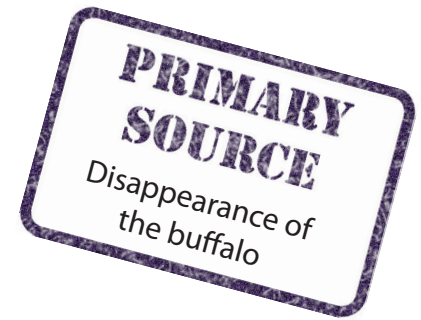


#1

Buffalo robes

Excerpt from a book written by Scottish writer Robert Ballantyne entitled, *The Hudson's Bay Company*, published in 1848. Ballantyne worked for the Hudson Bay Company from 1841 to 1847.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

The Hudson's Bay Company

The trade carried on by the Company is in peltries (skins) of all sorts, oil, dried and salted fish, feathers, quills, etcetera. A list of some of their principal articles of commerce is subjoined (attached):-

Beaver-skins.	Fox-skins, Cross.
Bear-skins, Black.	Fox-skins, Red.
Bear-skins, Brown.	Fox-skins, White.
Bear-skins, White or Polar.	Fox-skins, Blue.
Bear-skins, Grizzly.	Goose-skins.
Badger-skins.	Ivory (tusks of the Walrus).
Buffalo or Bison Robes (see note below).	Lynx-skins.
Castorum, a substance procured from the body of the beaver.	Marten-skins.
Deer-skins, Rein.	Musquash-skins.
Deer-skins, Red.	Otter-skins.
Deer-skins, Moose or Elk.	Oil, Seal.
Deer-skins, parchment.	Oil, Whale.
Feathers of all kinds.	Swan-skins.
Fisher-skins.	Salmon, salted.
Fox-skins, Black.	Seal-skins.
Fox-skins, Silver.	Wolf-skins
	Wolverine-skins.

Note. The hide of the bison-or, as it is called by the fur-traders, the buffalo-when dressed on one side and the hair left on the other, is called a robe. Great numbers are sent to Canada, where they are used for sleigh wrappers in winter. In the Indian county they are often used instead of blankets.

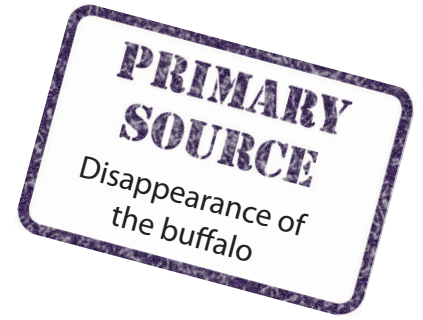
R. M. Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay: or, Every-day life in the wilds of North America* (Edinburgh, Scotland: W. Blakewood and Sons, 1848), pp. 35-37, Project Gutenberg, 2007, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/21758/21758-h/21758-h.htm> (Accessed November 16, 2010).



#2

The buffalo and the Canadian fur trade

Excerpt from an interview conducted in 1809 with fur trader William McGillivray, published as part of a journal article written by historian William A. Dobak in 1996.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Interview with William McGillivray, 1809

The principal aid given by these Indians to the Fur Trader (HBC and North-West Company traders) is to kill Buffalo and Deer, and prepare the flesh and tallow (fat) for the Company's servants who without this provision (pemmican), which could not be obtained in any other part of the Country, would be compelled (forced) to abandon the most lucrative (profitable) part of the trade (beaver pets and other fine furs like marten, mink, and otter).

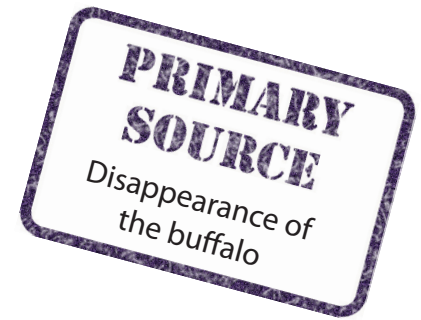
As quoted in William A. Dobak, "Killing the Canadian buffalo, 1821–1881," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 27, 1 (Spring, 1996), pp. 33–52.



