

DISCURSIVE ECOLOGY

DISCURSIVE ECOLOGY: TRACING INDIGENOUS EXPRESSION IN
SETTLER PRAIRIE ARCHIVES

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Within the broader project of studying early Indigenous literatures in Canada, this dissertation attends to Anishinaabe and Nêhiyaw discourse in government reports, missionary letters and diaries, newspapers, and other forms written between 1815 and 1874 to trace the range of ways Indigenous people responded to changing exigencies in their environments from *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi* (Red River) to *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* (North Saskatchewan River). Informed by work in Indigenous literary studies that understands Indigenous literatures as interrelational, including with land and the broader physical world, and diverse in form and media, I approach discourse as a network of relations that also mediates those relationships, reading my archive as part of discursive environments within the broader shifting, contested discursive ecology of the nineteenth-century prairies when settler colonial discourse worked to establish itself. This approach enables me to read with a networked form of attention, taking my texts as contested, polysemous, polyvocal sites in which I account both for settler colonial constructions of “Indians,” which increasingly constrained Indigenous life, and for the ways Indigenous people asserted themselves, their thought, and sovereignty. I argue we can re-trace Indigenous expressions in colonial archive and settler texts, complicating them in ways that exceed their frames and revealing the multiple entries of assertion and creativity expressed in a range of Indigenous concepts, rhetorics, imagery, and forms. Indigenous discourse exerts a destabilizing energy in settler colonial archives, showing how colonial attempts at narrative and conceptual circumscription of Indigenous identity, sovereignty, knowledge, etc. inadvertently preserved, and thereby conceded, Indigenous autonomy, knowledge, and authority.

nimiigwechiwendam, ninanâskomon

A network of relationships, both personal and professional, and the numerous gifts received in them over the years have sustained this project, and me with it.

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A hedge of trees surrounds me,

a blackbird's lay sings to me,

praise I shall not conceal,

to Justin

Above my lined book

the trilling of birds sings to me.

A clear-voiced cuckoo sings to me . . .

—THE SCRIBE IN THE WOODS, 9TH C.

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List of Abbreviations

APS	Aborigines' Protection Society
CMS	Church Missionary Society
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
OMI	Oblates of Mary the Immaculate
NWC	North West Company
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>OPD</i>	<i>The Ojibwe People's Dictionary</i>
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
SCHBC	Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
TRRP	Two Row Research Partnership

On Names and Naming

Native names are collective memories. . .

—GERALD VIZENOR, “Aesthetics of Survivance” (3)

They then changed their names. The people used to give themselves names. When a baby was born, they would give the baby a name. Then the Roman Catholics and the government agents came here. When the government agents could not write our names, they would give them [another] name and they baptized that person no matter how old.

—ININIW ELDER DALE SAKUSKESIS, Pratt et al. (92)

The Priest gave me a name and he called me “Peter Kelly” and he assigned me to number 54[.]

—ANISHINAABE ELDER TABOSONAKWAT KINEW, Pratt et al. (92)

My use of Indigenous names and naming throughout the project tries to follow the broader, ongoing project of reclaiming and revitalizing Indigenous names and languages in resistance to historic practices, both emergent and intentional, of renaming peoples, individuals, and places that led to the dominance of European-language names over Indigenous ones.¹ In their interactions with Indigenous people, Europeans coined terms that became widespread through their dissemination in various forms of discourse. Indigenous people did not always have access to or influence in (Younging 69). My project’s source texts, which are predominantly authored or mediated in some way by people whose primary languages were English or French, used inconsistent spellings of Indigenous names, exonyms, and place-naming practices like approximating Indigenous names or relying on new settler names. In light of this history and for the sake of editorial consistency, I have adopted the following stylistic conventions, understanding them as a matter of practice rather than adherence to a rule and as one strategy among many for writing with and about Indigenous languages in the process of naming and re-naming

¹ For discussion of re-naming peoples, refer to Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style*, 69-70. For place names, refer to Gray and Rück, “Reclaiming Indigenous Place Names,” 1. On practices of name-changing in residential schools and by Indian Agents, refer to the TRC, *Honouring the Truth*, 158; Canada, RCAP, *Report*, 597.

ourselves in writing.

In general, I follow the practice of using Indigenous peoples' names for themselves (Anishinaabeg, Nêhiyawak, etc.), but I do not revise primary text quotations to reflect this. Alternate names are listed in the "Names: People" section of the Glossary. I use the broader name "Cree" in cases where both Nêhiyawak or Mushkegowuk might be referenced or where it is ambiguous. I also use the word "Indian" or "Indians" to reflect the language of writers who use it and to highlight its constructions as what Gerald Vizenor calls "the *indian*" as a "simulation" with its registers in stereotypes, ignorance, and conflation rather than the reality of Indigenous people (*Fugitive Poses* 15). I use English translations such as "chief" and "band" with the awareness such translations often diminish "diverse roles and functions" and the complexity of Indigenous nations and peoplehood (LaRocque 50).

Whether to italicise Indigenous-language terms is an ongoing discussion, especially when style guides call for italicising "foreign words" that have not been "assimilated into English" (Canada, Translation Bureau). Such guidelines, however, derive from simplistic notions of "foreignness" that disregard Indigenous languages and naturalize English in Indigenous lands.² Instead of following this principle, I follow Gregory Younging's recommendation to italicise Indigenous-language words, phrases, and names to prevent their being "swallowed" or absorbed by English, excluding those terms that have become anglicised or adopted in English-language dictionaries like "canoe," "kayak," "hammock," and others (86-87).³ I also follow the practice of italicising French, partly in the spirit of

² Even if "foreign" refers in a metaphorical sense of, for instance, English being the "home" language of a text by being the primary one, the implication for Indigenous people who are trying to reclaim their Indigenous languages is that English remains centred as "home."

³ Another stylistic response is to follow this convention on its own terms to show "*that some words are imported*" and ensure "*readers can tell the difference between a foreign language / and the language of home*," as Māori scholar and poet Alice Te Punga Somerville does in her collection *Always Italicise: How to Write While Colonised* by italicising all non-Māori words in an ongoing play with English editorial convention relying on notions of

resisting its “swallowing” in English, but, although the stylistic effect on the page may be similar, I do so with a different rationale than my approach to Indigenous languages, neither signalling the “foreignness” of Indigenous languages nor the “indigeneity” of French.

I do make stylistic exceptions, however, for people names, both individual and collective, choosing *not* to italicise and *to* capitalise them for ease of recognition as names. Practices of italicising Indigenous-language nation and personal names have often differed depending on the Indigenous language. Anishinaabemowin names are often not italicised while Nêhiyawêwin names are. Conventions for capitalising names have also reflected this as writers in Anishinaabemowin vary in practice. In contrast, Jean Okimâsis and Arok Wolvengrey note that Nêhiyawêwin does not feature capital letters, and they argue that English conventions, being “neither universal nor essential,” should not be imposed on writing in Cree (5).⁴ While I respect and admire Okimâsis and Wolvengrey’s approach, I have chosen to capitalise names of people and nations as a cue for readily identifying them as names in this very English text.⁵

Indigenous peoples’ names were often spelled inconsistently in nineteenth-century texts, so I rely on one spelling and include the source text’s spelling in square brackets to aid identification where relevant: Ayeetapepetung (He Who Sits By It) [I-ee-be-pee-tang]. Variations and explanatory notes can be found in the “Names: People” section of the

“foreignness” (“Kupu rere kē” 6-7).

⁴ In Cree Syllabics, it is not even possible to capitalize nouns, and Okimâsis and Wolvengrey suggest that the absence of capitalisation could be understood as an “appropriate and egalitarian choice in which nothing is singled out or marked for special attention or status,” thereby reflecting “the wholistic world view of the Cree or First Nations people in general” (5).

⁵ I do so with the caveat that some names more closely reflect the orthography and spelling of their Indigenous-source languages than, for example, other names whose spellings reflect English or French writers’ efforts to render them phonetically in English.

Glossary. Where Indigenous people held more than one name, as in the case of having both an Indigenous-language name and an English or French baptismal name, I follow Paul Williams' practice of including a person's Indigenous name first in the order of names (ix). When referring to an Indigenous person, I use the name most associated with them and that they seemed to use most, which raises curious variations in usage. In the case of Peguis William King and his son Miskookenew Henry Prince, for instance, Peguis predominantly went by and was known as "Peguis," using his baptismal name strategically in political communication. In contrast, his son Prince was usually referred to as and often gave the name "Henry Prince" in communications, while "Miskookenew" appeared on important documents like the text for Treaty One, so I often refer to "Prince."

I want to note, however, the tension I feel about making such a choice. The difference in name usage for Peguis and Prince indicate the shifting discursive and political environments they both tried to negotiate. Processes of renaming were contested and uneven in practice. Taking a baptismal name, for example, did not necessarily require giving up one's Indigenous name, and in many cases, baptised Indigenous people continued using their Indigenous names, like Peguis. Maybe Prince chose to use his English name for ease of identification and communication with white settlers and officials; perhaps it was a strategy for forming connection. Writers in English may have also preferred and prioritized his English name, and it is always possible some combination of these and other factors could have influenced how Indigenous people used their names and how they were recorded. Whatever the case, the shift in names is part of the larger history of the shifting discursive and linguistic terrain over the nineteenth century Indigenous people negotiated in relation to growing settler presence.

Preface: *archival prelude*

I'm in the library Canada keeps my kin in
and I've brought all the other libraries I've ever been in with me.

—MATTHEW JAMES WEIGEL, “Inside the Pop-Up Box”

There are as many stories about archives as there are stories kept inside them.

—ALICE TE PUNGA SOMERVILLE, “I Do Still Have a Letter” (121)

May 2018, *oksana kê-asastêki*, Regina

My first visit to an archive, in inexperience and idealism, held a feeling of promise. I was looking for material by or about Nêhiyaw author Edward Ahenakew in the hope of gathering material for my doctoral dissertation. I had begun the visit in anxiety, feeling the limits of the time I had allotted before even beginning and the uncertainty of what to expect as a no-experience archival researcher. Beginning this way can often (and did) entail internal questions that, while they serve as attempts to foresee and mitigate risk, merely inflate the possibility and extent of negative outcomes: *What if I fill all the paperwork out wrong? What if there are rules I don't know about that they don't tell me? Could they possibly refuse me entry? or ask me to leave? What if someone makes an odd comment about my research topic?*

I did manage to fill the paperwork out fine, the archives staff were respectful and patient, I was never asked to leave even when I kept forgetting to fill out new paperwork for every copy I made. I made the mistake of ordering much too much material for the limited time I had, which can be accounted for both by inexperience and an unshakeable habit of needing to *look at everything* that has consistently followed me through libraries, galleries, thrift stores, and now research and, yes, archives. I was doing it—archival research. I was having my first experience of (carefully) rushing through material, learning about the time archival research can require to copy things, make notes, keep track of the systems (the archive's and my own) for future reference—beginning to learn about the material structures, demands, and conditions of doing archival research. I was getting a *feel* for

working in the archive with the feeling of expectation it can create: the sense of possibility that I might read someone's handwriting, de-code curious marginalia, view photographs or personal memorabilia, and get a sense of who the people I was studying were from their papers, learn something different about them. Put another way, I expected, hoped for, some kind of connection by gleaning, perhaps, new knowledge.

Then, there it was. I opened a folder, turned some documents, and found nestled among the pages an errant visitor slip signed by someone I know well. Among the archival traces, a connection personal to me emerged as another kind of unaccounted-for trace, appeared as an unexpected confirmation of the archive as potential space of connection.

* * *

ca. 2007-2009, *kisiskâciwan*, Saskatchewan

A memory: browsing the library during my undergraduate degree, I happen upon Penny Petrone's anthology *First People, First Voices*. I flip through the book, curious. Up to this point, I hadn't read much Indigenous literature. As I scan the book, I try to read passages, but they feel isolated and cold. I can't place them in time or location; the speakers' presence on the page feels more distant than *here*. I wonder vaguely where the sources are from and read citations, feeling out of my depth, instinctively wanting more—more explanation, more context. Unsure what to do with the book, I return it to the shelf.

* * *

December 2019, *maskotêw*, *wînipêk*, Winnipeg

At another archive where there is still a card catalogue you can consult to find material, I approach the wood filing case and pull out small, long drawers of index cards searching for names like "Peguis," "Big Bear," "Kuskapatchees," and others. My eyes and hands wander over to the listings under the letter "I," and I pull out a drawer to find card after card for "Indian." Slowly, unsure of what I might find, I flip through the drawer full of "Indians."

* * *

Select Interruptions

November 2021

“Close the box. If the lid is open, the lights will fade the material.”

Others have boxes open. I do not observe them being asked to close them and receive no explanation of possible differences in protocol.

“You must attach this lanyard to your phone or use a tripod if you are going to take photos.”

I am corrected when I forget to attach the lanyard. I attach it with difficulty to my phone case, but I do not find it particularly helpful either for taking photos or protecting the material. Again, I observe others taking photographs with a phone without using their lanyards or tripods and no explanation on different protocols.

“You must wash your hands before re-entering the reading room each time.
No, you must wash your hands *here*.”

I understand that hygiene protocols are necessary in an ongoing pandemic, but I learn that this means even if I have thoroughly washed my hands already (e.g., in the washroom), I must still use the foot pump handwashing station in the hallway so that I might be witnessed performing the protocol. After forgetting to use the station a couple times, I am corrected by a staff person and later asked by a gentle security guard to please try and remember because the guard gets in trouble if anyone goes by without using the station.

Among other material on this visit, I had been trying to read a small collection of “Indian tales” written by my non-Indigenous great-grandfather, a text I never knew existed until conducting miscellaneous family research a couple months prior.

* * *

Journal

August 2019, Birmingham, United Kingdom

I had hoped on this research trip to consult manuscript material rather than microfilm copies and was disappointed after permission to do so had been withdrawn due to misunderstanding among the staff. I had hoped that I might have closer contact with the original letters and diaries written by the Cree, Anishinaabe, and Métis people I was studying by being in closer physical proximity to the materials, the product of ancestors’

labour—again, to see and touch the materiality of what they wrote, almost with a sense of meeting or perhaps visiting. But I’ve been redirected to the microfilm copies with the rationale that where microfilm copies existed, original materials are not made available to prevent wear and tear.

I understand this reasoning, but what about information or data that does not come through on microfilm? Edges cut off, hidden watermarks, smudges or other errant marks on the page, material conditions the film cannot pick up or that on film are more difficult to differentiate. A smudge of what might be soil on a collection of journal entries indicates the conditions in which the writing needed to take place: possibly hurried and likely moving from work on the land, such as hunting, to writing and possibly back again. Couldn’t smudges and spots, wear and tear, heighten our awareness of the care needed to transport and handle paper and ink through many hands as a piece of writing passed through an organization’s structure finally “arriving” in the archive? I am unsure how to express any of this, and the sense of claim I feel to materials, to the archivists, not wanting to risk confusion or our working relationship, and feeling, too, that my own feelings are too much, almost inappropriate, for this space and place. On the other hand, the way I feel about this material is why I am here trying to study it in the first place. I think I will opt for a compromise: do what I can with the film but noting those pages and texts that are poorly copied, difficult to read, missing pages. I understand policies of tending to the physical care of archival material, but I also appeal to the mandate of archival access: “These texts are important to my research, and I cannot read them in this present form.”

Later

My request has been met, and, as I expected, my relationship with the material has shifted. My experience of the physical letters and books feels more immediate. My proximity to the documents as objects brings me into closer proximity to the physicality of the handwritten

texts, and I can more readily identify pen strokes and the qualities of particular writers' handwriting. Cree or Anishinaabe catechists and missionaries were expected to maintain diaries and correspondence with their supervisors in the mission society in addition to holding regular services, hunting, fishing, trapping, tending gardens, visiting the sick, travelling to care for people or get supplies. The labour of writing added to the labor of survival work, and holding some of their letters heightens my sense of what their realities might have been like. I am wondering, then, what kinds of relationships get privileged in archival research? Would it matter if I seemed more important or established as a scholar with some kind of public reputation? How do our interactions with each other in archives reveal different understandings of how to relate to one another and the materials in the archive? How does care for materials interplay with care for or relationship with researchers? What mediates researchers' relationships to archives and the materials they hold? What principles, practices, concepts undergird all this for everyone involved?

* * *

If Indigenous research, as Shawn Wilson argues, is a relationship with ideas, with knowledge (74), framed by ceremony, then what impacts a researcher's ability to relate to knowledge? The preceding scenes, scraps, and notes show something of the provocations for this project by narrating what can come to bear on the process of trying to relate to Indigenous literatures and histories by way of the archive and what it holds. I include them as archive stories that narrate the archive's "effect on its users" and "power to shape all the narratives which are to be 'found' there" with the goal of challenging "claims to objectivity associated with the traditional archive" (Burton 6). Experiences of conducting archival research can shift in the tension between expectancy, hope, possibility of the archive as a site of relation with the Indigenous past, and disjunctures in certain moments resulting from practices of management, curation, framing, and control that can trouble such hopes,

especially when they reflect suspicion or paternalism rather than partnership. For researchers of Indigenous histories, moments of suspicion and paternalism can register in the longer history of paternalistic bureaucratic management of Indigenous life in Canada, thereby instantiating broader forms of settler colonial (dis)relation in ongoing, mundane ways. For whom and for what are the archive and its materials, and what practices and concepts underlie approaches to curation and access? How can Indigenous researchers continue to work in relation to archival spaces and materials that, even when approached with care by archivists, staff, and researchers, persist as spaces troubled by the painful legacies they often hold?

Although archives can be felt as spaces of loss and separation in the seeming absence of Indigenous presence or knowledge (or, its controlled inclusion), they paradoxically also feature as sites of potential in which Indigenous researchers' engagement with them can work to constitute them differently, resulting in work that continues to both challenge and make use of archives as sources and sites of Indigenous knowledge, history, and connection, as well as of colonial discourse, management, and curation. Narungga poet and scholar Natalie Harkin describes how the archive can be "violent and difficult to approach," maintaining a "history of loss" that contributed to colonial narratives of Aboriginal peoples in Australia (Leane and Harkin 52, 54). Yet, both Harkin and Wiradjuri poet and scholar Jeanine Leane also argue that they, along with other Indigenous researchers, can interpolate the archive and re-narrate its colonial "regimes of authority" found in records of family members (55-56). As Harkin writes in the poem "Memory Lesson 3 | Afloat in the Wake,"

it is possible to stay afloat with others who tread carefully through archive
and memory with dignity and purpose who refuse to be fixed in time
and biologically determined who bear witness to colonising
practices of dispersal and erasure who re-signify the colonial-

archive for a broader Indigenous cultural memory, for hopeful and just futures . . . (17-22)

For Māori scholar Alice Te Punga Somerville, the desire to trace “a more expansive Māori literary history” partly motivates her archival research and returns (“I Do Still Have a Letter” 125).¹ For Te Punga Somerville, some archives’ claims to being exhaustive or representative, or, in contrast, notions of an archive being “bare” of Indigenous expression or presence, raise questions about how expectations shape our relationship with archives as we “collectively constitute” them through our engagement with them (121, 124). “How differently,” she asks, “might histories—might academia—look if we always assumed Indigenous presence” (124)? What follows is another entry, this time in the catalogue of scholarship working to trace Indigenous literary genealogies, to consider how we continue to relate to troubled, contested sites of narrative and knowledge, be they in physical spaces or located on the page, to persist in and with them and do differently.

¹ Te Punga Somerville is careful to note that a more “expansive” sense of literary history does not imply revising a “canon of literature to a new full authorized state of completeness” (“I Do Still Have a Letter” 126).

Introduction

MÍMÍY GABRIEL COTÉ: I cannot say anything to you. It is that man (pointing to Loud Voice) will speak.

KÂ-KIŠIWÊ (LOUD VOICE): If I could speak, if I could manage to utter my feelings there is reason why I should answer you back; but there is something in my way, and that is all I can tell you. This man (the Gambler) will tell you. (Morris, *The Treaties* 97)

ALEXANDER MORRIS: We don't understand what you mean. Will you explain?

ATAKAWININ (THE GAMBLER): I know what I have to tell you. (Morris, *The Treaties* 99)

September 1874, *kâ-têpwêwi-sâkahikana*, the Qu'Appelle Lakes

When taken as an “official” account of treaty-making, Commissioner Alexander Morris's narrations in *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* published in 1880 rely on what historian Sheldon Krasowski calls the “conventional view” of the Numbered Treaties “held by non-Indigenous people”: “Indigenous Peoples surrendered their land to the Canadian government” (1). In his opening to the chapter on Treaty Four with Nêhiyawak (Plains Cree) and Plains Anishinaabeg (Saulteaux) at *kâ-têpwêwi-sâkahikana*, the Qu'Appelle Lakes, Morris expressed this position explicitly:

The Indians treated with, were a portion of the Cree and Saulteaux Tribes, and under its operations, about 75,000 square miles of territory were surrendered. This treaty, was the first step towards bringing the Indians of the Fertile Belt into closer relations with the Government of Canada. . . . (*The Treaties* 77)

Morris's passage illustrates how he understood and framed the work of treaty and its effects. The referent for “its operations” in the passage is ambiguous, but I read Morris as referring to the treaty's operations, signalling treaty-making as a discursive *practice*, as a process of doings, actions, activity of a particular kind of discourse. Treaty, by Morris's narration, recasts Nêhiyawak and Plains Anishinaabeg as “Indians,” their lands as “the Fertile Belt,” and their relationships and claims to their lands as “surrendered,” available for settlement, and under Canadian authority by being brought into “closer relations with the Government of Canada.” Bringing “Indians” into closer relation in Morris's account also

entails bringing their lands with them as the prairies are reconfigured through treaty into an agricultural asset for Canada's expansion. All are reconfigured, both "Indians" and lands, through the discursive work of treaty and thereby caught up in Canada's paternalistic, governing embrace.

Krasowski responds to the "conventional view" of treaty by calling for an expanded understanding of what constitutes the treaty archive. He argues that where historians have relied on "official" or "standard" sources (e.g. commissioner's reports and treaty texts), the view of treaty-as-land-surrender tends to emerge. However, he continues, it unravels when other sources like oral histories and eyewitness accounts in diaries, letters, and newspapers are considered (1-2). Krasowski's approach raises an ongoing interpretive question that motivates my project: How do we read the archive of treaty? Indeed, as a literary studies scholar, this question leads me to broader, slightly redirected ones: How do we read Indigenous discourse recorded in settler-produced texts, including accounts of treaty, *as Indigenous literary, discursive, creative expression*? What different understandings might such readings yield? We can, as in Krasowski's approach, turn toward other sources to qualify accounts like Morris's, but are there also ways we can return to Morris's text and read it differently? In the project that follows, I suggest we can, that traces of Indigenous expression and presence *within* settler-authored texts, both of treaty and beyond, can be read as entries in Indigenous literary genealogies that open up new readings of settler accounts that might otherwise be read as "holding" or "containing" Indigenous voice. I suggest that recorded Indigenous discourse often exerts an energetic force that, when attended to closely *as* instances of Indigenous discourse, can destabilize attempts to reframe it under the conventions of settler colonial affirmation and reveal connections to the broader network of Indigenous discursive practice and thought through which many Indigenous people understood themselves, their communities, other peoples, and their relationships to the

more-than-human world. By attending to their narrative qualities, poetics, and discursive moves, we can trace how Indigenous discourse draws attention to other conceptual frameworks of relationality, diplomacy, governance, and discourse itself.

Morris's narrative of "closer relations," for example, becomes troubled, even undercut, by Indigenous expressions that resisted and delayed the relations he asserted in his book. Alongside his own accounts, Morris published government reports and records of treaty negotiations, some written by himself, that juxtaposed his and other officials' narratives of treaty with those of Indigenous people. In a report for 17 October 1874, Morris described how Nêhiyawak and Anishinaabeg at *kâ-têpwêwi-sâkahikana* repeatedly delayed and deferred attempts to achieve a "closer relation." In records of the negotiations, leaders like Kâ-kišiwê (Loud Voice) and Mîmîy (Pigeon) Gabriel Côté put off council discourse for days, emphasizing they were not able to speak and that they required more time to prepare.

Bringing "Indians" into "closer relations" with the Canadian government proved more complicated than Morris's straightforward narration conveyed, but rather than narrate Indigenous peoples' concerns, he blamed Indigenous peoples' problems of character and petty conflicts for delays, criticizing and characterizing "Indians" in his reports and oratory during negotiations as needlessly troublesome. He argued Anishinaabeg from the Qu'Appelle region, motivated by "the jealousies and ancient feud between the Crees and Saulteaux," worked to "coerce the other Indians" who seemed more inclined to negotiate, even though both Nêhiyawak and Anishinaabeg delayed council (82). Settler militia, Morris suggested, who "exerted a great moral influence" and prevented "acts of violence," alleviated these problems (82), problems that military enforcement and settler colonial governance could presumably continue alleviating through treaty.

In speeches during the negotiations, Morris criticized his would-be Indigenous partners' reluctance to agree to the treaty, using the motif of hand-shaking to frame their

behaviour as a startling affront to Queen Victoria, whom he represented: “If you shake hands with us and make a treaty, we are ready to make a present. . . . I cannot believe that you will be the first Indians, the Queen’s subjects, who will not take her by the hand” (*The Treaties* 93). Morris’s book and the Canadian government reports and documents it contains readily convey their respective authors’ interpretations of Indigenous-settler relations during the Numbered Treaties that assumed the rightness and necessity of treaty, Victoria’s sovereignty over Indigenous people, and the need for establishing settler colonial governance in the prairies as stabilizing and supportive authority in the late-nineteenth century. In Morris’s narration, Nêhiyawak and Anishinaabeg became transformed into troublesome “Indians” who were difficult, even hostile, in ways that also implied their unreasonableness and fed stereotypes of Indians’¹ need for civilization that at once narratively bolstered the Canadian expansionist project and disavowed the fact that Indigenous peoples’ claims to their lands, sovereignty, and governance required treaty-making in the first place.

Indigenous expression in settler-authored texts such as Morris’s can feel dampened, distant, or vague, framed as it often is by narrations like Morris’s that exert a strong framing influence that can feel like containment for Indigenous voice, circumscribing the possibilities of interpretation. This effect can also be complicated by processes of discursive and linguistic mediation that occur prior to their “arrival” in European-language texts. Treaty oratory, for example, could be translated in the moment, recorded in writing, and subsequently edited, often by different people, many of whom did not know Indigenous languages. These processes often filtered Nêhiyawêwin (Cree language) and

¹ Throughout this project I use the term Indians to refer to settler colonial stereotypes, ideas, and narrations of Indigenous people—not as a synonym for “Indigenous peoples” or name for actual people.

Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway language) oratory through the discursive conventions of Victorian English language, literacy, and generic forms like bureaucratic reporting. Colonial government officials with their own interests, agendas, and interpretations produced bodies of such writing for a government working to assert and establish its authority in territory it wished to include in the Canadian nation. The textual contexts in which Indigenous discourse features can read as attempts at colonial management, discursively supporting the displacement of Indigenous people from their peoplehood, languages, knowledge, and, especially, lands and waters. Under all these layers, then, what possibilities remain for tracing Indigenous expression in settler-authored texts as examples of Anishinaabe or Nêhiyaw discourse and creativity?

In the case of Treaty Four, another narrative emerges alongside and in resistance to Morris's framing: Indigenous peoples' repeated assertions of their sovereignty, practices of engaging in diplomacy and governance, and resistance to being dealt with in unilateral, non-consensual ways by Morris, other government officials, militia, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), and, by implication, Canadian government as well as Queen Victoria. What emerges if we attend more closely to the subtleties of Indigenous expression in Morris's text in light of Nêhiyaw and Anishinaabe practices of discourse and governance are significant interventions that impact expectations of the treaty relationship. The Indigenous people at Treaty Four cited at least three critical challenges as reasons for delaying treaty negotiations, all of which were specific, concrete examples of the unilateral ways they had been dealt with and matters of concern for how settler participants would approach treaty and their future relationship.

In the first instance, Indigenous leaders expressed the need to delay negotiations because they had not fully gathered or consulted each other—necessary conditions for beginning council in Nêhiyaw and Anishinaabe governance (*The Treaties* 88, 90). Morris's

impatience, criticism, and dismissal of Indigenous concerns broke Nêhiyaw and Anishinaabe council protocols that required the whole community to gather before deliberating important decisions. Morris and his party further contravened this protocol of honouring community consensus by assuming the authority to decide where everyone should camp for the negotiations, which Kâ-kišîwê alluded to on the first official day of council: “I will tell the message that is given me to tell. I have one thing to say, the first word that came to them was for the Saulteaux tribe to choose a place to pitch their tents” (89). Morris ignored Kâ-kišîwê’s criticism of the Canadian officials’ presumption, but the question of where to camp was vital if treaty council was about establishing permanent, ongoing, reciprocal relationships in which Indigenous people would be respected. An Anishinaabe orator, Atakawinin (The Gambler) said as much the following day:

I heard you were to come here, that was the reason that all the camps were collected together, I heard before-hand too where the camp was to be placed, but I tell you that I am not ready yet. . . . Where I was told to pitch my tent that is where I expected to see the great men in the camp. (91)

Not only had Anishinaabeg been told where to go, but some distance separated the Indigenous camps from *kipahikanihk*, *Gibayiganing* (Fort Qu’Appelle) where the commissioners and militia were camped (Krasowski 149). In Anishinaabe protocol, this layout communicated a spatial logic of distance and differentiation rather than proximity and possible alliance founded on mutual respect.

