People of the Willows

The Hidatsa, "People of the Willows," got their name from the many willows growing along the banks of the Missouri River in North Dakota, near their largest village. But it was the Mandan that named them "Minataree," "they who crossed the river."

The Hidatsa Indians are original people of North and South Dakota. Most Hidatsa people are still living in North Dakota today.

The Hidatsa too, were devastated by the smallpox epidemic of 1837. Remaining survivors regrouped themselves into a single village. In 1845, they moved the village to the vicinity of Fort Berthold, North Dakota. In 1871, by means of a federal governmental order, a larger reservation was established on which the remaining Mandan and Arikara tribes (of which the Hidatsa are members) lived.