#3

First Nations' spiritual views on the buffalo hunt

Collection of three different quotations that focus on the spiritual world views of First Nations groups living on the American and Canadian prairies. The first quotation was recorded by anthropologist Robert H. Lowie through his interactions with the Assiniboine, the second is from American author and army colonel Richard Dodge, and the third was collected by British traveller and army officer William Butler.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

First Nations' spiritual views on the buffalo hunt

Quote 1: (The Culture Hero taught the Assiniboine how to kill and use the buffalo, then said) from now on your people will subsist on such food. The buffalo will live as long as your people. There will be no end of them until the end of time.

Quote 2: (The Plains First Nations) firmly believed that the buffalo were produced in a country under the ground.

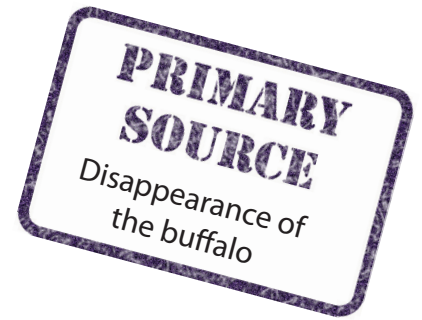
Quote 3: Southwest from the Eagle Hills ... lies a lake whose waters never rest; day and night a ceaseless murmur breaks the silence of the spot. See it is from under that lake that our buffalo come. You say they are all gone; but look, they come again and again to us. We cannot kill them all—they are there under that lake.

As quoted in William A. Dobak, "Killing the Canadian buffalo, 1821–1881," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 27, 1 (Spring, 1996), pp. 33–52.

#4

Buffalo herds

Excerpt from a report produced by David Laird, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northwest Territories from 1876 to 1881 that focuses on his 1877 journey from Battleford, Saskatchewan to Blackfoot Crossing on the Bow River in Alberta.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Buffalo herds

For the first day we followed a trail leading southward, but afterward our course was across the trackless plains until we approached nearer our destination. On the third day out we first sighted buffalo, and every day subsequently that we travelled, except the last, we saw herds of the animals. Most of the herds, however, were small, and we remarked with regret that very few calves of this season were to be seen. We observed portions of many buffalo carcasses on our route, from not a few of which the peltries (skins) had not been removed. From this circumstance, as well as from the fact that many of the skins are made into parchments and coverings for lodges, I concluded that the export of buffalo robes from the territories does not indicate even one-half the number of those valuable animals slaughtered annually in our country

(Signed)
Lieutenant-Governor David Laird
1877

As quoted in Alexander Morris, *The treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* (Toronto, ON: Coles Publishing, 1971), pp. 252.



#5

Buffalo carcasses

Print published in Harpers Monthly in October 1860 showing buffalo carcasses left by Métis hunters near Souris River, Manitoba.

**PRIMARY
SOURCE**
Disappearance of
the buffalo



GOLGOTHA.

“Carcasses of buffalo left by Métis hunters near Souris River, Manitoba,” in Harpers Monthly (October, 1860) p. 603 | Glenbow Museum, NA-1406-52, 1860, <http://ww2.glenbow.org/dbimages/arc3/1/na-1406-52.jpg> (Accessed November 16, 2011).

#6

A report on the Canadian prairies

Excerpt from a report made by Scottish-born geologist, naturalist and surgeon, Dr. James Hector, during his travels with the British North American Exploring Expedition (known as the Palliser Expedition). The report, published in 1858, focused on the Palliser Expedition that explored and surveyed the open prairies and wilderness of western Canada from 1857-1860.

**PRIMARY
SOURCE**Disappearance of
the buffalo

Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

A report on the Canadian prairies

Near our camp we found some old buffalo dung, and the Indians told us that not many years ago there were many of these animals along the valley of the North Saskatchewan, within the mountains. Eleven years ago, they say, there were great fires all through the mountains, and in the woods along their eastern base; and after that a disease broke out among all the animals, so that they used to find wapiti, moose, and other deer, as well as buffalo, lying dead in numbers. Before that time (around 1847) there was abundance (plenty) of game in all parts of the country; but since then there has been great scarcity (shortage) of animals, and only the best hunters can make sure of killing. I have heard the same description of the sudden change that took place in the abundance of game from half-breed hunters (Métis) in different parts of the country.