On the fourth day of council, Atakawinin raised another example of how Morris and his party disregarded Indigenous approaches to alliance-making. Morris pointedly expressed his frustrations by comparing his treatment at *kâ-têpwêwi-sâkahikana* with the supposedly more deferential approach of Anishinaabeg during the 1873 Treaty Three negotiations at North-West Angle, Lake of the Woods: “I held out my hand but you did not do as your nation did at the Angle. . . . [T]he Chief and his men came and gave me the pipe

of peace and paid me every honor. . . . I was not slow in offering my hand, I gave it freely and from my heart” (97). For Morris, Nêhiyawak and Anishinaabeg at *kâ-têpwêwi-sâkahikana* were guilty of offending Victoria’s good will toward her “red children” (94) in their (unjustified) refusal of treaty and withholding the affiliative gestures Morris assumed he was entitled to as Victoria’s representative: handshaking and pipe ceremony.² Atakawinin asserted another position: not only was Morris’s entitlement presumptive, actions by Morris and members of his party contradicted their appeals to partnership. Atakawinin reminded Morris that camping apart communicated spatial and relational distancing that he and his people took seriously and responded to in turn: “. . . you did not set your camp in order, you came and staid beyond over there, that is the reason I did not run in over there” (98). In addition to this topographical grammar of disrelation, Atakawinin added an example of a gestural, embodied one: “. . . you see sitting here out there a mixture of Half-breeds, Crees, Saulteaux and Stonies, all are one, and you were slow in taking the hand of a Half-Breed. All these things are many things that are in my way” (98). Atakawinin referred to how Métis, Nêhiyawak, Anishinaabeg, and Nakota were visibly enacting their alliance by sitting together in preparation for treaty council. In contrast, as Atakawinin argued, Morris contradicted his own appeals to gestural affiliation through his reluctance to shake a Métis person’s hand, another indication of his narrow and selective notions of alliance-making.

For the Indigenous people at Treaty Four, what might have appeared as discrete, unrelated moments, cohered as a body of discursive practices, including oratory, that communicated the treaty commissioners’ expectations for treaty. Indigenous participants

² Morris conveniently omitted the fact that prior to its acceptance in 1873, negotiations for Treaty Three had been attempted and failed three separate times over 1870-1872, contrary to his narrative of Anishinaabe deference (Krasowski 39-40, 87). Morris himself described the negotiations for Treaty Three as “protracted and difficult” after participating in them as Treaty Commissioner (*The Treaties* 45).

confirmed the narrow definitions of partnership being enacted, the gestures of disrespect, and the unilateral, nonconsensual approach of the Canadian officials were consistent with what they learned to expect in their historic dealings with the British government and HBC. Morris's treatment of a Métis person foreshadowed his dismissals of the Métis in treaty, contrary to the demands and kinship frameworks of Nêhiyawak and Anishinaabeg (98-99). Unilateral decision-making in telling Indigenous people where to camp reflected the so-called Rupert's Land Deal in which the Canadian government acquired Rupert's Land from the HBC for £300,000 without any consultation with, never mind consent from, Indigenous peoples of the territory (*The Treaties* 99-101). Following the transfer, Nêhiyawak and Anishinaabeg at Treaty Four were also angered by HBC surveys conducted without approval on land outside forts which had "always remained the Traditional Territories of the Cree, Saulteaux, and Nakoda" (Krasowski 150). Toward the end of the day, the *okimâw* Paskwâw expressed their frustration explicitly in a direct call to accountability and recompense. "You," he said, addressing the HBC factor, "told me you had sold your land for so much money, £300,000. We want that money" (*The Treaties* 106).

Records of Indigenous discourse included in Morris's account of Treaty Four not only trouble his narrative that the treaty process was made more difficult by Indigenous people, including inter-tribal conflict, the records also undercut his success narrative of fostering "closer relations" between Indigenous people and Canada. Using spatial and gestural rhetorics of refusal and delay supported by their orations, Indigenous people at Treaty Four communicated their resistance to and criticism of Morris's approach to treaty and of how they had been treated prior. Although these rhetorics of resistance are dismissed in Morris's book through his narrative of Indigenous assent to land surrender, reading closely for Indigenous discourse expands the narrative; their assertions become stronger, unsettling the account Morris wants to establish. Another narrative emerges, one recorded

in Morris's text that presses beyond his narrative frame in which Indigenous people communicated in a range of ways assertions of their sovereignty and insistence on reciprocity and respect.

My reading of Indigenous expression at Treaty Four is an example of how I approach the colonial archive as a contested site from which we can read entries in the genealogy of Indigenous literary expression. Roughly spanning the period between 1815 and 1874, my project attends to Anishinaabe and Nêhiyaw discourse recorded in settler-authored texts such as government reports and records, missionary letters and diaries, newspapers, and other forms, tracing the range of ways Indigenous people responded to changing exigencies in their environments from *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi* (Red River) to *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* (North Saskatchewan River). I read a text like Morris's as part of a discursive *environment* within the broader discursive *ecology* of the nineteenth-century prairies, itself shifting and contested as different forms of settler colonial discourse worked to establish themselves. I suggest that not only does such an approach draw attention to how settler colonial discourse worked to refigure Indigenous people and their sovereignty into narratives of containment that supported colonial and civilizationist projects, but more importantly it also casts in greater relief Indigenous peoples' assertions of their peoplehood, political authority, and relational frameworks in forms that exert a destabilizing force on settler discursive attempts to contain them.

This project is influenced by the "historical turn"³ in Indigenous literary studies, though it is history of a particular kind. Following Alice Te Punga Somerville, I frame my

³ Alice Te Punga Somerville used the term "historical turn" in 2017 ("Our Sea of Archives" 125). In 2012, Nadine Attewell, acknowledging a rhetorical debt to work in queer studies, described Indigenous literary criticism "feeling historical of late," citing the work of Hilary Wyss and Phillip Round, Robert Warrior, Jace Weaver, Craig Womack, Daniel Heath Justice, Lisa Brooks, Noenoe Silva, and Penny van Toorn (19n1, 1).

project as one of tracing literary genealogies rather than literary histories to locate them within different dimensions of relation: temporal, through intergenerational relationships connecting literary ancestors and inheritors, and spatial, spreading outward from different starting places, often in trans-Indigenous ways (“The Beginning”).⁴ Like many Indigenous literary scholars, my research emerges from personal investments in tracing our literary genealogies. The spatial and temporal scope of my project reflects this aspect as I “begin from home” by tracing the literary archive of the *ogimaa* after whom my First Nation is named, Peguis. I then move outward to read Cree discourse alongside Anishinaabe and consider responses to concerns both distinctive and shared as they unfolded in the prairies.⁵

I am also motivated by another investment, a methodological one: the challenge I felt of trying to read and interpret the kind of Indigenous discourse recorded in colonial archives that I first came across in Penny Petrone’s 1984 anthology *First People, First Voices* as an undergraduate student. Although my sense of difficulty responded in part to Petrone’s reliance on narratives of decline and “pastness,” it also responded to a significant contribution Petrone made in gathering and making accessible a wide range of material, some only available in archives, some recorded by colonial writers, presented as Indigenous discourse. I lacked, however, context for interpreting these materials, not only of their historical and conceptual environments but also of the textual ones from which they had been excerpted. Two other important anthologies of Indigenous writing from the prairies, *Manitowapow: Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water* (2011) and *kisiskâciwan: Indigenous Voices from Where the River Flows Swiftly* (2018), also approach the category of “writing”

⁴ For more on comparative approaches to Indigenous literary studies, refer to Chadwick Allen, *Trans-Indigenous* and Te Punga Somerville and Allen, “An Introductory Conversation.”

⁵ My regional, spatial attention is also influenced by the work of Lisa Brooks, “Digging at the Roots” and *The Common Pot*, and Tol Foster, “Of One Blood.”

broadly, reflecting Indigenous approaches to discourse, and featuring writing sourced from colonial archives, as-told-to stories recorded by non-Indigenous anthropologists, oratory recorded by government officials, and other forms of settler-recorded expression. While the editorial framing and approaches in these anthologies better contextualize such entries, methodological questions remain for how we read the nineteenth-century literary archive of Anishinaabe and Cree discourse in settler-recorded texts.

In the project that follows, I add to scholarship on early Indigenous writing in Canada by considering entries in our discursive genealogies that share the feature of not having been directly recorded, perhaps “authored” in a narrow sense, by their Indigenous creators, and thus raising questions for how layers of mediation come to bear on such works when read *as* Indigenous literature. I do not mean, however, to create a categorical split or opposition between the “mediated” expression and the “direct,” or, put another way, the “troubled and contested” expressions and those that, by virtue of their explicit authorship, can therefore be understood as somehow “free” of complications for the work of interpretation. Rather, as with any project of reading and interpretation, I am interested in how reading the particular features of Indigenous expression located within settler writing and archives, with its problems as well as its affordances, can add to our knowledge of Indigenous creative and intellectual practice.

My approach of reading what I call “discursive environments” is an effort to take together seemingly disparate and multiple aspects of a text, even oppositional ones, and to consider how the kinds of discourse within it can be working differently. A text is its own discursive environment, but it also exists in relation to the larger bodies of discourse that inform it, with which it is in conversation, and the people and places whose relationships it can affect. I understand discourse as practice that has effects on people and physical environments, thereby drawing attention to the dynamic interrelatedness of people and

communities, different discursive forms and media, ideas and conceptual frameworks. In this way, my understanding of discourse reflects Stuart Hall's as "the production of knowledge through language," drawing on the work of Michel Foucault. Rather than being "based on the conventional distinction between thought and action, language and practice," Hall writes, discourse is "itself produced by a practice" of "generating meaning": "Since all social practices entail *meaning*, all practices have a discursive aspect" (155). Reading for discursive ecology, then, considers how the work of discourse participated in a range of social practices that had very real effects on the people and places they emerged out of and circulated in and through.

However, my understanding of discourse derives from Indigenous concepts of discourse that emphasize even more strongly the enmeshment of human-world interrelation that decentres notions of human beings as primary meaning-makers and continually provokes attention toward a dynamic, multi-directional process of creation, reception, interpretation, and exchange not easily separated from the more-than-human world. Willie Ermine, for example, argues that interrelationality, what he calls "wholeness" or the insight that "all existence [is] connected," grounds creative activity in traditional Nêhiyaw thinking: "The being in relation to the cosmos possessed intriguing and mysterious qualities that provided insights into existence" (104). Because the "whole" enmeshes the being (person, self) "in its inclusiveness," it creates an intellectually and creatively generative relational context for making and uncovering meaning that honours each being's "inwardness" (creative force of the inner space) and its relationship to "wholeness," generating diverse insights and creative expressions in externalized forms like stories, medicine wheels, and other "physical clues" of conceptualization (104, 106).

Conceptual grounding in interrelationality yields what Marie Battiste and James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson call the "ecological insight" of many Indigenous peoples'

thought⁶ whereby “forces of the ecologies” in which Indigenous people are integrally connected “taught” them how to have “nourishing relationships” within their ecosystems and out of which “unfold” structures of “life and thought” (9).⁷ Because ecologies shift and change, Indigenous thought and its expressions do not reflect “singular modes of existence,” reflecting Ermine’s argument. They are “manifested in diverse ways” through oral traditions, ceremonies, stories, art that show “forces and aspects” of the respective ecology and create “multilevels of connection with the land” (9), including embodied ones.

Atakawinin’s criticism of Morris and his party’s decisions about where to camp and who to shake hands with, for instance, referred to embodied and land-based spatial discourses that communicated strongly to the Cree and Anishinaabeg from within place-based and gestural discursive environments. Even before oratory commenced at the treaty council, non-verbal enactments had already contributed to the “embodied memory” treaty by conveying the Canadian officials’ unilateral decision-making and selective attention to the Indigenous people present. As Neal McLeod argues, stories and other discursive forms are “completely enmeshed in the concrete world of sensations and physical connections,” resulting in “embodied memory,” “the connection to sensations of the body” and “the sensations of the land” (“Cree Poetic” 93). As stories have life in and with people, they move with people, animated in their lives, and returning to the earth in their deaths, perhaps to be remade.

Indigenous discourse, then, is part of the ecology as aspects of human creative, embodied interrelation with it, having and exerting force alongside other elements and

⁶ Battiste and Henderson refer to “Indigenous peoples” for the sake of their argument on shared insights (“strands of connectedness”) across the diversity of Indigenous thought (40). Thus, the discussion of ecology is not intended toward a pan-Indigenous category that conflates multiple distinct peoples, languages, histories, etc. Rather, ecological insight should reflect the distinctiveness and diversity of ecologies themselves as well as their human members. Refer to Battiste and Henderson, 40-41.

⁷ Refer, for example, to Jeannette Armstrong, “Literature of the Land—An Ethos for These Times” for a discussion of how this is reflected in Syilx (Okanagan) story and language.

members of the interconnected web of relations. As Tasha Beeds writes, “Within a *nêhiyaw* understanding, stories and . . . poetry emerge out of and fall back into the land” (61).

Discursive practices influence and are also influenced by close relationship with the land, involving processes of discursive emergence both active, in the sense of making, and receptive, featuring practices of being with and attending closely to the dimensions and dynamics of place and narratives held within it. As Beeds also suggests, because places exert influence on discursive expression through the necessity of learning to live as part of dynamic, forceful ecologies and their interrelationships, discourse is not only understood as a human activity. Joe Sheridan and Roronhiakewen Dan Longboat argue “imagination has a place because *imagination is a place*, and because everything is connected to everything else, the encounter with imagination is a living communication within a sentient landscape” (369, emphasis in original). Warren Cariou’s term “territory” conceptualizes how “stories live in the land and are not separate from it,” contrasting a “trajectory of signification that has been normalized in the western critical tradition”: “instead of humans telling stories to mimetically represent the land,” land also “communicates to humans through stories” (“Territory” 1-2). The land holds stories that are brought out and up through their telling, re-telling, and processes of imagining in a potentially reciprocal narrative process energized by and grounded in the interrelatedness of land and human creativity. In this way, land itself is an archive “full of Indigenous lives and stories even when it seems to have been remade in a colonial form” (5; cf. McLeod, “Introduction” 7). Even if a story, say of an individual or of the land itself, is not known, this does not negate its existence. The story remains regardless of a human knower, but it can also be re-attuned to, re-traced, and re-asserted (5).⁸

Tracing Indigenous discourse requires, I suggest, attention to the dynamic

⁸ Refer to Cariou, “Territory,” 5-7 for examples of retracing territory.

relationship between people, their environments, and the work of discourse, as embedded within and affecting relationships rather than as separate or abstracted from them. Indeed, for Indigenous people in the nineteenth century, discursive shifts in their territories intertwined with social, political, material, environmental ones, implicating discourse in ecology (and vice versa). Declining bison herds, devastating loss from multiple disease epidemics, and food scarcity issues were experienced by Indigenous people alongside gradual minoritization through growing white settlement, diminishing patterns of respect, and strengthening expectations among settlers of entitlement to the lands and waters, entitlement that found articulation in many forms of communication. Thus, settler colonial discourse influenced different kinds of environmental, practical, and embodied changes through its mediating ability, emerging as a key structuring process and practice for establishing emerging settler colonial governance and mediating the shifting power dynamics away from reliance on Indigenous partnership toward more fully establishing the Dominion of Canada in the prairies. Deborah Cowen, for example, cites two kinds of discourse that supported infrastructure projects instrumental in “making. . . settler colonial space” like the railroad and telegraph: public narratives and law. Public narratives of heroism belied the violence such projects were “contingent upon—the dispossession, dehumanization, and exploitation” of Indigenous peoples and their lands, as well as of Black and Chinese workers (471). “Legal infrastructure” supported the railroad through the Dominion Lands Act of 1870 and assertions of “settler jurisdiction” (474, 480).⁹ Similarly, Adam Gaudry argues “British and Canadian institutions mobilized a complex array of legal arguments to claim possession of huge expanses of territory they ‘discovered’ but did not

⁹ Implied, perhaps, in Cowen’s argument is the reinforcing interplay of how these very infrastructures, as mobilizing technologies for communication, also facilitated the work of discourse.

control,” justified by the Doctrine of Discovery, “an impractical *mythology* that, in the words of John Borrows, allowed the Crown to secure legal control . . . through ‘raw assertion’” (46-47, italics mine).

While Cowen and Gaudry do not explicitly take discourse as their central concern, Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark signals law’s discursive work, arguing “[s]tories are law;” “law is a set of stories” (“Stories as Law” 250, 251). When settler states worked to establish themselves in Indigenous lands, settler law formed what Stark calls “creation stories of the settler state” that “narrate[d] themselves into existence and maintain[ed] their fictive authority” (251), implicating settler colonial discourse’s enmeshment and mediating role in different spatial, social, and material relations more broadly beyond (but including) legal discourse. As Ann Laura Stoler writes, “colonial archives were both transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule in themselves” (20). Government reports and policy, legal arguments, the writing of HBC officials and traders, missionary letters and diaries, newspapers, published accounts of surveyors, traders, soldiers, and other travellers to “the west” narrated and conceptualized the prairies and Indigenous peoples in ways that supported settler presence in the region and worked to destabilize Indigenous peoples’ sovereignty.

Through their ongoing engagement with settlers and colonists, increasingly motivated by the dramatic changes in their environments, Indigenous people’s articulations of themselves also entered the colonial archive, both as a consequence of their interactions and through actively pursuing entry. Whether they knew English language and writing or relied on others who did, Indigenous people engaged with settler discourse, adapting and adopting different forms as they were introduced in their environments to retain and assert their claims to land, narrate the impacts settler expansion had on their lives and lands, establish or strengthen partnerships with settler groups and organizations, and demand

accountability and redress for settler disregard.

Interpreting Indigenous discourse in the colonial archive, I suggest, entails accounting for dimensions of archival shaping and framing that Indigenous people were working with and against, and that can continue to make interpretation difficult. Because many authors or recorders of gatherings and meetings with Indigenous people were non-Indigenous, they had limited understanding of the discussions and topics Indigenous people chose to disclose to them. Indigenous peoples' strategies around withholding, refusal, indirection, disclosure, etc. are also variously unaccounted for, misinterpreted, or dismissed by settler recorders, depending on their degree of familiarity with Indigenous thought and discourse or willingness to engage in reciprocal exchange. As I previously noted, translations of Indigenous discourse in English often diminished or displaced Indigenous concepts from their Cree and Anishinaabe contexts and re-placed them in colonial ones. Political discourse rendered in kinship terms, for example, addressing Victoria as a mother, rather than asserting family relation became rendered as subjecthood and submission to her sovereignty. Indigenous gift thought expressing reciprocal relationships became assent to relinquishing land, and interest in Victorian farming methods or requests for material support were translated into assent to assimilation.

Also, the biases of many settler writers resulted in a double process of both generalization and individuation that obscured the complex dynamics of Indigenous collectivity. Generalized use of the broad term "Indians" conveyed little about specific peoples, makeup of communities referred to, or other kinds of particularity. Against this vagueness, individuation worked to single out certain figures as speaking subjects, sometimes named, along a hierarchy of attention that favoured men, often community leaders or designated spokespeople, and erased gender diversity in Indigenous political authority and governance. Some people gained prominence in the settler record while many

others were hidden or erased (or went into hiding), as in the case of *okihcitâwiskwêwak* (clan mothers, warrior women) and Nêhiyaw women's governance that, as Sylvia McAdam argues, have not been recorded in published accounts (24).¹⁰ The hierarchy of attention included other markers that impacted whether and how an Indigenous person appeared in settlers' writing, some reflecting goals of "civilization." Whether someone was Christian, in the process of becoming one, or a "heathen" could affect both the degree of attention paid to them and how they were narrated as difficult or reasonable. Writing by government officials often reflected similar prejudices. Resistant figures were described as troublemaking or "shrewd," while Indigenous people appearing amenable to treaty or government partnership were peaceable and, again, reasonable, by virtue of their apparent willingness to participate in civilization, a project assumed by the settler writer as rational and good.

Thus, settler discourse was often marked by the agendas of its writers who engaged in processes of what Stark calls "figurative recasting" of Indigenous people and their sovereignty expressed in political and legal narratives, and settler discourse more broadly, asserting and justifying settler expansion and the project of civilization ("Stories as Law" 251). Treaty-making showed how settler authority was contingent on "recognition of Indigenous sovereignty" that "activated the authority of treaties" and gave "legitimacy" to Canadian settlement and acquisition of Indigenous lands ("Criminal Empire"). Maureen Konkle points out how European understandings of treaty as contract, entailing principles of consent, implied Indigenous people "formed governments with boundaries and laws that had to be recognized" and they "must be capable of free will and rational thought" to give free consent (3). Such recognitions also posed significant problems for settler control, and

¹⁰ McAdam notes oral history also has gaps due to the "impacts of colonization and genocide" (81). Refusal to share knowledge was also a means of protecting it. During the Numbered Treaty process, many *okihcitâwiskwêwak* were "hidden" for protection while staying informed of negotiations (57).

Indigenous people “had to be incorporated, explained, and superseded” for settler authority to be maintained (5). That is, they had to be discursively reconfigured in narratives that could continue legitimizing the settler nation (Stark, “Criminal Empire”).

A range of discursive moves were employed to figuratively recast Indigenous people in settler discourses and undercut their sovereignty, authority, and land claims. Not only did the term “Indians” erase Indigenous specificity, it also fostered the conceptualization of Indians as being in need of civilization and cultivation to “rise” to the levels of advancement British and Canadian people possessed, thereby denying Indigenous peoplehood and enabling the re-conceptualizing of every aspect of Indigenous life and thought. The term “Indian” emerged as a narrative category in settler discourse that became formally deployed (and conceptually reinforced) as a legal category through the Gradual Civilization Act (1857), Gradual Enfranchisement Act (1869), and the Indian Act (1876). “The notion of progress,” A.A. den Otter argues, was “inherent in mid-nineteenth-century understandings” of civilization and meant “commentators discerned different levels of achievements in the unfolding of civilizations,” which depended on how far a people had “advanced out of the wilderness and developed its culture” (xiv). In the emerging Canadian context of the nineteenth century, settler discourse fostered notions of Indians’ *potential* for civilization through assimilation into the Canadian nation and subjecthood to the Crown, adoption of English language and literacy, practicing settler land relationships (Victorian agriculture), Christianization, and submission to settler law.

Indigenous people, or Indians, rather, were understood as *having* claims and sovereignty, but not fully *enacting* them as they should or could under the terms of settler thought. Rather, they were marked by their fundamental civilizational incompleteness and therefore inability to fulfill what sovereignty and land relationships entailed. Settler discourses fostered a double move of recognition and diminishment in which Indigenous

people had land claims that needed dealing with, but their wildness, unsettledness, lack of (settler) cultivation needed settlement, settler farming methods, education, civilization to become more fully “developed.” Where Indigenous thought understood land relationships in kinship frameworks (land as relative), Indigenous lands in the prairies were recast as fertile resource, calling back to Morris, that needed cultivation and civilization to reach their full potential as developed, orderly, and, especially, productive places for settlers and the Canadian nation. The notion of Indians’ needing “cultivation” extending to every area of life. Indigenous law was narrated as nonexistent or not “real,” needing settler law for stabilizing effect. Indigenous governance and sovereignty were narrated as nominal, or redirected to assumed subjecthood under the Crown.

What emerged in these discursive moves was a struggle, not only for authority, but, as Konkle argues, over knowledge, “what counted as true and real,” and who could be a knower (4). Missionary writing about Indians understood them as being on a spectrum of knowledge and religious insight that required missionaries to share their (more developed, advanced) knowledge for the perfection of Indigenous peoples’ spirituality. Assumptions about the reasonableness and rightness of settler expansion and Canadian sovereignty also threaded through governors’ and commissioners’ reports and news coverage of treaty and Indigenous resistance, implying settlers’ superior positions of knowledge, authority, and ability to determine, due to better *knowing*, Indians’ lives. Although missionaries and government officials did not always share the same priorities and deployed different discursive environments, shared assumptions about superior knowledge implicated them in related projects. If Indians could be socially and culturally converted toward more settled lives, missionaries could better work toward religious change, and, if missionaries could exert a civilizing, settling influence on Indians, their lands could be more easily expropriated and settled. Through civilization and cultivation, Indians could be rendered

less chaotic, troublesome, and threatening to the emerging settler colonial order, particularly through the paternalistic “care” of that order that also became formalized through Canadian law and experienced in a range of ways in daily life.¹¹

Indigenous people had much to contend with as they engaged in settler discourses, and tracing Indigenous discourse in settler environments draws attention to all the ways Indigenous people were diminished or erased, resulting in a limiting effect of mediation. I also feel the tension of my literary archive’s limitations and the problems it poses. Reading for full “recovery” of Indigenous voice is not possible, for instance, simply due to the limitations of who gets figured in the written records and who does not. Even so, I contend that studying the discursive dynamics of these texts can still lead, even with limitations, toward a *more expansive* understanding of what Anishinaabe and Cree people were trying to assert, that practices of reading that question the limits as presented and read in relation to what we know of Indigenous thought, history, and discursive practice, can still surface Indigenous expression that are there and gesture toward others that are not. Approaching discourse as a network of relations enables practices of reading settler texts as source texts from which entries of Indigenous expression can be claimed, holding in attention both how such expressions get mediated and also how they can be read in relation to Indigenous discourse and philosophy. As Craig Womack argues, “we need to imagine the origins of experience instead of merely focusing on all the levels of discourse it gets refracted through” by means of active practices of reading and interpretation (374). In the case of my literary archive, I want to read the possibilities of Indigenous experience by reading for Indigenous discursive formations traceable in the texts in a range of forms.

¹¹ Cf. Sarah Carter’s summary of how nineteenth-century legislation assumed and reinforced paternalistic political and legal authority over Indigenous people (*Aboriginal People* 115-118).

Reading for Indigenous discursive environments involves tracing those aspects of discourse that register in and with Cree and Anishinaabeg thought and rhetorics, at the level of content and utterances recorded along with how they are communicated. Imagery, themes, discursive patterns, expressions, etc. of Indigenous discourse emerge and can link together, even in translation, as instances of culturally-specific knowledge, building through their interreferentiality meaningful connections with bodies of Indigenous thought. This way of reading, of course, requires attunement both to the conceptual frameworks of Cree and Anishinaabe thought and their discursive conventions, enactments, forms, aesthetics, and rhetorics. It involves, for example, awareness of what Tasha Beeds calls “a mindscape of narratives” in Nêhiyaw discourse that connect to each other and are carried through intergenerational relationships as a collective “storehouse of memory” (68). In the example of Treaty Four, interpreting Anishinaabe and Nêhiyaw responses to Morris requires knowing their respective conceptions of kinship and its role in governance and diplomacy, expressed both in language and embodied forms: gestures, non-verbal expressions, and enactments (or not) of specific protocols.

One method I use for tracing references to Indigenous thought is reading for word bundles, a term coined by Maria Campbell to convey how a word or phrase in English can relate to a range of meaning in Indigenous thought (Gingell and Campbell 200). Mareike Neuhaus expanded on the term as an approach to interpreting how Indigenous writers in English reflect “ancestral discourse practices” which are “influenced by the structure of Indigenous languages and notions of community” (127). Neuhaus describes how “[r]elational word bundles express relationships on a textual level,” linking to other stories, cultural referents, images, tropes, etc. to generate a story (128). While Neuhaus takes a more structural approach to relational word bundles than I do, I understand word bundles in broader terms as traces in English of Indigenous thought or discursive practice that can

appear as a word or group of related terms, phrase, mode of expression, idea, or a name. For those bundles not constituted by words, I apply the term “bundling signifier” for references to an action, gesture, material object, or a *doodem*—those referents that deal in the non-verbal expression, embodiment, physical matter, images.¹² My use of bundling signifiers draws upon another evocation in Campbell’s term: ceremonial or medicine bundles that carry important objects of meaning such as eagle feathers, medicines, pipes, etc., themselves kinds of bundling signifiers that refer to relationships and communication in an interrelated cosmology. A word bundle, or bundling signifier, depending on the medium, can operate as a metaphor, symbol, intertextual reference, or other discursive mode, but its key feature is its ability to be read and interpreted through Indigenous conceptual frameworks.¹³ Repeated variations of the phrase “I cannot speak” at Treaty Four by multiple speakers are bundles written in English, translated from Nêhiyawêwin and Anishinaabemowin oratory, that refer to a host of Nêhiyaw and Anishinaabe council protocols requiring certain conditions to be met before deliberations can begin, conceptions of collective participation in governance, kinship thought, and ideas about the power and responsibility of oratory.

Niigaanwewidam Sinclair’s reading of “Winnipeg” is another example of tracing word bundles in Indigenous names that became adopted as “English” place names (i.e., City of Winnipeg). Sinclair traces the knowledge- and narrative-holding capacity of land through names, untying the threads of definition for “Winnipeg,” meaning “dirty” or “muddy”

¹² Neuhaus describes relational word bundles as “the functional equivalents” of what linguists call holophrases, “one-word utterances that express a complete sentence or clause” (129), defining a relational word bundle as “a figure of speech that performs a significant narrative function” that “combined with other such figures, constitutes the narrative grid of a given story” (129).

¹³ I am influenced by the work of Deanna Reder, Tasha Beeds, Neal McLeod, and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, each of whom trace Cree or Anishinaabe concepts in Indigenous writing before the twentieth century.

waters, and stretching them out to discuss their referents to the ecology of Lake Winnipeg: algal blooms, watersheds, aquatic ecology, pollution, extractive industry. Sinclair argues that the word Winnipeg is a gift from ancestors—even in anglicized form—that can open a sense of the interconnectedness of the living network of the place carrying its name, gesturing to “a world made up of balance and powers that throw this balance out of sync” (207). The word calls attention to the work of reading and interpreting it: “It is also a critical and creative expression of power and understanding—a song, story, and *poem* all at once” (“Poetics of Muddy Waters” 207). Both “Winnipeg” and word bundles at Treaty Four show processes of change in discursive environments of the prairies over time as English gained predominance, often distancing or displacing references to and language for Indigenous knowledge from the bodies of thought that generated them. Word bundles also show how they remain traceable and can be “read back” in relation to those bodies of thought and Indigenous discursive practice.

However, Indigenous discursive practice is not limited only to those records of Indigenous peoples’ speech or writing, and I also trace references to other forms of expression in my literary archive to expand our sense of where and when Indigenous expression is happening beyond recorded statements. Reading for the significance of gestures, non-verbal communication, and spatial relations at Treaty Four, for example, whether in reference to “formalized” contexts in ceremony or diplomatic protocol (i.e. pipe ceremony) or expressions-of-the-moment informed by broader conceptual frameworks (i.e. camp location and unilateral treatment) conveys more than records of the spoken and enables a fuller elaboration of the Indigenous discursive strategies at work and of the interplay of different registers and genres of expression within the discursive environment.

