



Montana  
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**Indian Education for All**  
**Montana State Parks Lesson Plan**  
**Tower Rock State Park**  
January 2010 (revised)

**Title**

The Old North Trail—An Ancient Highway System

**Content Area**

Social Studies

**Grade Levels**

5th – 8th

**Duration**

2 50-minute class periods and 2 homework assignments of 20 minutes each.

**Overview and Objectives**

This lesson introduces students to the Old North Trail, thousands of years old north-south trail system that extends the length of North America. The Old North Trail runs through Montana along the east side of the Rocky Mountain Front and south past the Three Forks area, where it meets with east-west hunting trails. These much-traveled indigenous trails are part of a system of tribal travel routes. As the “backbone” of this system, the Old North Trail has been in use for over 10,000 years. The Blackfeet, Cree, Kootenai, Salish, White Clay (Gros Ventre) and Shoshone are some of the tribes who used this trail, as have the Métis (mixed-heritage) people. The Montana Section of the Old North Trail was used as recently as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by Cree, Chippewa and Métis groups. European and American explorers noted its presence and documented tribal use of the Trail in Canada and the U.S. Lewis and Clark observed part of the Old North Trail when they rested at Tower Rock, along the Missouri River, on July 16, 1805:

Captain Meriwether Lewis noted in his journal “an Indian road enters the mountain at the same place with the river on the Stard side and continues along its border under the steep cliffs.” Lewis also wrote in his journal, “At this place there is a large rock of 400 feet high which stands immediately in the gap which the Missouri makes on its passage from the mountains... This rock I called the tower. It may be ascended with some difficulty nearly to its summit and from it there is a most pleasing view of the country we are now about to leave. From it I saw that evening immense herds of buffaloes in the plains below.”

(See the Tower Rock State Park website, <http://stateparks.mt.gov/tower-rock/>)

*In this lesson, students will learn that:*

- For over 10,000 years people have used the Old North Trail. The earliest use *may* have been by people migrating from the Asian continent to North America or migrating north from Central America into

North America as the Ice Age waned. It is possible the Old North Trail could have played a significant role in the “peopling” of the Americas per the Bering Strait Theory.

- The Bering Strait Theory of migration is only one of several migration theories, and new archaeological and genetic evidence is being uncovered leading scientists to rework/rethink this theory. Today there are multiple scientific theories about a variety of migration routes to and between the America, based on evidence of sea passage from Polynesian islands in the Pacific to Central and South America and the likelihood of south-to-north routes of migration into North America.
- The indigenous peoples of this continent have their own histories about how they came to be on this continent. In many cases, these oral histories—some of them thousands of years old—differ from or contradict archaeological or anthropological theories of migration. Some tribal cosmogonies (origin stories) assert that tribes have been here since creation and did not migrate to their homelands from anywhere else. (The Kootenai origin story is one such example.)
- The Old North Trail is the “backbone” of an extensive and well-used indigenous trail system in the Rocky Mountain region. These trails were used by numerous tribes over the course of thousands of years for hunting migrations, inter-tribal trade and commerce, raiding and warfare, tribal relocation, specific resource needs (such as chert and obsidian), and other travel—including tribal exploration of the West.
- The Old North Trail has continued to be used by indigenous peoples and their descendants, right up into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Montana-area tribes who have documented use of the Old North Trail include the Blackfeet, Blood, (Piegan), Salish, Kootenai, Cree, Assiniboine, Apsáalooke (Crow), Gros Ventre (White Clay), Shoshone, Arapaho, and the mixed-heritage Métis.
- Archaeologists study and map ancient trails to learn more about the travels and migrations of indigenous peoples.

Objectives and skill development areas in this lesson include:

- Mapping, analysis, critical thinking, the importance of looking at history from multiple perspectives, and drawing conclusions.
- Vocabulary related to archaeology as it pertains to the Old North Trail, Tower Rock, and indigenous trails; additional vocabulary related to the indigenous people of Montana.

## Education Standards and Benchmarks

### ***Indian Education For All***

**Essential Understanding 3:** The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral history beginning with their origins that are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

**Essential Understanding 6:** History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.

### **Montana Content Standards**

**Social Studies Content Standard 1:** Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations. *Rationale: Every discipline has a process by which knowledge is gained or inquiry is made. In the social studies, the information inquiry process is*

applied to locate and evaluate a variety of primary and secondary sources of information [which is] then used to draw conclusions in order to make decisions, solve problems and negotiate conflicts.

**Benchmark 1.2:** Students will assess the quality of information (e.g., primary or secondary sources, point of view and embedded values of the author).

**Social Studies Content Standard 3:** Students apply geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., location, place, human/environment interactions and regions). *Rationale: Students gain geographical perspectives on Montana and the world by studying the Earth and how people interact with places. Knowledge of geography helps students address cultural, economic, social and civic implications of living in various environments.*

**Benchmark 3.1.** Students will analyze and use various representations of the Earth to gather and compare information about a place.

**Benchmark 3.2** Students will locate on a map or globe physical, natural and human features and explain their relationships within the ecosystem(s).

**Benchmark 3.3** Students will analyze diverse land use and explain the historical and contemporary effects of this use on the environment, with emphasis on Montana.

**Benchmark 3.4** Students will describe how movement and settlement patterns lead to interdependence or conflict.

**Benchmark 3.5.** Students will use appropriate geographic resources to interpret and generate information explaining the interaction of physical and human systems (e.g., estimate distance, calculate scale, identify dominant patterns of climate and land use, and compute population density.)

**Benchmark 3.7** Students will describe major changes in a local area that have been caused by human beings and analyze the probable effects on the community and the environment.

**Social Studies Content Standard 4:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships. *Rationale: Students need to understand their historical roots and how events shape the past, present and future of the world. In developing these insights, students must know what life was like in the past and how things change and develop over time. Students gain historical understanding through inquiry of history by researching and interpreting historical events affecting personal, local, tribal, Montana, United States, and world history.*

**Benchmark 4.1.** Students will interpret the past using a variety of sources (e.g., biographies, documents, diaries, eye-witnesses, interviews, internet, primary source material) and evaluate the credibility of sources used.

