

Giving Thanks For Native Roots

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

The first humans crossed the Bering Strait land (or ice) bridge to enter the western hemisphere about 15,000 years ago. Archeological evidence indicates they settled throughout North and South America over the next couple thousand years. Each indigenous Tribe has its own creation story.

Earliest agriculture was just getting started in southwest Asia around the time these human newcomers spread throughout the Americas. People in Central America were the first to develop agriculture in the new world about 8,000 years ago, working with maize, the forerunner of modern-day corn.

Next, potatoes, tomatoes and sweet potatoes were cultivated by Indians in the Andes Mountains region about 4,000 years ago. Gradually, beans, squash, melons, sunflowers, tobacco and other agricultural products followed as farming and trade spread from the warmer climes of South and Central America throughout what is now Mexico, the USA and southern Canada.

Agriculture led to a confluence of Native cultures throughout North America. The arrival of Christopher Columbus and others who followed changed the dynamics of human life thereafter on this side of the earth.

Thanksgiving Day reminds us of the early sharing of the continent's beneficence by both Native people and Europeans.

November is Native American Heritage Month in the US. Many non-Native Americans don't understand the deep attachments of Native people to the land and how forcible removal from Native lands by European settlers challenged their cultural identities.

All humans have a basic urge to claim the land, bodies of water and other resources needed to produce the food and shelter required by their families and communities. Called the agrarian imperative, this instinctual drive is also shaped by what humans learn about how to be successful farmers, hunters and fishers.

Europeans and most Asian immigrants came to the western hemisphere believing they would have opportunities to purchase and own the resources needed to produce food and fiber, as ownership had become the accepted practice in their native countries. With most land in Europe and Asia owned by the princes, rulers, religious institutions, and the wealthy, America offered possibilities for land ownership to the new immigrants.

Native Americans had no concept of ownership. Land, water and other resources of the earth were, and mostly still are considered divine gifts to be shared without ownership and to be conserved respectfully.

To Native Americans, all life comes from Mother Earth. Land and its gifts of bison, fish, corn, vegetables and so forth are sacred. Sharing Mother Earth's gifts is an essential part of spirituality and Native cultures.

When Europeans and other immigrants took con-

trol over tribal hunting and fishing territories, Native Americans felt Mother Earth was being desecrated. Forcible removal from their ancestral lands and confinement to reservations totally violated Native Americans' agrarian imperative.

It is not surprising that such devastating violations of what was most important to them led to profound disillusionment and cultural depression among nearly all Native Americans.

It is also not surprising that the most resilient Tribes are those that maintain and teach their cultural practices. The agrarian imperative instilled in them to do everything within their power to take uncommon risks—even wars, against overwhelming forces and to endure extreme hardships to adhere to their cultural practices.

This is the same drive that motivates farmers everywhere, but expressed differently, including the immigrants of the past five centuries. Native Americans already had survival capacity in a less complicated world. Their approach to living sustained the environment for future generations and had an inherent fairness doctrine: everyone shared in the gifts of Mother Earth.

The construct of the agrarian imperative helps us identify what draws us to appreciate the contributions to humankind that the earlier indigenous Americans devised. They had figured out a method of democratically sharing Mother Earth's gifts.

The American Indians survived and flourished for many centuries while inhabiting this hemisphere. They altered their environment very little.

As Native people thrived they developed various methods of recording information and systematic methods of observation and experimentation that resulted in sustainable agriculture techniques, astronomy, engineering, medicine, behavioral healthcare, sophisticated arts and much more.

Their methods of living nurtured cities of 40,000+ inhabitants until new immigrants arrived with unfamiliar diseases to which Natives had little resistance. My Mandan friends tell me their Tribe shrank from about 3,000 to 300 persons after smallpox decimated the population in the 1830s.

Think of the loss of accumulated knowledge and human capital. This is the Tribe that supplied the Lewis and Clark expedition with ample provisions during the winter of 1804-05 because of their healthy farming techniques—in a cold climate no less.

Thanksgiving Day is about appreciation for our roots, our gifts and, in many ways-agriculture. I am a neophyte in the understanding of the first cultures to inhabit the Americas but I have acquired great respect for our preceding cultures.

I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

Dr. Rosmann is a Harlan, Iowa, farmer and psychologist, available at: www.agbehavioralhealth.com.

