

vantage of an opponent in trade, whether fair or unfair. There was a state of warfare perpetually existing between rival establishments in the Indian country, except in case of sickness or scarcity of provisions, when hostilities ceased for a time, and the opposite party came to the rescue of those who were in distress, and afforded every assistance possible. Such exhibitions of qualities so contradictory were characteristic of all the old class of Indian traders.

*Legacy*  
In times of famine or of sickness among the Indians themselves, the trader was to them a ministering angel. No one was sent away unrelieved, so long as his stores lasted. The consequence of such generosity bore its legitimate fruit. The reliance of the savage upon his trader became, in the course of time, almost without limit, and he took no important step without first consulting him. The white man was the confidant of his joys and his sorrows, and his influence was augmented in proportion. That this influence was not often used to accomplish selfish and unworthy purposes, I do not pretend to assert. That it was more frequently employed for the benefit of the Indian and of his race, I most unhesitatingly believe.

As the trader received his goods on credit, at a stipulated price above the cost, either from individual / <sup>466</sup> merchants, or from associations, so he in turn made advances to the Indian hunters, as his knowledge of their characters for honesty and skill in the chase justified him in so doing. The system of credits was adopted more or less generally throughout the Northwest, and has not entirely ceased even at this day, but it must soon come to an end, for civilization, with all its blessings, can afford no substitute for the simple Indian trader of the olden time; who, equally with honest Leatherstocking, shunned the society of his fellow white men, and above all, despised