**Benchmark 4.6:** Students will explain how and why events may be interpreted differently according to the points of view of participants, witnesses, reporters and historians.

**Social Studies Content Standard 6:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies. *Rationale: Culture helps us to understand ourselves as both individuals and members of various groups. In a multicultural society, students need to understand multiple perspectives that derive from different cultural vantage points. Students as citizens need to know how institutions are maintained or changed and how they influence individuals, cultures and societies. This understanding allows students to relate to people in Montana, [American Indian] tribes, the United States and throughout the world.*

**Benchmark 6.2.** Students will explain and give examples of how human expression contributes to the development and transmission of culture.

**Benchmark 6.4.** Students will compare and illustrate the unique characteristics of American Indian tribes and other cultural groups in Montana.

**Reading Content Standard 4:** Students select, read, and respond to print and non-print material for a variety of purposes. *Rationale: Readers require a purpose to read related to personal, academic, and civic*

*needs and respond in a variety of ways, including writing and discussion, as well as through artistic expression, formal presentation, media, etc.*

**Benchmark 4.3.** Students will read, interpret, and apply information to perform certain tasks [such as mapping, estimating distance, etc.].

**Benchmark 4.4.** Students will read, analyze, and provide oral, written and/or artistic responses to traditional and contemporary literature.

## Related Curriculum and Suggestion for Integrating this Lesson

If you are using the textbook *Montana, Stories of the Land*, you may incorporate this lesson at the end of Chapter Two. If doing so, you will not need to introduce students to the old north trail at the beginning of Class Period 1 (Activities 1 and 2), but instead have students review the map on page 34 of the textbook and proceed with this lesson starting at Class Period 1, Activity 3.

## Materials and Resources

- ✓ Globe or a large map that shows northern Asia, Alaska and North America.
- ✓ Map of North America (1 copy per 4 students. They will need to draw on these.) It needs to be large, and National Geographic style map will do.
- ✓ Map of Montana—state highway map will do (1 map per pair of students). Free copies of this map are available from the Montana Department of Transportation, 1-800-847-4868 or use online request form at [http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment\\_form.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml)
- ✓ *Montana, Stories of the Land*, (Krys Holmes, Montana Historical Society Press, 2008): You will need Chapter Two, “People of the Dog Days.” It is available online at: <http://www.mhs.mt.gov/education/textbook/Chapter2/Chapter2.pdf>
- ✓ <http://lewis-clark.org/content/content-article.asp?ArticleID=2289> (Haystack Butte and Shishequaw Mountain along Old North Trail, as observed by Lewis and Clark)
- ✓ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Models\\_of\\_migration\\_to\\_the\\_New\\_World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Models_of_migration_to_the_New_World) (This Wikipedia entry offers a glimpse at multiple theories of migration from Asia, Europe, and Polynesia to the Americas, along with a mention of south-to-north migrations.)
- ✓ “The Old North Trail—America’s Earliest Highway” by Marcella Sherfy, *Heritage Education*, Spring 2004, pages 12-17. Available online at: [http://www.montanaheritageproject.org/edheritage/HE\\_04spr/Old\\_North.html](http://www.montanaheritageproject.org/edheritage/HE_04spr/Old_North.html)
- ✓ “An Ancient Highway...” by Graham Chandler, *Imperial Oil Review*, Vol. 85, No. 440, Spring 2001, p. 26-20. This article is available online at: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/24487565/An-Ancient-Highway>
- ✓ Attachments included in this lesson plan:
  - Attachment A: Vocabulary List (2 pages)
  - Attachment B: Trails, Theories and Oral Histories (1 page)
  - Attachment C: Locating the Old North Trail (1 page)
  - Attachment D: Archaeology and Ancient Trails (2 pages)
  - Attachment E: Blackfeet Use of the Old North Trail—excerpt from McClintock (1 page)
  - Attachment F: Blackfeet Origin Story (3 pages)
  - Attachment G: Worksheet (1 page)

## Activities and Procedures

**Teacher preparation:** Teacher should read the following resources, and become familiar with the maps and other materials used in the lesson. Also, acquire state highway maps of Montana (1 per pair of students) and maps of North America for students (1 per group of 4 students).

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Models\\_of\\_migration\\_to\\_the\\_New\\_World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Models_of_migration_to_the_New_World) (This Wikipedia entry offers a glimpse at multiple theories of migration from Asia, Europe, and Polynesia to the Americas, along with a mention of south-to-north migrations.)
- “**The Old North Trail—America’s Earliest Highway**” by Marcella Sherfy, *Heritage Education*, Spring 2004, pages 12-17. Available online at: [http://www.montanaheritageproject.org/edheritage/HE\\_04spr/Old\\_North.html](http://www.montanaheritageproject.org/edheritage/HE_04spr/Old_North.html)
- “**An Ancient Highway...**” by Graham Chandler, in *Imperial Oil Review*, Spring 2001, p.26-20. <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/24487565/An-Ancient-Highway>
- In *Montana, Stories of the Land*, (Krys Holmes, Montana Historical Society Press, 2008), study the maps on pages 34 (includes Old North Trail), p. 52 (early trade networks) and read p. 24-29, ending at the section break on p. 29, and read p. 34-36 describing the Old North Trail.

**Student Preparation:** The day before Class Period 1, provide and assign as homework the Vocabulary List (Attachment A), which they should read so that they are familiar with all of the terms and concepts that will be used in this lesson.

