

THE APSÁALOOKE

**THE  
DESCENDENTS  
OF THE  
LARGE  
BEAKED BIRD**

# **A P S Á A L O O K E**

THE CROW PEOPLE OF AMERICA

The laws of man change, but the laws of  
the spirit stay the same.

A C R O W P R O V E R B



The Crow country is in exactly the right place.

It has snowy mountains, sunny plains, all kinds of climates and good things for every season. When the summer heat scorches the prairies you can draw up under the mountains where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh, and the bright streams come tumbling out of the snow banks.

There you can hunt the elk, the deer, and the antelope when their skins are fit for dressing. There you will find plenty of white bears and mountain sheep

In the autumn, when your horses are strong and fat from the mountain pastures, you can go down into the plains and hunt the buffalo or trap beaver in the streams. And when winter comes on you can take shelter in the woody bottoms along the rivers.

There you will find buffalo meat for yourselves and cottonwood bark for your horses. Or you may winter in the Wind River valley where there is salt weed in abundance. The Crow country is exactly at the right place. Everything good is to be found there.

There is no country like the Crow country.

”



**ONE HAS TO FACE  
FEAR OR FOREVER  
RUN FROM IT.**

A NATIVE AMERICAN CROW PROVERB

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# THE NAME



The name of the tribe, Apasaalooke, meaning "descendants of the large-beaked bird," was given to it by the Hidatsa, a neighboring Siouan tribe.

The bird, albeit now extinct, was described as a fork-tailed bird with the blue jay or magpie resemblance. The name was rendered as gens du corbeaux (people of the crows) in French, and the group was referred to as the Crow in English.

The two La Verendrye brothers from French Canada were the first people of European descent to come into contact with the Absaroka in 1743.

The Apasaalooke were dubbed "beaux hommes " by the explorers (handsome men). French Canadians were referred to as baashchiile by the Crow (persons with yellow eyes).



# CROW NATION



*Crow Indians by David F Barry, 1878-1883*

The Crow are a federally recognised Native American tribe that once inhabited the Northern Plains of Montana and Wyoming as well as the Yellowstone River Valley.

They currently reside on a reservation south of Billings, Montana. The Crow Agency in Montana is home to their tribal administration.

The current chairman of the tribal council is Carl Venne while

Joe Medicine Crow, a noted writer is a tribal historian.

The Crow tribe still maintains its life style and language today on its reservation, commemorating its customs with an annual festival and preparing its youth for modern employment prospects as well as traditional beliefs and lifestyle.

# INTO THE PLAINS



*Crow Reservation, Montana 1910*

The invasion and influx of the Sioux, who had already been forced westward by European-American expansion, was largely responsible for pushing the Crow westward.

The Crow later split into the Mountain Crow, River Crow, and Kick in the Bellies groups after being entrenched in the Yellowstone River Valley and its tributaries on the Northern Plains in Montana and Wyoming.

They adopted the Plains Indians' nomadic way of life as hunters and gatherers and hunted bison.

Previously, they were semi-nomadic hunters and farmers in the northern woods. They were utilising dog travois to transport items before to 1700.

# FRIENDS & FOES



*Crow Riders, Montana 1910*

The Crow, Hidatsa, Eastern Shoshone and Northern Shoshone were known for being horse breeders and traders, who also cultivated substantial horse herds.

Although they occasionally clashed, the Crow were allies with the Flathead's northern Plains tribes, including the Nez Perce, Kutenai, Shoshone, Kiowa, and Kiowa Apache.

The powerful Iron Confederacy, also known as Nehiyaw-Pwat, began as rivals (in Plains Cree it was Nehiyaw; in Assiniboine, it was called Pwat-sak).

It was given this name in honour of the Assiniboine and Plains Cree peoples, the latter of which included the Stoney, Saulteaux, and Metis as its most powerful members.

# A TAD HISTORY

- 1490- established in Southeastern Montana/Northern Wyoming
- 1743- first contact with Europeans-French-Canadian traders, La Verendrye
- 1825- first treaty between U.S. and Apsaalooke
- 1864- the Crow lead a massive battle against Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho on East Pryor Creek
- 1887- Chief Wraps His Tail leads an insurgency against U.S. in response to restrictions on intertribal warfare and movement
- 1903- First Annual Crow Fair, a series of important festivals in Apsáalooke culture which help remind youth of the practices of the past
- 1948- First Tribal Constitution for Crow Nation established
- 2002- New Tribal Constitution



**MAN'S LAW CHANGES  
WITH HIS  
UNDERSTANDING OF  
MAN.**

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# THE WAY OF LIVING



*A Fire Gathering outside traditional tepees, Montana 1910*

The Crow people often live in teepees built of buffalo skins and wooden poles. They have a reputation for building some of the biggest teepees. Along the edges of their shelters, there are mattresses for them to sleep on inside. There is also a fireplace, from which smoke emerges from a hole at the top of the tepee.