(Signed)

Dr. James Hector
1858

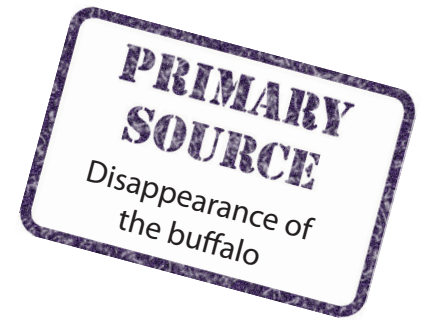
As quoted in Frank G. Roe, "The extermination of the buffalo from Western Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* XV, 1 (March 1934), pp. 1-23.



#7

The passing of the buffalo

Excerpt from an interview conducted in 1925 with an Albertan judge who had investigated the causes of the disappearance of the buffalo.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

The passing of the buffalo Interview, 1925

I followed up that prairie fire story and found it to be all too true. There had been grave clashes between our North West Mounted Police and the gangs of whiskey runners who then thronged (filled) the foothills (of the Rocky Mountains). For the great whiskey highway for many years had paralleled the Rocky Mountains far into the Canadian northland. The greatest enmity (hostility) prevailed (existed) between some of the smuggling gangs, who, to thwart (stop) the operations of their opponents in trade and the enemy police as well, set fires in all the best grassed valleys and natural feeding grounds of the buffalo; which extended in places more than 500 miles eastward of the foothills themselves Those lawless whiskey-traders were not in the least concerned with the buffalo-in fact, I do not think for a moment that they thought of anything other than to destroy the activities of other liquor smugglers and to defeat the purpose of the newly organized police who had amply (sufficiently) demonstrated that all liquor traffic was to be stamped out of (stopped in) the countryside. Again, I learned beyond dispute that many thousands of buffalo were killed during the winter of 1879-80 by hide-hunters south of the border. Many of the hunters were said to have formerly belonged to the ranks of the whiskey-runners. That was the logical sequence of what might be expected of men of that type, and to my mind wholly explains one of the most dastardly (terrible) crimes ever known to the north-west. I mean the wiping out of our once so-splendid herds of incomparable buffalo.

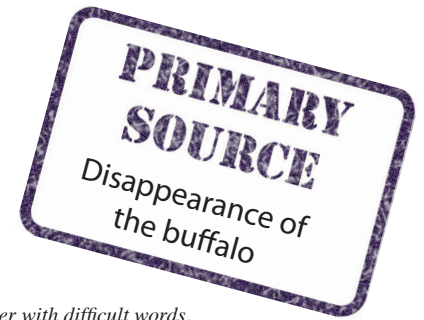
As quoted in Frank G. Roe, "The extermination of the buffalo from Western Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* XV, 1 (March 1934), pp. 1-23.



#8

The Buffalo hunt in the American west

Excerpt from a magazine article published in Harper's Magazine in 1874.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Harper's Magazine, 1874
The Buffalo hunt in the American west

The vast plains west of the Missouri River are covered with the decaying bones of thousands of slain buffaloes. Most of them have been slaughtered for the hide by professional hunters, while many have fallen victims to the sportsmen's rage for killing merely for the sake of killing. These people take neither hide nor flesh, but leave the whole carcass to decay and furnish food for the natural scavengers of the plains.

... The first shot brings down a splendid animal, wounded purposely in a manner not to kill but to make him "pump blood," that is to say, to bleed profusely (plentifully). Others of the herd gather around their wounded comrade, and appear to be too much stupefied (stunned) to avoid danger by flight (running away). The hunters kill as many as they can, until the survivors at last take fright and gallop off. Then the "stripping" begins. The hides are taken off with great skill and wonderful quickness, loaded on a wagon, as shown in the background of the picture, and carried to the hunters' camp. Our artists spoke with the hunters on the plains who boasted of having killed two thousand head of buffalo apiece in one season. At this rate of slaughter, the buffalo must soon become extinct. Already there is a sensible (noticeable) diminution (decrease) of the great herds on the plains, and from many places where they were once numerous they have disappeared altogether. Some of the railroads running far out into the prairies have regular trains for parties of amateur hunters, who fire upon their victims from the car windows. Thousands of buffalo were killed in this manner, besides other kinds of wild game, and their carcasses left to decay on the ground along the line of the railroad.