## Class Period 1: Introduction, Geography, Mapping Skills, Archaeology, Analysis

Before class or during the mapping activity (2), write the discussion questions from Activity 3 (see below) on the board, leaving room for answers below each one. For this class period you will need:

- ✓ Overview to the Lesson
  - ✓ Montana Maps (1 for each pair of students)
  - ✓ Map on page 34 of *Montana, Stories of the Land* (for teacher’s reference)
  - ✓ Pencils
  - ✓ Whiteboard or chalkboard space
  - ✓ Attachment B (1 copy per student and 1 for teacher)
  - ✓ Attachment C (1 copy for each pair of students)
  - ✓ Attachment D (1 copy per student to assign as homework)
  - ✓ Attachment G (1 copy per student to assign as homework)
- 1) Introduce your students to Tower Rock State Park and the Old North Trail, using the brief introduction/overview provided in the “Overview and Objectives” You do not have to use the list of objectives for this introduction. (<5 minutes)
  - 2) Have students pick a partner for the geography and mapping activity. Distribute 1 map of Montana to each pair of students. They will locate on the Montana map the *approximate* route of the Old North Trail system, which they will draw in pencil on the map using the landmarks and geographical locations listed in Attachment C. (15 minutes)
  - 3) Using the discussion questions listed below (and on the board), lead a short class discussion on the subject of archaeology. Designate one student per question to list the class’s responses to that question on the board. (10 minutes)
    - a) What is archaeology?
    - b) What is an archaeological site?

- c) What 3 kinds of “evidence” do archaeologists look for?
  - d) What are artifacts?
  - e) What are eco-facts?
  - f) What are features?
  - g) Is the Old North Trail a site, artifact, eco-fact or feature? (Discuss different responses and why students chose the answer(s) they did. Then, tell the students: *“The Old North Trail is both a feature and a site. What makes it a feature? What makes it a site? There are also several sites along the Old North Trail that are smaller and more specific, such as places where tribal groups camped.”*
- 4) Distribute copies of Attachment B to your class. (If it saves time, pass out Attachments D and G to your students at the same time. These will be the homework assignment.) Go through each of the points on Attachment B out loud with your students, using (when applicable) a world map or globe to illustrate various theoretical migration routes. (You will need to know where to find Asia, Polynesia, Bering Strait, and North, Central and South America, as well as the homeland of the Kootenai in southern British Columbia and NW Montana, and the location of the Blackfeet in Southern Alberta, SW Saskatchewan and Northern Montana.) (10-15 minutes)
- 5) Assign the homework to be done before the next class period: Read Attachment D, do questions 1-6 on the Worksheet (Attachment G). They will need to bring these materials back to class for the next period. (Homework will take 20-30 minutes.)

### **Class Period 2: Oral History, the Blackfeet, and the Old North Trail**

For this period, students will need Attachments D and G, assigned as homework from the previous class period. Teacher may want the map on page 34 of *Montana, Stories of the Land* for reference. (The mapping activity associated with Activity 3 has a long teacher narrative with it in the instructions below. It does appear to be very long, but you will find that it can be completed in about 15 minutes.) You will also need:

- ✓ Attachment E (1 per student and 1 for teacher)
  - ✓ Attachment F (1 per student and 1 for teacher)
  - ✓ Map of North America (1 per group of 4 students)
  - ✓ Pencils, rulers (inches or centimeters, whichever the map uses for measuring distance), paper.
  - ✓ A calculator per small group is optional and might speed the map activity up a bit.
- 1) Begin the class with a short discussion centered on the following 4 questions: (Keep this to 5 minutes, not more.)
- a) Why do archaeologists study ancient trails?
  - b) What is oral history?
  - c) What is an origin story?
  - d) How can tribal knowledge and indigenous oral histories be useful to archaeological studies of trails?
- 2) Read aloud to your class Attachment E—Blackfeet Uses of the Old North Trail. (<5 minutes)
- 3) Have students form groups of no more than 4 students each. Provide each group with a map of North America and make sure each group has pencils, paper, and a ruler. (Calculator optional.)

- 4) Remind students of the equation: **distance = rate x time**. In this activity they will be using the account of Elk Tongue's journey south on the Old North Trail to estimate how far he traveled, using the instructions below and teacher's assistance as necessary. (Total time = 15-20 minutes. Drawing the route will take about 5 minutes, doing the math another 5-10, and then plotting the route and finding the destination about another 5 minutes if they stay on task.)

### **Instructions to be read aloud by the teacher:**

**We are going to do an activity to estimate the approximate length of Elk Tongue's journey south on the Old North Trail.**

**Spread out the map of North America and on it locate the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. Because we don't know exactly where Elk Tongue began, (probably in southern Canada), we are going to start measuring at the U.S.-Canadian border along the Blackfeet Reservation. At the time of Elk Tongue's journey, remember, there was no reservation and the Blackfeet lived in a very large territory covering what are now southern Canada and the northern United States (along the Montana-Canadian border).**

**Our route will not be exactly true to the Old North Trail, but it will be close. First, begin by drawing a line representing the Old North Trail along the Montana portion of your map, similar to yesterday's activity. Remember to keep it just to the east of the Rocky Mountains, entering Montana from Canada at the present-day Blackfeet Reservation and leaving Montana just west of Yellowstone National Park. (You are now on the west side of the Rocky Mountains.)**

**Continue this line south along the west side of the Rocky Mountains, along rivers when possible, and keeping in a generally south-western direction along the western edge of the Rocky Mountains. Remember to let your route curve quite a bit around mountains and along rivers, since we know he did not travel in a perfectly straight line. Also, make sure your line goes around major landforms like the Grand Canyon. Extend your line all the way down into Mexico. This is the approximate route we will be using for our math activity.**

*Give your students a couple of minutes to finish marking their maps. Their lines will undoubtedly be straighter than any actual travel route, but you will find that there are highways today that follow some portions of the Old North Trail and its branch trails.*

### **Teacher's narrative continues:**

**How long did Elk Tongue and his family travel south on their journey to the land of the "dark skinned people with hair falling over their faces?" (Answer: 12 moons)**

**What are "moons?" (Ans: cycles of the moon, so about 28 days each.  $12 \times 28 = 336$  days)**

**If you were going to make a really, really long trip on foot, would you travel every day or stop now and then to rest? (Ans: Stop to rest from time to time)**

**What are some of the other reasons Elk Tongue and his family might have stopped along their journey? (Ans: to hunt, to repair tools or footwear or gear, to trade with people from other tribes, because of bad weather, to gather plant foods, to camp at night, etc.)**

**So, if Elk Tongue's group stopped from time to time in their 336 day journey, we have to estimate how many of these days they were actually moving in order to guess where they might have ended up. (You will have to guess. It is likely that at least half to two-thirds of the days were spent traveling, but no one knows for sure how many days they were actually journeying. It could be fewer or more days, but for this exercise, a**

likely number is sufficient. Discuss it and come to an agreement with the class, such as 60% of the days or 202 days...)