The tepee is still owned by and used by many Crow families, particularly when they are travelling. The largest tepee gathering in the world, according to some accounts, is Crow Fair.



# THE LANGUAGE LORE



*The children of the Crow tribe take classes in an American reservation school. Montana. 1910.*

The Apsáalooke language serves as a dynamic means of expression and communication, directly tying the Apsáalooke people to their ancestors as a crucial component of the Crow cultural identity.

Young children learnt to fear their own culture through mandatory attendance at boarding schools and programmes that discouraged the use of the Crow language by using

physical punishment; as a result, they never developed early fluency in Apsáalooke. Even now, because of the impact of this practise, several generations of Apsáalooke adults are unable to speak the language as fluently as the oldest elders and the youngest children do.

**THROUGH  
THE  
CULTURAL  
LENSES**





COSTUME  
CUISINE  
CUSTOMS

# COSTUME



*A mother holds her baby in her arms. Montana 1910*

The Crow wore clothing distinguished by gender. Women wore simple clothes - dresses made of deer and buffalo skins, decorated with elk teeth. They covered their legs with leggings during winter and their feet with moccasins. Crow women wore their hair in two braids, unlike the men.

Male apparel mainly comprised of a shirt, trimmed pants with a belt, a robe, and moccasins. Their hair was long, in some cases reaching or dragging the ground, and often portion was arranged into a pompadour.

# CUISINE



*A Crow family, now living in an American settler-style home, sits down for dinner, Montana. 1910.*

The Crows' main source of food was bison, but they also hunted mountain sheep, deer, and other game. Buffalo meat was often roasted or boiled in a stew with prairie turnips. The rump, tongue, liver, heart, and kidneys all were considered delicacies. Dried bison meat was ground with fat and berries to make pemmican.

# CUSTOMS



*The members of the Crow tribe pause for a rest during a ceremonial dance, Montana, 1910.*

The grieving relatives would occasionally torment themselves as part of death rituals. They would cut themselves so it would leave a scar as a way of grieving. In order to express their grief, crow ladies were known to cut off their hair.

Warriors might advance to become clan chiefs only after meeting a number of requirements and being chosen as such by the council of chiefs. They had to physically touch an adversary during battle, overthrow an enemy town, steal a horse, and take a weapon

from an enemy under fire in order to defeat another tribe through force of arms.

In an effort to get closer to the spirits, tribe members would traditionally fast up to three times throughout their lifetime.

Before tribe meetings, the leaders would smoke and pass around a sacred pipe in the hope that it would aid in problem-solving. A certain way had to be used to pass the pipe. It was not to be rotated in any manner during the pass.



**YOU ALREADY POSSESS  
EVERYTHING  
NECESSARY TO BECOME  
GREAT.**

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# TALES OF THE TRIBE

THROUGH THE LENSES OF FASHION  
AND DOCUMENTARIES



CROW PEOPLE IN

# DOCUMENTARIES



## APSAALOOKE TRIBE TELLS THEIR OWN STORIES

A historic exhibition, *Apsáalooke Women and Warriors*, is the first large-scale show to be curated by an Indigenous person. Along with an overhaul of its Native North American Hall, the Field Museum is trying to address the racially insensitive past of many natural history museums by including Native Americans in the process.

## APSAALOOKE: THE CROW PEOPLE - HISTORY, CULTURE & MORE

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## Still Here A Crow Nation Story

## STILL HERE: A CROW NATION STORY

Directed by Zach Nanus

Produced by Mel Bloomer and Dylan Jefferson

Cinematography by Gregory Thompson

Editing by Matt Dean



## AWAXAAWIPPÍIA: THE CROW NATION'S SACRED TIES

The eight-minute documentary "Awaxaawippia: The Crow Nation's Sacred Ties," created by the Montana Wilderness Association and Dr. Shayne Doyle, examines the historical, cultural, and spiritual bond between the Apsáalooke (Crow people) and the Crazy Mountains.

## FOUR KEEPS: HORSE

This movie illustrates the degree of poetic identity that the Crow people derive from their bond with horses while also implying the hardships that the community has experienced with their horses serving as witnesses and companions. Based on the Apsaalooke cosmology, in which the four earthly elements stand in for the cardinal points, this brief experimental film, *Four Keeps: Horse*, is titled.



## HOW NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH ARE REVIVING TRIBAL BONDS

Young Crow Indians team up with Nat Geo photographers to explore the roots of their community. National Geographic Photo Camp invited kids from across the 2.3-million-acre Crow Indian Reservation in order for photography to be used to help revive the idea of the Crow clan system among its youth?



# CROW PEOPLE IN FASHION



## APSÁALOOKE WOMEN AND WARRIORS: EXHIBITION

The Apsáalooke Women and Warriors exhibition houses the Bethany Yellowtail fashion installation. In this installation, Apsáalooke women, dress, and culture are honoured.

