

A Monograph on Prehistoric Survival Patterns and Behavioral Characteristics with no Apparent Relevance to the Modern World and Certainly not to Investment Style Analysis

Research into recently discovered ancient records has led to a new understanding of the behavior patterns of our ancestors in their struggle for survival. While these patterns may seem strange when reviewed from a modern perspective, there may exist parallels in modern society, even if to-date, these have been difficult to identify.

According to the research, subsequent to the Ice Age, there existed a forest tribe that had evolved a peculiar set of survival skills and societal behaviors. There were three clans of warriors in this tribe, and the fortunes of each ebbed and flowed over time. Each clan was followed and supported by tribespeople who were not themselves warriors, but who would provide shelter and the important materials needed for the warriors' work, feeding both themselves and their followers.

The *Hunters* were the largest and most visible of these clans. They certainly made the most noise. An excitable group, these warriors would use their speed and reflexes to seek out and kill their animal prey. Sometimes alone, but mostly in groups, they would run through the forest in search of game to bring back to the village for food. Having spotted their prey, the Hunters would race after it with great enthusiasm, screaming their war cries to build their spirit and scare their target. Fit and agile, they'd seek to outmaneuver the fleeing quarry. Some specialized in forecasting the prey's direction and behavior. As such, the smartest or fastest was usually the one to take the prize at the kill. Sometimes others got lucky, but over time, many of the less fit (or poor forecasters) got discouraged. Typically, they'd declare that it wasn't a question of their lack of skill, but that hunting wasn't worth the effort. They would then go off to join the Gatherers (see next page.)

Other unskilled Hunters were more stubborn, and just got thinner and thinner, until they figured out the strategy of following the best hunters and hoping to pick up enough scraps to keep alive. Sometimes it worked (and sometimes it didn't.) But most prominent, and most respected, were the top Hunters. Extraverted and passionate, they ate well and attracted the most followers. Their life was fun. Of course, they always had to avoid the temptation that came with their popularity: if they ate too well, accepted more and more followers, and spent increasing time boasting of their success, then they often lost their advantage over other Hunters. There were always others ready to take their place; young ones in the tribe were eager to show their hunting prowess.

The second clan never generated as much popular excitement. The *Trappers* were more introverted by nature. They would disappear quietly into the forest for extended periods, setting their traps in the ground, in the trees, or wherever they calculated their prey would go. Sometimes in groups, but often alone, their skills were in analyzing the habitats and habits of

“Monograph” *continued*

the prey, and in using patience and endurance to make the kill. Trappers recognized that they were never going to be the popular ones (disappearing for days at a time and returning with the less-than-exciting story of “yes, another one fell in the hole,” was not designed to enthrall followers). However, the Trappers seemed to do quite well. In fact, many of the tribespeople noticed that the Trappers, on average, seemed to eat better than the Hunters, and for rather less physical energy expended. The best Trappers were not the fastest or the most energetic, but the ones with the most calculating minds, the most knowledge of the forest, and certainly the most patience. It took great patience and a certain contrariness to watch and wait by the traps, while the Hunters rushed around enjoying the thrill of the chase.

The Trappers used a variety of techniques: some relied on disciplined routines, some on abstruse calculations of animals’ former behavior, and some on pure cunning and intuition. Human nature being what it is, these groups could never agree on the best trapping technique, and often spent long periods not talking to each other. (Generally this passed unnoticed among the non-Trappers in the tribe). The best Trappers never engendered the same excitement as the top Hunters: those that persisted successfully over the years became somewhat legendary, but they weren’t invited out much, as their stories were just too boring.

The third clan was mostly composed of warriors who had tried the other clans but not found them to their liking. The *Gatherers* had a simple philosophy: if you can’t catch it, don’t try. They neither chased around like the Hunters, nor planned and waited like the Trappers. The Gatherers browsed through the forest, taking for food whatever they found. The more of something that was available, the more they’d take. It was an easier life, needing no great skills. While the Gatherers received less support from their followers, they needed less, so they managed to get by. They spent a good part of their days smiling at the antics of the other two clans and pointing out that they achieved as much as the average Hunter or Trapper with minimal effort. It was harder for them to compare against the most successful members of the other clans, but the Gatherers mostly attributed those successes to luck. Being a Gatherer wasn’t always easy, and occasionally a disaster would decimate their ranks. For example, on finding a field of plentiful vegetation, the Gatherers would usually agree to harvest and eat it together. On occasion, however, the vegetation was poisonous, with predictable consequences.

Occasionally splinter groups formed, but most did not last. For example, it appears that one group broke away from the Trappers and set up the *Counters*, a clan that used abstruse calculations to develop an “Efficient Food Theory,” which held that all other groups were wasting their efforts. The Counters believed in the existence of a place named the “Efficient Frontier,” where the maximum amount of food would be available for the minimum amount of risk. The Counters gathered their followers and belongings and left the tribe in search of this Efficient Frontier. However, as they also believed in traveling in arbitrary directions (so-called “random walks”), it seems they never arrived.

The tribespeople constantly had to decide which clan to follow. Some believed strongly in the approach of one of the three clans, and theirs was an easy choice. Others vacillated, often switching allegiances from one clan to the other, depending on which appeared to be more

“Monograph” *continued*

successful at the time. This turned out to be quite difficult: often the followers of this approach would switch at the wrong times, either starving to death or, in many cases, giving up the effort and joining the Gatherers. Particularly infuriating was the tendency of some of the Hunters to dig traps when prey was scarce (they tended to dig them in the wrong places and then forget where they were), or for some Trappers to lose patience with their approach and chase after the Hunters (generally unsuccessfully, as they weren't as fit and had no ability to anticipate). The tribespeople held these renegades in contempt, accusing them of “clan-drift.”

Ultimately, a fourth clan of non-warriors developed, with the goal of advising the confused among the tribespeople. These *Helpers* held that they could predict whether it would be advantageous to follow the Hunters, the Trappers, or the Gatherers and, even better, that they could predict specifically which Hunter or Trapper to follow. The people were delighted, and were happy to provide food and lodging to the Helpers in return for their services. The Helpers grew well-fed and happy – in most cases, happier than the tribespeople they were advising.

Researchers differ as to the cause of the eventual extinction of this strange tribe. Some attribute this to a natural disaster or to a war between Hunters and Trappers. A third school of thought holds that the Counters did in fact find the Efficient Frontier and sent for the other clans to join them, but that the tribe died out on the journey because of their reluctance to walk randomly.

Even now, researchers differ over which of these clans had the best philosophical approach to life. It may be that we will never know, for there seem to be no parallels in modern life that could serve as a basis for analysis of these unusual behavioral patterns.