While my project mainly focuses on alphabetic writing, my approach to reading Indigenous expression in a diverse range of forms both within and, at times alongside, the

written texts as an aspect of the discursive environment under discussion stems from arguments in Indigenous literary studies that argue Indigenous discursive practices find expression in a range of forms that include but are not limited to alphabetic writing. As Te Punga Somerville argues, “Indigenous texts might be carved, oral, written, sung, woven, danced and so on” (“Our Sea” 121). Alphabetic writing, Niigaanwewidam Sinclair and Warren Cariou argue, was adopted by Indigenous people from Europeans and incorporated in Indigenous discursive networks alongside, rather than superseding, other forms of expression such as oral storytelling, petroforms, rock paintings and etchings, pictographs, birchbark scrolls, and *doodemaag* (5, 12). Neal McLeod refers to the Nêhiyawêwin term *aniskwâcimopîcîkêwin* to convey “[t]he act of interconnecting stories together” without conceiving of stories only as written text, what Sinclair and Cariou call alphabetic writing (“Introduction” 14n28).¹⁴ Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Tasha Beeds, and Neal McLeod, drawing on Anishinaabe and Cree oratory, have also argued for the significance of embodiment and performance in discursive practice.¹⁵ Alphabetic writing is understood as being in closer, networked relation to other material, pictorial, oral, gestural, embodied forms that interplayed with one another in conceptually-linked networks of Indigenous creative expression that, as Chadwick Allen argues, can and should be interpreted in relation to each other as well as on their own.¹⁶

Indigenous discursive environments can be identified within and also reaching

¹⁴ McLeod suggests the term “poetic icons” rather than “texts” as a move away from “text” as alphabetic writing and to convey the “interplay between orality and written forms,” troubling notions of a “progressive” relationship between the two where written replaced orality (“Introduction” 8).

¹⁵ Cf. Simpson, “Bubbling” 110-111; Beeds, 68-89; McLeod, “Cree Poetic” 92-93; Simpson and Manitowabi, 288-289.

¹⁶ Allen argues that methodologies that engage Indigenous “*aesthetic systems* and *technologies*” for various “‘textual’ arts” like “painting, weaving, and carving” and other “‘making,’ ‘building,’ and ‘moving practices’” can “augment and significantly refocus” “orthodox methods” of English literary interpretation, especially toward trans-Indigenous studies of different bodies of Indigenous discourse (xvi, xvii, emphasis in the original).

beyond settler records as I read my texts for arguments as presented and also read for more—what they might reference, connect to, web with, whether of different forms, particular concepts, or rhetorics, to destabilize the authority of the colonial archive and its framing assumptions. This approach to reading and interpretation I propose and enact in this project does not offer a systematic interpretive framework. Rather, I describe and experience it as an emergent, at times intuitive, poetic practice of reading that moves associationally, interreferentially, in an effort to attend to the polyphony and polysemy of my selected archive. More importantly, and put another way, I try to enact a poetic reading practice that reflects the sense of interrelation I understand and feel within Indigenous discourses and that I sense coming through, even asserting itself at times, in records of Indigenous peoples' expressions in my chosen archive.

I also employ an approach to writing in this dissertation that also works by association and juxtaposition, including entries of life writing, research notes, or poetic re-workings of my archive alongside the usual critical prose of scholarly writing. In the first instance, these entries are attempts to evoke my experience with the archive and encounters of reading by creating juxtapositions I have felt or that have provoked my readings, sometimes of affect in feeling the archive's constraints, moments in which places, material objects, or other non-alphabetic forms asserted themselves in my attention, or other experiential aspects of the research process. My creative entries in the project are also practices of response and intervention, especially to settler discourse on the page. Reflecting Natalie Harkin's archival-poetics, an "intuitive," "slow, unfolding, 'situated-poetic' method" that emerges from experience in the archive and deals in the affective (16), I understand my own practice also as "a kind of 'reckoning'" exercised "through creative praxis with intention to transform, re-signify and destabilise the 'official' colonial record" (16). "To write affectively," Harkin argues, can be a strategy of "pushing through the weight

of the archive,” where “ideas, emotions, and experiences collide,” and to “do something with it, produce something new” (21). Furthermore, my approach is informed by the idea that I not only read and interpret the discursive ecology, which includes archives. I, *too*, am a part of it as an inheritor, reader, researcher, and member of an intergenerational network of relation, motivating me in a project of re-membering Indigenous literary genealogies, to stitch together knowledge and memory for myself and hopefully for others.

My narrations of experience, however, are not positioned as “uncontestable evidence” or “originary point[s] of explanation” (Scott 777). Rather, following Robert Warrior, I approach them as “crucial point[s] for coming to an understanding, an interpretation, a reading of the world in which we live” (xxvi). I understand feeling and experience as modes of accessing knowledge, influenced by, for instance, Phaniel Antwi’s approach of recasting “feeling as a portal to knowledge” from an experience of “archival jolt,” citing Ted Bishop’s term, that enables him to trace “edges” of the “negative space of public memory” in the history of anti-black racism in Ontario (120, 121). Employing personal stories as method can be a way of acknowledging where learning emerges through experience and personal relationships, as in Deanna Reder’s approach to Cree-Métis *âcimisowina* (autobiography) as both a method and subject of research (*Autobiography* 8-9). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson also argues Anishinaabe *dibaajimowinan* (personal stories) are a method for *biskaabiiyang*, a process of “looking back,” evaluating past and ongoing impacts of colonialism, and “pick[ing] up the things we were forced to leave behind,” another way of reckoning with the archive and our relationship to it (*Dancing* 103, 49-50). Because my method often begins from emergent experiences with reading, often dealing in affect or felt as provocation, I narrate some of them to illustrate how the archives I work with continue to exert different kinds of force or energy in the present, felt at times as troubling or painful, dealing in the inheritances of settler colonialism, and at times as

moments of synergy, synchronicity, learning, dealing in the persistence of Indigenous expression through time in response to and in spite of colonialism's efforts to constrain it.

A practice of reading for discursive ecology and its particular environments enables me to draw upon my training as a literary studies scholar to read my archive closely as contested, polysemous, polyvocal sites of tension, even paradox, in which Indigenous knowledge and discourse continue to assert themselves in the settler colonial archive. Although processes of mediation can create a distancing effect, displacing at times Indigenous expressions away from the bodies of thought that informed them, we can re-trace Indigenous expressions in the colonial archive and settler texts, complicating them in ways that exceed their frames and revealing the multiple entries of assertion and creativity expressed in a range of Indigenous concepts, rhetorics, imagery, and forms. In this way, Indigenous discourse exerts a destabilizing energy in settler colonial archives, showing how attempts at narrative and conceptual circumscription of Indigenous identity, sovereignty, knowledge, etc. inadvertently preserved, and thereby conceded, Indigenous autonomy, knowledge, and authority.

The process of tracing Indigenous discourse in these texts, and the traces themselves, reveal settler colonialism's contingency, inconsistencies, inherent contradictions, and ultimate instability, which in turn destabilizes colonial claims to authority and knowledge and their various narrations. They draw attention to how settler discursive environments and formations in the nineteenth-century prairies were working *to* establish themselves, rather than being firmly ensconced, as settlers tried to assert increasing dominance in the region. Settler colonial writers produced bodies of discourse not unlike Ann Laura Stoler's characterization of Dutch colonial archives: "Grids of intelligibility were fashioned from uncertain knowledge; disquiet and anxieties registered the uncommon sense of events and things; epistemic uncertainties repeatedly unsettled the

imperial conceit that all was in order. . .” (1). While officials, missionaries, and other recorders continually asserted narratives about Indians, presented as knowledge, that would, reflecting Stoler’s argument, “inscrib[e] the authority of the colonial state and the analytic energies mobilized to make its assertions,” they also registered “other reverberations, crosscurrent frictions . . . that worked within and against those assertions of imperial rights to property, persons, and profits that colonial regimes claimed as their own” (22). Indigenous discourse operated as a “reverberation” that could be read, and often was, as assent to the projects of land surrender, assimilation, and civilization. Indigenous discourse also retained a forceful energy drawn from its links to other ways of conceptualizing and practicing relation. Knowledge claims to Indians’ motivation and behaviour, for instance, were repeatedly undercut by records of Indigenous peoples’ accounts of themselves, undermining colonial “assertions of imperial rights” to positions of *knowing* and *authority* practiced as paternalism and understood as benevolence.

Recorded Indigenous expressions brought settler discourse into relation with Indigenous thought and, as a result, into juxtaposition with it, creating moments of comparison and contrast that, even when Indigenous discourse was not explicitly resistant, dealt first in and from its grounding in Indigenous life and offered different visions for settlers’ engagement with them. Although they were and have often been re-narrated toward colonial interests, I argue Indigenous peoples’ discursive practices can be re-narrated again back in relation with the bodies of Indigenous thought and discourse from which they arose, their polysemic possibilities surfaced in resistance to re-circumscription by their textual frames. Even where this process is made difficult by translation, processes of individuation, or other limiting effects of editorial mediation, traces remain that gesture toward other kinds of knowledge, philosophies of land relationship, conceptions of governance and diplomacy, inter- and intra-tribal partnership that undergirded a single

person's recorded utterance. Indigenous people themselves, directly and indirectly, raised the inherent contradictions of settler understanding of and arguments leveraged against them, troubling settler colonial assumptions of authority and sovereignty. Rather than overcoming Indigenous discourse and containing the "troublesomeness" of Indians, settler recordings of Indigenous voice inadvertently participated in re-assertions of Indigenous knowledge, authority, presence, and expectations of self-determination, grounded in their epistemologies in ways that continue to exceed their frames.

Each of the three parts that comprise my project mainly focus on the discursive archives either of a specific Indigenous person or significant event in the history of Indigenous-settler discourse in the prairies as they appear in settler archives. Proceeding roughly in a chronological way, each part builds readings of how Indigenous people engaged in both Indigenous and settler discourse over time and in response to the changing environments of their respective regions. To do this, I move between two threads of reading throughout the project: noting processes and effects of figurative recasting in settler discourse, and foregrounding how Indigenous expressions and discursive tactics remain traceable in relation to Anishinaabe and Nêhiyaw thought. As I previously suggested, my approach to tracing Indigenous discourse in settler records includes accounting for textual and archival shaping Indigenous people had to negotiate in settler discursive environments, shaping that continues to exert reconfiguring effects in the present. Therefore, I thread through each part descriptions of how settler discursive moves diminished or displaced Indigenous expression as Indigenous-settler relationships moved away from dependence on and knowledge of Indigenous diplomatic practices, concepts, and their discourses toward growing settler ignorance and dismissal as power dynamics shifted in the prairies over the nineteenth century. I continue with readings of Indigenous discourse that re-cast them again into relation with Anishinaabe and Nêhiyaw epistemologies, showing how

Indigenous discourse is not ultimately confined to the framings of settler discourse. Also threaded through each part are creative interventions, life writing entries, and archival re-workings that narrate experiential and affective relationships with archives, both spatial and textual, personal investments, and ongoing inheritances that incite this project of insistence—that show both the challenges and possibilities of engaging with these archives.¹⁷

In Part One “Beginning from Home”, I begin in the *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy* (Red River) region by tracing a thread of my nation’s literary genealogy through the recorded discourse of Chief Peguis, an Anishinaabe *ogimaa* after whom our nation is named. Part One consists of four sections that consider different but related discursive contexts in which Peguis engaged from about 1815 to 1863, a year before his death, to show what happened to Anishinaabe political thought and practice over time as settler colonialism became more entrenched in the region. I begin Part One by reading a word bundle for *Gdoo-naaganinaa* (Dish with One Spoon concept) in relation to Red River settler Donald Gunn’s historical narration of Peguis and the Selkirk Treaty as a strategy of re-placing Anishinaabe diplomatic thought and history, showing how, although the complexity of Indigenous thought can get missed in translation, its relation to Indigenous frameworks remains traceable, creating interconnections with larger bodies and histories of Indigenous diplomacy and treaty-making. *Gdoo-naaganinaa* also provides some conceptual introduction to themes that return in the sections that follow: gift thought, kinship frameworks, ideas of respect and collective decision-making in diplomacy and governance,

¹⁷ “A glossary of insistence,” Tanya Lukin Linklater writes, “is a thinking-through of ideas, allowing me to bring together what might appear to be disparate discourses and practices in the same way that I allow my mind to hold ideas alongside one another every day. It considers the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the forces/structures that attempt to contain us” (“A Glossary of Insistence” 317).

and relationality among Indigenous people and communities. The remaining sections trace these themes through different discursive environments: the 1817 Selkirk Treaty, archives of the Church Missionary Society, and periodicals and news through the Aborigines' Protection Society and *Nor'Wester*. Throughout, I read Peguis' discourse as expressed in a range of alphabetic and non-alphabetic forms, noting their settler frame, while returning to their connections with Anishinaabe thought and discursive practice. I argue that the various forms of Anishinaabe philosophy Peguis and others conveyed troubles narratives of containment, whether of land surrender, arguments against Indigenous knowing, Indians' need for civilization, or assumed subjecthood to Victoria, and Peguis' discourse can be re-positioned back in relation to the terms of Anishinaabe political relationality.

Part Two "Negotiating Nêhiyaw Diplomacy" extends Part One's trajectory by reading engagement in changing discursive environments, but it moves westward spatially to the *kisiskâciwani-sîpi* (North Saskatchewan River) region and centres primarily on Wîhkasko-kisêyin (Sweet Grass) and Nêhiyaw consciousness. Over four sections, Part Two considers Wîhkasko-kisêyin's participation in two discursive environments from 1870-1872 and the ways his participation can be interpreted as assent to assimilation: visual and written archives of Roman Catholic missionary discourse and political protest recorded in Canadian government reports and Morris's book on treaty. I trace Wîhkasko-kisêyin's *okimâhkâniwiwin* (work of being a chief) in relation to Nêhiyaw diplomatic thought and relationality to widen the fields of interpretation for both his engagement in missionary as well as political discourse. Through Part Two, I build an argument that, although records of *okimâwak* engagement in "civil" and religious discourse can and do work to diminish their arguments as traces of assent to the assimilationist project, the discourses of Wîhkasko-kisêyin, Atâhkakohp, and other Nêhiyawak, read in broader relation to Nêhiyaw thought, show the impossibility and false promises of assimilation's terms for recognition and

inclusion. Even as the project of assimilation held out the possibility of recognition and inclusion in the Christian body of fellowship and the settler nation, settler discourses demonstrated the continual re-circumscription of Indians to lesser status within these bodies, betraying its ultimate “boundedness” and perpetual limitation, as Daniel Coleman argues modern civility did in nineteenth-century Canada (*White Civility* 13-14). Nêhiyawak agency, intelligence, political authority, and power must be constantly recast in political and missionary discourse as “nominal,” mistaken, misdirected, or, taken straightforwardly as full assent (and submission) to the terms of assimilation. Not only do Nêhiyaw discourses draw attention to assimilation’s actual limits and false promises, they demonstrate how figures like Wîhkasko-kisêyin and Atâhkakohp were always in excess of efforts to contain and shape them discursively. Even when they appeared to seek assimilation, their invocations of Nêhiyaw relationality, discursive practice, and expressions of agency troubled the terms of gaining recognition in the always-limiting terms of the settler networks they tried to access.

Finally, Part Three “Placing Treaty” returns to *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, and, picking up themes initiated in the previous two, discusses how Indigenous people in the Red River region asserted their sovereignty in a range of discursive moves, both in language and action, following the Rupert’s Land deal and initial establishment of settler colonial governance in the area after the Red River Resistance in 1869 and through negotiations for Treaty One in 1871. In the discursive environments of a lieutenant governor’s archives, the *Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada*, Morris’s account of treaty, and news coverage, I trace Indigenous assertions in word bundles and references to Anishinaabe relationality, gift thought, and Anishinaabe council governance as they are expressed in writing, oratory, and non-alphabetic gestures and practices. As in the previous parts of my project, I show how settler narrations of Indigenous assertion displaced Indigenous expressions and enactments of their sovereignty and its energizing philosophies

from their grounding in Anishinaabe and Cree thought and reconfigured them as further evidence of Indian “troublesomeness” that needed stabilizing via civilization and settlement, thereby justifying Canadian expansion. I argue that Canadian officials narrated by *assertion* of arguments that belied the direct, consistent, ongoing resistance they met from Indigenous leaders and contradicted the fact of Indigenous land claims that necessitated treaty in the first place. Furthermore, Indigenous discourse in settler accounts of Treaty One showed how the arguments and narratives by which Archibald, settler journalists, and Simpson repeatedly framed treaty were just that—presumptive assertions presented as authoritative and certain knowledge of the treaty relationship as a strategy of “fixing” Indigenous-settler relations in a permanent, contractual, limited relationship framed by subjecthood to the Crown. Instead, Indigenous leaders insisted in word and gesture on their political authority, sovereignty, claims to land, and their undergirding philosophies that understood treaty as a permanent, ongoing relationship framed by the principles of respect, reciprocity, and practices of renewal (Stark, “Renewal”).

The three parts of my project offer an approach to reading difficult texts that acknowledges their complexity, difficulty, polyvocality, and polysemy, claiming them as sources and sites of Indigenous expression that register the ongoing inheritances of both Indigenous thought, settler discourse, and the possibilities for ongoing reclamation of our languages, histories, and knowledge while acknowledging the enormous constraints under which many Indigenous writers exercised their creativity and rhetorical labour. I suggest that reading discourse and its environments within, and as, a broader ecology facilitates a networked form of attention, holding multiple fields and layers of meaning together, tracing both settler colonial discursive formations of Indians that shaped and constrained Indigenous life and lands, and also Indigenous peoples’ discourse and their philosophies. Through discursive moves that displaced “Indians” conceptually from their grounding in

specific places, languages, philosophies, settler discourse contributed to narratives justifying dispossession of Indigenous peoplehood and land. However, the ongoing presence of Indigenous discourses show the colonial archive's instability, drawing attention to assertions of colonial knowledge and authority as narrative projects that were and continue to be queried, criticized, and troubled by Indigenous peoples' engagement in and with them. Furthermore, as I suggest, there are ways of reading Indigenous discourse within and through the constraints of their frames that surface the broader networks of Indigenous relationality and its discursive practices, showing reading itself as a relational practice with potential to engage in complex, at times difficult, processes of close engagement with the discursive and political activity ancestors engaged in as they insisted on their futures, carrying with them their ways of thinking and doing in dynamic expressions of intellect and creativity.

Part 1: Beginning from Home

And now, I wish this statement to go across the waters . . . so that our children and our children's children whose lands are being taken possession of by foreigners, may receive what is just and fair for the loss of their lands.

—PEGUIS, "Important Statement" (3)

Tracing Bundles of Anishinaabe Diplomacy

August 2020, Manitowapow, Manitoba

"You could do a grounding exercise," my sister said.

"What do you mean?" I asked, laughing.

"Like take your shoes off and walk barefoot on the ground and see what happens."

We were sitting at the kitchen table in our parents' house, surrounded by the bright yellow and red cupboards, walls covered in family photos and décor, some of which seemed to have been with us forever. A large wall calendar featured the comings and goings of arrivals and departures, notes for outings on different days, a long-standing practice of tracking the movements of our large family from when we all lived at home.

I was probably holding a coffee, warming my hands, and we might have been finishing a meal or about to begin one, or a Scrabble game, or just a visit over snacks. In the interlude, we had been discussing a day trip I was planning to visit different sites along the Red River, culminating with a visit to St. Peter's Dynevor in Selkirk where our grandparents are buried. My intention was to try something new in my dissertation research practice: to visit places and find out how standing or walking or visiting different sites might help me read the archives produced in those places differently. How, maybe, they might "come alive" or . . . feel.

My sister's suggestion came in a moment of being asked what I was going to do when I got to these places. I replied with a version of, "I'm not sure. I kind of want to find out when I get there." I had, shall we say, an emerging notion of what I was trying to do and

how I was going to do it. When my sister suggested a grounding practice, she made me laugh, as she often does, but I could also sense her partial seriousness, offering a possibility for thinking about being a body on the land, for practicing attention. Because, who knows? What would happen if I tried to feel the ground with my body? What would I know differently? What might I feel?

* * *

c. 1790-1812, *Nipiwîn-sîpiy*, *Nibo-ziibi*, Netley Creek

In the late eighteenth century, the *ogichidaa* (warrior, veteran), eventually *ogimaa* (leader, chief), our Nation is named after moved west with his community toward the territory of *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy* (Red River).¹ Donna Sutherland writes that “some say” the move happened “in search of beaver as the waterways in the east were trapped out. Others say it was to escape the dreaded smallpox that had decimated large groups of people” (“Peguis, Woodpeckers”). Peguis, with his family and community, eventually arrived at the Red River valley and a creek known as *Nipiwîn*, *Nipiwîn-sîpiy*, and *Nibo-ziibi*, now Netley Creek (Sutherland 21-22).² The Cree and Anishinaabemowin names for the creek mean “Death River,” referring to an account of Anishinaabeg arriving in the area and finding “abandoned tents along the bank” (Manitoba Conservation 190). The Anishinaabeg

¹ Sources differ as to where Peguis and his band moved from. Laura Peers describes how “several secondary sources give Peguis’ community of origin as Sault Ste. Marie,” but she suggests “this may be due to confusion over the meaning of the term *Saulteaux*. Other sources give his place of origin as Lake of the Woods, Leech Lake, or Red Lake” (237n123). Henry Youle Hind wrote in 1860 that Peguis was from Pigeon River, Lake Superior, which is located near Sault St. Marie but is more specific than conflating the name of the city and the exonym for the Anishinaabeg (173). Donna Sutherland writes that “[r]ecords confirm that groups of Saulteaux peoples did move westward from the Great Lakes area between the years of 1770 to 1790,” and some groups travelled to the regions of Red Lake, Sandy Lake, Leech Lake, Rainy Lake, and Lake of the Woods, often living there for some time before moving on to other regions like Red River (*Peguis* 9). She suggests Peguis travelled southwest from the Great Lakes area, stayed near Red Lake for a time, before moving north to the Red River (9).

² Peers dates Peguis’ arrival to sometime between 1800 and 1810 (89). Chief Albert Edward Thompson in his recorded oral history dates the arrival to the late 1790s (1; cf. Dempsey, “Peguis”).

met a surviving boy who reported that his people had been killed by smallpox. They remained in the area and, through a peace ceremony, formed an inter-tribal alliance with the Cree and Nakota (Assiniboine, Stoney), who returned to the area later (190; cf. Gunn 4).³

Whether Peguis was among the Anishinaabeg who found the empty tents on “Death River” is uncertain (Sutherland suggests it is unlikely), but when Peguis’ band arrived in the area, they were entering a space and place marked by grief due to the smallpox epidemic many Indigenous people suffered in the prairies. They were also entering a place marked by inter-tribal alliance informed and shaped by different nations’ diplomatic practices, likely responding to the devastation. Historian Laura Peers notes how losses of kinship ties at every level, hunting partners, elders, and knowledge holders, left communities seeking new alliances to re-build their communities, perhaps with others who experienced the same. Such conditions “validate accounts of Ojibwa being invited to move west into depopulated Cree and Assiniboine lands,” like that of Donald Gunn, a Red River settler who wrote about Peguis and his band’s arrival for *The Nor’Wester* in 1860. Gunn wrote that around 1780 when smallpox “overtook” the Cree and Nakota, the “Saulteaux found the Assiniboines and the Crees encamped at the Pembina Mountain, where they were received in the most friendly manner, and after smoking and feasting for two or three days,” the Anishinaabeg were

formally invited to dwell on the plains—to eat out of the same dish, to warm themselves at the same fire, and to make common cause with them against their enemies the Sioux—and were told that the country to which they were invited was extensive, and abounded in buffalo, moose, and deer; and that it had become to them a land of death—that wherever they turned their steps they trod on the unburied and bleaching bones of their kindred. “Your presence,” said they, “will remove the cloud of sorrow that is on our minds and strengthen us against our enemies.” (Gunn 4)

³ Cf. Sutherland, *Peguis*, 23-24 for another account of this oral history from Chief Albert Edward Thompson, great-great grandson of Peguis, who suggests Peguis was present for this event.

Gunn's report describes how the Nakota, Cree, and Anishinaabeg gathered in a time of immense grief to work out the nature of their relationship in the territory—one in which they would share in its gifts and responsibilities of living in it.

By the early nineteenth century, Peguis and his people were part of the “numerous Native and European peoples gathered and camped near the banks of Netley Creek” (Sutherland, *Peguis* 26), which was “near a marsh plentiful in muskrats and wildfowl, a fishery in the Red River, and elk and bison on the plains to the south” (Peers 89). As Peguis and his people continued in the region, they traded furs and led hunts for themselves and for colonists. Both the North West Company (NWC) and Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) traded in the area and with Peguis' band, but around 1810 Peguis began favouring the HBC due to a dispute between Peguis and the NWC post manager (Sutherland 34; Peers 89). Over time, Peguis and his band garnered a reputation for their willingness to provide “aid to the inexperienced and ill-equipped colonists,” and by 1812 Peguis was known for leading the best fur hunters in the area (Peers 89).

Popular narratives of Peguis' legacy in Manitoba tend to highlight his and his peoples' role in supporting colonists and the Selkirk settlers' struggle to establish their settlement, often missing the Indigenous partnerships that preceded and created a context for Indigenous-settler relations. When Peguis and his people moved to the Red River region, they entered a milieu whose discursive ecology had been shaped by Cree, Nakota, and other Anishinaabe bodies of thought and their discursive practices, including the embodied, enacted forms in ceremony that established their diplomatic relationships with Cree and Nakota at Pembina—what Nêhiyaw legal scholar Darcy Lindberg calls the “aesthetics” of “legal pedagogy” (53). Such aesthetic—and discursive—practices informed, narrated, and shaped how Indigenous people related to one another both within their respective communities and with other peoples in a territory as they worked out diplomatic

and kinship relationships. Although European colonists and traders had been present in the area for some time, Indigenous diplomatic frameworks continued exerting a shaping force and mediated relationships. At the same time, the presence of the NWC and HBC also introduced new discursive practices for engaging with French and English colonists, traders, and, later, settlers and missionaries. As interest in the region grew for trade and settlement, Indigenous people also had to respond to settler encroachment and shifting social and political dynamics in the region as they changed through the nineteenth century.

Over the course of his life, Peguis appeared and re-appeared in colonial archives as he negotiated various relational dynamics in his role as *ogimaa*, entering and engaging with different discursive environments. As I already noted, he participated in Indigenous discourse and thought, drawing on his own Anishinaabe knowledge and working in connection with other Indigenous peoples in the area to form alliances and relationships of mutual support. Although Indigenous discursive environments receive less attention in settler writing, references to them are present, and I suggest they can be read for word bundles that link to and evoke a larger network of Indigenous political thought than may be readily ascertained on the surface and through translation. Peguis continued to draw upon Anishinaabe thought and discourse in his dealings with the 1817 Selkirk Treaty and Red River Settlement, missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), and, in his later life, settler periodicals and newspapers in an effort to communicate with and influence settlers and their *ogimaa*, Queen Victoria, in resistance to by-then longstanding complaints of encroachment, growing disrespect, and settler entitlement. Aspects of Peguis' discourse in the settler archive at times seem to convey an image of loyal partnership with British settlers, missionaries, and Victoria, emphasized by the rendering of his voice in Victorian English and filtered through his recorders' conceptions of Indigenous people, but when we read for traces of Indigenous conceptions and diverse forms of Indigenous discursive

practice, Peguis' archive yields a more dynamic and complex process of inter-nation engagement informed by Anishinaabe conceptions of diplomacy and relationality.

* * *

28 April 1860, *maskotêw*, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, Red River Settlement

Donald Gunn's account of Peguis' arrival to *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy* (Red River) was published late in Peguis' life as part of an unfolding debate in the newspaper *The Nor'Wester* about the validity of the 1817 Selkirk Treaty and Indigenous land claims. In his article titled "Peguis Vindicated," Gunn argued that a history of inter-community treaty-making between the Cree and Nakota and the incoming Anishinaabeg formed the basis for Anishinaabe continuance in and claims to the region, and he described the event using a curious image: "the children of the forest [Anishinaabeg] were formally invited to dwell on the plains—to eat out of the same dish" (4). Gunn gives us little indication of how he understands the phrase "to eat out of the same dish" in his article. On the surface, when read apart from Anishinaabe language and thought, the phrasing might feature as his own metaphorical flair, evoking general images of fellowship and hospitality like "breaking bread," or as a curiosity of "Indian" speech. However, when read in relation to the history of Anishinaabe conceptions of diplomacy, the phrase unspools, revealing a myriad of conceptual—and experiential—references that underlie the events Gunn describes and locate them in longer histories of Anishinaabe inter-national alliance-making and their frameworks of mutual care. Gunn's writing shows how, in one sense, Anishinaabe diplomatic histories can get diminished in English texts and their significations possibly lost for settler audiences over time. However, his use of the phrase "eat out of the same dish" also shows how discursive, imagistic traces of Indigenous thought also remain and continue to assert themselves within his text, bringing it in relation to broader networks of Indigenous thought and diplomatic practice through time.