The indiscriminate (unselective/random) slaughter of the buffalo has brought many evils in its train. Among other bad consequences it has been the direct occasion of many Indian wars. Deprived of one of their chief means of subsistence (survival) through the agency (actions) of white men, the tribes naturally take revenge by making raids on white settlements and carrying off stock, if they do not murder the settlers.

"Buffalo," Harper's Magazine (December 12, 1874) | Spartacus educational, n.d., <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/WWbuffalo.htm> (Accessed November 18, 2011).



#9

The slaughter of buffalo on the Kansas Pacific Railroad

Engraving made by U.S. Army colonel R.I. Dodge portraying the killing of buffalo along the Kansas Pacific Railroad that was published in *The plains of the great west*.

PRIMARY SOURCE
Disappearance of the buffalo

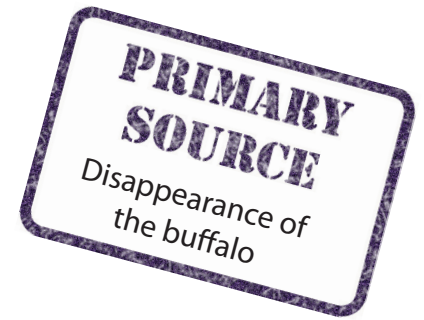


R. I. Dodge, *The plains of the great west: Being a description of the plains, game, Indians, &c. of the great North American desert* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1877), pp. 142, HathiTrust digital library, n.d., <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015023272423> (Accessed November 18, 2011) © Public Domain

#10

Tanning buffalo hides

Excerpt from a newspaper article published in the The London Times in August 1872.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

The London Times, 1872
Tanning buffalo hides

(When the hides arrived in New York they were) sent to several of the more prominent tanners who experimented upon them in various ways, but they met with no success. Either from want (lack) of knowledge or a lack of proper materials, they were unable to render (make) the hides soft or pliable, and therefore they were of no use to them ... several bales of these hides were sent to England, where they were readily (easily) taken up and orders were immediately sent to this country for 10,000 additional hides. These orders were fulfilled, and since then the trade has continued The hides are collected in the West by the agents of Eastern houses; they are simply dried, and then forwarded to either New York or Baltimore for export The low price that these goods have reached on the English market, and the prospect of a still further decline, may in time put an end to this trade, but at present the hides are hunted for vigorously, and, if it continues, it will take but a few years to wipe the herds out of existence.

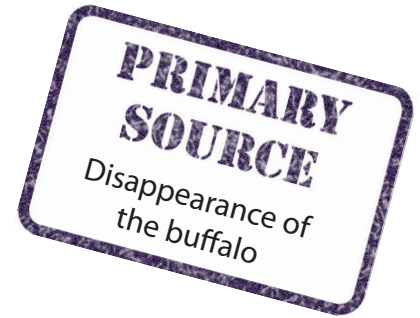
As quoted in Scott Taylor, "Buffalo hunt: International trade and the virtual extinction of the North American bison," p. 9. Paper presented at the International and Global Challenges Conference, The William R. Rhodes Center for International Economics and Finance, Providence, RI, April 25-26, 2008, The Rhodes Center, <http://watsoninstitute.org/rhodes/conference/papers/taylor.pdf> (Accessed November 16, 2011).



#11

The United States army and the buffalo

Two quotations from buffalo hunters John R. Cook, and William B. Hazen. The first quotation refers to comments made by General Sheridan to the Texas State Senate in 1875. The second is an excerpt from correspondence sent in 1872 by Colonel William B. Hazen to Henry Bergh the president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Quotation 1:

He (General Sheridan) told them (Texas State Senate) that instead of stopping the hunters they ought to give them a hearty, unanimous (collective) vote of thanks, and appropriate (take) a sufficient sum of money to strike and present to each one a medal of bronze, with a dead buffalo on one side and a discouraged Indian on the other. He said, "These men have done in the last two years, and will do more in the next year, to settle the vexed (difficult) Indian question, than the entire regular army has done in the last thirty years. They are destroying the Indians' commissary (leadership); and it is a well-known fact that any army losing its base of supplies is placed at a great disadvantage. Send them powder and lead, if you will; but, for the sake of a lasting peace, let them kill, skin, and sell until the buffaloes are terminated."

