Hairlock shirts are sacred to the Blackfoot people. Sacred items are made, used and cared for by those who have acquired the ceremonial rights to them. To obtain the rights to a sacred item, an individual must go through a ceremony specific to that item. Even someone who has acquired rights to certain items must go through another ceremony to acquire the rights to hairlock shirts.

The Blackfoot ceremonial leaders who helped to guide this project respectfully remind readers of this book that only those people who have had the appropriate rights transferred to them in a ceremony should make or wear hairlock shirts.
The Blackfoot ceremonial leaders with whom we collaborated on this project offered advice about the themes and content of this book. They also raised concerns that they wish to highlight and spoke about why they and others chose to participate in this project.

**HERMAN YELLOW OLD WOMAN:** When we were starting to talk about reviving our ceremonial societies back home, one of the words I kept hearing in prayers was *aaksisstoyi’ta’kssin*: it’s bravery, accepting a challenge; these people took this challenge, they never looked back. That was a prayer that I kept hearing, even after transfers had taken place: a lot of our elders kept saying, *mooksi aomoopiiksi*: these people have taken this challenge, they never looked back. Today they’ve succeeded, by taking the guidance of us elders. There’s another word that I kept hearing in the prayers for us: *aomoopiiksi*. The thing about taking up this challenge, taking over the stuff that we repatriated: we sat for days, we sat for nights, listening to our elders, how we were going to proceed, because it was a very difficult thing that we were going to go through. So this word, *aomoopiiksi*: what they were talking about was this kind of setting [that we are in now]. We don’t know what we are going to do, we don’t know what we are going to hear. We are sitting here, looking at what we want for our children, our children’s children, the generations ahead of us: that’s why we’re sitting here, for hours and hours.

**FRANK WEASEL HEAD:** In our culture, in our way, we don’t look at ourselves. We’re always talking about our children, our grandchildren. When I was young, at the end of each elder’s prayer was *a’ahssaistawa’tsimaani.* And that means bringing our children up in the right way. Bringing them up. That was always the end of a prayer. And that’s what I’m doing now. In all my prayers. And this is why I’m doing this.

**ALLAN PARD:** We’re already on our horses! We’ve already started that journey! We can’t look back now. Let’s make the best of it, let’s do the best we can be doing with this project. And hopefully our people—not only our people but mainstream people—will get the benefit of what we’ve endeavoured.

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1 *Aaksisstoyi’ta’kssin* is a person who persists in pursuing a goal despite challenges or the odds against achieving that goal.

2 *A’ahssaistawa’tsimaani*, literally, ‘good raising’ (of children). To raise children well is to raise them with the proper values, to succeed in contributing to their growth and helping them live a long life by teaching them about what makes a good life.
Figure 1. Shirt with painted war honours, 1893.67.1. Elk, mountain sheep, or deer hide; porcupine quill; sinew, glass beads; paint. Collected by E. M. Hopkins, 1841. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.
Figure 2. Shirt with layers of paint, 1893.67.2. Elk, mountain sheep, or deer hide; porcupine quill; wool cloth; sinew; glass beads; paint. Collected by E. M. Hopkins, 1841. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.
Figure 3. Shirt for formal occasions, 1893.673. Elk, mountain sheep, or deer hide; porcupine quill; sinew; glass beads; paint. Collected by E. M. Hopkins, 1841. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.
Figure 4. Shirt with replaced quillwork, 1893.674. Elk, mountain sheep, or deer hide; porcupine quill; wool cloth; sinew; glass beads; paint. Collected by E. M. Hopkins, 1841. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.
Figure 5. Shirt for working, 1893.675. Elk, mountain sheep, or deer hide; sinew. Collected by E. M. Hopkins, 1841. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.