I read the phrase “to eat out of the same dish” as a word bundle that cites a significant framework for conceptualizing inter-tribal, international, diplomatic relations: the Dish with One Spoon, a longstanding treaty between the Anishinaabe Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy for sharing hunting territory. In an interview, Métis writer Maria Campbell uses the phrase “word bundle” to describe how she coaches students to read for a range of significations as they study Indigenous stories and language:

I always tell my students don’t just settle for the word, but imagine that the word is carrying this big huge bundle. What’s inside? What are the roots of that word? What is the story? Is there a song in the bundle, a ceremony, a protocol? Where did it come from? The word bundle is full of treasure. (Gingell and Campbell 200)

The concept of the “bundle,” and questions derived from it, while not dissimilar to practices of close reading, offer a vivid image for the study of Indigenous language and discursive production that assumes the interrelatedness of different elements held within a word, phrase, or story, and it also calls attention to the transfer, or “carrying,” of signification among and across discursive works, evoking medicine or travelling bundles. Borrowing from Campbell, Mareike Neuhaus builds the concept as the “relational word bundle” that “*builds* discourse and *embodies* Indigenous notions of community, thus pointing to the interdependence between Indigenous rhetorics and kinship” (128, emphasis in the original). Working synecdochically and intertextually, word bundles, or bundling signifiers, link to other stories, concepts, histories, and discursive tropes—“big bundles” of meaning that are not stated explicitly (129-130). Reading for word bundles, I suggest, can help us register how words, signs, phrases in English-language texts remain in relation to, rather than isolated from, and broadly evocative of bodies of Indigenous thought and discourse.

* * *

c. 2017-2018, Ohsweken, Ontario

On the surface, the space of Deyohahá:ge: Indigenous Knowledge Centre looks familiar, like

a library, an archive reading room, perhaps a museum due to artefacts on display on the shelves and in glass cases such as wampum, regalia, other important objects of Haudenosaunee history, governance, and thought. Yet the mission of Deyohahá:ge: resists clear institutional distinctions like these, operating as a centre that deals with diverse media and materials to preserve and nurture Indigenous knowledge and foster community-based research (“Deyohahá:ge:”). The name Deyohahá:ge: refers to “two roads” in Cayuga language and conveys the centre’s mandate, “given . . . in 2007 by Six Nations elders,” to “bring together the best in Hodinöhsö:ni’ and Western knowledge traditions” in a research hub “for the benefit of the local Hodinöhsö:ni’ community” and “surrounding communities and beyond” (Hill and Coleman 340). Deyohahá:ge: offers an example of Indigenous ownership and self-determination in knowledge care that facilitates different relational modes within archives and archive-like spaces.

In an early visit to the centre, I experienced the outworking of Deyohahá:ge:’s mandate in a gesture of inter-Indigenous community exchange and knowledge-sharing that left a lasting impression on me. I was visiting as a participant in the Two Row Research Partnership (TRRP), which is hosted by Deyohahá:ge:, and as we toured the space, I was affected by how the vision of the centre was visually and materially realized, raising feelings of connection and excitement at how people might be “reading” a range of material in relation to each other, both textual and not.⁴ One of our hosts, learning it was my first visit and I was new to the region, offered me introductory research material on the *Kayanerenkó:wa* (The Great Law of Peace), *Tsioneratasekowa* (white pine tree of peace), and

⁴ The TRRP is made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers dedicated to thinking about Indigenous research methodology in a range of fields, drawing on the principles of relationship preserved in the Two Row Wampum and with particular attention to Haudenosaunee knowledge, history, and philosophy. For more on the Two Row Research Partnership, refer to Hill and Coleman, 340-341.

Tekani teyothata'tye kaswenta (Two Row Wampum)—key concepts in Haudenosaunee thought—from a revolving magazine rack conveniently located near the centre's entrance full of printed language resources and research guides.⁵

“This is a good place to start,” I recall her saying, as she handed me the pamphlets. I felt that I, as a nonlocal Anishinaabe, was being invited to think with my Haudenosaunee neighbours and hosts about shared issues from Haudenosaunee perspective, revealing the trans-Indigenous partnerships that also form in and through the work of Deyohahá:ge:, TRRP, and other forms of Indigenous connection, formal and informal. I was being shown different ways of being in this place, in Ohsweken, in Hamilton, in the territory between lakes Ontario and Erie. I was being encouraged to ask, “What stories animate our relationships to particular places and to research?”

When our host at Deyohahá:ge: gave me material on the Great Law of Peace, she illustrated the argument that research about Indigenous peoples needs to begin with learning their language and stories. In his influential essay “Is That All There Is? Tribal Literature,” Basil Johnston argues that learning language and stories deepens research approaches, helping scholars “get into their minds the heart and soul and spirit of a culture” to understand Indigenous perspectives and interpretations (5). Cree scholar Willie Ermine argues Indigenous “languages and culture contain the accumulated knowledge of our ancestors” and “concepts in our lexicons” gathered over intergenerational processes of learning that are necessary for understanding Indigenous thought. Indigenous literatures can be shaped by cultural sensibilities that, if not attended to, might be missed or misinterpreted, as Jeannette Armstrong argues (“Editor’s Note” 229-230). Thus, it is

⁵ Refer to Debicki, *Okwire'shon:'a*; Hill, *The Clay*; Monture, *We Share*; Williams, *Kayanerenkó:wa* for discussions of the Great Law of Peace and Great Tree of Peace. Refer to Hill and Coleman, “The Two Row Wampum-Covenant Chain Tradition” and Monture, *We Share* for discussion of the Two Row Wampum.

important to consider the “mindscape of narratives,” as Tasha Beeds argues, comprised of intergenerational “storehouse[s] of memory” maintained in language as well as discursive histories (68). What Beeds terms “mindscape” entails not only conceptual frameworks or ideas but also their relation to particular sensory, affective, and experiential contexts. Kanyen’kehà:ka (Mohawk) writer and knowledge holder Sakokweniónkwás Tom Porter describes his experience of perceiving “vivid pictures of action, of colors, of even songs in the language” while listening to his Grandma and other elders “talk Mohawk” as an illustration of how Indigenous languages and discourse can offer affective and imaginative experiences not easily translated into English (91). Language knowledge adds dimensions of sensory experience, often informed by ways of perceiving the world and one’s relationship to it, that can get diminished or re-shaped through translation. A shirt “colored red” is better known as a shirt “the color of the blood that flows in my body” (92). Someone who has died and been buried is someone whose body has been wrapped in “the garden blanket of Mother Earth,” invoking a relationship between human beings and the natural world framed in kinship terms that can evoke affection, sympathy, love, grief (93).

* * *

over centuries, territory covered by *Gdoo-naaganinaa*

Gunn’s reference to *Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan*, the Dish with One Spoon, or *Gdoo-naaganinaa*, “Our Dish,”⁶ in his 1860 article connects to a longer history of treaty-making

⁶ Dean M. Jacobs and Victor P. Lytwyn use the Anishinaabemowin translation *Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan* (Dish with One Spoon) which they received from Anishinaabe elder Reta Sands (192). Leanne Simpson uses *Gdoo-naaganinaa* which translates to “Our Dish” (“Looking After” 39n1). Simpson notes the spelling of *Gdoo-naaganinaa* follows the “Fiero orthography eastern Ojibwe dialect,” and it is in the “inclusive form, as opposed to the *ndoo-naaganinaa*: ‘our dish (but not yours)’” (*Dancing* 117n161; cf. “Looking After” 39n1). Alan Corbiere has also used the spelling *Gidonaaganinaa* (“Gidonaaganinaa” 22). Corbiere argues the treaty between the Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee is called *Gdoo-naaganinaa* “by the Nishnaabeg, both in the oral tradition and in historical documents written in Nishnaabemowin, and it means ‘Our Dish’” (Simpson, *Dancing* 117n161).

between Indigenous peoples, in this case, Anishinaabe Nation and Haudenosaunee Confederacy, that conceptualized and mediated complex land-sharing arrangements in and around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Valley (Lytwyn 210),⁷ and whether Gunn was aware of it at the time of writing or not, his use of a word bundle for “eating out of the same dish” connected his historical account of Indigenous alliance-making in the Red River region to the history of this broader spatial and discursive network of Indigenous diplomatic engagement. In the summer of 1701, for example, the Dish with One Spoon was invoked to establish peace between Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg during a “Great Peace Treaty Council” in Montreal after an extended period of conflict over hunting territory in the fur trade: “Delegates came from a wide geographic territory and meetings took place over nearly two weeks. The resulting Treaty included promises to protect people who travelled through other nations’ territories” (Jacobs and Lytwyn 194).⁸ References to sharing the same “kettle,” bowl, or dish were invoked by different spokespeople during the process, revealing shared imagery for conceptualizing the relationship (194).

Although the Dish with One Spoon Treaty was ratified in 1701, it was “not new” either conceptually or in diplomatic practice (Jacobs and Lytwyn 195). Indigenous practices and conceptions of diplomacy, including sharing territory, predate written records and are preserved in oral traditions, and, as Victor Lytwyn writes, “imagery of a dish with one spoon was frequently, widely, and consistently used to refer to sharing hunting territory (“A Dish”

⁷ One of the gifts of studying in Hamilton is to be located squarely in Dish with One Spoon territory and in proximity with others who know its history. I would like to thank my colleagues of the Two Row Research Partnership, particularly Ki'en Debicki, Rick Hill, and Daniel Coleman, for introducing me to the Dish with One Spoon and its thinking and expanding my sense of this place and its Indigenous intellectual, diplomatic, and ecological history.

⁸ Lytwyn notes that motivations for the sustained conflict “were complex and multi-faceted,” but that one factor was the “depletion of beaver in the vicinity of the Five Nations [Haudenosaunee Confederacy] villages south of Lake Ontario” (“A Dish” 214).

210; cf. Corbiere, “Godonaaganinaa” 22).⁹ Treaties drawing upon this imagery “were renewed” between nations “[t]hroughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries” and included agreements between Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg and Sioux, and other nations (Lytwyn 210-211).¹⁰ The Dish with One Spoon, then, neither refers to a single event nor to one particular expression of diplomacy or treaty, but rather to a range of events and ongoing diplomatic relationships that were reaffirmed and re-negotiated over time and that may have moved with Anishinaabeg, extending their conceptual influence in the prairies.

While the Dish with One Spoon is often referred to as a “treaty” or an agreement arrived at for sharing territory between Indigenous peoples, the phrase also refers to a conception, a theory, of land-sharing that extends beyond arrived-at agreements and asserts itself as law. In his study of *Kayanerenkó:wa* (The Great Law of Peace), Kayanesenh Paul Williams describes how the Dish with One Spoon features as a law in Haudenosaunee legal and governance thought that provides a way for Haudenosaunee people to share hunting grounds with one another (339, 1).¹¹ *Kayanerenkó:wa* describes a time when five Haudenosaunee nations were enmeshed in cycles of conflict with one another, and the Peacemaker noticed that one source of conflict was disputes over hunting territories. He “replaced” the concept of “exclusive hunting grounds” with the concept of the Dish with One Spoon “that would feed everyone” and provide them with an equal share (339). In this framework, the “dish” refers to the natural world and all the beings within it: animals,

⁹ Lytwyn notes that other terms were sometimes used in place of “dish,” such as “kettle” or “bowl,” and sometimes “spoon” was absent, but the “overall meaning” evoked by these terms “remained remarkably consistent over the centuries” (210n1).

¹⁰ Refer to Lytwyn, “A Dish with One Spoon” for a survey of archival references to these agreements. Cf. Jacobs and Lytwyn, “Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan”; Corbiere, “Gidonaaganinaa”; and Corbiere, ““Their own forms.””

¹¹ Cf. S. Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of*, 43-44 for another discussion of the Dish with One Spoon in the context of Haudenosaunee law.

medicines, plants, fish, birds, water, etc. and also human beings.¹² The dish is shared equally by the people negotiating peace and commit to it afterward, so there is only one spoon for everyone to share. They must take equal turns; no one can take more than they should, taking only what they need. The utensil figured is a spoon rather than a knife because it will assist the people to eat, but it does not have sharp edges and therefore no harm, either intended or accidental (Williams 339).¹³ Williams elaborates that the “no sharp edges” principle also includes avoiding harm caused by “‘cutting words’ that might injure one another’s feelings” (340). The spoon, then, figures as the ethic and practice that thoroughly encompasses how to conduct one’s self and interact with others around the dish.

However, the figures of “dish” and “spoon” signal the peoples’ responsibilities not only to each other but also to the dish itself. The responsibility to take only what you need benefits the “dish” as well as other people by preventing overuse and over-harvesting that could upset the ecology of the dish and deplete it: “. . . out of [the dish] comes all the bounty that we are meant to share. There is an ecological premise to the dish” (R. Hill, “Ecological Knowledge” 8:21 ff.). Taking only what one needs resists hoarding food or medicines and keeping things only for one’s self. Something must always be left behind, for other people and for the continuance of other, non-human lives (“Ecological Knowledge”).¹⁴ Everyone has a responsibility to keep the dish clean, tending to the shared environment with awareness of others who will come after you and for the well-being of all beings in the dish. Thus, the

¹² Some written accounts specify animals, but the ecological underpinnings of the Dish with One Spoon concept (and its exigencies of resource depletion through over-harvesting) implicate medicines and other plants, water, fish, birds, etc. Furthermore, Rick Hill emphasizes that human beings are also “of the dish” and depend on everything within it as much as other beings (“Dish With One Spoon” 19:42 ff.).

¹³ In one rendering of the principle, the Peacemaker states explicitly that “there will be no knife near our dish” and repeats the phrase, emphasizing the need for peaceful participation (Williams 340).

¹⁴ R. Hill expands on the “ecological premise” with the principle of not picking the first plant or hunting the first deer you find, ensuring those beings will be sustained (“Dish With One Spoon” 21:00 ff.).

Haudenosaunee law entails an environmental ethic and an ecological understanding of mediating relationships that includes all beings in the dish, not only human.

Anishinaabe understandings of *Gdoo-naaganinaa* are similar to those of the Haudenosaunee, politically and ecologically. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson describes how “Nishnaabeg environmental ethics” were practiced through taking only what was needed, redistribution of wealth practices, and wasting no part of the animal (“*Gdoo-naaganinaa*” 37). Anishinaabeg relied on their intimate knowledge of the land to support their practice of *Gdoo-naaganinaa*, combining their ethical approach with their “their extensive knowledge of the natural environment, including its physical features, animal behavior, animal populations, weather, and ecological interactions” to ensure plenty of food remained to sustain the futures of the parties involved (37). Key decision makers were relied upon to work out this process and “consider the impact of their decisions on all the plant and animal nations, in addition to the next seven generations of Nishinaabeg” (37). The responsibilities of the dish drew upon and reinforced the need for ecological knowledge to make astute decisions about how one maintained their responsibilities, thereby maintaining their communities and the ecology in which they were embedded.

Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe discussions of the Dish with One Spoon demonstrate how complex and dynamic conceptualizations of relation across communities, in particular places and environments, and in relation to the more-than-human world relied on varied forms of discursive expression and enactment to maintain and re-negotiate them. Whether through the story of Peacemaker, practices of council deliberation, or other discursive forms, practices of diplomatic engagement required expressions that facilitated understanding of the concepts in play, memory and history of negotiated agreements and key events, and means by which relationships could be maintained and re-affirmed or re-negotiated as needed. Human beings’ dependence on the dish in the framework of *Gdoo-*

naaganinaa is supported, for instance, in the Anishinaabe creation story that narrates human beings' fundamental dependence on all other beings preceding them. Basil Johnston's version of the story relates how "Kitche Manitou . . . beheld a vision" of the world and brought it into being by stages, giving different groups of beings life and specific gifts in each stage, ending with human beings who were "last in the order of creation, least in the order of dependence, and weakest in bodily powers" (*Ojibway Heritage* 12). In the story, human beings descend from and are dependent on all other beings in creation, on the rest of the dish, a concept that would have been reiterated through the story's rehearsal over generations, cultivating a sensibility of interrelation and of having received the gift of life mediated by the gifts given to beings who came before them.

If the world is gift, and if everything the Anishinaabeg have and are is gift, this state entails an ethic, responsibilities for how to use, treat, interact with, inhabit, embody, relate to the gifts: "We need the animals and plants in order to survive. We need them to teach us and we need them to live. For those reasons we pay them respect" (Linklater et al. 55). For Anishinaabe elder Donald Catcheway respect relates to land knowledge: "That was what was gifted to them, the knowledge of this [land]. This Loving Creator as we say, he gifted us with the responsibility for the land" (Linklater et al. 27). Embedded in the idea of gift are the concepts of interconnection, interdependence, and interrelation, which Anishinaabe Elder Francis Nepinak describes, linking the human body in relation with land: "The oceans, the lakes, the rivers, it's similar to a blood vein in your body. It's like that. It's like the water on Earth is its blood. And the plants like hair. Also the ground is the same as your flesh" (Pratt et al. 17). Beings exist in relation to each other in the ecology, and in various ways, are related to and dependent upon each other.

Furthermore, in the creation story Gichi-manidoo gives the most dependent of all the first gift that began the world: ability to vision, power to dream, which human beings

exercise as they reciprocate gifting back to each other and the rest of the world.¹⁵ One of the ways this happens, Sinclair argues, drawing from Johnston, “is in story” by which “relationships are possible” as they narrate the working out of relationships, their responsibilities, and the various ways beings can enact them or not (“K’zaugin” 93). *Gdoo-naaganinaa* is one such creative “visioning” and expression of how Anishinaabeg, with the Haudenosaunee, negotiated their gift-receiving relationships with each other and the world toward respect, peaceful relations, and mutual survival.

In addition to stories narrating or contextualizing the Dish with One Spoon’s significance, non-alphabetic forms and practices embodied or enacted the principles involved, giving physical, demonstrable form to ideas rendered in narrative. Gift-giving practices were central to Anishinaabeg in their dealings with one another and with other nations, forming and confirming bonds: “Gifting was the cornerstone of kinship, and kinship organized society” (C. Miller 32).¹⁶ Haudenosaunee, working from their own gift practices, made a wampum belt with rows of white beads surrounding a purple-bead dish or bowl in the centre of the belt to commemorate the *Gdoo-naaganinaa* relationship. As Penelope Kelsey argues, wampum belts were forms of “visual literacy” whose “aesthetic engagements serve[d] as extensions of the ideas recorded in purple and white shell” (xi, xii). Through “a set of mutually understood symbols and images,” wampum “communicate[d]

¹⁵ The responsibility and power to create features in other Indigenous concepts of human beings. Refer, for example, to Cree scholar Willie Ermine’s discussion that *mamatowisowin*, the “capability of tapping into the ‘life force’ as a means of procreation,” describes “a capacity to tap the creative force of the inner space by the use of all the faculties that constitute our being—it is to exercise inwardness” as a process of relating and giving meaning to existence premised on the idea “all existence [is] connected and that the whole enmeshed the being in its inclusiveness” (104-105).

¹⁶ The degrees of relationship between individuals and peoples were complex and nuanced, moving beyond the reductive categories of “kin” and “not kin” to a range of relational understandings that were first grounded in relationships to the Creator and then to the Earth (Craft, *Breathing Life* 70). Cf. C. Miller, *Ogimaag*, 15-16, 100-101. Cf. Bohaker, *Doodem*, 6 ff.

culturally-embedded ideas to the viewer” and were “read” and interpreted (xii). Wampum played an important role in memory-keeping for communities, necessary for upholding longstanding agreements, as Rick Hill describes: “The memory of the dish is within that belt itself, and if you have a good mind, as they say, if you’re thinking well, you can call upon the memory of the beads to help you interpret the meaning of this belt” (“Dish” 17:17-17:34). Haudenosaunee held gatherings where the wampum keeper held the belt and recited its story, ensuring the memory was sustained and remained in the beads (17:35 ff.). Corbiere also notes how Anishinaabeg retained oral history of the wampum, which Peter Jones (Mississauga of the New Credit) wrote about in 1861 (“Gidonaaganinaa” 22). The Dish with One Spoon was memorialized and rehearsed in vivid imagery and in physical, aesthetic forms, showing how narratives, agreements, and material, visual literacies circulated through gift exchanges in discursive and diplomatic relationships.

Emphases on equal sharing in the Dish with One Spoon, its expansive ecological attention, and underlying concepts of gift relationship did not, however, understand territory as open and boundless.¹⁷ The terms of the conceptual framework itself and its history in Indigenous diplomacy indicate its range of limits that also feature as responsibilities. Imagery of “dish” and “spoon,” for example, inscribe attention both to the essential finitude of what constitutes the dish and the limits of human action and intervention in it. In *Kayanerenkó:wa*, the Peacemaker makes beaver tail stew for a large circle of chiefs to share using one spoon as a representation and enactment of how they will share territory (Williams 339-340). The dish, in its edges, size, shape, is bounded in form and

¹⁷ Jacobs and Lytwyn summarize some of the ways the Dish with One Spoon has been taken to refer to a general environmental principle that “blurred the territoriality” of the Dish with One Spoon “by suggesting that First Nations had agreed to share the land,” ignoring its long history as a “concept of Aboriginal co-sovereignty” (203, 200). Refer to Jacobs and Lytwyn, 200-207.

quantity, just as the natural world features its own constraints through seasonal changes, environmental shifts, and their effects on different plant and animal species, patterns of reproduction and death, etc. The spoon's singularity represents another boundary: the requirement of taking turns as a reminder to carefully manage, even limit, human intervention that can foster shared benefit or result in harm.

That there is only one spoon in *Gdoo-naaganinaa* also reminds participants of the political care needed to maintain the relationship. “[S]haring territory for hunting,” as Simpson describes, “did not involve interfering with one another’s sovereignty as nations” (“Gdoo-naaganinaa” 37). Because both parties were responsible for sharing the dish, accountability was built into the framework of the treaty and in long-standing practices of Indigenous diplomacy and negotiation that “required regular renewal of the relationship through meeting, ritual, and ceremony” to maintain the “peaceful coexistence” the agreement promoted (37). In one historical account of *Gdoo-naaganinaa* shared by Corbiere, Anishinaabeg were being pressured to cede land to white settlers on Manitoulin Island, and *ogimaag* held councils prior to the signing of the Manitoulin Island Treaty of 1862 to determine what to do. At a council in Manitowaning, Chief Wakegijig reminded the others that their sovereignty in the land was necessary by invoking *Gdoo-naaganinaa*:

My friends, we want to eat out of one dish as it were, we do not wish to break a part of it to give away. All of us who met together at Metchekewedenong [M’Chigeeng] three years ago . . . agreed that we should eat out of one dish. We feel convinced that the Indians would be better off if they kept the Island for themselves, than if they surrendered a part of it. (Corbiere, “Gidonaaganinaa” 22)

In Wakegijig’s description, the dish should not be broken apart, implying fragmenting harm could permanently damage the dish itself and harm all in relationship with it.

* * *

The Dish with One Spoon concept appeared in Gunn’s writing as an English-language

phrase in a newspaper article in which Indigenous land claims were being debated through writing. This process of re-contextualizing the dish in English-language writing can have a dampening effect for readers unaware of the concept's history and significance, and it is difficult to ascertain what range of significations Gunn might have known when he referred to "eating out of the same dish" to narrate a history of inter-Indigenous diplomacy and treaty-making in *Manitowapow* (Manitoba). Ready images of sharing the same food sources and territory were likely there, but whether he understood the concept of "our dish" or the Dish with One Spoon, whether he was knowledgeable of Indigenous treaty concepts and their outworkings in historic alliances like the Iron Alliance,¹⁸ is more difficult to determine.¹⁹ In the beginning of his article, Gunn styles himself as "a friend of the Indians generally, and of the good and venerable old chief [Peguis] in particular" (4), implying his historical knowledge at least partly comes from Indigenous people he knew. Yet, he neither details the extent of the relationships nor what was shared with him, making ambiguous his understanding *Gdoo-naaganinaa* and whether his rhetoric is borrowed or his own gloss. However, the extent to which Gunn understood the possible significations of the phrase does not negate the range of meaning it can assert both within and beyond the context of his article, nor does it nullify the history and range of Indigenous diplomatic conceptualization and practice signalled.

In the case of Gunn's article, the word bundle "to eat out of the same dish" carries its significations with it, borrowed from Anishinaabe discourse, re-contextualized in an English newspaper, and, whether intentionally or not, linking to Haudenosaunee-

¹⁸ The Iron Alliance refers to an "economic, social, and military alliance" among Nêhiyawak, Nakota, Anishinaabeg, Métis who occupied "overlapping territories" (R. Innes 43, 60). Refer to R. Innes, *Elder Brother*.

¹⁹ However, colonist and settler awareness and active participation in Indigenous treaty-making protocols is well-documented. Examples include uses of wampum and Haudenosaunee protocols with British officials, participation in pipe ceremonies in the Numbered Treaty process, and participation in gift protocols.

Anishinaabe diplomatic history and the conceptual frameworks that shaped it. In this way, for instance, the relational word bundle “embodies Indigenous notions of community,” as Neuhaus puts it, operating along kinship logic that assumes its embeddedness within a network of relationship—of signification but also mediating human and more-than-human relationships. However, “relationships do not simply exist,” Neuhaus adds. As Daniel Heath Justice argues, kinship involves the practice of “storied expression” of “the living relationship between People and the world”: “Stories define relationships, between nations as well as individuals” (150).

The rhetoric of *Gdoo-naaganinaa* continued exerting its influence in the context of Gunn’s account even if his settler audience understood the dimensions of its referents or not, thereby exerting different frameworks for understanding treaty, diplomacy, and alliance-making in the Red River beyond the terms of settler writing in *The Nor’Wester*. Thus, word bundles like “eating out of the same dish” give “gifts” of interconnected meaning they “carry” into new languages and discursive forms, like English-language newspapers directed toward settler audiences. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair argues that Anishinaabemowin words, for example, are *bagijiganan*, “offerings” or “gifts,” as they facilitate relationships through communication and draw attention to what is at stake in navigating such relationships (*Nindoodemag* 17-18). When Indigenous words or concepts become anglicised, perhaps distanced from their conceptual and linguistic histories, possibilities remain for re-contextualizing them in relation to these histories and bodies of knowledge. Re-tracing the Dish with One Spoon’s history and thought through “transition in language” is also another “way to trace its ‘gifts’” and “the evolving discursive ecosystem in which it has circulated,” as Daniel Coleman suggests (Personal comment).

For those who know its history, the appearance of a word bundle for *Gdoo-naaganinaa* carries histories of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee diplomacy, treaty-making,

and environmental ethics; Anishinaabe gift thought in mediating relationships; histories of Indigenous inter-tribal alliance on the prairies; extended networks of meaning in Indigenous-language terms translated in English as “dish”; oral, visual, and material forms of Indigenous discursive practice; and the transfer of the Dish with One Spoon to the diplomatic history of Indigenous treaties and land relationships in the Red River region. Thus, the dampening effect can be resisted and traced along with the force of meaning the concept continues to exert through its gifts of signification. Gunn’s text becomes another commemoration of the Dish with One Spoon and a potential access point for not only the conceptual frameworks but also “mindscapes” of Indigenous social worlds and intergenerational memory that can be re-enlivened through reading Gunn’s text in relation to Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee bodies of thought.

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Gift Thought and the Selkirk Treaty

Journal

December 2019, *maskotêw*, *wînipêk*, Winnipeg

Visited the Archives of Manitoba to view Peguis’ archival material the Selkirk Treaty. I wasn’t sure what to expect based on past experiences with having requests to see original materials denied, but my request here was welcomed. I can’t tell what makes the difference from one archive to another, feeling in some places as though materials are being protected from me, while in others feeling we can have connection. Sitting with the treaty document itself was an odd, amplified experience. Its history felt enlivened somehow, my proximity to the *doodemag* on it created feeling of being closer to the ones who wrote them, marks made by Peguis, Mache Wheseab, Mechkaddewikonaie, Kayajieskebinoa, and Ouckidoat. The relationships with the land and waters along the Red River were visible, blue shaded waterways and animal *doodemag* mediating their writers’ place in this territory. The document was smudged and worn; I could see the texture and shifting line weights of inked

words, names, rivers, lakes, and *doodemag*. It is odd to see the river one's family grew up on, your grandfather fished, being traced in brown and blue on a map to show territory Selkirk wanted to claim, to see the canoe portage your hometown is named after marked in a dotted ink path linking the Assiniboine River and Lake Manitoba (fig. 1).