**How fast can a group of people walk, assuming they are covering a variety of terrains and carrying all their survival gear with them?** (It is about 2.5 miles per hour on foot, or only about 1.25 miles per hour with a travois.)

**How many hours would they walk in one day, on average?** (We don't know, but it is possible that on the days they traveled, they could have traveled for about 8 hours on a single day. The travelers would have had to stop from time to time—to rest, to eat, to drink/obtain water, etc.)

- Write all of the possible rates (by foot, by travois) and number of days (half the total, 2/3 the total) on the board.
- Remind students that they will need to compute the TIME based on the hours per day times number of days traveled.

*Now the groups will work to compute a rough estimate of how many days Elk Tooth traveled, how fast he might have gone, and about how many miles he might have traveled. One student from each group should write down the equations and they can do the math together to make sure it is correct. They can use a calculator if need be. You might have one group do a shorter number of traveling days (time) and use a slower rate by travois, while another group can try a longer time and the by-foot rate of travel. This will yield a nearer and farther destination, either of which could be correct, as could somewhere in-between. Mathematically, however, it gives students something to think about in terms of how rate and time have an impact on distance traveled, and how an average of the two might yield a more accurate result than either one alone. They will need to fill in the chosen estimated rate and time, then mark the distance on their maps.*

*Give the students about 5 minutes to do the math and measure the trip.*

*For the foot-travel groups, if traveling 8 hour days at 2.5 miles per hour, for 222 days, the total miles will be  $20 \times 222 = 4,440$  miles.*

*For the groups that calculate distance at a travois-rate for an 8 hour day, the total will be  $1.5 \text{ mph} \times 8 \text{ hours} = 12 \text{ miles per day}$ ;  $12 \text{ mi/day} \times 168 \text{ days} = 2016 \text{ miles}$ .*

*The average of these two distances is 3208 miles. Historians have speculated that Mexico City may have been the destination of Elk Tongue and his family before they turned northward to return home, but no one knows for certain.*

### **Teacher Narrative, continued:**

**So, what are your results?** (Let each group name the nearest city or town to their final destination.)

**It is possible that Elk Tongue's journey lead him to a destination somewhere between these two points. After all, our calculations are not quite exact and do not take into account any number of things that could have slowed them down. Still, it is an awfully long journey!**

**If they ended up in Mexico City, they would have been in the largest city in the Americas (which it still is). At the time, Mexico City would have been occupied by the Spanish, in addition to its indigenous inhabitants, and these Spaniards may have been the "people with hair falling over their faces." They would have discovered, as the Spanish did, that Mexico City had streets laid out on a North-South grid, a water-supply system to much of the town, and even a waste-water system to take used water out of town! This would have been an excellent city for trade and commerce, and Elk Tongue could have brought back many valuable trade items to share with his tribe!**

- 5) Provide the students with the Blackfeet Creation Story (Attachment F). Introduce this story by telling them that it is the Blackfeet Creation Story as told by Chewing Black Bones to Ella Clark, and that they are reading the story because it offers one tribes' historical and cultural perspective on the Old North Trail (or what might have come to be the Old North Trail) and because it is an alternative perspective to the anthropological migration theories. They should read this story either silently or aloud in groups and finish the worksheet (questions 7-9) related to it. If necessary, allow them to take this work home and return it the next day. (Estimated time: 15-20 minutes.)
- 6) Wrap up: If there is time, ask your students "What did you learn in this lesson?" and let them each share one thing. Students should hand in the completed worksheets. (5 minutes)

## Extensions

- Invite a Blackfeet Tribal Member/Elder to your classroom to learn about tribal history.
- Check out these websites with more information
  - “**The Old North Trail—America’s Earliest Highway**” by Marcella Sherfy, *Heritage Education*, Spring 2004, p.12-17. Online at:  
[http://www.montanaheritageproject.org/edheritage/HE\\_04spr/Old\\_North/html](http://www.montanaheritageproject.org/edheritage/HE_04spr/Old_North/html)
  - *The Old North Trail: Or, Life, Legends, and Religion of the Blackfeet Indians*. Walter McClintock, originally published in 1910, now available in newer editions (paperback) and in its entirety at: <http://www.1st-hand-history.com/ONT/ALBUM1.HTML> and <http://www.1st-hand-history.com/ONT/ALBUM2.HTML>
- Visit Tower Rock State Park to see the interpretive displays related to the Old North Trail.
- Visit the Old Trail Museum in Choteau, Montana, to learn more about Métis settlement along the Old North Trail. Also research Louis Riel, and the Cree and Métis in Montana.
- Research the histories of the communities of Augusta, Choteau, Dupuyer, Bynum (etc.) along the Old North Trail (in historic Teton County). Map landmarks, like Tower Rock, along the Old North Trail and research tribes who lived or live in the vicinity of these landmarks.
- Have students research the various migration theories pertaining to the “peopling” of North America; research topics include: Tribal origin and creation stories, tribal migration stories, Bering Strait Theory, Polynesian/Seafaring theory, South-to-North theories, Asian seafaring, and even East-to-West theory (people coming from Europe). Once students have completed their research, have them list the theory, evidence to support it, pro’s and con’s of this theory, and present this material to the class. Then lead a discussion on the various theories and histories in order to encourage students to think critically and analytically about how these theories may support or contradict one another and what questions remain unanswered.
- Read the book *Indian Trails of the Northern Rockies*, by Darris Flanagan, Stoneycdale Press, 2001.
- The National Park Service has a “Land Bridge” math activity on its website:  
[www.nps.gov/akso/ParkWise/Teachers/Treasures/BELA\\_Footprints/activities/BeringianMath.htm](http://www.nps.gov/akso/ParkWise/Teachers/Treasures/BELA_Footprints/activities/BeringianMath.htm)
- Explore the map set entitled “Rocky Mountain Front/Blackfeet” from the collection “Discovering Our Own Place, A Map Saga for Montana” by Sally Thompson and Kim Lughart, for the Lifelong Learning Project of the University of Montana—Missoula, 2004. Order online at:  
[http://www.montanabookstore.com/shop\\_product\\_detail.asp?catalog\\_group\\_id=Mg&catalog\\_group\\_name=R2VuZXJhbCBCb29rcw&catalog\\_id=437&catalog\\_name=UmVnaW9uYWwgTGZhcm5pbmcgUHJvamVjdA&pf\\_id=178&product\\_name=UmVnaW9uYWwgTWFWwIFNlcmllcyBSb2NreSBNb3VudGFpbiBGcm9udCBCbGFja2ZlZXQ&type=3&target=shop\\_product\\_list.asp](http://www.montanabookstore.com/shop_product_detail.asp?catalog_group_id=Mg&catalog_group_name=R2VuZXJhbCBCb29rcw&catalog_id=437&catalog_name=UmVnaW9uYWwgTGZhcm5pbmcgUHJvamVjdA&pf_id=178&product_name=UmVnaW9uYWwgTWFWwIFNlcmllcyBSb2NreSBNb3VudGFpbiBGcm9udCBCbGFja2ZlZXQ&type=3&target=shop_product_list.asp)