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Dr. Mike ROSMANN

Visiting Hours

Friendly Neighborhood Bacteria

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Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Whether you like it or not, bacteria are everywhere: on your skin, in your food, and inside your body. For the most part, actually, this is a very good thing. We hear about bad bacteria on the news (MRSA, salmonella and E. coli come to mind), but these nasties are the exception, not the rule. Most of the bacteria we come into contact with aren't harmful, and can even improve our health.

The human body is full of microbes, mostly in the form of bacteria. The large intestine is a diverse environment, containing up to 500 different species of bacteria and literally hundreds of trillions of organisms (that's one followed by twelve zeros). These bacteria aren't parasites, or even free riders; instead, they're more like business partners. Imagine two neighborhoods. One neighborhood is barren, its streets lined with empty, abandoned houses. The other neighborhood is a thriving community, filled with families and businesses. Which one is going to be more susceptible to gang infiltration? In the same way, the good bacteria in your intestines make it harder for pathogens - the bad bugs -

to establish themselves and cause illness. The good bacteria also act as neighborhood crime watch groups, assisting and strengthening the "police" - your body's immune system.

Although the bacteria in your gut play an important role in your health, not all bacteria have the same health benefits. Specific strains of microbes that have been studied and shown to have health benefits in humans are called "probiotics." One particular probiotic, for instance, may help alleviate the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, while another may be more effective at treating antibiotic-associated diarrhea. That's not to say that other strains of bacteria aren't good for you, but only probiotics have proven benefits. There is evidence supporting that probiotics can be helpful in treating infant diarrhea, antibiotic associated diarrhea and C difficile, irritable bowel syndrome symptoms, pouchitis, and ulcerative colitis. Some probiotics may help enhance the immune system. When using probiotics, it is important to choose the correct strain and dosage for the most benefit.

How can you add microbes to your diet? In the United States, most ingestible bacteria are found in fermentable dairy products, including as

yogurt, kefir (a yogurt-like drink), and certain cheeses. To choose a product with live bacteria, look for the words "contains live and active cultures" on the packaging. Other fermented foods, such as pickles, sauerkraut, kimchi, and tempeh, may contain live bacteria, but in most cases these are killed during the manufacturing process.

If you are looking specifically for probiotics, brand names are important - different brands of yogurt contain different combinations and strains of bacteria, and not all of them contain probiotics. Some brands of yogurt that contain probiotics include Activia and DanActive. (Note: the author does not endorse these products. Additionally, even if a yogurt does not contain probiotics, it contains many other important nutrients.) You can also take probiotic supplements, which come in a variety of forms, including powders, tablets or capsules.

Another way to support good bacteria in your gut is to feed them. Bacteria thrive on dietary fiber, which is found in whole grains, beans, nuts, fruits, and vegetables. Coincidentally (or maybe not), these foods are all known to have health benefits. What's good for you is also good for your bacteria!

County

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"(My family and I) will be moving to Omaha," Johnson stated. "I've already gotten an apartment down there."

He said he regretted leaving the commission one year into a four-year term.

"I have to take opportunities when I can," Johnson said. "I'm getting older, and those opportunities don't come by very often. I do feel bad about it. I really have enjoyed working with the commission, and I think that experience really enhanced my opportunities and gave me the chance to go work for TransCanada."

Looking back on the last nine years, Johnson said he couldn't point to any individual accomplishments on the commission. It's always been a team effort with his colleagues.

"This group of commissioners we have now, as well as all the commissioners I've dealt with during my time here, have just been outstanding," he stated.

"Everybody brings something special to the table. I think everyone has understood this is a professional group of people. We try not

to take things personally when we disagree on topics. That makes it so we can work together."

Johnson said the commission will examine the laws to determine how he should be replaced.

"They've appointed people in the past, but with a three-year term (remaining), they may look at appointing someone for one year and then having an election for a two-year term," he stated. "It hasn't been decided yet."

Johnson isn't the first county employee to leave for employment with TransCanada. Former Yankton County Emergency Manager Jeremy Dangel resigned in 2010 to go work for the company, which owns the Keystone Pipeline that runs through the Yankton area. Johnson said Dangel got a promotion to work for the company out of Houston two weeks prior to his being hired.