* * *

Journal

March 2021, Hunter Street, Hamilton

Realized I have conflated memories of different archival material. In my memory, the 1817 Selkirk Treaty had been written on a large piece of leather, like parchment, and I wondered if it was bison hide or some other animal. I returned to the photos and noticed the treaty was on paper, and another document was on leather: an 1835 letter of annuity to Peguis from the HBC. Somehow, my memory combined the material of one with the inscriptions of another. For a few months I believed the Selkirk Treaty had been written on parchment, on a spread of tanned hide, linking

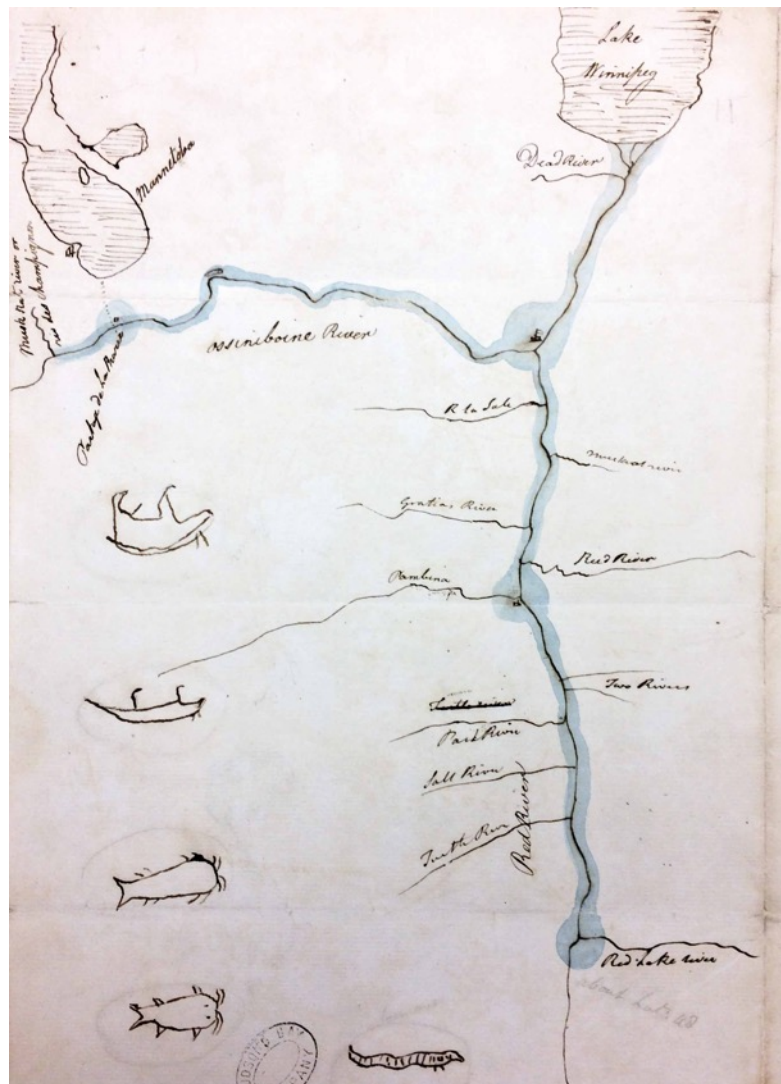


Figure 1: Detail of the “Selkirk Treaty” showing the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and *doodemag*, “Deed and map of 18 July 1817 conveying land adjoining the Red and Assiniboine Rivers from Saulteaux and Cree chiefs to Lord Selkirk.” Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2019.

the *doodemag* in ink with the literal material of the more-than-human world, the land—that the treaty was literally written on the back, perhaps, of an animal. Thankfully, the photos and a helpful archivist confirmed everything. The treaty was on European laid paper usually

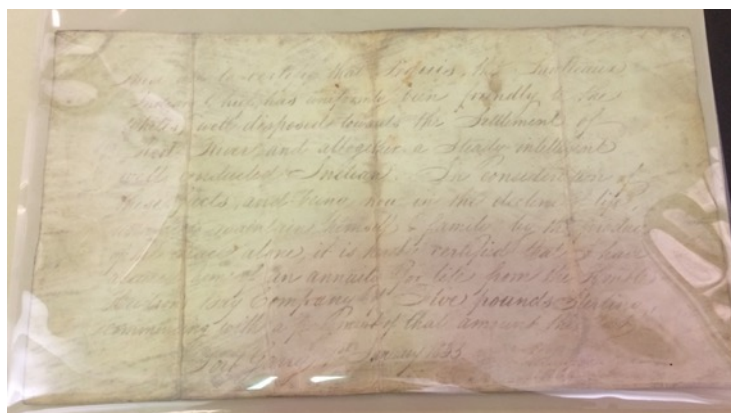


Figure 2: Grant of Annuity from George Simpson, 1 Jan. 1835. Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2019.

handmade from cotton fibres. The 1835 letter of annuity written on hide is a faint document by HBC governor George Simpson describing Peguis as having been “uniformly friendly to the Whites,” “well disposed” to the Red River Settlement, and “[a]ltogether a steady intelligent well-conducted Indian,” for which reasons Peguis was granted an annuity for life of five pounds a year from the HBC (fig. 2). The leather document is much thicker than paper and quite durable. Perhaps that is why leather was used. Chief Albert Edward Thompson writes the annuity is of “buffalo-hide that would endure for years” (27). It shows whatever life it had in Peguis’ or others’ hands, characteristic of leather. A splatter stain appears on the back. Its edges and creases, although flattened, show wear and discoloration (fig. 3). It looks well-handled, maybe well-travelled, as though the one who possessed it carried it with him as a sign of the commitment he understood it to commemorate.



Figure 3: Detail, Grant of Annuity from George Simpson, 1 Jan. 1835. Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2019.

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Journal

March 2022, Hunter Street, Hamilton

Textual material is physical, is material object. Intimacy with materials is sometimes

necessary in research, drawing attention to research as embodied practice, interacting with objects and their material qualities. How does studying feel, weight, texture, depth, colour, pen strokes, marks, wear, etc. alongside “content” yield different kinds of readings? The object has its own substance, its own body, originating from the elements of land and water, animal hide, plant material, stones, minerals.

* * *

18 July 1817, *Niizhoziibean*, *Nestawa’ya*, The Forks

In the summer of 1817, Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, met with Anishinaabe leaders at *Nestawa’ya*, the Forks, where they marked what has come to be known as the Selkirk Treaty—Selkirk and colonist witnesses with their signatures and Indigenous participants with their *doodemag*.²⁰ The treaty was a land agreement allowing “for the use of two-mile tracts on each side of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers” (Craft 37), and Selkirk’s settlement project created another discursive environment Indigenous people like Peguis navigated in English legal discourse around land. The English text of what has come to be called the Selkirk Treaty stipulates the signing “Chiefs” had “given” the land for annual presents of tobacco, implying something like consent to land surrender. However, the treaty also features discursive forms, other forms of writing, beyond alphabetic writing in English that assert other possibilities, namely, *doodemag* the various *ogimaag* ascribed to the document that tie the treaty text to Anishinaabe gift thought, which, as expressed in the Dish with One Spoon, conceptualize land agreements very differently than surrender. *Doodemag* operate like word bundles in how they gather and reference signification in Indigenous

²⁰ “*Doodem*” in Anishinaabemowin “belongs to a special class of nouns” that are dependent and therefore “never appear without a possessive adjective”; Anishinaabeg “would always have indicated, through the use of the possessive form, to whose *doodem* they were referring” (Bohaker, *Doodem* 28n2; cf. Sinclair, *Nindoodemag* 64). Because I discuss *doodemag* mainly in the third person possessive, I use the adapted “*doodemag*,” following Bohaker, *Doodem* and C. Miller, *Ogimaag*.

thought, but they do so in pictorial form as bundling signifiers rather than as “words,” creating on the treaty document a complex interplay of discursive forms as well as connections with Anishinaabe relational concepts.

What Selkirk might have understood as “given” in his treaty with Anishinaabeg also has a longer discursive and political history in English discourses narrating sovereignty over the territory that came to be known as “Rupert’s Land.” Five years before the signing of the Selkirk Treaty, the first group of settlers led by Miles Macdonell arrived in the Red River Valley from Scotland in 1812 to found what became the Red River Colony or Selkirk

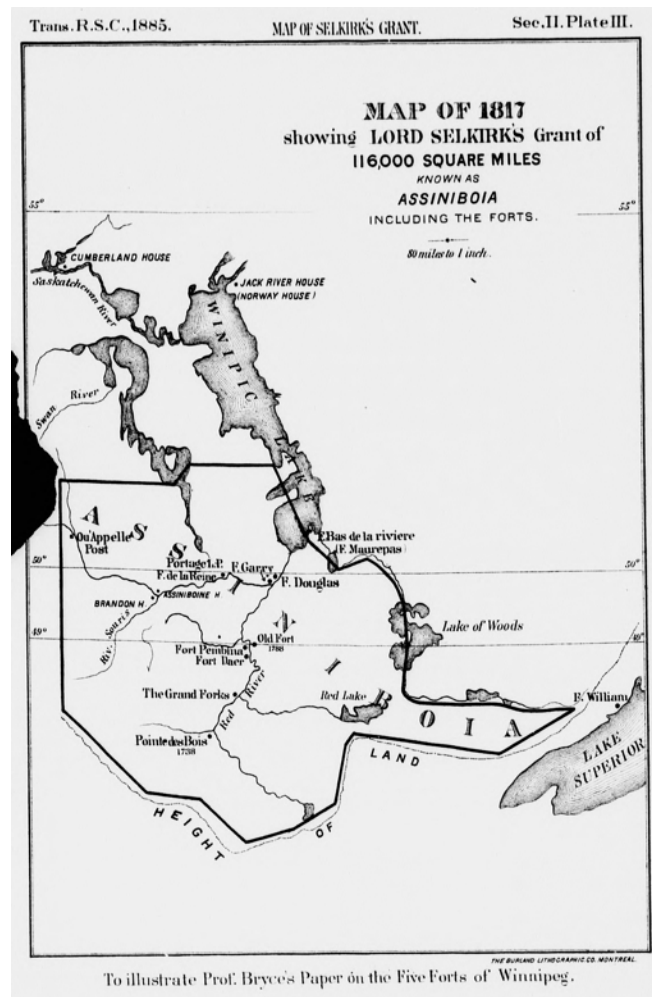


Figure 4: The Burland Lithographic Co. Montreal, Map of 1817 Showing Lord Selkirk's Grant of 116,000 Square Miles Known as Assiniboia. Bryce, George. "The Five Forts of Winnipeg." Canadiana.

Settlement. Selkirk, originator of the settlement scheme, had been looking for ways to support emigration to the British colony in North America for Highlanders being evicted and cleared from the Scottish highlands by their landlords, having previously sponsored settlements at Belfast, Prince Edward Island, and Baldoon in Upper Canada (Campey 4). In 1809, Selkirk and his brother-in-law, Andrew Wedderburn (later Colville) began facilitating their scheme, buying enough stock in the HBC that Selkirk and his supporters began to “dominate its policy” (Campey 77; cf. Bumsted 201). In 1811, he obtained a land grant from the HBC of over 300,000 square kilometres covering

the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, stretching from the Forks to Fort Qu'Appelle (fig. 4). The area was named "Assiniboia." The HBC felt authorized to make such a land grant to Selkirk based on its 1670 granting the company exclusive trading rights and territorial claim to a large area covering the Hudson's Bay watershed. The charter was one of a "complex array of legal arguments" that "British and Canadian institutions mobilized . . . to claim possession of huge expanses of territory they 'discovered' but did not control" through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries wherein "Indigenous people in the North-West exercised more or less unconstrained political authority over most of their lands" (Gaudry 46). English legal and political discursive strategies were deployed to narrate claims to land ownership in the North-West and begin a process of asserting colonial authority over Indigenous people.

In the 1670 charter, King Charles II "granted" a vast territory around the Hudson's Bay to the HBC, territory not considered "actually possessed" by any of Charles II's "Subjects or by the Subjectes of any other Christian Prince or State," for the pursuit of "some Trade for Furrs Mineralls and other considerable Commodities" and "such discoveries" from which would "arise very great advantage to us [Charles] and our Kingdome" (Royal Charter 3-4). Thus, the charter "not only granted the territory to the Company but also confirmed or asserted British sovereignty over it" (McNeil 6), revealing the discursive efforts to re-shape conceptions of the territory as British territory and re-shape Indigenous peoples as non-possessors under the terms of the charter. The actual terms of the HBC charter and territory "granted" were "remarkably vague," as Kent McNeil argues, likely due to the "extremely limited" geographical knowledge Europeans had of North America in 1670 (6). Grants tended to be defined "in broad language rather than on the basis of known geographical features," as in the case of the HBC charter, resulting in

territorial grants in North America that “frequently overlapped” (10).²¹ Inaccurate knowledge of the land did not deter discursive assertions of claim and authority in it.

Although British sovereignty was being asserted in the territory, Selkirk still understood that Indigenous partnership was critical to the settlement’s success, perhaps due to, as Gaudry argues, Selkirk’s “relatively weak political standing in the region” among Indigenous, HBC, and NWC inhabitants already living there (52). Selkirk instructed Macdonell in 1812 to garner favour with Indigenous people, that “no precaution must be limited to obtain their friendship,” and goods should be procured for gifts until the colony was well-established (qtd. in Sutherland 38). Selkirk also urged Macdonell to “concea[l] that the establishment [was] to be permanent,” and if “the jealousy of the Indians appear[ed] to be roused, the purpose of purchasing the land must be brought forward” (38). Macdonell confirmed all: “The natives must be conciliated & won over by some little presents. Your Lordship may rely on my not giving anything away unnecessarily” (38). Selkirk’s directives reveal some acknowledgement of the centrality of gift-giving practice for the Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous diplomatic frameworks, but for Selkirk, Macdonell, and the settlement, gifts were functional and perfunctory, treated explicitly as provisional expediency instead of physical manifestations of ongoing diplomatic commitment framed by kinship responsibility or, as understood in *Gdoo-naaganinaa*, signifiers of mutuality and respect in complex land relationships. Performing acts of Indigenous diplomacy both acknowledged their necessity and, in an oblique way, depth of what they represented, but it also re-shaped them in service to exertions of British sovereignty or rendered them,

²¹ In his examination of the geographical boundaries of Rupert’s Land, McNeil argues that provisions of the *Manitoba Act* arguably indicate French possession of “almost the entire region that was used to create Manitoba in 1870,” indicating the Red River Settlement “lay outside the [HBC’s] territory”: “In other words, since the Company’s Charter did not extend to that region, there was no legal authority for the powers exercised in the Settlement either by Lord Selkirk and his successors or by the Company itself” (37-38).

ultimately, unnecessary in the face of expected colonial success.

In the six years between the colony's establishment and the Selkirk Treaty, the Anishinaabeg, likely persuaded by Macdonell's efforts, demonstrated their commitment to the settlement, offering material aid at crucial moments. In 1812, the Anishinaabeg helped one of the first groups of settlers "finish their journey from the mouth of the Red River to a temporary camp at Pembina for the winter" and provided some food (Peers 89). The relationship continued to the extent that, when conflict between the Selkirk settlers and the NWC intensified such that settlers began leaving, the remaining settlers appealed to the Anishinaabeg as allies for support in the fight in 1815. In a speech addressed to Peguis and Ozaawashkogaad (Yellow Legs), the settlers argued that the Anishinaabeg were the only people with authority to determine who could stay in the region:

But we could not leave these lands without sending for you, in order that you might tell us to leave them, because we consider those who are now driving us from your lands as having no right to do so—half of them was not born upon these lands, and the greater part of them are the sons of Slave Women. We know these lands are yours, if you tell us to leave them we are ready to do so, but if you tell us to remain here we will not leave these lands, but you must make peace for us with these people. (Fidler et al. 55/fo. 27d)

The spokesperson framed the appeal in terms of legitimacy, deploying an argument of being "native-born" and an ambiguous reference to the "sons of Slave Women." The "sons" could refer to Métis related to "Slavey" or Dene people, who, although connected to Red River through the northern fur trade, were primarily located further north from the region, implying lack of authority or claim in it. Another possibility, not unrelated to the former, is that the phrase refers to descendants of enslaved people, possibly of Indigenous women "traded off as commodities" (Brown, *Strangers in Blood* 84-85). This sense bases the argument on social and class hierarchy that understands persons descended from unfree parents as devoid of power and, consequently, authority to arbitrate claims to settling the territory.

Ann Lindsay argues, contrary to a common theme in Canadian historiography, that chattel slavery, indentured servitude, and unfree labour were present and practiced in the fur trade, including at Red River, embedded as it was in the larger networks of trade and profit in the British Empire (1). Lindsay emphasizes that while it may be difficult to determine whether some uses of the word “slave” in fur trade records refer to “Dene” or “enslaved person,” there are many that clearly refer to enslavement or indenture (103-105).²²

Either way, the Selkirk settlers appealed to the Anishinaabeg as authorities that could legitimate the settlers’ presence and actions in the region. The Selkirk settlers had been infringing on Métis hunting economy (Gaudry 53), and they went so far as to attempt exerting legal authority in the area through the “Pemmican Proclamation” and other measures that constrained Métis peoples’ and other traders’ livelihoods. As the conflict intensified, the Anishinaabeg had remained uninvolved, being “confused by ‘these quarrels between relatives’” (Peers 90). Now, however, the settlers were invoking their alliance and expressing deference to Anishinaabe authority to bolster their own claims, practicing a selective recognition of Indigenous authority and alliance when it suited their concerns that was also consistent with Selkirk’s and Macdonell’s policy of strategic appeasement and conciliation. The Anishinaabeg responded with support, fulfilling what they understood to be their alliance obligations for “reciprocal aid” with “the full expectation that they would themselves receive aid from the Europeans some day” (Peers 89-90).

Rather than being met, however, their expectations were “consistently disappointed” (Peers 92). By 1817, the Anishinaabeg were growing frustrated with their relationship with the Selkirk colonists and HBC. Even though the Anishinaabeg acted according to their

²² For further discussion of enslavement and unfree labour in the fur trade, refer to Lindsay, “*especially in this free Country*,” 96-102, and Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 84-85.

expectations of alliances, “their ‘allies’ failed to do so, and . . . intentionally scorned them”: “Despite the crucial support that they had consistently offered the colony, no reciprocity was forthcoming. Instead, the Europeans did everything they could to deny the existence of anything but a token relationship” (92). As the conflict between the NWC, HBC, and Selkirk settlers calmed, the Anishinaabeg were not necessary for support and defense, and, therefore, they were no longer needed or respected, even though the Anishinaabeg had provided important support in the past and continued to supply the colony and HBC with needed provisions. An HBC official referred to as “Mr. Bird,” perhaps James Bird, advised Macdonell to avoid Indigenous alliances in the future: “Many of the Indians offer their assistance . . . but I hesitate to employ as allies savages whom it would be impossible to restrain within the bounds prescribed by humanity” (qtd. in Peers 92). Not only were Indigenous allies getting deprioritized because the colony did not need them anymore, they were also being dismissed on the basis of racial, and also moral, categories that framed Indigenous people for colonists as “savages” without ability to be guided by, presumably, civilized “humanity” and their “bounds” inscribed in *British* law and social custom.

* * *

Journal

June 2024, Hunter Street, Hamilton

Some days, it is enough to let interjections like “Mr. Bird’s” sit on their own without comment or elaboration, enough to let them “speak” on their own. But, some days, like today, anger and grief and furious impatience are not so easily absorbed, taken in, got over, moved on from as I move on to more sifting through the inheritances of our archived past. Mr. Bird (hopefully not an ancestor, but who knows!) was free with his feelings—of apprehension, suspicion, disdain—further indications of the archival history of paternalism and racist suspicion that continues to exert influence, from Mr. Bird’s moment to mine.

* * *

18 July 1817, Niizhoziibean, Nestawa'ya, The Forks

For Selkirk, making treaty with Indigenous people in Red River was necessary for at least two reasons, both having to do with the growing frustration Indigenous people felt and expressed. First, Selkirk noted the “resentment against” the settlers from the Cree and Anishinaabeg “for having taken possession of their lands without their consent or any purchase from them” (Letter to W.B. Coltman, qtd. in Craft 37), and he wanted to “settle disputes” between them “over use of land for settlement and agriculture” (Craft 37). Second, through treaty, Selkirk wanted to “refute the North West Company’s claim that the violence in the settlement was the result of Native dissatisfaction with colonists for not properly compensating them for their land” (Peers 92).²³

The text of the treaty takes the form of a land indenture written in English with a map sketching out the territory under discussion (fig. 1). Selkirk negotiated for “exclusive use of land, not in terms of a sale or surrender, but rather as a ‘gift’” (Craft 37), and this “gift” would be maintained by “merely a small annual present in the nature of a quit rent or acknowledgement of their [the Indians’] right” (Letter to Coltman, qtd. in Craft 37). He preferred annual presents to a single purchase made with a “large quantity of goods” because he could avoid criticism that “temptation of immediate advantage had induced [the Indians] to sacrifice their permanent interests” (qtd. in Craft 37). He also wanted to acquire

²³ It is unclear whether and to what extent Selkirk might have been influenced by the requirements of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 for treating with Indigenous peoples. The Royal Proclamation was not understood to include Rupert’s Land even though it did establish precedents for approaching Indigenous land agreements. Kent McNeil notes how “the second paragraph of the part relating to Indians . . . expressly excluded ‘the Territory granted to the Hudson’s Bay Company,’” for which reason the Supreme Court of Canada, in a 1966 court case pertaining to Inuit hunting, “held that the Royal Proclamation does not apply to Rupert’s Land” (3). McNeil adds, however, that “[t]his sweeping conclusion is open to question” based on a fuller reading of the proclamation. Kenneth Narvey also argues Rupert’s Land was included and that Selkirk’s grant, as with other grants, was understood not to convey “a clear title, but only the exclusive right to purchase the Indian title” (185). For detailed discussion, refer to Narvey, “The Royal Proclamation,” 183 ff.

through annual gifts “a permanent hold over [the Indians’] behaviour, as they must be made to understand that if any individual of the tribe violate the treaty, the payment will be withheld” (qtd. in Peers 92). Peers argues it is “doubtful” whether the Anishinaabeg and Cree understood Selkirk’s motives; indeed, evading full understanding was a key strategy of Selkirk’s from the beginning of the colony, as demonstrated in his instructions to Macdonell. Peers, however, suggests the Cree and Anishinaabeg interpreted Selkirk’s dealings with them through their own diplomatic frameworks and experience with traders whereby the annuity’s similarity with annual presents from traders “would have implied, from their perspective, a similar ceremonial honouring of a valued business associate or relative rather than the imposition of a hierarchical relationship such as Selkirk had in mind” (92). For the Anishinaabeg, the treaty marked a “formal acknowledgement” of their relationship with colony officials and “offered some protection for their remaining lands and resources” (92-93). Although Selkirk and his agents treated Indigenous people as necessary participants in negotiations over territory claims, they did so with the eventual goal of limiting Indigenous influence, authority, and claim even as they appealed to it in support of their own interests, contrary to Cree and Anishinaabe treaty protocols and history such as those conveyed in the Dish with One Spoon.

The *doodemag* that mark the treaty texts, as with other forms of Indigenous expression in settler texts in this period, are liable to constrained interpretations reflecting settler understandings of the treaty, but they also reach beyond these constraints, signifying more. Although they may be commonly “read” as equivalent to the signatures of Selkirk and others, *doodemag* are not analogous to signatures since European signatures “were intended to uniquely identify the individual signing and to convey his or her authority as a party bound to or a witness of the documents signed” (Bohaker, “Reading Anishinaabe” 16). Heidi Bohaker argues that because of their collective, rather than solely individual connection,

doodemag might be better considered in terms of “seals” that marked documents with heraldic imagery of the relevant authority and thereby “embodied relationships and kin connection as part of the tradition of heraldry” (16-17). While this might be a slightly closer analogy, as Bohaker argues in another work, interpreting Anishinaabe or any Indigenous work requires care and attention to the “political categories and terms” of the particular people and their language because “reaching for analogies from other political and cultural traditions” risks importing concepts that “do not adequately describe Anishinaabe politics and law” and “render invisible the present and power of Anishinaabe alliances and governance through alliance” (*Doodem* xxvii).

What Bohaker’s seal analogy draws attention to is the collectivity and kinship thinking *doodemag* convey. Sinclair describes their “synechdochal function, gesturing to larger systems and processes at work” (*Nindoodemag* 77). In a broad sense, *doodemag* formed a “foundation” for how Anishinaabe societies can “form and operate,” providing a way for Anishinaabeg to understand themselves and their relationships to one another and the rest of the world (77-78). *Doodemag* “indicated their community affiliations,” or “clans” as they are commonly referred to, signalled by a specific image that visualized that affiliation (Sinclair and Cariou 10). The iconography of specific animal beings evoked for the Anishinaabeg a network of associations and meanings that drew from their knowledge of that animal its relationships with the world, teachings and stories associated with it, and what those narratives signified for how Anishinaabeg conducted themselves, practiced their affiliations, in their families and wider communities.²⁴

²⁴ Basil Johnston, for example, in *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* organizes different *doodaemiwiwin* (totems) under the broader categories of the roles they held: *ogimauwiwin* (leadership), *gizhaudauwissoowin* (safe guardianship), *gautawaewauwissoowin* (providing the necessities), *kikinoomaugawin* (teaching), and *naundiwiwaewin* (healing) (20). Sinclair describes how carrying a *doodem* was a closer, embodied identification: “In essence, an Anishinaabeg carrying a *doodem* is *effectively* that *doodem*. . . . Given the gift of a totemic marker, Anishinaabeg

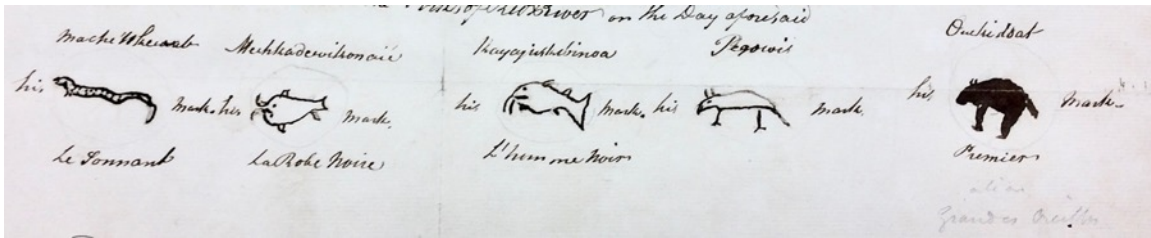


Figure 5: Doodemag, detail of the “Selkirk Treaty,” “Deed and map of 18 July 1817 conveying land adjoining the Red and Assiniboine Rivers from Saulteaux and Cree chiefs to Lord Selkirk.” H4-MB1-OS1-10 (E.8/1 fos 9-12), Legal records relating to the Red River Settlement, Governor and Committee, Hudson’s Bay Company. Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2019.

Thus, in another sense, *doodemag* are interrelational, visual bundling signifiers that work discursively and relationally in not only Anishinaabe political, social, and ecological relationships, but also in the broader network of Anishinaabe discourse and “intellectual narrative tradition” (Sinclair, *Nindoodemag* 64). The discursive ecosystem of Anishinaabe meaning-making included a range of “non-alphabetic” writing systems that slowly became re-contextualized in English-language and literacy forms (Sinclair and Cariou 12). Cary Miller shares a range of examples for *doodemag* use, including in “daily message” left for one another, posted messages in camp, to communicate with allies as well as enemies (37). *Doodemag* featured alongside petroglyphs, pictographs, birchbark scrolls, and other forms in a narrative network Anishinaabeg used to communicate and narrate their lives, to help them conduct their affairs. As signifiers used to “communicate identity,” it is unsurprising the *ogimaag* added their *doodemag* to the Selkirk Treaty in 1817. However, while the treaty text assigns individual names to each of the *doodemag* (fig. 5), thereby constraining them to an individualistic interpretation, they also figure beyond this limit, connecting in Anishinaabe intellectual and discursive history to the person’s family, place in their community, role and responsibilities, relationship with the more-than-human world, and their approaches to diplomacy. In this way, *doodemag* signified the collectivity of

carry the responsibility to form a lifelong relationship with this being in a variety of ways and incorporate what they learn into their lives" (*Nindoodemag* 81). Cf. Cary Miller, *Ogimaag*, 39-40.

Anishinaabe *ogimaag* responsibilities and participation in their communities through “the ethic of noncoercive reciprocity” rather than unilateral decision-making (C. Miller 36).

The *doodemag* on the Selkirk Treaty work along the same lines as Sinclair’s interpretation of the *doodemag* on the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal. The *doodemag* were “distinct signs” of commitment “to a long-term relationship, with a shared set of rights and responsibilities,” regardless of “how complex or misrecognized” (Sinclair, *Nindoodemag* 73). In a sense, they were “bagijiganan, gifts of relationship” that Anishinaabeg introduced to European newcomers and “invit[ed] them to join in various ways” through “remarkable statements about the worlds they inhabited”: “In other words, they were signing a treaty using treaties. By accepting these gifts, the French were bound to the parameters of these pre-existing ties and were expected to find their place within them, not vice versa” (74). However, this understanding of Anishinaabe gift thought and treaty as expressed in *doodemag* did not come through in the Selkirk Treaty’s language, which describes the “Chiefs” having “given, granted, and confirmed” the land itself for annual presents of tobacco. In this formulation, “gifts” of *doodemag* on the treaty document entailed with them the “gift,” or “sale” as was later argued, of land, rather than induction into long-standing relationships that had responsibilities to carefully maintain as in the Dish with One Spoon. Over time, effects of this misunderstanding emerged in settlers’ treatment of the Anishinaabeg, leading Peguis to protest the issue in writing toward the end of his life.

Although the Cree and Anishinaabeg were trying to practice their forms of diplomacy and governance through the treaty, the treaty form applied a constraining effect that persisted in the colony. As Peers argues, the treaty acknowledged Indigenous rights to

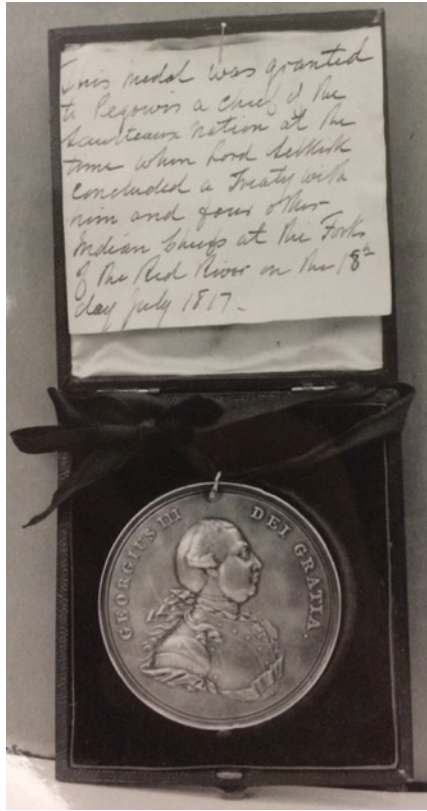


Figure 6: Photograph copy of Peguis' treaty medal from Selkirk featuring George III. Peguis Collection, Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2019.

the land, but it also resulted in their effective exclusion from the settlement (93). Rather than working as the creation of an ongoing, committed alliance, the treaty acted—as Selkirk intended—as a land transfer agreement, revealing “multiple legal traditions were present at the site of treaty signings, and each legal tradition was itself a product of a different ontology” (Bohaker, *Doodem* 23). For example, Peers notes how, likely due to their unfamiliarity with “the purpose of land treaties,” the Anishinaabeg later realized they had not “left themselves a legal access to the Red River” and had to negotiate it afterwards (94). This new discursive form presented interpretive and diplomatic challenges that did not meet their own expectations of negotiating shared territory with other Indigenous peoples. The imposition of this new form required them to

adapt to it while also constraining them as the terms were shifting to favour English legal and language approaches. As Craft argues, the memory of the Selkirk Treaty loomed in the memory of the Anishinaabeg leading up to Treaty One. Their dealings with colonists in this experience, proving different than the longstanding diplomatic traditions they were familiar with, were “influential” in their understandings of how settlers approached land use agreements conceptually and discursively (Craft 38-39).

