratio of under 20's to over 20's (characteristic of a steadily growing population) and a Department containing some three Bands (York Factory, Fort Severn, Winisk) each covering about 20,000 square miles (the size of the York Factory Band's territory),¹⁷ then the York Factory Band population would have been about 120 people, a density of one person per 167 square miles. Rogers (1963: 22) estimates the 1829 ratio in the Mistassini Cree's territorial range to have been one person per 200 square miles.

Although two parallel trends are apparent over the years--an increase in the population of the York Factory Band as a whole, including its Shamattawa branch, and a decline in trapping and hunting activities on the part of the members of the band--it would be incorrect to assume a priori that the trends are directly related. Increasing pressure on local resources by an expanding population does not necessarily lead to a decline in hunting and trapping activities. However, in the immediate vicinity of an expanding settlement certain resources are likely to become seriously depleted over time and affect production activities. This was certainly the case from time to time at York Factory:

...country cleared of deer for 100 miles round by
Indians waiting in vicinity all summer for supplies
to arrive (HBC Arch B239/a/1M154, October 9, 1716).

The October 10 Journal of 1716 reports large number of 'hunger starved'