Exhibition Designer: Greg Walter

Fashion Photographer: Cameron Mackie

Producer, Editor and Colorist: Latoya Flowers

Creative Direction: Bethany Yellowtail

Curator: Nina Sanders

## DESIGNS BY DELLA: FASHION BRAND

Della is the owner, designer and artist for the brand as mentioned above. She's an enrolled member of the Apsaalooke (Crow) Tribe and that of Whistling Water Clan & Child of the Big Lodge Clan. Watching her family work around geometric and floral Crow designs, she learnt to combine both traditional & the modern world together to make wearable fashion of today.



## ANGELA HOWE- PARRISH: FASHION DESIGNER

The third annual Paris Indigenous Fashion Week, an occasion that has given Indigenous designers a global platform and assisted them in breaking into the mainstream fashion market, welcomed Angela to take part.



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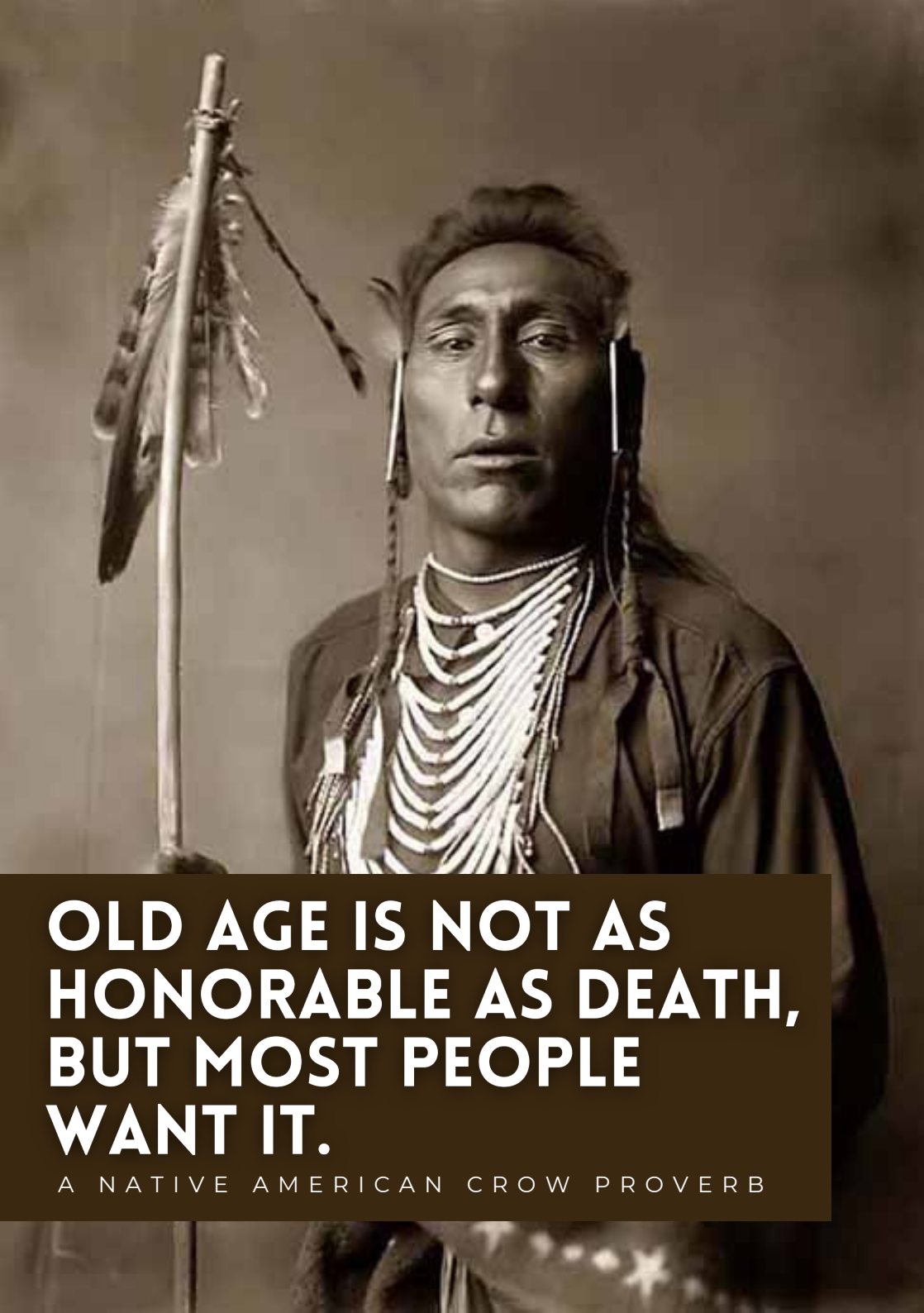
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**OLD AGE IS NOT AS  
HONORABLE AS DEATH,  
BUT MOST PEOPLE  
WANT IT.**

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BATCH OF 2020-2024  
DEPT OF FASHION COMM.  
NIFT NEW DELHI