* * *

18 July 1817, *Niizhoziibe*, *Nestawa'ya*, The Forks

In addition to the annual commitment of presents for the “quit rent” from the treaty, Selkirk gave the *ogimaag* gifts in recognition of their partnership. Peguis received a coat and

medal (fig. 6) along with a letter by Selkirk attesting to Peguis' services to the settlers and declaring he "deserve[d] to be treated with favour and distinction" by the HBC (Peguis Letter). Following Anishinaabe practices of gift-honouring in diplomacy, Peguis retained these gifts through his life and treated them as the physical manifestations, bundling signifiers in objects, of his relationship with Selkirk and the settlers. Through the fur trade, Indigenous legal traditions and their enactments were relied upon by traders to garner support with their Indigenous partners for furs, supplies, land and waterway knowledge, protection, and kinship (Craft 28). Traders' participation in gift exchanges, pipe ceremonies, and feasts were a critical practice of embodying and continually re-affirming their relationships (Craft 29), and these practices influenced Indigenous-colonial relations when more permanent colonies and settlements were being established, such as Selkirk's colony.

For Peguis, gifts expressed "a term of the treaty relationship that constituted the alliance and duty of care owed the other" (Bohaker, *Doodem* 6). Gifts facilitated all kinds of relationships, not only with other human beings, but also with *manidoos*, and the more-than-human world: "The giving and receiving of the present transformed the gift into both physical proof and a memory aid of the specific terms of alliance. If the gift was rejected, so too was the specific term or the larger alliance itself" (6). Thus, although gifts themselves were not always discursive forms such as wampum, they acted as sites of signification within the relational dynamic, narrated and re-narrated over time as part of the memory work for maintaining the relationship as it had been negotiated and agreed upon.

* * *

12 June 1821, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziiibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, Red River

In 1821, Peguis sent a message to Andrew Colville (*né* Wedderburn), Selkirk's brother-in-law, reminding him again of their relationship and its responsibilities as signified in gifts.

Andrew Colville acted as one of Selkirk's representatives after his death in 1820, and Peguis

addressed him as a spokesperson for the deceased “Chief,” *ogimaa*, taking up the terms of the relationship Selkirk and Peguis had set (Letter to Colvile, 7309). Peguis began by acknowledging presents Colvile had sent last fall and wrote he would “never forget” Selkirk’s request for Peguis to “take the Colony under [his] protection”:

I followed his wishes by taking the Colony under my care, and I shall hold it as an Eagle keeps its prey in his talons. Since my Father [Selkirk] is no more, we hear with great satisfaction that the Tree is not totally dead, that a promising sprout is rising to replace it in all its splendour as a rising Sun, to whom I shall hold sacred the promise I made to his Father. (7309)

However, Peguis’ communication was not limited to gracious declarations of his willingness to maintain responsibilities for care he had agreed to. Immediately following his salutary statements, he wrote, “I request thee to hear my complaints.” Peguis had already written to Selkirk “two or three times” with no answer, asking for a replacement of Selkirk’s current representative in the Red River Settlement. Now, in this communication, Peguis demanded a new person, writing, “The one you sent us again . . . we will have no more, he deceives us, he cheats us, and had he been alone to give me even your present I know it would not have been complete, and truth never comes out of his mouth. We are poor and pitiful, it is time to change” (7309). Although Peguis was willing to continue his service to the settlement, he expected reciprocal treatment and to be dealt with in the same respect, honesty, and care he expected from himself and other *ogimaa* in an alliance.

He concluded the letter by citing another service rendered for the settlement in preventing parties of Sioux from blocking the road the previous year. He had given them his flag and two medals, and now he requested these signs of their political relationship be replaced. Then, he marked the message with his *doodem*

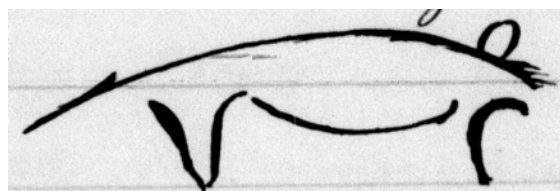


Figure 7: Copy of Peguis’ *doodem*. Detail, Peguis, Letter to Andrew Wedderburn Colvile, Red River, 12 June 1821. MG 19 E1, Reel C-7, vol. 21, p. 7310. Selkirk Papers, *Canadiana*.

(fig. 7).²⁵ A marginal note on Peguis' letter, presumably in Andrew Colville's hand, remarked, "A new flag and medal will be sent to him" (7309).²⁶ Peguis' insistence on respectful treatment and invocation of bundling signifiers of Anishinaabe diplomacy in his *doodem* and use of material objects remain in the colonial record, exerting their influence.

* * *

Creating and Converting the "Indian"

Journal

July 2019, Birmingham, United Kingdom

Scanning scanning scanning microfilm greys today interrupted by **P** and Peguis' name takes form in relation to other words, "ridiculous" and "degradation," and I'm tired again, slouching even more in the chair, glad I have a screen to hide whatever plays out as the excited moment flows into a weary one.

* * *

22 May 1824, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, Red River

When Anglican missionaries from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) began arriving on the Red River, some noticed Peguis' use of gifts from Selkirk, but their meaning and significance was often missed or reframed as supporting pre-existing ideas about "Indians." Whereas previous dealings between Indigenous people and European traders or settlers depended upon Indigenous practices and conceptions of diplomatic engagement, the discursive environment of the Red River was shifting as new people arrived who were ignorant or dismissive of this long-established dynamic. The summer after he was ordained a priest in the Church of England in April 1823, David Jones sailed to the Red River

²⁵ Because many of the Selkirk Papers are organized copies, Peguis' *doodem* is also likely a copy, drawn or traced by a clerk. As a 1941 transcriber of the handwritten copies noted under the re-copied *doodem*, "The drawing above is a correct tracing of Peguis' signature" (Peguis, Transcript of Letter to Colville 1051a).

²⁶ The 1941 transcriber of Peguis' letter added, "Note in Mr. Colville's writing" (Peguis, Transcript of Letter to Colville 1051a).

Settlement to relieve John West, HBC chaplain and Anglican missionary at the Red River settlement (Johnson and Bredin). In May the following year, Jones recorded in his CMS journal impressions of Peguis and his companions after they visited him:²⁷

A Band of Indians came today with their Chief at their head to beg some wheat or seed; their appearance was truly ridiculous, the old Chief dressed in a field officer's uniform given him by Lord Selkirk some years ago; they had about 30 Birch rind Canoes with a flag in the foremast, given them by the Company, and thus they proceeded up the river, beating an old drum and shouting, and yelling; their appearance altogether was a representation of human nature in its lowest state of degradation. (Jones 104-105; Appendix B1)

For Jones, the image of Peguis and his company arriving to visit him demonstrated their “state of degradation.” They come “begging,” by Jones’ description, and in their “ridiculous” appearance and shouts appear to him as confirmation of their primitiveness and lack of cultivation. Later in the entry, Jones mentioned he had met them on a previous visit, but rather than employing language that signalled acquaintance or familiarity with names, he wrote of them at a distance as an unspecified “Band of Indians” with a “Chief” in a worn uniform. What Jones missed were the ways he was being introduced and invited into Anishinaabe practices of alliance-making and kinship responsibility.

At the outset, Peguis’ purpose in visiting, according to Jones, was to request supplies of food, a practice consistent with Peguis’ relationships with Jones’ predecessor John West, Selkirk settlers, HBC traders, and the purported aims of the CMS to help and aid his people. Moreover, Peguis’ approach was also grounded in expectations of mutual care and reciprocity expressed in *doodemag*, treaty practice, gift thought, and concepts like the Dish

²⁷ CMS missionaries were expected to keep journals and submit annual reports to their superior offices for tracking the progress of different mission efforts the CMS oversaw. These materials related the work of individual missionaries, including financial expenditures, and collected information and stories for circulation to financial supporters in England where the CMS was based.

with One Spoon. In Anishinaabe society, relatives and allies who were in possession of more, and thus had more power, were responsible for redistributing to those who had less (Miller 23). All human beings, as per narratives like the creation story, generally existed in a state of dependence due to the existence of *manidoog* who possessed more power, and *gichi-manidoo*, who had the most power over all (C. Miller 22-24). Being in a state of need was concomitant with being human and reflected in relationships with other human beings “established through gift exchange with human and manidoog that promised to aide them in basic subsistence and to achieve the Ojibwe moral ideal, *mino-bimaadiziwin*, or life lived well, consisting of longevity, good health, and freedom from misfortune” (25). Because of the harsh environments they lived in, “[t]he only way to ensure mino-bimaadiziwin in all seasons was through establishing relationships of interdependency as widely as possible” by approaching “beings with requests for pity or to receive a blessing” (25). An explicit indication of need was considered the appropriate state to make such a request. In the case of Peguis’ visit with Jones, requesting food was consistent with the expectation of redistributive economy and the missionaries’ claims to support the Anishinaabeg.

In making his approach, Peguis again used bundling signifiers of relationship by honouring gifts that showed his history with Selkirk, settlers, and the HBC, asserting them as testaments and reminders for Jones of his diplomatic history and continued practice. Māori scholar Chanel Clarke argues Indigenous uses of dress were another “site of cross-cultural encounter, negotiation and manipulation,” showing in her study of nineteenth-century Māori practice how uses of both Māori and European dress, depending on the garment and context, conveyed different meanings ranging from diplomacy, desire for reciprocal relationship, implied political equality, gift exchange, or self-presentation as modern and cultured (“Dressing” 91; cf. Clarke, “Māori Encounters”). In the context of the Red River, Peguis wore the uniform given to him by Selkirk and flew the flag from the HBC,

employing in his own way the colonists' political and diplomatic emblems, honouring them as the gifts of relationship he understood them to be in Anishinaabe thought paired with the significance such symbols have in European society and governance.²⁸

Furthermore, the manner of the Anishinaabeg's approach up the river with numerous canoes and people, flying the flag, drumming, and calling out was consistent with how Peguis signalled his approach for diplomatic visits in the past with the Selkirk settlers and HBC. Nine years prior, HBC trader Colin Robertson described Peguis' visit to Fort Douglas in which the *ogimaa's* ceremonial gestures were interpreted in a way more consistent with how he intended them. Peguis arrived with nearly one hundred and fifty canoes, by Robertson's count, hoisting his flag in response to the fort's, and calling out loudly in response to every volley fired of the fort's canons, which in turn were fired in response to the Anishinaabeg's initial gunshots declaring their approach. Robertson described how all the people in the company were "decorated," giving a "wild but grand appearance" (17416). After they arrived, they were met with cheering, and Robertson initiated the pipe ceremony, during which "not a single word or even a whisper was heard." Afterward, speeches were exchanged discussing the nature of their relationship in the context of ongoing conflict with the NWC.

It is possible that as a missionary rather than a trader or colonist, and informed by his own ideas of racial, religious, and civilizationist hierarchy, Jones was not poised to think

²⁸ As Julie-Ann Mercer argues, "[c]lothing was . . . a form of colonial visual language that was used to mediate Indigeneity" as well as connections to colonists (166). Another account describes how Peguis, in order to mediate a conflict between himself and a group of Mushkego Cree over settler land use, had exchanged his "ordinary dress of a settler" for his "full Indian fashion, moccasins, fringed leggings, and breech cloth with a scalping knife in his belt" before hosting the pipe ceremony (qtd. in Peers 159; cf. Sutherland, *Peguis* 138-139 for a fuller account). Peers marks the use of clothing as an example of Peguis' "leadership skills" in negotiating dress for different audiences (159-160). Refer to Mercer, "Peter Rindisbacher" for discussion of lithographs of "the Red Lake Chief," possibly Peguis, depicted in two modes of dress in meetings at Fort Douglas, Red River.

of himself as engaging in a diplomatic relationship with the Anishinaabeg in the way traders and colonists had practiced. Jones' lack of knowledge or disregard for Anishinaabe diplomacy and its gestures likely also stemmed from the shifting power dynamics on the Red River that saw settler and trader reliance on their Indigenous partners diminishing over time, and, with it, shared knowledge about and respect for Anishinaabe expectations of reciprocity. Increasingly, European newcomers were able to ignore and remain ignorant of Indigenous conceptualizations and practices for inter-national relations because they no longer depended on them for their own survival.

In fact, the growing disrespect did not go unremarked in Jones' visit with Peguis in May 1824. Jones wrote that after the Anishinaabeg arrived, he reminded Peguis of a commitment made during a previous visit that Peguis would allow Jones to educate his children. In reply, Peguis affirmed his position and redirected Jones' attention to the issue of gift-giving: "Tis true I cannot read, but for all that I can remember, and I am not a man to throw my mouth into the ground, my brother, but you must wait a little longer. . . . I will call for the seed tomorrow" (Jones 105; Appendix B1). Jones said he would not give it the next day because it would be Sunday: ". . . we keep that day holy, as the Great God has told us; and I should be very glad to see the Indians observing it too, it is time that they should know these things now." Jones attempted to criticize Peguis and his resistance to proselytizing, implying that he and his people had delayed too long putting off what Jones assumed they should know or come to know, the Christian faith and its practices.

Peguis returned with his own criticism, however, asserting his expectations for relationship and relating the history of Indigenous-settler relations, their unequal impact on his people, and settlers' lack of recognition of this fact: "Well, well, my brother . . . this is fine talk now I tell you, Indians have never done so much harm to white people as they have to the Indians" (Jones 105; Appendix B1). By using a word bundle for kinship, addressing

Jones as “brother,” Peguis reminded Jones of the kinship framework guiding their relationship, which undergirded Peguis’ request for grain. Jones finally acknowledged Peguis’ meaning: “I could not but feel this keen retort.” However, whatever understanding Jones felt, he contextualized it within the framework of his own sense of mission to “cultivate” Peguis and his people. He commented in his diary that Peguis’ reply was “worthy of being recorded” as “proof of the acute discernment” of the “uncultivated Nature of the forest” and of “how little impression, humanly speaking, can be made upon these Indians untill [sic] they are softened by education and gradual introduction to the knowledge of the truth” (105; Appendix B1). Jones’ conceptual framework allowed him to identify “acute discernment,” but he was not able to accord full understanding or rationality to Peguis and people, arguing Peguis’ skill in discourse further demonstrated the need to render Anishinaabeg pliant through the “softening” effect, as Jones described it, of education and introduction to new forms of knowledge Jones was ready to apply. Such a moment from Jones’ journal demonstrates colonial attempts to stabilize and render coherent, under a racialized, civilizationist framework, Indigenous identity, thought, and behaviour, even as it also shows Peguis’ acute challenges of those attempts.

Even Peguis’ use of such discursive signs that should have registered for Jones, a uniform and flag, were treated as further evidence of Peguis’ need to be taught, revealing the contradictions of Jones’ interpretation. Rather than a political actor, Jones perceived in Peguis a performance of mimicry and ignorant enactment lacking reason, civility, and knowledge through the pairing of English heraldry and symbol with seemingly incongruent Indigenous gestures. What Peguis tried to assert could not be apprehended by Jones because it did not conform to his sense of the “real” and “right,” but Peguis asserted them all the same: his diplomatic sensibility and acuity with English political symbols, clothing, and forms of signification as well as Anishinaabe discourse.

* * *

7 November 1823, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, Red River

Jones' presence on the Red River was part of a broader change in the conceptual landscape of the territory that began with the fur trade and intensified with the arrival of settlers.²⁹ The presence of Christian missionaries further intensified these changes, as they brought with them new discursive forms, conceptual frameworks, and expressed intent to influence the conceptual landscape through their conversion efforts. The first Christian missionaries arrived on the Red River in 1818, namely, Roman Catholic missionaries primarily coming to serve the Catholic colonists and Métis. Although, as Peers writes, their dealings were not primarily with the Anishinaabeg, the missionaries still introduced new discursive forms through "Catholic teachings, prayers, concepts of saints and the Holy Family, and sacred objects" that would have "entered" Anishinaabe "consciousness" through "discussion with their Métis kin" and their own encounters with the missionaries (94). In addition to the religious forms came added reinforcement for "racist and assimilationist sentiments in the region" that, like the HBC colonist's description of Indigenous allies as "savages," framed Indigenous people as being in a state of "barbarism and the disorders that result from it" in need of "a progress in the arts of civilized life" (94-95). As Jones' writing indicates, the arrival of the CMS in the region reinforced sentiments of the need for Indigenous people to progress in civilization. Founded in 1799 by evangelical Anglicans, the CMS existed to send missionaries to various parts of "the heathen world" (Stock 69), including the Red River

²⁹ The influence of fur trade companies occurred more through encounter and exposure rather than active education, leaving Indigenous people fairly free of "directed cultural change" (Stevenson, "The Red River" 130). Conflict arose at points between HBC officials and CMS missionaries over competing motives for engaging with Indigenous people, but, while the HBC was reluctant to let "missionaries into areas which remained viable trading centres," it also considered missions as "the proper media for the instruction and moral guidance of the inhabitants of its vast territory" (Pettipas ix).

where a mission was established in 1820 with the arrival of John West, Jones' predecessor.

CMS missionaries brought with them the belief that Indigenous people, rather than being a "different species" from white Europeans as their polygenist contemporaries believed, reflected the "variety" of human life resulting from "the varying influences of climate, [and] habits of life,' including the knowledge or lack thereof of Christianity," as Derek Whitehouse-Strong describes ("Purveyors" 145). Indigenous peoples' "shortcomings" could be surmounted if they "unreservedly" accepted Christianity and "European understandings of civilization" (145). A duty to engage in mission work was motivated by the belief that "God had placed upon the British an 'obligation to impart' Christianity to others" by first "raising their nation to what they believed was the pinnacle of civilization and Empire and by conferring upon it the saving graces of Christianity" (146). In this understanding, the "colonized of the Empire were, at least in principle, fellow British subjects who were entitled to receive the benefits that they themselves associated with British culture, civilization, and religion," resulting in support for missionaries (146). John West echoed such sentiments, describing the "obligations which Christianity has enforced" of "rais[ing] the wandering heathen, who. . . are immortal in their destiny, from a mere animal existence to the partaking of the privileges and hopes of the Christian religion" (qtd. in Whitehouse-Strong, *Because* 58). CMS conceptions of Indigenous people were framed in a religious and cultural hierarchy that assumed the progress and ascent of "heathens" from "animal existence" to that of Christian religion and British civilization.

In records of his meeting with Peguis, Jones continually returned to such imagery and concepts of "Indians" but in ways that also demonstrated their contradictions both in Jones' own accounts of himself and in records' of Peguis' engagement with him that invoked other relational understandings. Jones recounted attempts to impress on the *ogimaa* the need for Christian education, especially for children. On 7 November 1823, Peguis visited

Jones. Although the missionary's "object" was to remind Peguis of his "promise" to John West to submit his children to Jones' teaching, Jones undercut his own effort, writing he "placed no value on the interview as it would be of little or no advantage to get children from Indians that frequent the Colony as this band does, as they would always be unsettling them and probably taking them when clothed" (Jones 90; Appendix B2). Jones' dismissiveness did not prevent him from trying to persuade Peguis on the basis of fulfilling a moral obligation, arguing "many of the White People" in England "loved the Indians very much" and were "willing to do them good at a great expense," including sending Jones to teach and "be a father to their children." Jones stated he hoped Peguis would not "let" him "write to these kind friends" to say that Peguis "will not let his children learn what the White People know" (90; Appendix B2). In one sense, Jones presented an argument about reciprocity—that Peguis and his people have already received gifts from the CMS and were responsible to return in kind with their participation in the mission.

However, Jones' argument was not one of reciprocity in an Anishinaabe sense, creating as it did indebtedness with an obligatory requirement for payment rather than an exchange of gifts in a mutually-understood and agreed-upon relationship. In his reply to Jones, Peguis elaborated what Jones neglected and located his arguments in the longer history of the Anishinaabeg's dealings with Europeans:

I have listened very much to what you say, and they are fine promises; we want our children to become like White People, to get plenty of Indian Corn, Wheat, and Potatoes, for since you White People have got our lands we are very poor; before that we had plenty—our woods were full of game—our creeks full of Beaver—our rivers full of fish, and we always conquered our enemies; but now the White People promise much and give nothing. And now you come and want our children, but I do not know what to say, for I hear so many reports, one saying one thing, and another thing, that I am quite distracted and know not whom to believe; last year a new Chief came, now he is gone and another is come, I do not know what to do of all this changing, but I shall see how things will go on. I will call my people together when I

go home and tell them what you say . . . (90; Appendix B2)

Jones interpreted Peguis' speech as another sign of Indigenous ignorance and pride, reflecting their position in his hierarchized understanding of knowledge, religion, and cultivation. In his notes on the meeting, Jones did not discuss Peguis' arguments, offering instead a character description of the *ogimaa* as "a very shrewd man, and a very harmless and inoffensive Indian, but completely spoiled by being initiated into habits of drinking in which he is more indulged than they commonly are from his contiguity to the Colony" (91; Appendix B2). He continued with a prolonged discussion of how "surprising" he found the pride of Indigenous people, contradictory to his "natural" expectations of "admiration and applause" he assumed "a barbarous and ignorant race" would give to one possessing "superior qualifications of mind" (91; Appendix B2). Rather than challenge Jones' entitlement logic, Peguis' and others' responses were re-incorporated in Jones' imagination and description as evidence of—and justification for—Indigenous ignorance in his hierarchized conception of knowledge, and of Jones' own position of authority and ability to act unilaterally. Within this framing, Indigenous reasoning and deliberation were based on a fundamental inability to properly understand themselves, a consequence of their un-enlightened state. Missing the ability of accurate self-perception, therefore, Indigenous people's arguments need not challenge Jones' conceptions of himself or others but should instead be countered with his efforts to teach them.³⁰

In contrast, Peguis' statements of not knowing what to say and waiting to see how things would go feature as word bundles, not of ignorance and confusion, but of approaching important decisions with *Naakgonige* (careful deliberation). As Leanne

³⁰ When Jones' did find himself acknowledging the "adroitness" of an Indigenous person's argument, he ended rather than engaged in conversation, as in his meeting with an unnamed Indigenous person, also recounted in the 7 November entry (91-92; Appendix B2).

Betasamosake Simpson describes, *Naakgonige* requires careful thought and decision-making when facing any kind of change and encourages attention to consider, not only one's self, but "all aspects of life and our relationships—the land, the clans, children, and the future" (*Dancing* 56-57). The issues Peguis raised with Jones required such a careful approach. There had not been sufficient evidence from "White People" for the "love" Jones wanted to argue. Rather, Peguis argued, "White People" were the very reason Anishinaabeg needed to find different food sources because the White People "got [their] lands." Where Peguis and other Indigenous people on the Red River had once been esteemed as important allies, increasingly they were dismissed in their own territory. Previous acts of support were forgotten, and respect from settlers "decreased greatly" (Sutherland, *Peguis* 85). As a result, claims of support were undermined by the Anishinaabeg's experience that "White People promise much and give nothing," proved inconsistent in their communication, and revealed the changeability of their leadership (either HBC officials, missionaries, or both). These were all factors that because of their potentials risks, for Peguis, required *Naakgonige* with his people, reflecting Anishinaabe collective approaches to decision-making and the Anishinaabeg's awareness of consistent bureaucratic change marking both merchant and religious colonial life that required careful deliberation and discernment.

* * *

Journal

January 2024, Hunter Street, Hamilton

The Indian Boys came as usual in the evening to my house to say their Catechisms and to sing. . . . This evening I was more than usually interested, as it was the first time that I witnessed them shedding tears. . . . what noble feelings of Philanthropy and affection and zeal are smothered in the mind of the North American Indian under the rubbish of ignorance; yea! what sweet strings are here mute to the praises of God through the chilling influence of Barbarity and Heathenism!!!

—DAVID JONES, 7 February 1824 entry in his CMS Journal

Read another passage in Jones' journal today demonstrating the conceptual frameworks

Indigenous children were being educated into. I was affected by the children's response to what they were being taught through music. In the passage, Jones describes singing the hymn "Lord, while little heathens bend" with the students and "witnessed them shedding tears" (102; Appendix B3). He explained the song, relating to the children "the cruelties practiced in the East, which are alluded to in that hymn" (102; B3). They sang a nineteenth-century hymn that refers to violent acts of non-Christian worship occurring in an undefined "eastern" place: children watching their mothers "burnt before their eyes," children "thrown to bears and tigers wild" or abandoned on "the river's brink." The hymn seeks consolation in Christian faith, including residence in "a Christian land," and urges singers to compare their actions to "heathen children" as they seek forgiveness: "Lord, let it not be said of us, / That heathen children were not worse" (Warne 61).

What did the boys singing with Jones understand of the hymn?

When Jones noticed their tears, he explicated the hymn and its depictions of violence by way of the Victorian missionary construction of the "East" as an un-Christian (i.e., heathen) place of violence and cruelty, introducing the children to moral, racialized, and relational categories that place them, Indigenous children of the Red River, in a comparative global relation with other racialized peoples and stereotypes of them. One child asked whether the children in the hymn had a schoolteacher to "tell them not." Paired with Jones' interpretation of the children's expressions as revealing their "inward approbation," the question functions in Jones' account as expressed support for CMS missionaries and understanding from the children (uttered by one, supposedly confirmed non-verbally by others) of the missionary's role in teaching them, acting as superior knower without whom people, including their own families and communities, are liable to experience what the hymn describes. Through their teacher's instruction, constructions of missionaries as "knowing" and Indigenous people as "not-knowing" has been leveraged in response to the

students' ultimately ambiguous affective response to the hymn. When Jones' entry was published in the CMS *Proceedings* for 1824-1825, it was introduced with the statement, "The Indian Children manifest a susceptibility of religious feeling which is very encouraging" (195).³¹ Whatever approbation the children might have felt, that Jones might have understood from the children's expressions, he dismisses Indigenous capacity for "noble feelings of Philanthropy and affection and zeal," arguing through his own violent metaphor they are smothered by ignorance, "Barbarity and Heathenism." The children are not knowers outside of Jones' instruction and interpretation. Their tears are not signs of knowledge and understanding, perhaps of deep intuitive understanding of what a song can do; there is no reference to their own interpretations of their feelings, only to Jones' instruction, being re-circumscribed by the lack of their knowing in need of the "conquest" of Calvary, as Jones quotes from another hymn.

But, why *did* the children cry? From fear of or shock at the song's violent imagery? Something else? Something more? The children would have heard a range of songs in their young lives, which might have included calling songs, songs sung in worship as invocations, prayers, for the presence of a spirit, a gift, etc.—much like hymns. Different communities varied in practice as to what kinds of ceremony children participated in, but it is possible the children intuited or had some context for thinking of hymns as calling, perhaps even from Jones himself as he taught them how and why to sing hymns.³²

Were the children afraid for what they might be calling? Especially with such frightening words?

* * *

³¹ The *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East* was an annual report for CMS supporters that featured excerpts from missionary journals and letters.

³² Thanks to Tanya Lukin Linklater for bringing to mind calling songs in a discussion about this passage.

ON THE “SAULTEAUX CHARACTER,” OR WHAT WERE MY ANCESTORS LIKE?

From a letter by CMS missionary Abraham Cowley to Richard Davies, 17 July 1846

Partridge Crop, Fairford, Binemoodaang, Manitowapow

You are fully aware of the Saulteaux character,

aaniin

and know that the Manitoba is

home!

the most *hopeless* and yet perhaps

the skies are big

the most *irksome* of all the Stations

zagimekaa bad?

in this part of the *world*.

*have you heard the one
about mikinaak's back?*

And why wonder for

its very name imports it.

Manito oopwā as pronounced by the Indians

manitowapow

signifies God's Straits.

the spirit moves here on the water...

In such a situation who cannot but
expect *difficulties*?

don't mess with manidoo

My trouble arises however not from the *place*

leaving aki out of it this time?

but among those who *inhabit* it.

misaaboos? ogaa? Nanabush!

You will gain a better idea of what I wish to convey if I lay before you

the actual state of things here and
the mode of my proceedings under the present circumstances.

bekaa!

It is now
four years

since the first attempt was made to establish a Mission
and nearly

two years

that my time has been fully given to it,

only six years?

yet NOT ONE Convert is made to Christianity.

have you met gichi-manidoo?

The Indians are *still* Heathen.

*I prefer Anishinaabeg
Ojibwe
or even take that old exonym
“people of the rapids”*

They conjure in every way as before.

bawaajiganan

They observe their feasts,

mawadisidiwag, wiikondiwag

idolatrous rites,

pray

dances,

biijishimo, babaamishimo, animishimo
feel the land under your feet

singing and

breath, sound, rushing air
agwaa'amaazo, onda'amaazo, anima'amaazo,
babaama'amaazo

drumming

heartbeats heartbeats heartbeats

with apparently as much devotion as ever.

one thing we have:
endurance
mashkawizi

When spoken to they argue so

gaganoonidiwag

absurdly and

ondaapi, animaapi, babaamaapi

stubbornly

cf. prev. note re: endurance

almost as though no one had ever shown them
a more excellent way.

quoting Paul, yes?
when he was writing to the city of Corinth
he followed up that line with a whole chapter about

what was it again?

oh yes,

zaagi'idiwin
zhawenjigewin

I speak of them as a whole, and
of their conduct upon an average.

“Though I speak with the tongues...”

I must now state my proceedings among them
to show another part
of their character.

sure, give us more of your side of the story

When we came among them,
I looked upon and treated them as

savages

“sounding brass...”

whom I wished to conciliate and
win over to Christ’s Kingdom.

