

Cote First Nation Sable
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Who we are and where we come from...

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This book is dedicated to our beloved Elders and Great Leaders in the past and present, Chief Gabriel Cote, and all the families with their exceptional teachings and knowledge which have been passed on to our future generations. Learning about our culture helps us to learn about who we are and our self-identities and to be proud of who we are.

Thank you all,
Chief Gabriel Cote Education Complex Grade 4/5 Students
2016-2017



Cote First Nation History: Our Stories, Our Way of Life

Cote First Nation is a fairly large band and has become a prosperous community since the early days of 1874. Cote First Nation has progressed comfortably to benefit both the people and a continued way of life.

Our Elders have greatly impacted our lives in the past, present and will continue to do so for our future generations. Cote First Nation which is located near Kamsack, Saskatchewan has a population of 3,869 as of May 1st, 2017.

Cote First Nation received its name when Chief Gabriel Cote signed Treaty in 1874.

Chief Gabriel Cote was also called Omeemee, Wild Pigeon. Chief Gabriel Cote was a Chief for eleven years, 1874-1885, up to the year he passed away. Chief Gabriel Cote's son Joseph Cote, was next in line and became Chief.

Chief Gabriel Cote was indeed a great leader and carried a strong voice to ensure the people's needs were met and their ideas heard during tribal gatherings/meetings and also with the government officials. Aside from Chief Cote, his reign as Chief, and his successors as Chiefs, Elders play an important role in our way of life and always have from the beginning.



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As we take a look at our past, we look at our great leaders such as our Elders, Great Chiefs and the women and children who have all kept our Saulteaux way of life strong and alive. Our Saulteaux people continue to nurture our culture strong and carry a great respect for it.

We are proud to be from Cote First Nation and will continue to pass on our knowledge through our Elders, Chiefs, and families to future generations.



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Culture was always important for our First Nation.

Little boys and girls learned about their culture at a young age. Elder Harvey Whitehawk shared a story about how he got a special rock as a gift.

This rock is very special to the Elder and he uses it when he prays.



Although First Nations children were in the residential schools, their happiest times were those spent living at home. Elder David Cote shares that his dad taught him how to speak Saulteaux.



In the past, family life included doing chores for the home and having fun playing games. Elder Alvin Cote said, "As young children they would fill old tires with water to pretend that was their gasoline for cars". They also would play store and use rocks for money.



One special chore for little girls was going into the bush to pick berries and take them home. Elder Clara Munroe mentions picking berries was fun because they also ate some of the berries.



Long ago, First Nations people did not own vehicles. Only a few First Nations owned a horse to travel places. Elder George Keewatin says, "Dogs would follow them when they had to walk to school. Children were very strong and brave to be able to walk far". Elder John Cote remembers good memories about playing with friends and walking to school. Elder John Cote would see horses too and he loved horses. Riding a horse was so exciting. Elder John, as a young boy did a lot of walking to and from school.



Elder George Keewatin remembers when he was a little boy seeing people riding horses. Elder George had the opportunity to ride a horse and become very good at it. Most of the time Elder George walked to and from school. He was very grateful for his parents and his up-bringing.



Elder Vern Severight has a fond memory growing up and riding a horse. Elder Vern was very happy to become a strong horseback rider.

Elder Margaret Chrusch talked about the team of horses they had that they used for gathering wood, hunting, transportation and riding.

All the families on the reservation used horses. They used to get together for fun, races and gatherings. Horses were needed and kept like family members.



Our Saulteaux language was very important in our Culture.
Elder Corrine Brass talks about her mother teaching her
how to speak Saulteaux.

Elder Sadie Cote learned the Saulteaux language as a little
girl too from her parents. Sadie was very grateful to learn
her culture at a young age.



A great advantage of speaking Saulteaux was being able to write a book. Elder Corrine Brass wrote a Saulteaux book which will be available for our school to use.



Elder Delphine Whitehawk remembers Treaty Day clearly in her mind. Treaty Day was yearly and Elder Delphine liked eating ice cream. Ice cream was the best treat for her.



A big job the little girls started around the age of 9 years old was cleaning up after gatherings. Women also helped clean up after powwows, weddings, and Christmas.



Elder Howard Cadotte shared his memories as a young boy about food and hunting. Rabbit was a popular source of wildlife and is still hunted to this day. The boys always had a lot of fun learning how to hunt and going on hunting trips.



Elder Reggie Severight said, "Around five or six, I was taught to hunt. My older brother and dad taught me. We would eat rabbits, ducks, moose, deer, and berries. We used snares and other traps, and slingshots to hit ducks."

Elder Reggie talked to us about gun safety. When to load the gun and how to hold a gun.



Elders Howard, Reggie and Ross explained as young boys they were taught how to hunt. The Elders also said a feast was held when you had your first kill. Also, hunters must never let animals suffer, hunt the proper way. There were certain times to hunt the animals and what kind of animals to hunt year-round.

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