

A study guide
for the film

Rice

HARVEST[®]



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Film Synopsis

Three hundred years ago the Pauingassi (pronounced 'pun-gassi') Indians of northern Manitoba relied on wild rice to sustain them throughout the winter. Harvesting it in the shallow rice lakes was a social and spiritual event.

With the coming of the voyageurs, they began to trade this precious commodity along with furs for goods which made their harsh lives seem easier.

Today, the encroachment of white settlement and the influence of modern technology have left few customs untouched. Harvesting wild rice remains as one traditional way for the Pauingassi to earn a living.

Paradoxically, today's link to the lucrative North American gourmet food market is a modern-day voyageur, a bush pilot who flies the northern lakes equipped with scales, pocket calculator, and hard cold cash. Nature's bounty is exchanged for soft drinks, chocolate bars, and money.

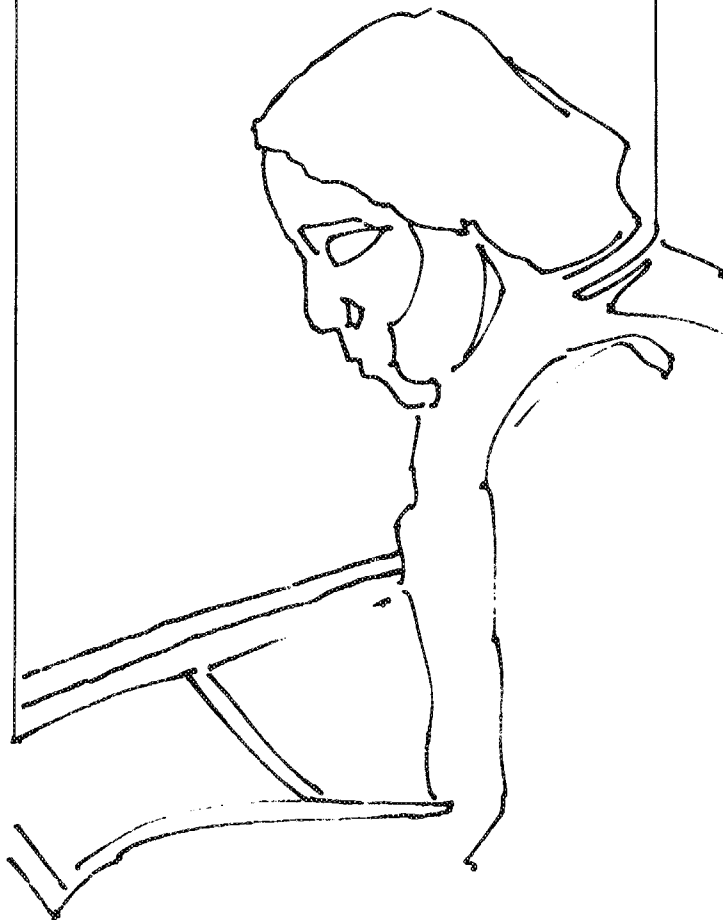
Now even this annual ritual is threatened, as wild rice becomes big business and southern entrepreneurs begin to grow it in cultivated paddies.

This film is suitable for use in upper elementary through secondary school. In History classes it can contribute to an understanding of the fur trade, the early settlement of Canada by Europeans, and the traditions of Native Peoples. In Social Studies and other social science classes it is a stimulus to learning about cultural change, tribal community, evolving lifestyles, and the impact of technology.

Suggested Activities

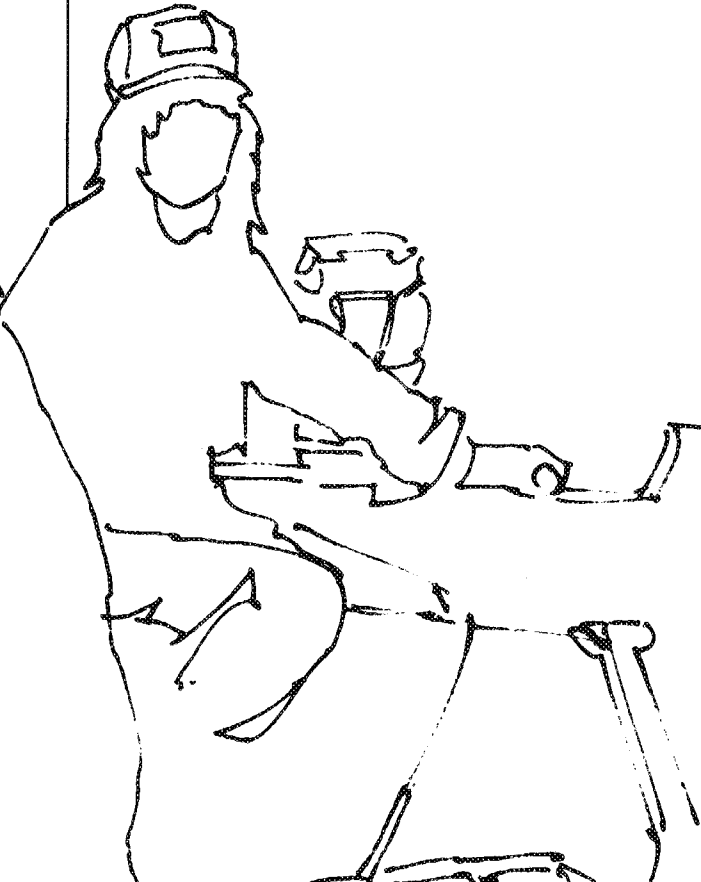
Before Viewing the Film

- Ask students to give examples of how jobs are changing. What is causing these changes?
- Use the atlas of Canada to show national population trends and densities over the past century. Discuss the implications for Native Peoples with your students.



After Viewing the Film

- Discuss the similarities and differences between the fur trade as it was and the wild rice trade of today.
- Ask students to find the retail price of wild rice at a local store. Inquire from the owner or manager about its wholesale price. Try to account for the difference between what is paid to the



Indians and the shop shelf price. What effects do factors such as "middlemen," competition, supply and demand, and monopolies or cartels have on pricing?

- Discuss the changes in lifestyles which the Pauingassi are undergoing because of their contact with white society and modern technology.
- Divide your class into discussion groups and assign topics such as: botanical, agricultural, nutritional, economic, marketing, or gastronomic differences between wild rice and ordinary rice.
- Have students ask their families about some cultural aspect of their heritage which has changed through the years. Discuss the differences of meaning of the words heritage, culture and tradition.
- Discuss the relationship of white pilot and Indian rice-gatherers.
- Get a group of students to contact a local native Indian organization. Have them research the meaning of and arguments for Native land claims.
- Ask some students to investigate the controversy which exists between Natives and non-Natives about the rights to harvest wild rice. Research other natural resources which are in dispute, such as fishing, hunting and mineral rights. Become familiar with all sides of the debate and the positions of various interest groups such as government, business, white sportsmen, environmentalists and Native Peoples.

Related Films

- *Nonoonse*
- *Kainai*
- *The Ballad of Crowfoot*
- *Bush Pilot: Reflections on a Canadian Myth*

Bibliography

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- Campbell, Maria. *Halfbreed*. McClelland and Stewart. Toronto. 1972.
- Adams. *Prison of Grass-Canada from a Native Point of View*. New Press. Toronto. 1975.
- Harkness and Sealy. *Indians Without Tipis*.
- "The Siege at Mud Lake."
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Rice Harvest

16 mm color 106C 0180 052

Screening time: 11 minutes 40 seconds

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