“though I...understand all mysteries”

My house was always open to them by day and by night. Whenever any of them called I GAVE to each of them men and sometimes to the women about an ounce of tobacco of which they are excessively fond (this is the custom of the trade) and PROVIDED a meal for them... my custom has been to converse with them and thus preach Christ crucified. Such parties I have always ALLOWED to remain eating and drinking such things as we had to give as long as they thought proper conversing frequently with them and inviting them always to attend our devotions, when the Scriptures were explained to them. This has been my practice towards Indians coming from any distance. As it respects those who happened to be eating near, of course the case was different. To these I occasionally GAVE a piece of twist tobacco, ALLOWED them to make my house as common as their own tents and seldom if ever turned away one begging without GIVING him a part of such food as I possessed pemican, flour, fat, dried meat, milk, fish, beef for bread and butter; such opportunities I embraced for preaching the Word, and pointing out the advantages of civilization. These also I often VISITED at their tents for the same purpose. I HELD prayers morning and night and PRESSED them to be present on the latter occasions. On Lord's days I URGED them to attend the services... after which at first I GAVE them something to eat at my own house but finding this inconvenient...

"though I bestow all my goods..."

I TRIED to collect them on Sundays without the food, but found this impracticable though I INVITED them day by day. "Give us food and we will come to hear you" or some such answer was their constant reply. This distressed me very much and often very often have I been quite ashamed and disheartened to be here to preach and to have none to hear me; you can have little idea of the poignancy of such a case. Rather than that the Indians should not hear the Word I DETERMINED to ALLOW to each man or woman who should attend the service a pint of flour each day. Since then we have always had a congregation when the Indians have been at hand. The very same difficulties have presented themselves in the School department, and we have been obliged to allow to each child from the tent a half pint of flour daily as an inducement to attend school.... To secure a congregation and better the condition of the poor creatures around me I continually URGED them to locate themselves upon the banks of the river and farm. Knowing their destitution and to encourage them I offered to assist any that are disposed to build and farm. The assistance I HAVE PROFFERED is as follows: To lend axes to cut, and oxen and sleds to haul... To help to put up the house. To give the owner upon his going into it one pound to enable him to buy a few necessary articles, one calf and one pig to commence stock with, to plough the land and he may prepare and furnish seed for it for nothing. All this I HAVE BEEN DOING but I find that it involves me in an outlay that the increasing want of an increasing family (notwithstanding all the economy and coarse living that I PRACTICE) prohibit or bid me curtail.

I think the above will throw
light on the character
of the Salteaux[sic] and
explain how it is that they
attend our Services,
build and farm, and yet
retain their heathen habits and dispositions.

“understand...all knowledge”

The length of time they have heard the Gospel of our salvation
opposed to their conjurations,
feasts,
dances, and
other religious observances
that they have heard the terrors of
the holy law of God
that they have been invited and
urged
to accept of salvation
through Christ alone
as the only way in which men can be saved
that they have been wooed by
the love of Jesus
a love stronger than death and
all without effect
especially under
the above circumstances
causes me to fear that their day of grace
is not yet come and that
I am doing wrong
by spending the Society’s means among
so hopeless a people.

“...have the gift of prophecy”

“though I should give my body...”

* * *

1820-1860, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, Red River

Since the mission's beginning in 1820, conditions on the Red River made some form of partnership with the CMS increasingly necessary as a means of survival. Anglican missionaries appeared as potential partners like the traders and settlers before them—an impression reinforced by the missionaries' persistent declarations of support. Long-held customs of alliance from the fur trade waned, and Indigenous people found they were being afforded less respect and deference over time. Resistance to missionary intervention shifted over time as they experienced challenges, leading to further entries of Indigenous discourse in CMS records. However, as Jones' and other missionary writing demonstrate, Indigenous discursive engagement continued to be described in the hierarchized conceptual terms that animated the CMS' sense of mission, especially with increasing emphasis toward settlement and changed land relationships.

In CMS discourse, Indigenous people had to contend with emerging notions of Indians that fostered conceptual hierarchies of difference and power differentials in their relationships with Euro-Canadians in spite of Indigenous peoples' own expressions of themselves. David Anderson, Bishop of Rupert's Land, employed imagery of ascent and advancement in the "scale" of religious life when he complained in his 1859-1860 report that Indigenous people, "even. . . the most advanced Christians," did not pursue "deeper religious life," resting instead "contented with a lower level" instead of "press[ing] forward to the measure of the stature of perfect man" and "higher . . . divine life" he expected for converts (206; Appendix B5). Indigenous people might have converted and done what the CMS missionaries wanted of them, but they have not converted *enough*—confining them, again, and primarily in relation to their place on the "heathen" and "perfected" continuum. Anderson's assessment illustrates the emergence and persistence of discursive and

conceptual categories such as “Indian” that were assumed to be “meaningful,” as Brownlie argues about missionary discourse in Upper Canada, and could narrate “real differences—in character, morality, and intelligence” between “between Indians and whites” by Euro-Canadians (171). As with other evangelical Anglicans, Anderson understood difference on a spectrum with the potential for “attainments,” but his assessment of Indigenous Christians relied on his conceptions of them rather than on Indigenous peoples’ understandings of themselves. Whatever beliefs of universality were implied in the *availability* of Christianization, cultivation, and civilization to all, featured as what Daniel Coleman terms a “limited or constrained universality” and “bounded civility” requiring the transformation of “Indians” through settlement, education, and conversion, but keeping them always removed from attaining its ideals (*White Civility* 14).

Missionaries, therefore, participated in processes of alienating Indigenous people from their lands, and of settler encroachment already underway, even as they purported to aid them through the formation of permanent agricultural settlements such as the Indian Settlement on the Red River. It did not matter that Peguis and his band had been growing corn and potatoes since at least 1805 while the CMS tried to introduce English agricultural practices or that other Indigenous people had practiced different forms of gardening and agriculture in the prairies for much longer (Peers 134-135; cf. Sutherland, *Peguis* 26).³³ Added to conceptions of Indian “difference” was the perceived problem of what Anderson called their “migratory character” (Report 205; Appendix B5), elsewhere described as “wandering,” that required settlement to achieve the higher religious states missionaries desired. An 1820 proposal for the mission in North America argued a “common cause of failure” in other attempts to “civiliz[e] savages” lay in efforts to “inculcate religious and moral instruction,

³³ Refer to Carter, *Lost Harvests* for further discussion of Indigenous farming histories.

without a sufficient basis of the habits of civilization” (Committee, “Proposal” 368-369).

Red River missionary William Cockran framed the settling of “the weather beaten wanderer of the North” almost as inevitable. He described in 1832 how land on the Red River had already become “too valuable” for Indigenous occupancy or ownership, creating an opportunity for the CMS to mediate Indigenous land relationships through settlements that would protect land for Indigenous occupancy from settler encroachment (Letter 3; Appendix B6). Cockran argued “[s]eizing and preserving” Indigenous rights to land while such rights were “acknowledged by all parties to be inviolable” was an important motivation, but even his acknowledgement of Indigenous claims assumed a paternalistic response to an expected future in which these claims would not be acknowledged at all. Thus, “[p]lacing an ignorant savage upon a piece of land” could “make room” when the “wanderer” must “drift in and find a retreat when he can weather the storms of his native woods no longer” (4; Appendix B6). In Anderson’s report, written almost thirty years after Cockran’s, the notion of Indians’ mobility persisted as an ongoing problem that “materially check[ed] education,” “prevent[ed] their growth and rise,” “lessen[ed] the amount of spirit and local attachment,” and “perpetuate[d]” the “habits of Indian life,” demonstrating again the limits of whatever advancement he claimed was available to them (206; Appendix B5). Stereotypes of migratory Indians and their perceived differences in character also exerted influence more broadly in settler society, emerging later, for instance, in discourses of the Numbered Treaties.

The CMS’ emphasis on settlement shows how missions entwined with the broader settler colonial project and the interplay of material affordances for discursive and conceptual ends—changing Indigenous peoples’ relationship to land in order to change their minds and hearts. Anderson’s report understood the settling of Indians as a necessary and urgent moral project requiring the CMS’ political advocacy in colonial governance

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expectations of Indians toward Anishinaabe assertions of self-determination and relationality. In his journal for 1845, missionary Abraham Cowley recorded part of a conversation about farming with an influential *ogimaa* named Kewetayash (Flying Round): “I do not think that I shall be able to join you yet, as I must be off hunting in the spring when the farming commences” (13 Jan. 1845, 11). About sixteen years later, Kewetayash’s position shifted. He addressed a letter to the CMS expressing more interest in missionary support:

I am not able to go to see you now—my health’s not being very good. But when you see this letter, think it the same as though you saw me. It is not my wish to speak first to you. I want to see what offer of assistance you make me, my Lord. You will speak first. I understand your wish is to seek a man to come among us; we have one in our minds. I wish him to come at once to select a spot, as we are to leave for the hunt when the present moon ceases to shine. Let him come with my Brothers. My Lord, I have now decided to have a house like yours. (Letter [to Anderson] 513)

Kewetayash showed openness to having a missionary live among his people, desire for a house, and interest in other forms of assistance from the CMS, but he also asserted his autonomy and leadership by holding a position of leverage with the CMS by insisting his reader “speak first” the offer, by retaining his hunting practice, asserting his peoples’ authority in selecting a missionary, and setting the terms for the missionary’s arrival. He also mentioned nothing of baptism and had not been baptized at the time of sending the letter as indicated by the letter’s label in CMS records: “Letter of Kiwetias, chief of the Reed River Indians (a heathen)” (513).³⁴ Although Anishinaabeg sought missionaries’ assistance, this did not necessarily entail submission or capitulation to missionaries’ expectations or perceived authority. As in historic diplomatic practice, Anishinaabeg resisted unilateral authority in their dealings with other peoples, and people like Kewetayash maintained such

³⁴ David Anderson, likely the addressee of Kewetayash’s letter, also described Kewetayash as “the conjuring Indian Kewitias,” signalling not only Kewetayash’s resistance to conversion but also his influential and prominent status as a knowledge-keeper among his people (Letter to Chapman 512).

expectations in their dealings with various settler groups. While missionaries became another resource for the Anishinaabeg, Peguis and others learned “while they might ask for certain things from the missionaries, they themselves would be asked to give a good deal more in return” (Peers 131), a possibility Kewetayash also seemed attuned to.

Peguis and his people worked strategically to maintain their relationship with the CMS while putting off the missionaries’ attempts at ceremonial and cultural transformation, perhaps as another expression of *Naakgonige* and its discerning practices. For almost two decades Peguis and many of his people refused conversion while still participating in or offering support for certain CMS projects such as education, construction of buildings, some participation in services and visiting with missionaries, and even the establishing of a more permanent settlement at Netley Creek in 1831. Missionaries became increasingly frustrated with their resistance, but the Anishinaabeg maintained their strategic approach. Even when Peguis encouraged his people to consider settlement in 1832, it was primarily motivated by issues of accessing game (Peers 135-136). Even then, only a few families moved to the “Indian Settlement.” Even when Peguis was baptized in 1838, he took the baptismal name “William King” to signify and assert his authority translated in English-language terms and understood as equal with the English monarch. As for his broader community, Peers notes that “few others” converted, and that this suggests Peguis was partly “motivated by political reasons” (161). While this is possible, and Peguis’ partnership with the CMS was a point of conflict at times among his people (Podruchny 373), another possibility is that Peguis’ conversion without significant community response signalled another outworking of *Naakgonige* by which the relationship with the CMS, and its perceived benefits, could be maintained without imposing conversion unilaterally on the whole community. Such an approach may have even been a collectively-authorized strategy of compromise or concession that maintained peoples’ decision-making authority.

As in his relationship with Selkirk and the HBC, Peguis employed gift exchange expressed in diverse forms of communication in his relationship with the CMS as a sign of their diplomatic partnership and commitment.

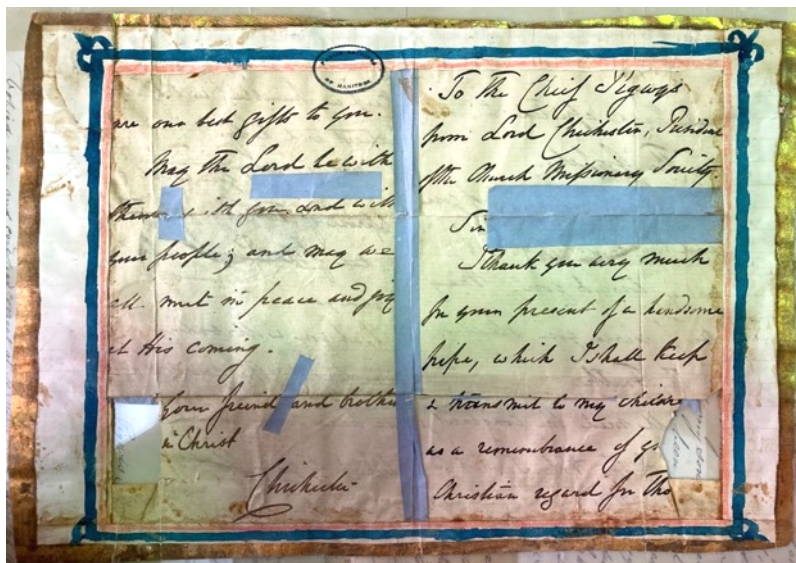


Figure 8: Letter of thanks from Lord Chichester, President of the CMS, ca. 1838. Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2019.

In October 1838, when Jones went on leave to England,

Peguis sent with him the gift of a pipe and a letter to the CMS office in London requesting another missionary to support Cockran's efforts among them (Sutherland, *Peguis* 119-120). In reply, Peguis received two letters. The first was a letter from Dandeson Coates, the CMS Secretary, acknowledging the pipe and encouraging Peguis to maintain his Christian faith, employing language of kinship framed in Christian terms, and confirming that another missionary would be sent (Coates 152-153; Appendix B7). The second letter was from Lord Chichester, President of the Church Missionary Society, also thanking Peguis for the pipe and expressing his regard and affection to Peguis and his people (fig. 8).

* * *

Journal

December 2019, maskotêw, wînipêk, Winnipeg

Flip a folder and a slip may shimmer; copper-colour gilded edging and teal ink floret scrolls frame a much-patched letter stained and frayed from folding. Who gilded the letter? Why?

* * *

Peguis also continued to use the flag from the HBC and medal from Selkirk as tangible reminders of their historic commitments to one another in his interactions with CMS

missionaries. Peguis was in the practice of hoisting his flag from the HBC in honour of David Anderson, doing so for Anderson's arrival to the Red River in 1849 (Letter to Venn [1849] 566; Appendix B8) and at subsequent visits (Letter to Venn [1850] 589; Appendix B9). During one visit, Anderson gave Peguis a gift of "two handsome Bows" he brought from England and remarked on Peguis' George III medal from Selkirk, noting its significance if not entirely understanding its meaning: "[the medal] is with them the badge of royalty, the same as a crown with us; to take away the medal is then the same as to dethrone" (Letter to Venn [1849] 566; Appendix B8). Indigenous discursive practices of diplomacy and relation feature in CMS records as assertions of Anishinaabe relational thought and, in moments, registered for their settler audiences even if they were not fully understood or accepted.

* * *

Engaging Settler Publics in Writing

... the poor Indians, the rightful owners of the soil, and the unhappy victims to the cupidity of the fur-trading monopolists, have thus far enjoyed no opportunity of pleading their own cause, or of stating what their views are with regard to the future disposition of their own country. The Committee of the Aborigines' Protection Society have, therefore, felt it to be a duty specially incumbent upon them to supply, as far as they were able, this lamentable deficiency. . . . But we are happy to state, that, while acting in our representative capacity, . . . we have also been able to place before the Parliamentary Committee some more direct evidence of the treatment, condition, and desires of our Indian brethren.

—ABORIGINES' PROTECTION SOCIETY, preface to Peguis' 1857 letter (223)

1857, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, Red River

Anderson's desire for Rupert's Land to become a direct colony of the British Crown reflected a significant shift over the mid-nineteenth century away from the centrality of the fur trade and its companies to the formation of settler colonies governed by the Crown that were enmeshed with Victorian ideas of progress that entailed "civilizing the wilderness" and its Indigenous people. As part of this larger project, "social discourses in Canada and Britain" were changing, Gaudry argues, as "discourse on civilization, and its equation with

settlement, expansion, and market-oriented agriculture” became more prevalent, leading to “an intimate challenge of Indigenous governance in the North-West” (56). Brownlie describes how settler colonialism in Canada was a “cultural and discursive project as well as a material and geopolitical one” (170), and in the prairies, physical and social manifestations of settler colonialism’s challenge to Indigenous governance appeared in investigations of the region’s economic potential through “well-publicized scientific expeditions” in the 1850s initiated by the British and Canadian governments in response to lobbying by developers and speculators (Ray et al. 96). Starting in 1857, the Hind and Palliser expeditions described Indigenous peoples of the prairies and Rocky Mountains, agricultural viability of the land, mining resources, and possibility of transportation routes. Indigenous people were attuned to the shifts in their environments over the period.

Many, like Peguis, foresaw growing expansion efforts and, with them, the threat of increasing marginalization in and alienation from their lands. By 1857, settlement was expanding onto reserve lands, and while some *ogimaag* like Peguis could be “flexible” in their dealings with settlers, especially when they were approached with respect, individual cases that seemed to show settler recognition of and respect for Indigenous peoples and their claims could not make broader assurances, especially when considered in relation to the larger shifts of settler ignorance and incursion (Sutherland, *Peguis* 138; cf. Carter, “They Would Not” 175-176). As he had previously with Selkirk and Colvile, Peguis took up letter-writing again in 1857 to protest growing settler disregard, entering a new discursive environment of English-language periodicals and newspapers.

Peguis’ 1857 letter was addressed to Victoria by way of publication in *The Colonial Intelligencer*, a periodical of the Aborigines’ Protection Society (APS). The letter is written in English, likely orated by Peguis, then translated and recorded in English by someone else, possibly one of his sons as indicated in an attached letter by Frederick W. Chesson,

Secretary of the APS: “The letter, I am informed, is in the handwriting of his son” (226). In the letter, Peguis detailed his concerns about the Selkirk Treaty, appropriate compensation for land, settler encroachment, complaints with the HBC, and concerns for the future of his people in the face of increased settlement. Peguis argued that in 1812 their lands “were taken possession of, without permission” from himself or his tribe “by a body of white settlers,” and that for the sake of peace, he “allowed them to remain” on the land with the promise that they “should be well paid for them by a great Chief who was to follow them” (qtd. in Sinclair and Cariou 14). They had not been paid, he continued, being promised only provisional gifts of ammunition and tobacco, and the matter of compensation was never resolved while settlers continued to claim more and more territory:

Those who have since held our lands not only pay us only the same small quantity of ammunition and tobacco which was first paid to us as a preliminary to a final bargain, but they now claim all the lands between the Assiniboine and Lake Winnipeg—a quantity of land nearly double of what was first asked from us. . . . We are not only willing, but very anxious, after being paid for our lands. (15)

Peguis’ letter employs discursive strategies that show his approach as conciliatory and assertive, drawing upon principles of Anishinaabe diplomacy and framing them in Victorian language and literacy. At points, Peguis’ conciliating approach is more explicit in accepting certain aspects of the expansionist project, acknowledging perceived benefits of settler farming methods and expressing a desire for agricultural support for his people, which includes more white settlement: “We are not only willing, but very anxious, after being paid for our lands, that the whites would come and settle among us, for we have already derived great benefit from their having done so—that is, not the traders, but the farmers” (qtd. in Sinclair and Cariou 15). However, through the process of translation, emphases on reciprocity, mutuality, and equity drawn from long histories of Anishinaabe treaty-making risked constraint by the conceptual frameworks in which they were received,

creating a contested site of signification in the effort to communicate and be understood. As Sarah Carter points out, drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic, records of communication such as Peguis' drew upon different linguistic, rhetorical, and diplomatic traditions. "The records that survive," Carter emphasizes, "were translations, and often poor translations" in which common terms would be used but with "very different meanings attached" ("The Faithful" 80). Such interpretive complexity did not prevent colonial authorities from using such records "to grandstand loyalty and awe for the monarch" (80).

For example, Peguis made an ethical appeal based on Christian morality that might have registered for settler readers as compliance with the entirety of the missionizing-as-civilizing project as expressed in the CMS and their hierarchized forms of relation:

[The missionaries] have told us the good news, that Jesus Christ so loved the world that he gave himself for it; and that this was one of the first messages to us, "Peace on earth and goodwill to men." We wish to practice these good rules of the whites, and hope the Great Mother will do the same to us; and not only protect us from oppression and injustice, but grant us all the privileges of the whites. (qtd. in Sinclair and Cariou 15)

By the time he wrote this letter, Peguis had been baptized for almost twenty years and developed a closer connection to the CMS missionaries. Rather than expressing his sense of Christian faith as an acceptance of Indigenous inferiority, he leveraged it as another ethical invocation for how he and his people should be treated—as equals. The terms under which land and land relationships were discussed in the letter, especially repeated references to compensation for land, risk covering over complex histories of Anishinaabe territorial diplomacy, such as *Gdoo-naaganinaa*, while veering toward transactional language based on British concepts of property and diplomacy.

Appeals made through kinship language, using the language of "protection," also risk acceptance of colonial paternalism (or maternalism). Peguis addressed Victoria in his

letter as “Great Mother,” asking her to “shew herself more truly great and good by protecting the helpless from injustice and oppression” (qtd. in Sinclair and Cariou 16). Through translation, Peguis’ use of Anishinaabe kinship frameworks for political discourse also register in prominent metaphors of colonial discourse such as “Great Mother” and “red children” that, as Carter notes, “emphasise[d] the inferior position of the colonized people of the Empire, to ‘fix, rank and subdue’ them” (“The Faithful” 78). Through translation, the discourse of Peguis’ letter likely registered these significations for colonial audiences, framing Indigenous people as colonial subjects needing benevolent British monarchical rule for advancement in civilization made available through empire.

The letter’s publication in *The Colonial Intelligencer* and *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson’s Bay Company* (SCHBC) illustrated some of these dynamics in the letter’s reception and interpretation by colonial audiences. The APS, for example, introduced Peguis’ letter with an introductory note that emphasized the APS’ paternalistic role in facilitating civilization, stating the intent to act “not merely as the self-appointed, but, to some extent at least, as the chosen friends of the Indian race in British North-West America,” which entailed appointing themselves to make up the “lamentable deficiency” of “Indians” not having opportunity “of pleading their own cause, or of stating what their views are with regard to the future disposition of their own country” (223).³⁵ Following

³⁵ The APS’ self-understood liberality and evidence of the “Red River Indians” were positioned in opposition to proponents of

... the monstrous theory, that, by the operation of a natural and unchangeable law, the Indians must of necessity disappear before the advancing march of the white man. We think our readers will agree with us that the history of the Indian settlers at the Red River effectually explodes this hideous doctrine, and as forcibly proves, that if the natural rights of the red man are respected, and he is treated as the equal and the brother of his more favoured fellow-creatures, he will adapt himself to the new state of things introduced by civilization, and will become the progenitor of a happy, increasing, and enlightened posterity. (230)

The APS explicitly supported colonization of Indigenous lands and people on “civil” terms:

And while we believe that colonization is desirable, and we hope to see the day when the whole of the

Peguis' letter, the APS expressed agreement and support for his claims and added their own evidence for the "progress of Christianity and the growth of social improvement among the Red-River Indians" to demonstrate Peguis' reliability, thereby constraining him and his people again within that broader paradigm of Indians *en route* to overall improvement through civilization and the committed efforts of their "more favored fellow-creatures," their British "brother[s]" (229-230).

Peguis' letter ended up in the SCHBC report when APS secretary Chesson forwarded it to the chair of the SCHBC, Henry Labouchere, as evidence both of the injustice Indigenous people experienced in Rupert's Land under the HBC's leadership and of Indigenous "improvability." Chesson described Peguis' band and their settlement as "a remarkable example of the improvement of which the Indian race is capable" in which the "great majority of the tribe" were "settled down as farmers" with the added distinction of, "singularly enough," furnishing "the only harnessmaker and tinsmiths which the Red-River Settlement possesse[d]" (226-227). Even the possibility of Peguis' son having written the letter was described by Chesson as "creditable proof of Indian capacity" (226). All credit and notes of praise throughout were refracted through the paternalist frame as arising from the investments of British language, literacy, and education and needed only more protection and support than the HBC had given to grow even more.

In the SCHBC report, Peguis' letter featured only as an appendix, published along with his letters from Selkirk and George Simpson attesting to his character and framed by an additional letter from the APS that reiterated arguments from Chesson and *The Colonial*

vast regions of Hudson's Bay will be opened up to the enterprise of the Anglo-Saxon race, we are equally anxious that every precaution should be taken to prevent a repetition of those terrible acts of cruelty and injustice which have been so frequently perpetrated upon our uncivilized fellow-men by lawless backwoodsmen and unscrupulous marauders. (230-231)

Intelligencer that the Anishinaabeg at the Red River Settlement “abundantly demonstrated” the “capacity of the red men for the habits of civilized life” (United Kingdom, 444). Adele Perry notes how the placement and framing of Peguis’ letter relegated it as “fundamentally lesser, static and mediated through the interlocutor of British advocates”:

Peguis’ testimony was thus literally frozen in time, located in a version of what Anne McClintock famously dubbed the ‘anachronistic space’ carved out for non-European peoples in colonial discourses. Within the pages of the published report, the illustrious and by then elderly Anishinaabeg [*sic*] leader was represented as both dubious and spectacular at the same time. . . . accompanied by old letters from Lord Selkirk and Simpson vouching for his loyalty and good character . . . to colonial authorities. (164)

* * *

Excerpt, Research Note

c. 2018-2019, Hunter Street, Hamilton

- [Note: Today, while reading context in *Indigenous Communities and Settler Colonialism*, I wept. Wept for the idea that “Peguis’ letter represented the unexpected intrusion of an Indigenous voice into the SCHBC, but one that was different, lesser and never entirely trusted” (Perry 164). → My affect, my feeling says something truthful about the archival record—for then and now, for me.]

* * *

Colonial narrations of Peguis and his people as Indians showing the promises of civilization and settler discursive registers of Peguis’ communication in translation can feel containing in an ongoing re-circumscription of Indigenous voice into the project of empire. Peguis’ deployment of Anishinaabe thought and discursive practice, however, still emerge in his communication and demonstrate his insight into settler colonial discourses he had to contend with. As with records of his engagement in missionary discourse, he positioned his acceptance of Christianity and communication in its terms as gestures of connection, attempting conceptual translation to strengthen alliance. Even his son’s acquired language and literacy through missionary education offered possibilities for better communication,

closer connection, and, ultimately, stronger diplomatic partnerships with supporters at home and abroad who, as he perceived them, would try to continue settling the Red River region. Whether his own or brought out in translation, Peguis' discursive strategy, its potential constraints and limitations, show not only the highly complex and dynamic process of Indigenous-settler communication at this time, but also attempts to adapt to, and mitigate increasing marginalization in a dramatically shifting physical, social, and discursive environment.

Closer readings of a few key word bundles, for example, draw out more possibilities for interpretation than if read only in their Victorian context. When Peguis writes he and his people “are not only willing, but very anxious, after being paid for our lands” (qtd. in Sinclair and Cariou 15), I read his multiple references to “pay” and “payment” as word bundles invoking something more than transactional financial relationship for land as property. While we do not have record of what Peguis' own terms might have been, the Anishinaabemowin word for “pay,” *diba'*, comes from the root *dib-*, meaning to “even, judge, measure” in action toward or on someone through a “tool or medium” (*OPD*). While Peguis demanded some form of material or financial compensation for settler occupancy and use of lands, this is contextualized by his understanding of the relationship as a whole: an ongoing, mutual process of commitment and respect enacted in reciprocal actions.

Principles of “even” or “mutual” treatment emerge in other points of the letter as well. Peguis also criticized treatment by the HBC: inadequate compensation for furs, lack of care or adherence to the responsibilities of their historical partnership, threats of violence if any Indigenous people criticized the HBC's treatment of them, and interference in relationships with missionaries—indicating the company's efforts to continue profiting from the dwindling fur trade (15). Peguis' language more explicitly described his expectations of the relationship when he called for “a fair and mutually advantageous

treaty” as a means for securing not only his and his peoples’ advantage and future, but that of their children and children’s children (16). As Aimée Craft notes, it is difficult to trace an Anishinaabemowin word that means “treaty,” which adds to the challenge of knowing what word Peguis might have used that was translated in English as “treaty.” Craft also suggests there are, however, a couple Anishinaabemowin expressions used to refer to treaty that, when read alongside Peguis’ letter, open up the sense of mutual relationship he conveys. *Tibamagaywin* refers to “an agreement of exchange” (“Living Treaties” 5n12). *Agooiidiwin* or *Ago’idiwin* means “bring together” (5n12), coming from the root word *agw-*, meaning “stick, adhere, attach,” implying strength in the attachment of being “brought together” (OPD). Both terms connect to other phrasings of Peguis’ letter that emphasize his understandings of fair and just treatment, mutuality, and relationship as an ongoing commitment guided by Anishinaabe principles and practice—aspects of which also come through in English.

In other ways, Peguis’ letter called upon Anishinaabe diplomacy. Although the letter form emphasizes his authorship as an individual, his reference to the collective grounding of the message demonstrates, again, *ogimaa* practices of decision-making that relied on collective deliberation: “. . . in committing this to you on behalf of myself, do so also on behalf of my tribe, who are as one man in feeling and desires on these matters” (16). Also, by referring to Victoria as “Great Mother,” he used kinship language and its attendant ethical invocations that framed their relationship as one of mutuality and reciprocity in which they have responsibilities to respect and care for one another, similar to the ethos of other Indigenous and inter-Indigenous diplomatic frameworks like the Dish with One Spoon:

There was as much a right and obligation to receive as to give, an idea embedded in the ascription of familial relationships to all parties in the exchange. The closer the kin relationships, whether actual or fictive, the greater the implied obligation as well as the assumed trust. (C. Miller 32)

When one accepted a gift, one “had to fulfill promises made to perform appropriate

ceremonies or use the gift in appropriate ways” lest the individual suffer negative consequences or “the gift be withdrawn” (32-33). Thus, whether for the “gift” of land-sharing, occupancy, resource use, or exclusive ownership in the terms of property, Peguis called upon Victoria to fulfill the obligations from dealings with Selkirk, treatment by the HBC, and other settlers, framing them in ethical terms: “We hope our Great Mother will not allow us to be treated so unjustly”; “. . . our Great Mother . . . who will shew herself more truly great and good by protecting the helpless from injustice and oppression than by making great conquests” (qtd. in Sinclair and Cariou 15, 16).