## Evaluation

Reading assignments, written work, mapping activities, participation in and contribution to class discussions.

## Attachments

See Attachments A-G

## Attachment A—Vocabulary list

**Archaeological site:** any location of past human activity, evidenced by the remains of that activity.

**Archaeology:** Archaeology is the study of the past through artifacts, eco-facts, and features. It is the process of discovering, interpreting, and preserving the past. The scientist who conducts these studies is called an **archaeologist**. An archaeologist studies human beings of the past, using techniques and methods centered on the examination and interpretation of physical remains left behind by past cultures.

**Artifacts:** Artifacts are human-made or used objects present at an archeological site, such as tools, daily household objects, discarded items, fire-pits, tipi-rings, or cairns, or trade items.

**Bering Strait Theory:** A migration theory that hypothesizes that the first inhabitants of the Americas were of Asian origin and crossed a land-bridge between Siberia and Alaska around 12,000 years ago, then moved south into the “uninhabited” lands of North, Central and South America. Today many archaeologists, genetic scientists, and anthropologists are disputing this theory and finding evidence of multiple migration routes. Many indigenous peoples’ origin stories disagree with the Bering Strait theory and other migration theories which suggest people came to the Americas from elsewhere.

**Cache pit:** Hole dug into the ground for storage of food, stone for tools, or other objects until needed.

**Cairn:** A cairn is a marker created on a landscape, usually a carefully stacked column of rocks made by someone to mark a specific location or resource. Stone cairns exist along the Old North Trail.

**Eco-facts:** Archaeological “evidence” that are natural in origin, such as bones and seeds, and provide additional information about an archaeological site.

**Ethnocentric bias:** A point-of-view that is limited to only one culture’s perspective. Because an ethnocentric bias does not take in to account multiple cultural perspectives, it can undermine or diminish or deny the relevance (importance) of these other perspectives.

**Ethnographic record:** Accounts of events and practices about a specific community or culture of people or the people who are or were at a specific site being studied. A written ethnographic record is called ethnography.

**Features:** Natural, non-moveable components of an archaeological site, such as alterations in soil composition due to the use of fire-pits. A feature may also be a place where people spent time, like a tipi ring or a fire pit.

**Historic:** The time period for which written documentation exists. See “pre-historic” for the **ethnocentric bias** in this use of the words “history” and “historic.” See also, “Oral History.”

**Indigenous:** Belonging to or originating from a place or occupying it since time immemorial.

**Landmark:** A landmark is a natural topographical reference that is used in the same way as a stone cairn—to mark a specific location or help people locate a trail or resource. Landmarks along the Old North Trail system in Montana include Haystack Butte, Tower Rock and the headwaters of the Missouri river, as well as many other rivers, buttes, hills and valleys. A grove of trees or a specific habitat type may also be utilized as a landmark.

**Migration theory:** A theory that all people originated in the same place long ago and from there dispersed around the globe. One migration theory about the “peopling” of the Americas is the **Bering Strait Theory**. Other migration theories include sea-faring or sea-travel theories of ancient peoples coming from Asia or Polynesia to the west coast of the Americas and the South-to-North theory of migration into North America. Migration theories may be disputed or agreed to by tribal origin stories and indigenous oral histories.

**Oral History:** An oral history is a non-written account of a people’s history. The indigenous peoples of North America, as well as many other peoples around the world, each have their own oral histories which have been passed down from one generation to another. Oral histories can be in the form of personal stories, stories or names associated with particular places, songs, traditional tales, and accounts of tribal or family events. When tribes lose their own indigenous languages, they risk losing their historical knowledge, because the speakers of tribal languages are often the keepers of oral histories. Over the last century, some tribal oral histories have also been preserved in audio recordings and in writing.

**Origin Story:** An origin story is a cultural group’s own historic account of their origins—where and how they came in to being. An origin story is also called a **cosmogony**. Origin stories are specific to the cultural groups they belong to, and many origin stories note that other people also existed in the world or came later. An origin story may tell of a **migration** or creation.

**Prehistoric: “Prehistoric” is an archaeological term that refers to** the time period before written history, around 300-1500 years ago in North America. This term reveals an **ethnocentric bias**, as it does not take into account the historical perspectives and oral histories of indigenous tribes, only what has been recorded since Europeans arrived.

**Raw material:** Natural resource suitable for development or refinement by humans but in (or nearly in) an unaltered state; examples are stone, wood, plants, clay, and bone.