Quotation 2:

The theory that the buffalo should be killed to deprive (take away) the Indians of food is a fallacy (wrong), as these people are becoming harmless under a rule of justice. I earnestly (sincerely) request that you bring this subject before Congress with the intention of having such steps taken as will prevent this wicked and wanton (meaningless) waste, both in the lives of God's creatures and of the valuable food they furnish.

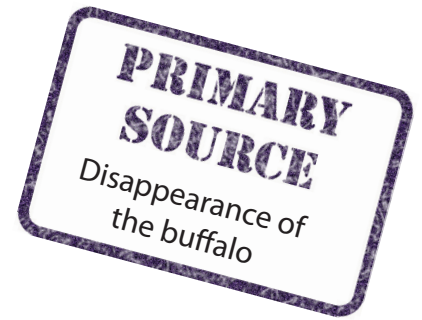
As quoted in David D. Smits, "The frontier army and the destruction of the buffalo: 1865–1883," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 25, 3 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 325, 330, Buffalo field campaign, http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/habitat/documents2/Smits_The_Frontier_Army.pdf (Accessed November 18, 2011).



#12

Personal recollections and observations

Excerpt from the memoir of U.S. Colonel Nelson Appelton Miles entitled *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles*, published in 1896.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles 1896

While the vast herds of buffalo, deer, elk, and antelope remained, they (First Nations people) were sure of food and raiment (clothing/covering). They were, however, soon to be deprived (without) of their abundant (plentiful) riches. The wave of civilization was moving over the western horizon. Its onward march was irresistible (unstoppable). No human hand could stay (stop) that rolling tide of progress One great cause of disaffection (unhappiness) among the Indians was the destruction of their vast herds of buffalo, which seemed like ruthless sacrifice.

Within a few years millions of buffalo were killed for their hides, and thousands of white men, the best rifle-shots in the world, were engaged in the business. The buffalo, like the Indian, was in the pathway of civilization. Now the same territory is occupied by innumerable (countless) numbers of domestic animals that contribute untold wealth to our entire country.

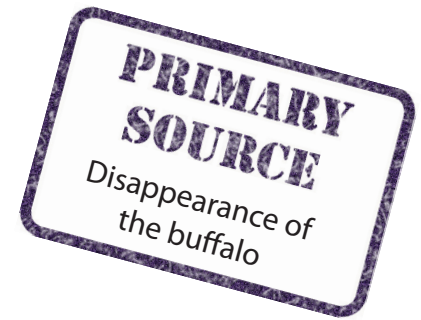
Nelson A. Miles, *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles* (Chicago: Werner, 1896) | Spartacus educational, n.d., <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/WWbuffalo.htm> (Accessed November 18, 2011).2011).

#13

The extermination of the American bison

Excerpt from a report written by William T. Hornady, Superintendent of the American National Zoological Park, entitled *The extermination of the American bison*, published in 1889.

Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.



The extermination of the American bison

The primary cause of the buffalo's extermination, and the one which embraced all others (which all others were a part of), was the descent of civilization, with all its elements of destructiveness, upon the whole of the country inhabited by that animal. From the Great Slave Lake to the Rio Grande the home of the buffalo was everywhere overrun by the man with a gun; and, as has ever been the case, the wild creatures were gradually swept away ...

The secondary causes of the extermination of the buffalo may be catalogued as follows:

- (1) Man's reckless greed, his wanton (reckless) destructiveness, and improvidence (carelessness) in not husbanding (raising animals or crops) such resources as come to him from the hand of nature ready made.
- (2) The total and utterly inexcusable absence of protective measures and agencies on the part of the National Government and of the West States and Territories (of the United States).
- (3) The fatal preference on the part of hunters generally, both white and red (First Nations), for the robe and flesh of the cow (female buffalo) over that furnished by the bull (male buffalo).
- (4) The phenomenal stupidity of the animals themselves, and their indifference to man.
- (5) The perfection of modern breech-loading rifles and other sporting fire-arms in general.

