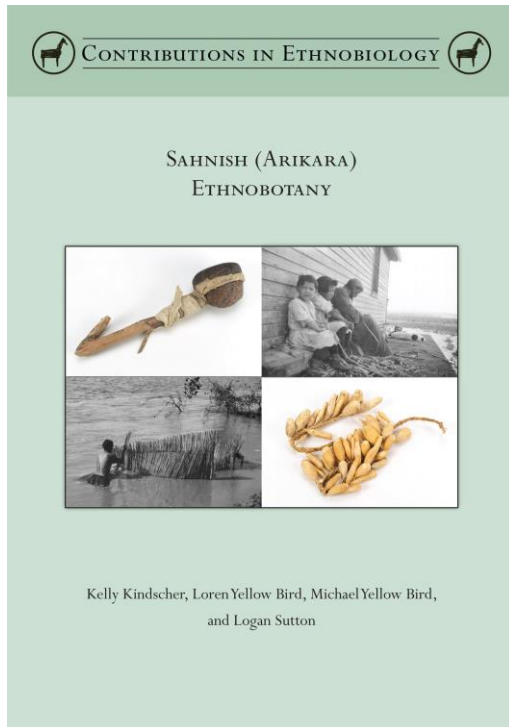


## New Book on the Arikara Tribe's Historic Use of Plants Being Released

**For immediate release:**



This new book, *Sahnish (Arikara) Ethnobotany*, describes the traditional use of wild plants among the Arikara (Sahnish) for food, medicine, craft, and other uses. It is an important work because it is the first published compilation of traditional plant uses of this Northern Great Plains tribe. The Arikara grew corn, hunted, and foraged, and traded with other tribes in the region, but wild plants were key to their diet, medicine, craft and daily life. Their villages were located along the Missouri River in northern South Dakota and North Dakota. Today, many Arikara tribal members live at Fort Berthold Reservation, North Dakota, as part of the MHA (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara) Nation. The book documents the use of 106 species from 31 plant families, based primarily on the work of Melvin Gilmore, who recorded Arikara ethnobotany from 1916 to 1935. Gilmore interviewed elders for their stories and accounts of traditional plant use, collected material goods, and wrote a draft manuscript, but was not able to complete it due to debilitating illness. Fortunately,

his field notes, manuscripts and papers were archived and form the core of the present volume. Gilmore's detailed description is augmented here with historical accounts of the Arikara gleaned from the journals of Great Plains explorers—Lewis and Clark, John Bradbury, Pierre Tabeau, and others. Additional plant uses and nomenclature is based on the field notes of linguist Douglas R. Parks, who carried out detailed documentation of the tribe's language from 1970 through 2001.

Although based on these historical sources, the present volume features updated modern botanical nomenclature, contemporary spelling, and interpretation of Arikara plant names, as well as color photographs and range maps of each species. Kelly Kindscher, lead author, collected and assembled the historical Gilmore materials; Logan Sutton contributed the Arikara spellings and linguistic analyses; and, Michael Yellow Bird, and Loren Yellow Bird—Arikara themselves—provided the cultural context. The work serves as an important regional ethnobotany of the Arikara Tribe, one of the most influential on the Northern Plains, and should be of great interest to ethnobotanists, ethno-medical practitioners, and historians, as well as other Indigenous Peoples. More importantly, this book is for the Arikara people of all ages as documentation of, and reconnection to, their cultural heritage. A generous grant from the Society for Ethnobiology has allowed for copies to be provided to Arikara youth on the reservation.

Statement from Kelly Kindscher, lead author, Senior Scientist at the Kansas Biological Survey and Professor in Environmental Studies at the University of Kansas: "It was exciting to know

that ethnobotanist Melvin Gilmore had studied the Arikara's plant uses in the 1920s and 1930s. At that time, the elders he visited with had memories that went back to the Old Ways, when they lived traditionally along the Missouri River in villages and gathered wild plants for important uses. It was delightful to actually work with the manuscripts and notes and see all the details Gilmore recorded. And it was illuminating to see the material goods which Gilmore collected and the photographs of them from the Smithsonian Institution, which bring the plants and their uses back to life."

Michael Yellow Bird, co-author, former Director of the Indigenous Studies Program at the University of Kansas, now Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba, and an Arikara tribal member says: "the importance of this book cannot be overstated. It provides compelling evidence of the traditional plant knowledge of the Arikara people, illuminates an important period in history of the tribe, and helps to restore an understanding of the Arikara ethnobotany that will be beneficial to ethnobotanists and members of the tribe."

Press Release Contact:  
Kelly Kindscher  
Senior Scientist/Professor  
Kansas Biological Survey/Environmental Studies Program  
Room 135A, Higuchi Hall  
2101 Constant Avenue  
University of Kansas  
Lawrence, KS 66047  
Office: 785-864-1529  
Email: [kindscher@ku.edu](mailto:kindscher@ku.edu)  
Web page: <http://kindscher.faculty.ku.edu/>