**Terrain:** The physical features of a tract of land.

*\* Some of these definitions are used with permission from the handout “What is Archaeology” included in the Montana Historical Society’s footlocker curriculum, “Ancient Teachings.” For more information on the MHS Educational Footlockers and the Ancient Teaching Curriculum, please visit the Montana Historical Society’s website at <http://mhs.mt.gov/education/footlocker/default.asp> You can also contact their Education office at 1-406-444-4789.*

## Attachment B—Trails, Theories and Oral Histories

- For over 10,000 years people have used the Old North Trail. The earliest use *may* have been by people migrating from the Asian continent to North America or migrating north from Central America into North America as the Ice Age waned. It is possible the Old North Trail could have played a significant role in the “peopling” of the Americas per the Bering Strait Theory.
- The Bering Strait Theory of migration is only one of several migration theories, and new archaeological and genetic evidence is being uncovered leading scientists to rework/rethink this theory. Today there are multiple scientific theories about a variety of migration routes to and between the Americas, based on evidence of sea passage from Polynesian islands in the Pacific to Central and South America and the likelihood of south-to-north routes of migration into North America.
- The indigenous peoples of this continent have their own histories about how they came to be on this continent. In many cases, these oral histories—some of them thousands of years old—differ from or contradict archaeological or anthropological theories of migration. Some tribal cosmogonies (origin stories) assert that tribes have been here since creation and did not migrate to their homelands from anywhere else. (The Kootenai origin story is one such example.)
- The Old North Trail is the “backbone” of an extensive and well-used indigenous trail system in the Rocky Mountain region. These trails were used by numerous tribes over the course of thousands of years for hunting migrations, inter-tribal trade and commerce, raiding and warfare, tribal relocation, specific resource needs (such as chert and obsidian), and other travel—including tribal exploration of the West.
- The Old North Trail has continued to be used by indigenous peoples and their descendants, right up into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Montana-area tribes who have documented use of the Old North Trail include the Blackfeet, Blood, Piegan, Salish, Kootenai, Cree, Assiniboine, Apsáalooke (Crow), Gros Ventre (White Clay), Shoshone, Arapaho, and the mixed-heritage Métis.
- Archaeologists study indigenous trails and have certain landforms and other indicators that they look for to locate, map and learn more about the travels of indigenous peoples.

## Attachment C—Locating the Old North Trail

The purpose of this activity is to locate the approximate route of the Old North Trail. In some places, the Old North Trail is actually more than one parallel trail which separate and then meet up again. For this activity we will be locating just one likely route using known landmarks along the Old North Trail.

- 1) Spread out your map on a desk, table or the floor. Students should be on the south side of the map, so that it is right-side-up for each of them.
- 2) Locate the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana. It is next to Glacier National Park. You will notice it is next to the Canadian border.
- 3) Starting at the Canadian border on the far western (left) edge of the Blackfeet Indian reservation, begin locating the approximate route of the Old North Trail by drawing a line from:

**Port of Carway** to a spot between Browning and Kiowa

**Browning/Kiowa** to just east of Heart Butte

**Heart Butte** (just east of) to Augusta

**Augusta** south to Dearborn River

**East on Dearborn River** to Missouri River at Craig (This route goes north past Tower Rock to Ulm Pishkun Buffalo Jump (First Peoples' State Park) and beyond. You can draw a dotted line from Craig to Ulm Pishkun/First Peoples' State Park.)

[Start again at the Dearborn River south of Augusta:]

**Dearborn River** to Helena

**Helena** to Townsend (eastern fork of the Trail)

**Townsend** to Three Forks (Missouri Headwaters State Park. Here it picks up the trail to the Madison Buffalo Jump)

**Three Forks** to heading south along the Madison River

**Madison River** to its headwaters east of Yellowstone Park and exiting Montana at Raynold's Pass

[Start again at Helena to follow what may be the western fork of the old North Trail:]

**Helena** to Boulder

**Boulder** to Cardwell along the Boulder River

**Cardwell** to Dillon along the Jefferson and Beaverhead Rivers (trails here also lead west into Idaho)

**Dillon** up the Beaverhead River and exiting Montana at Monida Pass

**\* \* \* You did it! Great job! \* \* \***

## Attachment D—Archaeology and Ancient Trails

Adapted and modified from *Discovering Prehistoric Trails*, Amy Leithoff & PAK Education Committee, 2004.

### Prehistoric Trails

Many times the roads of today cover much older roads—ancient inter-tribal trade routes, tribal roads to good hunting grounds, or routes connecting tribal communities. Archaeologists study ancient trails to learn about how and why cultures moved from one region to another, whether for hunting, migration, trade, or for survival. Archaeologists looking for clues of these early trails study several things: the terrain, the nearness to raw materials, the presence of archaeological sites, and the ethnographic record.

### Landscape

Did you ever wonder why a road follows a particular path? The **terrain** that a trail crosses can be very important. Both humans and animals will favor the easiest and/or most familiar path. A way to get from point A to point B *without* walking up and down the steepest hills or crossing the boggiest river bottom is the preferred way to go. Many trails follow along the divides that separate the major rivers. The major divide in Montana is the Continental Divide, which separates the two major river systems in Montana, the Missouri River system and the Columbia River system. The Old North Trail, for example, runs along the east side of the Continental Divide for much of its route in Montana. Many trails are located along river systems, because river ecosystems provide so many necessary resources. Mountain ranges, rivers and noticeable landmarks (like peculiarly shaped hills or rock-outcroppings such as Tower Rock) are important parts of well-used trails—markers that generations of travelers can look for and identify year after year to keep them on the path.

### Trails: Routes to Resources

People often make trips to get supplies. In prehistoric times\* people moved along routes where they could collect the raw materials they needed, such as wood, specific types of stone for tool-making, clay, plants and animals to name a few. The Yellowstone Park area, for example, is a source for obsidian, a glass-like type of stone that Native Americans used for making knives, arrowheads, and other tools. Central Montana has several sites where chert, another tool-making stone, was also mined by indigenous peoples. Prairies in central and eastern Montana provided grasses for shelters, as well as bison for meat, hides, and bones, which the people then used for food, clothing, shelter and tools for daily living. Water for drinking and cooking is always a critical factor; no one would want to set out on a long journey without knowing the location of the next water. River systems also provided access to herds of elk and deer, beavers, medicinal and edible plants and specific kinds of trees such as cottonwoods.