Each of these causes acted against the buffalo with its full force, to offset which there was not even one restraining or preserving influence, and it is not to be wondered at that the species went down before them. Had any one of these conditions been eliminated the result would have been reached far less quickly. Had the buffalo, for example, possessed one-half the fighting qualities of the grizzly bear he would have fared very differently, but his inoffensiveness and lack of courage almost leads one to doubt the wisdom of the economy of nature so far as it relates to him.

William T. Hornady, Superintendent of the American National Zoological Park, 1889

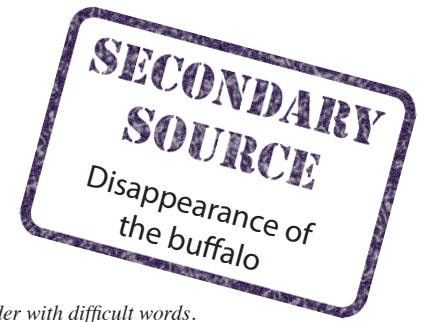
William T. Hornady, *The extermination of the American bison* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, United States National Museum Government Printing Office, 1889), pp. 464–465, <http://www.archive.org/stream/theextermination17748gut/17748.txt> (Accessed November 16, 2011).



#1

Buffalo

Excerpt from a book written by historian John Foster, entitled Buffalo, published in 1992.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

A frequently encountered and enduring [lasting] historical truism [saying] ... is the statement that the “whiteman” was responsible for the destruction of the buffalo on the Canadian prairies. Like most historical truisms this one needs clarification. If by “whiteman” the truism identifies the commercial system rooted in the industrial cities of eastern North America, which for a time seemed to offer an insatiable [unsatisfiable] market for buffalo robes and a cornucopia [abundance] of material goods in return, the statement has much validity [plausibility]. If on the other hand it purports [claims] to identify the “trigger-men” in the hunting of the buffalo in the Canadian West it is wrong. The overwhelming proportion of buffalo hunters in the decade before extinction, the 1870s, were native peoples. Even among the traders who encouraged hunting activity, in the wintering villages, native peoples were a majority.

[...]

It was to the cities of eastern North America, not the cities of Great Britain and Western Europe, that the Euro Canadian and Native Traders would look to market their product. In return an exponentially expanding [rapidly growing] array and number of goods were manifest [evident] in the lives of Native peoples. By the 1870s behaviour would suggest that ... material goods were of much importance in the lives of native peoples. Old and new products were consumed in increasing amounts. Significant risk was undertaken to sustain [maintain] the flow of goods.

[...]

As bed covers and sleigh throws, and occasionally as material for winter coats and boots, buffalo robes enjoyed a market in the eastern cities that expanded from a few hundred robes annually in the 1820s to more than a 100 000 robes annually in the 1860s

[...]

It was apparent that in the minds of a large number of native hunters and their families the material goods acquired in the robe trade were no longer luxuries but necessities As well, native peoples demonstrated a willingness to alter their behaviour to generate an increasing number of buffalo robes. Such an alteration [change] in behaviour suggests the consumption [use] of the industrial world’s material goods had become ... linked with “understandings” of the “good life.” The importance of these understandings was such that the fall in robe prices, rather than lessening the production of robes, heightened the hunting pressure on the buffalo resource to the point of extinction.

John Foster, Buffalo (Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, 1992), pp. 63–74.

#2

The buffalo people

Excerpts from a book written by journalist Liz Bryan entitled *The buffalo people: Pre-contact archaeology on the Canadian plains*, published in 2005.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

At first then, the native people of the grassland were far less dependent on the traders than those of the northern forests. They did not need hunting ammunition: They continued to make their own stone arrowheads (though they preferred metal points, when they could get them). They did not need imported blankets or food supplements: The bison provided all. When the desire for guns, metal goods and tobacco finally induced [encouraged] them to trade they chose not to make the long trek north but dealt instead with Cree middlemen until trading posts were established in the south. Even then, it was not furs that the Plains People traded—there were precious few fur-bearing animals on the grasslands—but dressed bison hides and pemmican, the nutritious dried-meat-and-berries that the voyageurs had come to depend on during their long canoe trips to trade headquarters.