"I won't get to work with him directly, but I will still be able to stay in contact with him," Johnson stated.

In other business Tuesday, the commission:

- approved a contract with CRS, Inc., for inmate excess medical insurance, which will cover catastrophic medical issues for

inmates in the Yankton County jail;

- approved a contract with Bon Homme County to hold its prisoners;

• agreed to move ahead with a pre-disaster mitigation plan for Yankton County and its communities;

- agreed to provide Bon Homme County with six surplus computers for its emergency operations center;

• gave permission to the Red Cross to park a disaster recovery trailer at the Yankton County Ambulance Building. It carries equipment to start a shelter in the case of a disaster and would otherwise be stored in Sioux Falls;

- listened to a presentation from Lynn Peterson of CorTrust Bank about why farm credit system institutions and federally-chartered credit unions should have to comply with the full application of the federal corporate income tax code and South Dakota's bank franchise tax. Jeff Olson of the Credit Union Association of the Dakotas rebutted the argument;

- voted to extend advertising for the position of the veterans service officer for one week. Also, an open house for Chuck Haffner, the

veterans services officer leaving at the end of the year, was set for 2-4 p.m.

Dec. 13 at the Yankton County Government Center;

- approved a \$941,000 contract with Spencer Quarries to complete a mill and overlay of four miles of road near 306th Street and 448th Avenue east of Volin;

• was told by Commissioner Allen Sinclair that information provided by the James River Water Development District indicates that dredging the mouth of the James River, where deposits of sediment have impeded its drainage into the Missouri River, is not a feasible option because the topography is so flat; and

- heard a concern from Commissioner Garry Moore about meeting rules. He believes adjournment of a commission meeting should require a second motion instead of just one and questioned whether the commission has truly adjourned in years. The other commissioners expressed agreement with his suggestion.

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

Award

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cred Heart Hospital; South Dakota Human Services Center and Lewis and Clark Specialty Hospital."

In traditional models, third-year medical students focus on one subject area — such as internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, psychiatry or family medicine — for six to eight weeks before moving on to the next discipline, Hansen said.

"But in our model, the students are doing all those core disciplines at once throughout the entire year," she said.

Throughout the 12-month program, students are introduced to clinic patients and follow them during hospitalizations, return visits, surgery, subspecialty visits and home visits to provide a continuity experi-

ence. For example, students will follow an expectant mother through pregnancy, participate in labor and delivery, and then examine the newborn infant.

Hansen said such an "apprenticeship-type model" of teaching gives students more exposure to patients and more clinical experience.

"It benefits the students in that they take on more of a physician role by the end of the year," she said. "And our studies have shown they have improved retention of knowledge and have improved empathy."

Yankton Ambulatory Program graduate Dr. Michael Pietila, who practices at Yankton Medical Clinic and is also an assistant SSOM professor, said the program's longitudinal structure gave him a foundation for success during his internship year and residency training.

"It felt like I had an advantage over students

trained in more traditional medical school environments," he said. "It is a different model than what most of the country is using to train medical students. The innovations established 20 years ago and refined over time are now being utilized to evolve medical education across this country."

According to Hansen, approximately one-fifth of all medical schools in the U.S. have visited the Yankton campus to learn from its method. Other countries have taken notice too, she said.

"We have served as a resource for other medical schools throughout the United States, Canada and Australia," she said.

This year, SSOM's other two clinical sites in Sioux Falls and Rapid City also changed to the longitudinal model.

In addition to helping students with their education, the program also is aiding in the fight against a

shortage in rural physicians, Hansen said. Roughly 50 percent of students who have participated in the Yankton Ambulatory Program enter primary care fields, she said, which has helped with workforce issues in South Dakota.

Hansen added that the program also has had success in recruiting students back to the area to practice and serve as teachers for the next generation of students.



"It's been a benefit not only to the students, but the Yankton community as well," she said.

You can follow Derek Bartos on Twitter at twitter.com/d_bartos/. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net/.

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Wednesday, November 20
7:40 am Yankton Area Arts (Jackie Quinn)
8:20 am Hy-Vee Foods (Chef Staci)
8:45 am Mount Marty College (Kristi Tacke)
Thursday, November 21
7:40 am Yankton Conv/Vis Bureau (Lisa Scheve)
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