### Archaeological Record

Archaeologists use manmade evidence to help identify prehistoric trails. One such clue is the presence of many **archaeological sites** in an area. The presence of numerous archaeological sites does not necessarily confirm the existence of a trail, especially along stream drainages that naturally tend to have a higher percentage of sites. However, when taken with other evidence at those sites, such as **stone cairns**, **cache pits**, and **burials**, higher site density may be a good indicator of a trail through a given area. The purpose of stone cairns is not always known, but they [probably] serve as guides or markers. Cache pits, while commonly found at villages and camps, also can indicate a trail when they are not associated with house remains. Non-local materials found at sites may point to regional trade or seasonal movement across the prairie. Archaeologists also use **ethnographic** information to gain a better understanding of the uses and positions of earlier trails. Many of the trails, such as the Lewis and Clark Trail, the Nez Perce Trail, and Old North Trail, while best known in the historic period, were in fact well-established prehistoric trails.

### Locating Indigenous Trails

Many times archaeologists cannot conclusively identify the entire route of a trail because intensive farming, cattle trails, farm roads, railroads, highways, or housing developments have disturbed the ground surface and removed or hidden old trail scars. Often multiple kinds of evidence are needed to deduce where a trail ran. However, trail studies can provide archaeologists with insights about how people lived, moved, and interacted across the Montana landscape through time.

*\* Please see the vocabulary list for a discussion of the term “prehistoric”*

## Attachment E—The Blackfeet and the Old North Trail

### **Blackfeet use of the Old North Trail**

(This quote--from Walter McClintock's book--is cited here from Trail Tribes.org, on the web at: <http://www.trailtribes.org/greatfalls/since-time-immemorial.htm> Text in brackets has been added for clarification.)

A century ago, Chief Brings Down the Sun told Walter McClintock [in around 1910 or earlier] about the Old North Trail:

“There is a well-known trail we call the Old North Trail. It runs north and south along the Rocky Mountains. No one knows how long it has been used by the Indians. My father told me it originated in the migration of a great tribe of Indians from the distant North to the South, and all of the tribes have, ever since, continued to follow in their tracks.

“The Old North Trail is now becoming overgrown with moss and grass, but it was worn so deeply, by many generations of travelers, that the travois tracks and horse trail are still plainly visible...

“In many places the white man's roads and towns have obliterated the Old Trail. It forked where the city of Calgary now stands. The right fork ran north into the Barren Lands as far as people live. The main trail ran south and along the eastern side of the Rockies, at a uniform distance from the mountains, keeping clear of the forest and outside of the foothills. It ran close to where the city of Helena now stands and extended south into the country inhabited by a people with dark skins and long hair falling over their faces.

“ My father once told me of an expedition from the Blackfeet that went south by the Old Trail to visit the people with the dark skins. Elk Tongue and his wife, Natoya, were of this expedition, also Arrow Top and Pemmican, who was a boy of 12 at that time. He died only a few years ago at the age of 95. They were absent four years. It took them 12 moons of steady traveling to reach the country of the dark-skinned people, and 18 moons to come north again. They returned by a longer route through the “High Trees” or Bitterroot country, where they could travel without danger of being seen. They feared going along the North Trail because it was frequented by their enemies, the Crows, Sioux and Cheyennes.

“I have followed the Old North Trail so often that I know every mountain, stream and river far to the south as well as toward the distant north.”

--Brings Down the Sun to Walter McClintock.

(Excerpt from pages 434-437 of the 1992 edition of *The Old North Trail or Life Legends of the Blackfeet Indians* by Walter McClintock, originally published in 1910. Entire book available online at: <http://www.1st-hand-history.com/ONT/ALBUM2.HTML>)

## Attachment F—Blackfeet Creation Story

Out of respect for the Blackfeet Nation please ask students to be mindful of the fact that this story is still told in traditional ways through a long history of oral tradition. Ideally, it would be best to invite a Blackfeet elder to retell this story in person.

### Creation Story

*Blackfeet, as told by Chewing Black Bones to Ella E. Clark*

*Old Man came from the south, making the [Rocky] mountains, the prairies, and the forests as he passed along, making the birds and the animals also. He traveled northward making things as he went, putting red paint in the ground here and there --arranging the world as we see it today.*

*He made the Milk River and crossed it; being tired, he went up on a little hill and lay down to rest. As he lay on his back, stretched out on the grass with his arms extended, he marked his figure with stones. You can see those rocks today, they show the shape of his body, legs, arms and hair.*

*Going on north after he had rested, he stumbled over a knoll and fell down on his knees. He said aloud, "You are a bad thing to make me stumble so." Then he raised up two large buttes there and named them the Knees. They are called the Knees to this day. He went on farther north, and with some of the rocks he carried with him he built the Sweet Grass Hills.*

*Old Man covered the plains with grass for the animals to feed on. He marked off a piece of ground and in it made all kinds of roots and berries to grow: camas, carrots, turnips, bitterroot, sarvisberries, bull-berries, cherries, plums, and rosebuds. He planted trees, and he put all kinds of animals on the ground.*

*When he created the bighorn sheep with its big head and horns, he made it out on the prairie. But it did not travel easily on the prairie; it was awkward and could not go fast. So Old Man took it by its horns, led it up into the mountain, and turned it loose. There the bighorn skipped about among the rocks and went up fearful places with ease. So Old Man said to it, "This is the kind of place that suits you; this is what you are fitted for, the rocks, and the mountains."*

*While he was in the mountains, he made the antelope out of dirt and turned it loose to see how it would do. It ran so fast that it fell over some rocks and hurt itself. Seeing that the mountains were not the place for it, Old Man took the antelope down to the prairie and turned it loose. When he saw it running away fast and gracefully, he said, "This is what you are suited to, the broad prairie."*

*One day, Old Man decided that he would make a woman and a child. So he formed them both of clay, the woman and the child, her son.*

*After he had molded the clay in human shape, he said to it, "You must be people." And then he covered it up and went away. The next morning he went to the place, took off the covering, looked at the images, and said "Arise and walk." They did so. They walked down to the river with their maker, and then he told them that his name was Napi (pronounced nopyy), Old Man.*

*This is how we came to be people. It is he who made us.*

*The first people were poor and naked, and they did not know how to do anything for themselves. Old Man showed them the roots and berries and said, "You can eat these." Then he pointed to certain trees, "When the bark of these trees is young and tender, it is good. Then you can peel it off and eat it."*

*He told the people that the animals also should be their food. "These are your herds," he said. "All these little animals that live on the ground -- squirrels, rabbits, skunks, beavers, are good to eat. You need not fear to eat their flesh. All the birds that fly, these too, I have made for you, so that you can eat of their flesh."*

Old Man took the first people over the prairies and through the forests, then the swamps to show them the different plants he had created. He told them what herbs were good for sicknesses, saying often, "The root of this herb or the leaf of this herb, if gathered in a certain month of the year, is good for certain sickness."