[...]

Did this mass manufacture of bison pemmican start the species [bison] tumbling into its disastrous decline? Certainly it must have had an effect. For the first time, native hunters were slaughtering bison for more than their own immediate needs. An increasing supply of efficient breech-loading repeating rifles made this killing easier, so easy that often the carcasses [dead bodies] were ripped only for their hides, tongues (the greatest delicacy) or the foetal [unborn] calves and the rest of the meat abandoned. Natives were not the only hunters. By the end of the eighteenth century they were joined by bands of Métis, the offspring of native women and English or French fur traders, who mounted enormous fall hunts, tearing across the prairie in their creaking Red River carts and killing huge numbers of bison for pemmican and hides However, the chief culprits in the demise of the bison are thought to be the Americans. When they entered the fur trade—they came late, reaching the Canadian grasslands only in the 1830s—they wanted principally bison hides for leather and robes. These were bulky items, too costly for Canadian traders to transport by the long northern overland route to market. The Americans had the Mississippi River system, a great and easy highway to the industrial centres of the southeast. Heavy bundles of hides could be put on a boat and simply floated down at little or no cost. So lucrative was the hide business that thousands of slaughtered bison were skinned where they lay and left to rot. The Plains reeked. It was an example of profligate [extravagant] waste that has seldom been equalled—and it led to the near extinction of a species that had thrived on the grasslands since the Ice Age.

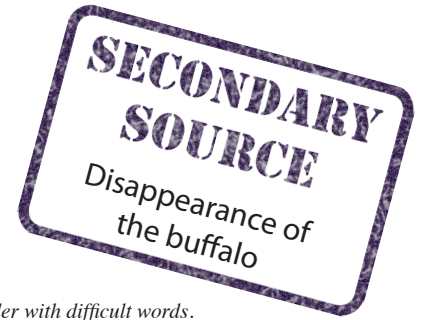
Liz Bryan, *The buffalo people: Pre-contact archaeology on the Canadian plains* (Nanose Bay, BC: Heritage House Publishing, 2005), pp. 206–207.



#3

Buffalo hunt

Excerpt from a journal article published by M. Scott Taylor, a professor of economics, entitled “Buffalo hunt: International trade and the virtual extinction of the North American bison,” published in 2008.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

In the 16th century, North America contained 25–30 million buffalo; by the late 19th century less than 100 remained. While removing the buffalo east of the Mississippi took settlers over 100 years, the remaining 10 to 15 million buffalo on the Great Plains were killed in a ... slaughter in a little more than 10 years. I ... argue that the slaughter was initiated [started] by a foreign-made innovation [advance/invention] and fueled by a foreign demand for industrial leather. Ironically, the ultimate cause of this sad chapter in American environmental history was of European, and not American, origin.

[...]

There is no real mystery as to why the buffalo were eliminated from their previous ranges—an expanding population, conversion to agriculture, and industrialization all spelt the end for the buffalo sometime during the late 19th or early 20th century I argue that the usual suspects held responsible for the slaughter on the plains—the railroads, the U. S. army, environmental change or altered Native hunting practices—are in fact innocent

[I]n 1870 or 1871 tanners in England and Germany developed a method for tanning buffalo hides into useful leather. While natives had always been able to tan the thick haired buffalo hides taken in winter months into buffalo robes ... a cheap simple commercial process was as yet unknown [was not yet known]. Various historical accounts attribute the breakthrough to tanners in Germany and still others to English tanners. Many accounts suggest the “innovation” was soon imitated [copied] by U. S. tanners, but exactly when and where is unclear It is less clear how buffalo tanned leather was used, and why it had such a strong foreign demand. The literature mentions two uses for the leather. The first was for sole leather, with a burgeoning [growing] European demand coming from armies in the post 1870 period. Specifically, several sources mention the British Army and its demand for buffalo leather as it was tougher and thicker than cow hide. In addition to sole leather, the tough buffalo hides found use as industrial belting for machinery in England and elsewhere on the continent.

