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The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival (Manitoba Studies in Native History, 5)

Peter Douglas Elias

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The Dakota came to the Red River area in 1862, bringing with them their skills in hunting and gathering, fishing and farming. Each of the bands that came to the Canadian prairies had a different combination of skills and adapted in a different way to the conditions they found. This volume recounts the history of the Dakota in Canada by examining the economic strategies they used to survive.

Some bands established themselves as commercial farmers, one band based its economy on the traditional pursuits of hunting, farming and gathering, another adopted an economic strategy based on livestock production and the sale of labour. The Dakota at Portage la Prairie and Prince Albert were almost exclusively urban and rural wage labourers. But despite their different ways of using resources, technology and labour, they faced common barriers.

By demonstrating the great flexibility of the Dakota in adapting to the trying economic circumstances of their environment, Elias has given us a significant example of the cultural tenacity and economic ingenuity of one Aboriginal group.

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