In that way the people learned the power of all herbs.

Then he showed them how to make weapons with which to kill the animals for their food. First, he went out and cut some sarvisberry shoots, brought them in, and peeled the bark off them. He took one of the larger shoots, flattened it, tied a string to it, and thus made a bow. Then he caught one of the birds he had made, took feathers from its wing, split them, and tied them to a shaft of wood.

At first he tied four feathers along the shaft, and with this bow sent the arrow toward its mark. But he found that it did not fly well. When he used only three feathers, it went straight to the mark. Then he went out and began to break sharp pieces off the stones. When he tied them at the ends of his arrows, he found that the black flint stones, and some white flint, made the best arrow points.

When the people had learned to make bow and arrows, Old Man taught them how to shoot animals and birds. Because it is not healthful to eat animals' flesh raw, he showed the first people how to make fire. He gathered soft, dry rotten driftwood and made a punk of it. Then he found a piece of hard wood and drilled a hole in it with an arrow point. He gave the first man a pointed piece of hard wood and showed him how to roll it between his hands until sparks came out and the punk caught fire. Then he showed the people how to cook the meat of the animals they had killed and how to eat it.

He told them to get a certain kind of stone that was on the land, while he found a harder stone. With the hard stone he had them hollow out the softer one and so make a kettle. Thus, they made their dishes.

Old Man told the first people how to get spirit power: "Go away by yourself and go to sleep. Something will come to you in your dream that will help you. It may be some animal. Whatever this animal tells you in your sleep, you must do. Obey it. Be guided by it. If later you want help, if you are traveling alone and cry aloud for help, your prayer will be answered. It may be by an eagle, perhaps by a buffalo, perhaps by a bear. Whatever animal hears your prayer you must listen to it."

That was how the first people got along in the world, by the power given to them in their dreams.

After this, Old Man kept on traveling north. Many of the animals that he had created followed him. They understood when he spoke to them, and they were his servants. When he got to the north point of the Porcupine Mountains, he made some more mud images of people, blew his breath upon them, and they became people, men and women. They asked him, "What are we to eat?"

By way of answer, Old Man made many images of clay in the form of buffalo. Then he blew breath upon them and they stood up. When he made signs to them, they started to run. Then he said to the people, "Those animals--buffalo--are your food."

"But how can we kill them?" the people asked.

"I will show you," he answered.

He took them to a cliff and told them to build rock piles: "Now hide behind these piles of rocks," he said. "I will lead the buffalo this way. When they are opposite you, rise up."

After telling them what to do, he started toward the herd of buffalo. When he called the animals, they started to run toward him, and they followed him until they were inside the piles of rock. Then Old Man dropped back. As the people rose up, the buffalo ran in a straight line and jumped over the cliff.

"Go down and take the flesh of those animals," said Old Man.

The people tried to tear the limbs apart, but they could not. Old Man went to the edge of the cliff, broke off some pieces with sharp edges, and told the people to cut the flesh with these rocks. They

*obeyed him. When they had skinned the buffalo, they set up some poles and put the hides on them. Thus they made a shelter to sleep under.*

*After Old Man had taught the people all these things, he started off again, traveling north until he came to where the Bow and Elbow Rivers meet. There he made some more people and taught them the same things. From there he went farther north. When he had gone almost to the Red Deer River, he was so tired that he lay down on a hill. The form of his body can be seen there yet, on the top of the hill where he rested.*

*When he awoke from his sleep, he traveled farther north until he came to a high hill. He climbed to the top of it and there he sat down to rest. As he gazed over the country, he was greatly pleased by it. Looking at the steep hill below him, he said to himself, "This is a fine place for sliding. I will have some fun." And he began to slide down the hill. The marks where he slid are to be seen yet, and the place is known to all the Blackfeet tribes as "Old Man's Sliding Ground."*

*Old Man can never die. Long ago he left the Blackfeet and went away toward the west, disappearing in the mountains. Before he started, he said to the people, "I will always take care of you, and some day I will return."*

*Even today some people think that he spoke the truth and that when he comes back he will bring with him the buffalo, which they believe the white men have hidden. Others remember that before he left them he said that when he returned he would find them a different people. They would be living in a different world, he said, from that which he had created for them and had taught them to live in.*

**(The story above was told by Chewing Black Bones, a respected Blackfeet elder, to Ella E. Clark who later published the account in her book, *Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies*.)**

## Attachment G—Old North Trail Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the Old North Trail, where is it located, how old might it be?
2. List at least 4 of the reasons why indigenous inhabitants of what is now Montana used the ancient trail systems here. (You may refer to tribal trail use in any era in time.) In your answer, mention at least one specific example of a particular tribe's use of a well-established trail.
3. Name at least 2 features that archaeologists use to help them find ancient trails.
4. What are possible problems archaeologists encounter when trying to identify ancient trails?
5. What do archaeologists learn from studying ancient trails?
6. Describe 3 or more ways tribal knowledge is important in the study of ancient trails.
7. In the Blackfeet Origin/Creation Story, where did the Blackfeet people come from?
8. Is there a journey in this story? If so, who goes on this journey and where does he go?
9. What landforms and geographical locations are named in the Blackfeet Creation Story? What can we learn from this story about the Blackfeet geography?
10. Some people think the route that Old Man (Napi) took is where the Old North Trail came to be from north-central Montana to Canada. What migration theory does the Blackfeet Creation story seem most similar to? How is it different from any of the migration theories?