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The Plains People

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From the Rocky Mountains to the woodlands of Southeastern Manitoba, the native people of the plains spanned the Southern provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Family

- While men hunted, women would do the cooking, sew the clothing, and make tools, while tending to the children.
- The women were also in charge of constructing the tipis and hauling wood and water to the campsite.



A Sioux Family

Children

- Tipi or hut was erected specifically for the birth process.
- Three women assisted the mother-to-be through labour.
- The afterbirth was wrapped in hide and buried under a young tree that would grow up strong and healthy like the child.
- In many clans, the whole village took care of the children; the women cared for all newborns, and all elders met to determine a name.
- Children's games, like those of the Sarcee, taught life skills.



A Stoney Mother and Child

Moss Bags

- Children kept in a moss bag along side the mother while she worked.
- It was made from hide or cloth and filled with dry moss and crumbled wood that absorbed a baby's discharge, and was changed after being dirtied.



A Moss Bag

- Cradle Boards
 - A Cradle Board was a U-shaped piece of board that a child in a moss bag was lashed to, and placed on the mother's back, allowing her to continue with work.

Social Structure / Leadership

- Within each nomadic group, there would be a band chief who was supported if the band could catch enough game for food, and were protected from enemies.
- Chiefs would advise, then a council of elders would come to a decision - in the Blood tribe the council of Clan Elders was called Inaki.
- Generally the leader was wise and patient or showed other qualities of leadership, or had a good deal of wealth.
- Public shame was the form of punishment or discipline.
- When food was scarce, bands would split into even smaller groups and go separate ways.
- The Stoneys had their own systems of government, where each leader had certain powers like the keeper of the whip, or the keeper of the knife, or keeper of the staff.
- The leaders were often prophets, Elders, valiant warriors, or wealthy persons and they each performed specific duties.



Peigan Chief Bull Plume

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