Scott Taylor, “Buffalo hunt: International trade and the virtual extinction of the North American bison,” pp. i, 4, 8–11. Paper presented at the International and Global Challenges Conference, The William R. Rhodes Center for International Economics and Finance, Providence, RI, April 25–26, 2008, The Rhodes Center, <http://watsoninstitute.org/rhodes/conference/papers/taylor.pdf> (Accessed November 16, 2011).



#4

Killing the Canadian buffalo

Excerpts from journal article written by historian William A. Dobak entitled “Killing the Canadian buffalo, 1821–1881,” published in 1996.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

The trade in tanned buffalo robes was largely responsible [for the disappearance of the buffalo]—the Canadian historian Robert Beal has called it “the fundamental factor”—but the decades-long provision [supplies] trade, in which Native and Métis hunters furnished [provided] pemmican for the Hudson’s Bay Company’s boatmen, also played a part, as production statistics suggest The story of the extermination of the buffalo in the northern United States ... is well-known. A few years after the Sioux War of 1876, commercial hide-hunters went to work. Since they were interested in the hides as leather, rather than as robes, they hunted year-round, even in summer when the buffalo’s coat was thin and robe-hunters would have left the herds alone Whether the destruction of the buffalo in the United States resulted from deliberate government policy or from market forces alone, commercial hide-hunters did the final damage.

No year-round trade in raw buffalo hides, which depended on breech-loading rifles [new rifle that could be loaded quicker than previous rifles] to kill the animals and railroads to ship the hides, developed [on the Canadian Prairies].

[...]

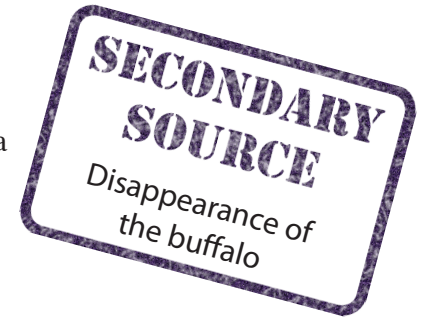
How were Native peoples able to drive the buffalo from the Canadian Plains? The most obvious answer is sheer population pressure, augmented [added to] by commercial demand, which claimed the skins of 30 percent more buffalo than Natives required for their minimum needs Cows were especially subject to attrition [being killed], for their skins were lighter and more easily worked than those of bulls, and their meat was more tender. The ability of equestrian [on horse] hunters to select cows would have restricted reproduction severely.

William A. Dobak, “Killing the Canadian buffalo, 1821–1881,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 27, 1 (Spring, 1996), pp. 33–52.

#5

Wildlife in western Canada

Excerpt from a book written by historian George Colpitts entitled *Game in the garden: A human history of wildlife in western Canada to 1940*, published in 2002.



Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

[P]rogress was transforming the Canadian west, government administrators could avoid preventing what was viewed as a natural, inevitable [predictable], or even providential [occurring by divine design] course of events when the buffalo rapidly disappeared from Canadian ranges in the 1870s and in 1881 roamed south across the American border never to return. A visitor to the west in 1874 was surprised by the few buffalo left and suggested in a report to the Department of the Interior [responsible for federal land management, Indian affairs and natural resources extraction] that, if the American export of skins and pemmican be stopped, “a rapid increase in their numbers might be anticipated” in Canadian territory. The report even suggested that the measure would allow Native people to continue to use buffalo for food and clothing. But it is telling that the minister paraphrasing [summarizing] the report did not mention this possible course of action. To him, it was far better to introduce into “the magnificent grazing [keeping livestock] country from which the Buffaloes have recently been driven ... some hardy [tough] race of domestic cattle.” One reason why federal bureaucrats were hesitant to do much about the buffalo—beyond their threadbare [scarce] resources in the first place—was a general view that an ideal settler society would rapidly push aside the wild elements of the region.

George W. Colpitts, *Game in the garden: A human history of wildlife in western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2002), pp. 47–48. Excerpt reprinted with permission of the publisher.