Alongside a strategy of appeasement, Peguis gave sharp criticism and complaint through “a cogent analysis of four decades of colonialism that named the HBC, local settlers and British officials in the process of dispossession” (Perry 164). He asserted his position as *ogimaa* on behalf of his people who must be dealt with justly and with respect by Victoria and all who represent her. He ended his letter with other discursive gestures that reiterated their history of commitment: attached commendations he received from Selkirk and George Simpson over twenty years earlier and reference to his British flag and “valuable medal” he “treasures” (Peguis, “To the Aborigines” 226; cf. United Kingdom 446).³⁶

* * *

1860-1861, *maskotêw*, *miskwaagaamiwi-zîibi*, Red River Settlement

Two years after writing in 1857, Peguis wrote again to the APS and was published again in *The Colonial Intelligencer*, only this time the letter was also published closer to home through another change in its discursive ecology—the introduction of the first newspaper on the

³⁶ Curiously, Peguis’ name on the letter is signed “Wm Prince” rather than his baptismal name of “William King,” and the context of the letter does not clarify why this was the case, especially when he had an opportunity to assert his sense of mutual status with the British monarch through his chosen name (Peguis, “To the Aborigines’ Protection Society” 226). Sutherland’s transcription of the letter lists “Wm King” (Peguis 141), as does the copy in Sinclair and Cariou, which reprinted Sutherland’s transcription (16).

prairies. *The Nor'Wester* was founded in 1859 by two ambitious journalists from Toronto who wanted to secure a place as publishers for “the varied and rapidly growing interests” of the Red River region as demonstrated by the surveying expeditions organized by the Canadian and British governments that “established the immediate availability for the purposes of Colonization of the vast country watered by the Red River, the Assiniboine, and the Saskatchewan” and arrivals of “private parties of American citizens” who were “engaged in determining the practicability of rendering this [region] the great overland route to the gold deposits of British Columbia” (“Prospectus” qtd. in Coldwell and Stephen 54). Framed by this context of exploration and keen interest in the region, a newspaper featured as another valuable structure for, not only supporting settler expansion in the west, but also “hasten[ing] the change . . . by cultivating a healthy public sentiment upon the spot” and “conveying to more distant observers an accurate knowledge of the position, progress, and prospect of affairs” (“Prospectus”).

Less than a year after it was founded, *The Nor'Wester* reprinted Peguis' 1859 letter to the APS. In a statement more succinct than his 1857 letter, Peguis reiterated his position expressed in stronger terms: “I and my people have our minds much disturbed by the Hudson's Bay Company We never sold our lands to the said Company, nor to the Earl of Selkirk; and yet the said Company mark out and sell our lands without our permission. Is this right?” (“Native Title” 3). He repeated his call for payment from the 1857 letter but with the addition of rhetorical questions and strong affective language to express his frustration: “If I were nearer the Great House [British Parliament], I would speak much and loud. I and my people are disturbed I speak loud: listen!” (3).

Another key shift in language was the use of “property” and “landed property” to describe what he had previously termed “our lands,” perhaps another effort to use terms his audience would readily understand, perhaps a difference in translator, or both. Whatever

terms were translated as “property” were qualified by Peguis’ concluding statement that invoked the chiefs of other bands with whom his community neighboured and shared territory: “I . . . hereby agree with the letters which my brother chiefs, Makasis, Keskismakuis, and Wa-was-ka-sis, sent across the great waters . . . last spring about our lands” (3). He referred to letters Cree *okimâwak* sent via the APS following his letter in 1857. Makasis (Fox) had sent a letter in May 1858 witnessed by Keeskesimakun (Keskismakuis of Peguis’ letter) declaring “the pretensions to the soil or land of any part of the Assinniboine [*sic*] valley” by the HBC or anyone else were “null and void” because, as he put it, “neither I myself, nor my fathers, nor any of the Cree chiefs, have ever sold to the Hudson’s Bay Company, or to Lord Selkirk, or to any one else, any lands whatsoever, or any of our rights” (“Statement of Makasis”). Peguis’ acknowledgement of Makasis’ and the others’ messages connected their different expressions of resistance, signalling shared attention to their shared concerns grounded in a longer history of Indigenous diplomacy they had tried to bring to their dealings with settlers.

Although Peguis’ letter was addressed to Victoria and her representatives, its publication in *The Nor’Wester* sparked a debate that lasted over a year dealing with the legitimacy of Peguis’ claims and parsing out the dimensions of Indigenous title to land. The introduction of a new form of discourse on the Red River, the newspaper, added new dimensions to attempts like Peguis’ and Makasis’ to communicate with settler audiences at home and abroad, and one of those dimensions was observing the debate of one’s claims unfold and shift with each new issue of the paper. For example, responses from Andrew McDermot, a prominent free trader in the Red River Settlement who owned a large tract of land in what would become Winnipeg (Hyman), undermined Peguis’ authority and knowledge by suggesting Peguis’ “mind ha[d] been poisoned,” positing that Peguis wrote his letter “at the urgent and frequent request of parties who took particular care to misinform

him, and to assure him that by doing so he would receive back the lands and be allowed to dispose of them again” (“Peguis Refuted” 3). He countered that Peguis and other chiefs had sold the land, had said the amount of tobacco offered was “too much,” and asked for other goods in exchange. He also re-deployed the “native-born” argument of legitimacy used in 1815 by Red River settlers to appeal to Peguis and Ozaawashkogaad, but now McDermot used it against the chiefs protesting the Selkirk Treaty and settler encroachment, arguing “not one of these chiefs was born within several hundred miles of this Settlement” (3). He concluded the Selkirk Treaty was legitimate and had been fulfilled as the chiefs had received “purchase-money” annually; the Selkirk Treaty was “a *bona-fide* transaction,” “a bargain [was] a bargain, whether in horseflesh or lands,” and Selkirk and the British government exercised their authority in “making the best bargain . . . with the Indians” (3).

It was in response to McDermot that Donald Gunn wrote his account of Peguis and his people’s history in the region and the history of inter-Indigenous alliance and referred to “eating out of the same dish,” invoking the Dish with One Spoon. Gunn added further defenses of Peguis and the other leaders by arguing that “during the last thirty years Peguis and his people ha[d] uniformly complained of the action of the Company in occupying and selling their lands, without giving them any adequate compensation” (“Peguis Vindicated” 4). Gunn criticized McDermot’s characterization of Peguis and the other chiefs as consenting “to dispose of land” which, according to McDermot, “by their own account, did not belong to them,” and for only “a few rolls of tobacco” (4). The rest of Gunn’s article gave a detailed defense of Peguis and the other chiefs and pointing out McDermot’s errors, all contextualized by the history of inter-tribal treaty-making by which the Cree and Anishinaabeg came to share territory. He concluded that the *ogimaag* “consented . . . that the occupiers should hold ‘as far back from the river bank as a man standing on the bank could see under the belly of a horse out into the plains” and that the arrangement was “only

preliminary to a final bargain”: “the Indians hold that they rented the land, and are afraid that under similar pretences, all their lands will soon pass out of their hands” (4). The discussion continued over subsequent issues with other entries from McDermot and Gunn, with Gunn attesting he “stated *facts* as they were related to [him] by Peguis, through an interpreter” and pointing out McDermot’s contradictory arguments that both dismissed Peguis’ land claim and also relied on it for support of Selkirk’s “bargain,” concluding, “Lord Selkirk arranged with the Indians about land because he well knew them to be the genuine and indisputable owners of the soil” (“The Land Controversy” 4, emphasis in the original).

Although most of the debate that played out in *The Nor’Wester* was conducted by settler writers, Indigenous leaders continued to make entries, asserting their authority and claims. Paketayhoond from the Portage la Prairie band responded after having “been told that a controversy” was going on in the “big news” over title to the lands of Red River:

There are at this place three Indians who were present when the treaty was made with Lord Selkirk, and they all affirm that no final bargain was made; but that it was simply a loan. The lands were never sold to the money-master. I have not two mouths. There is no sugar in my mouth to sweeten my words. And I say positively, *the lands were never sold*. (Paketayhoond 4, emphasis in the original)

There was also a statement following a meeting of Métis to discuss the issue and their claims in the region. On behalf of those who met, Andre Trutier testified that “the chiefs did not in any sense *sell* the land to the Earl of Selkirk, but rented it,” and they resolved to get a statement from Peguis on the matter (“The Land Question” 3, emphasis in the original). In September 1860, Keeskesimakun and Makasis also sent another petition through the APS that was later published in *The Nor’Wester* in June 1861, calling for “serious consideration” in the matter of the “Honorable Hudson’s Bay Company” having sold their lands “in the valleys of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers without [their] consent and without recognising [their] native rights” (Keeskesimakun and Makasis 1). While McDermot’s

narration of Peguis' claim focused on him as an individual, contributions by multiple *ogimaag* and leaders showed how Indigenous peoples' complaints were shared, based in similar expectations of Indigenous-settler diplomacy, and asserted their sovereignty, authority, and claims in the region.

In April 1861, Peguis, perhaps responding to criticism that he was acting on his own, submitted another letter, this time signed with five other *ogimaag*: Mannamig, Moosoos ("Mooscoose"), Eskepacakoose, Accupas, and his son, Miskookenew Henry Prince. Titled in the paper as "Indian Manifesto," the statement was a short declaration that settlers encroaching on and using of lands outside the bounds of the Selkirk settlement were required to make "annual payments" of wheat, barley, and potatoes in proportion to the amounts planted in acknowledgement, as the Indigenous signatories put it, "of our property in the said lands" (Peguis et al. 2). In addition to discursive practices in English writing, the *ogimaag* asserted necessary gestures of respect and reciprocity they expected their settler audiences to adhere to that would confirm and communicate their relationship.

* * *

Journal

August 2020, *miskwaagaamiwi-züibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, Red River

A cemetery and stone church on the Red River five kilometres north of East Selkirk marks the site of what was once the St. Peter's reserve. The largest headstone marks the grave of Chief Peguis, who died in 1864. There are also graves of his children and grandchildren, the Princes, some of whom were also chiefs. Peguis and his Salteaux people had occupied this region on both sides of the river, farming, hunting and fishing, well before 1833 when the [CMS] located at St. Peter's. . .

—SARAH CARTER, "They Would Not" (175)

The day ran hot as they often do in Manitoba summer. We ended the day at St. Peter's Dynevor to visit Grandpa, Grandma, and our other relatives. Like many Anglican churches built in the nineteenth century for Indigenous communities, St. Peter's faces the river so you can arrive by boat. The arrival point is full of reeds now as most people drive, taking the

road. By the graveside, someone prayed a prayer, and I grieved a little bit more, again. For their absence and for not having known them longer.

We walked around, and stories of the memory held in this place rose up. Memories of specific people, mundane or dramatic, my own or those told to me. Aunty's laughter and long ponytail; images of family at her funeral. Stories about fishing and fish canneries, baking and going to town. Snippets of conversation overheard as a child at family gatherings. The smell of tobacco and woodsmoke. The feel of the boat on the river.

And the land memory goes further back. A larger headstone memorializes Peguis' burial here, too, featuring a quote from Selkirk. Our band's flag hangs in the church building. Abraham Cowley is also buried here, his frustration with our people not enough to drive him away completely. Apparently, he was better at "teaching farming" than "translating Christianity" (Goldsborough, "Abraham Cowley"). Layering of memory to laugh, to comfort, also to anger, to grieve.

Nearby a grassy field near the church was a plaque commemorating the Indian settlement there. In the church, the baptismal font read "suffer the children." Relatives had signed the guest book, visited just days before us.

* * *

1863, *miskwaagaamiwi-züibi*, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, Red River

Finally, in 1863, Peguis submitted one last statement on the issue of settler expansion and the Selkirk Treaty. In his final letter, recorded for him by one of the editors of *The Nor'Wester*, Peguis returned to the detail of his 1857 message relating again and in detail his account of the treaty. This time, however, he narrated even more the participation of other *ogimaag* in response to previous criticism in *The Nor'Wester* claiming he acted unilaterally and even duplicitously. Again, he repeated his position on the matter:

The things we got, I repeat, were not in payment for our lands. We never sold them.

We only proposed to do so; but the proposal was never carried out, as Lord Selkirk never came back. . . . All of a sudden some years afterwards it turned out that they [the HBC] were claiming to be masters here. (“Important Statement” 3)

As with his first letter to Victoria through the APS, Peguis repeated his hope for a “proper settlement,” expressed in his old age with the language, diplomatic gestures, and belief in partnership he had persisted in for decades:

And now, I wish this statement to go across the waters to my great and good mother, and I pray her to cause a proper settlement to be made with us for our lands, so that our children and our children’s children whose lands are being taken possession of by foreigners, may receive what is just and fair for the loss of their lands. I am old and feeble. I am the only surviving chief of those who spoke to Lord Selkirk. I pray the great mother, whose medal I have, to feel for us and help us. (3)

Throughout his attempts to strengthen the commitment of settlers toward his people, Peguis showed his understanding of treaty as “forg[ing] a living relationship, not merely an agreement fixed on paper” dependent on the “principles of respect, responsibility, and renewal” and continually referred to those expressions, images, and objects that registered as meaningful signs of such a relationship (Stark, “Respect” 153).

Tracing Peguis’ discourse in colonial records over the course of his life show the range of discursive environments he and other *ogimaag* engaged with as they negotiated relationships with traders, colonists, missionaries, and settlers and the impacts of their changing environments. As settler colonialism became more entrenched in the region, settler interpretations of Indigenous discursive strategies became increasingly read through limiting conceptions of Indians that gained imaginative, and, thereby, political and social, force in Indigenous-settler relations, reinforcing power differentials over time. However, even as settler writers interpreted the discourses and actions of people like Peguis through their own understandings, often in service to their respective agendas and projects, settler records of Indigenous discursive practices also held and continue to hold within them links

to, and therefore possibilities of reading for, broader networks and longer histories of Indigenous thought and diplomacy that were also being asserted in these records.

Discourses of Peguis and others show how Indigenous people leveraged settler generic forms and discourses of Christianity and British diplomacy to assert their land claims in response to incursion and unilateral treatment. Although often translated in the terms of Victorian Christianity and diplomacy, their discourses asserted in a range of communicative forms and practices that Anishinaabe gift thought understood and continued to understand the Selkirk Treaty as *not* surrendered, given, or otherwise relinquished and that attempts to exert governing authority over the *ogimaag* and their people would be resisted and, in the case of Victoria, re-positioned back as approaching an ally in kinship terms, not a sovereign to whom they submitted—again framed under the terms of Anishinaabe political relationality that also called back to frameworks of mutual care as expressed in *doodemag*, gifts, and *Gdoo-naaganinaa*.

Part 2: Negotiating Nêhiyaw Diplomacy

Now
make room in the mouth
for grassesgrassesgrasses
—LAYLI LONG SOLDIER, “Now”

potent
grass songs
a grass chorus moves *shhhhh*
.....
... always
present the grasses
confident grasses polite
command to *shhhhh*
shhh listen
—LAYLI LONG SOLDIER, “Steady Summer”

Visiting with the Visual Archive

Journal

February 2022, Hunter Street, Hamilton

I’ve papered a narrow wall of my office with printed images of Peguis, Gabriel Dumont, Pîhtokahânapîwiyin (Poundmaker), and others. A wall of faces in printer ink, tacked up with teal and rose gold tape, looking on. I do this hoping to feel closer, more connected to the people whose words I read. Often texts feel quiet, distant, but I feel the energy reverberating from the faces for me.

As I print and trim photos, I notice details of dress, hair, posture, gaze. The patterns of coats and blankets. Small details of beadwork, like Atakawinin’s Thunderbirds. Jewelry, kerchiefs, and objects held. Pîhtokahânapîwiyin’s thick braid and white streak, Dumont’s steady look and broad brim, Atâhkakohp’s beadwork. Some wear medals and western coats and suits, some wear feathers and detailed regalia. Some, like Wîhkasko-kisêyîn, (Sweetgrass) wear both.



Figure 9: Portrait printouts taped to the office wall. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2022.

* * *

*Journal***May 2022, Hunter Street, Hamilton**

I am trying to write about Wîhkasko-kisêyin's letter to Fort Garry, but my thoughts keep turning to two portraits of him. So, I add them to the page hoping they will help me find the words to say. Instead, I keep wondering what the portraits show of who Wîhkasko-kisêyin is, and I am launched on a hunt for citation, realizing the copies I saved are low resolution, circulated on Pinterest or a blog, lacking archival or published references. I search for better copies, traceable images that have some kind of archival "home." The first portrait is easy enough to locate in a digital collection of the Glenbow Archives. In this portrait, Wîhkasko-kisêyin stands in bison robes and a leather fringe, holding a bow and arrows in one hand that are crossed with a staff held in the other hand. On his head is a band with feathers tucked in, pointing upward. The image was taken in a studio, revealed by a blurry baseboard and drawn accent curtain against a wall background.

The second portrait has the same background and curtain; both images also feature a geometric floral motif on the floor. In the second image, Wîhkasko-kisêyin has traded the feathers on his head for a "Boss of the Plains"-style hat decorated with a large fan-shaped feather mount on the band. He wears a large three-piece suit with moccasins, and on his chest hangs a bright crucifix in sharp contrast to the dark colour of his jacket. His right arm rests on a tall round table over which is draped a cloth with a botanical print. This portrait proves trickier to locate than the first. Finally, through different image searches, I trace a copy to the website of Septentrion, publisher of the French translation of Olive Patricia Dickason's *Canada's First Nations*, where I learn that Wîhkasko-kisêyin's baptismal name was Abraham and of his connection to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) in Alberta. After a quick email to the Provincial Archives of Alberta, who house the OMI fonds, a generous archivist supplies me with copies of the image in the collection. Images

are so readily circulated online, yet they have histories, too, to be traced. Citations to check.

* * *

I keep returning to Wîhkasko-kisêyin's pictures because they seem to represent conversion and remind me of famous portraits of the child Thomas Moore Keesick, a student at the Regina Industrial School. In 1897, Keesick's portraits were published as the opening images of the Department of Indian Affairs' annual report for the year 1896 prepared by Clifford Sifton, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and the images' captions frame them as showing the success of residential schooling in Canada and its "civilizing project" in a "before" and "after" narrative of the assimilative effect of the schools on Indigenous children and youth. In the first image, Keesick poses against a fur-covered surface in what appears to be traditional dress with moccasins, multiple strands of beads, pants featuring diagonal stitch-work and floral detail. His hair is braided and decorated with fur, and he holds a handgun, the finishing detail. The caption labels it as a "before" image: "Thomas Moore, as he appeared when admitted to the Regina Indian Industrial School." The second portrait changes the fur for an interior decorated with carpet and a potted plant. Keesick's hair is now short, and he sports a military-inspired jacket and pants with boots. The caption describes the image as "Thomas Moore, after tuition at the Regina Indian Industrial School" (Sifton n.p.).

Over a century after their first publication, the portraits have had a famous afterlife as widely-circulated iconography of the genocidal project of residential schools, afforded in part by their digital circulation and near-ubiquitous presence in educational material on residential schools. Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schools (TRC), Keesick's portraits are often discussed in relation to a child's lack of agency and vulnerability, the absence of choice or consent, and, ultimately, of Indigenous trauma,

generating an affective force that fuels the ongoing afterlife of Keesick's portraits.¹ Indeed, this is where the visual power of Keesick's portraits come from for us now—in the visual archive of a coerced transformation imposed upon a child that registers and re-registers as another entry in the ongoing “injustice of being turned into an object of always-ready injury” (Belcourt, “Settler Structures”).

How, then, do I begin to interpret images of Wihkasko-kisêyin that seem to participate in this visual archival afterlife? Through their imagery and symbolism, Wihkasko-kisêyin's portraits also appear, like Keesick's, as “before” and “after” images, but rather than representing the effects of residential schooling on a child, they show the change of religious conversion to Roman Catholicism as an adult. In the first instance, then, they differ importantly from Keesick's in that they do not register along the same affective lines of a child's powerlessness, but this hardly clarifies things.

* * *

Journal

May 2023, Hunter Street, Hamilton

I have found another portrait I have never seen before. It feels like it appeared, in a flash, as digital images often do, moving into view on the screen faster than I can take a breath, halting me in the middle of a routine research task. Probably, I was trying to confirm a citational detail, but instead a third portrait of Wihkasko-kisêyin emerged from the heap of the digital archive.

The third portrait was taken in the same studio, with the same curtain and bison robes, only this time another figure stands alongside Wihkasko-kisêyin—the Roman Catholic priest Albert Lacombe, OMI. Wihkasko-kisêyin wears the robes and feathers from

¹ Falen Johnson and Leah Simone Bowen note the dissonance of Keesick's images circulating as “poster” images of residential schooling, often with little to no citation, identification, or context, and the likelihood his parents never consented to his portraits in the first place (“The Boy in the Picture”).



Figure 10: Sweetgrass, head chief of the Cree in St. Boniface Manitoba, *carte de visite* photograph. June 1872. CU184333, Glenbow Library and Archives Collection, Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections, University of Calgary. Image courtesy of Glenbow Library and Archives Collection.



Figure 11: Portrait of Abraham Wihkasko-kisêyin, print of *carte de visite* photograph. June 1872. PR1973.0248/1101 Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), Lacombe Canada fonds, Provincial Archives of Alberta. Image courtesy of Provincial Archives of Alberta.

the first portrait; Lacombe is dressed in his clerical robe with a crucifix tucked in his sash. Between the two men, one of Lacombe's hands is poised, shaped in benediction as though caught mid-way through making the sign of the cross.

The image includes crossings of different kinds. Underneath Lacombe's hand, Wihkasko-kisêyin holds his bow and arrows crossed with a staff pointed outward, as he does in the first portrait. The men almost face each other, their gazes angled toward the camera in opposite directions, forming lines that, emphasized by the staff, cross in front of



Figure 12: J. Penrose, *Wîhkasko-kisêyin* (Sweetgrass), Chief of the Plains Cree, with Father Lacombe in St. Boniface, *carte de visite* photograph. June 1872. TR 681 I58 I64 IP104, Indigenous Photographs, Bruce Peel Special Collections, University of Alberta. Image courtesy of Bruce Peel Special Collections.

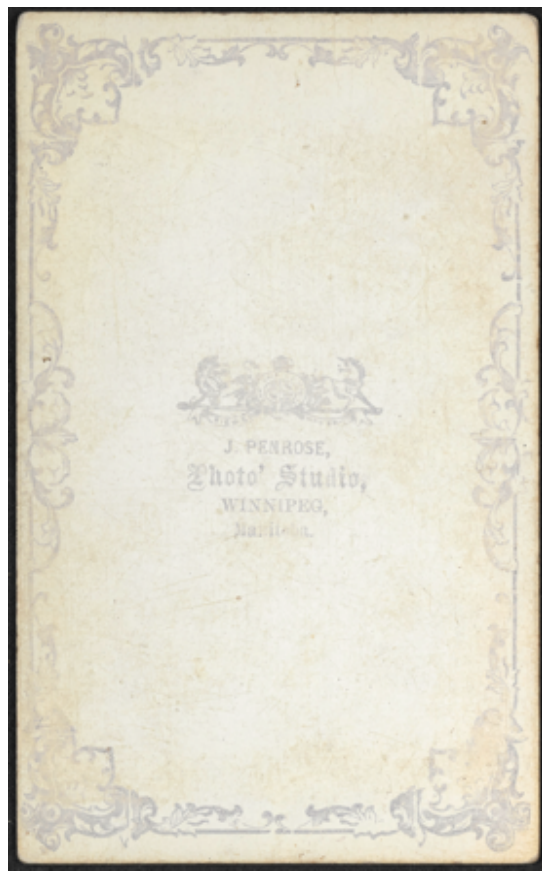


Figure 13: Reverse of J. Penrose, *Wîhkasko-kisêyin* (Sweetgrass), Chief of the Plains Cree.

them, meeting for a moment between them and the camera before extending beyond the frame in divergent directions.

As I study the images, all three of them shift and move in turn, refusing to hold still. In some moments, the paternalism of the images and its visual signification rise to the surface; in others, the possibilities of what *Wîhkasko-kisêyin* might have hoped for emerge—some kind of diplomatic engagement or partnership that would serve *Nêhiyawak*. None hold still, fading in and out of view in turn, over and over.

I can feel I have been sitting too long, holding a concentrated pose, wishing the portraits will show me what they are. I begin to notice the trouble I feel, an uncertainty stemming from the images' opacity that does not yield. The absurdity of desiring connection via the visual archive and being confronted by even more questions. With these images I can look upon Wîhkasko-kisêyin's face, yet I cannot assume knowledge of him. It can feel like an Indigenous person's utterance or life emerges out of the archive and falls back into quiet, or nothing. It can feel as if such images emerge disconnected, often without the context of biography, personal knowledge, the dynamics of personality, or personal history. Efforts to feel connected can form tenuous threads rather than sure links.

The reverse of the third photograph shows the portraits were taken at J. Penrose's photography studio in Winnipeg (fig. 13), but Wîhkasko-kisêyin was a signatory to Treaty Six and lived on the *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy*, much closer to *amiskwaciy-wâskahikan* Fort Edmonton than Winnipeg. Why did he travel that distance to take these photographs?

* * *

Communicating Nêhiyaw "States of Feeling"

13 April 1871, *amiskwaciy-wâskahikan*, Fort Edmonton

Wîhkasko-kisêyin's appearance in historical writing tends to focus on the message he and three other *okimâwak* sent to Governor Archibald in 1871. In mid-April of that year, Wîhkasko-kisêyin with Kehewin (The Eagle), Onchiminahos (The Little Hunter), Keskayiwew (Bobtail), and other companions arrived at *amiskwaciy-wâskahikan*, Fort Edmonton, to meet with the HBC Chief Factor, William J. Christie, and "ascertain whether their lands had been sold or not, and what was the intention of the Canadian Government in relation to them" (Morris 169). News of the resistance at Red River and the Rupert's Land transfer had reached Indigenous people on the *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* (North Saskatchewan River) after moving westward through trade and communication networks, and Wîhkasko-

kisêyin and his companions both wanted to confirm the reports and ensure their positions were known in response to increased settlement and the emerging structures of settler colonial governance that were extending into their territory.

In 1871, Wîhkasko-kisêyin was regarded as one of the most prominent *okimâwak* among Nêhiyawak in the *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* region, and, like Peguis, his leadership position among his people led to colonial records of his discourse emerging from his interactions with various settler partners. Over the fraught period of the 1870s, Wîhkasko-kisêyin and other *okimâwak* engaged with and appeared in the discursive environments of colonial government reporting and missionary writing as they worked to mitigate worsening conditions in their territories. Nêhiyawak had been dealing with a range of crises that caused enormous suffering and concern over their future survival. Compounding crises of disappearing bison and disease epidemics was the looming threat of European settlement that worsened following Canadian Confederation and the Rupert's Land Deal. The Nêhiyawak also observed the Hind and Palliser expeditions' efforts to prove the prairies' agricultural viability in the late-1850s along with other surveying teams for infrastructure and mining projects (Morris, *The Treaties* 172). In the 1860s, more Europeans and Americans moved into the area in search of gold (Daschuk 76). All these conditions created "an increasingly desperate situation," "ever-deepening crisis," forcing Nêhiyawak to find ways to garner support and ensure their survival (Daschuk 79, 85).

As their physical and social environment changed, so did the discursive ones. Nêhiyawak like Wîhkasko-kisêyin and his companions entered the growing network of written political communication linking Christie, the HBC factor, to the newly-appointed lieutenant governor of Manitoba, Adams Archibald, in an emerging structure of settler colonial governance the *okimâwak* were expected to deal with and do so at a physical remove from the "centre" of nascent Canadian governance in the prairies. Wîhkasko-kisêyin also

appeared in records of Roman Catholic missionary writing resulting from their mission work among his people and, later, his own partnership with them. As in Peguis' records, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's discourses can seem to capitulate or assent to the assimilative projects of establishing settler colonial governance under the Crown's authority and missionary efforts to civilize Indians. However, connections to Nêhiyaw conceptual and social worlds remain traceable and evocative in his expressions when read through bundles of *wâhkôtowin* (relationship, kinship) and its discourses of affect and responsibility, his *okimâhkâniwiwin* (work of being a chief) and its connections to *wîhkaskwa* (sweetgrass) after which he is named, and Nêhiyaw gift thought expressed through *mêkinawêwin* (gift giving) practices. Traces of presence for figures like Wîhkasko-kisêyin and Atâhkakohp, whom I turn to at the end of the chapter, show the always-constrained projects of assimilation in this period that, while holding out the promise of civilization's possibility and benefits, continually reveal their inherent contradictions, limits, and assimilation's ultimate impossibility. Furthermore, the ways *okimâwak* like Wîhkasko-kisêyin and Atâhkakohp exercised their agency and intelligence, through their connections to Nêhiyaw thought and practice, troubled the terms of gaining recognition in settler knowledge and purported "care" networks they tried to access and invoked other forms of relationality countering ones that tried to limit them.

Like the Cree and Anishinaabeg of *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, the Nêhiyawak of *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* took up letter writing as a means for negotiating their relationships with colonists and settlers in response to drastic changes in their social, political, and physical environments. When the *okimâwak* at *amiskwaciy-wâskahikan*, Fort Edmonton, engaged in political discourse through the HBC-Canadian government communication network, they laid out the grounding and context for urgent concerns to Christie: a smallpox epidemic had "raged throughout the past summer" that had decimated their communities, growing scarcity of the bison, and looming starvation that was an ongoing threat to their families

due to the epidemic and scarcity of bison. They asked Christie for provisions to take back to their people and to “lay their case before Her Majesty’s representative at Fort Garry” in messages addressed to Lieutenant-Governor Archibald (Morris, *The Treaties* 169).

The letter Christie recorded was structured in four sections, numbered and named for each *okimâw*.² Reflecting the prominent position he held at the time, Wîhkasko-kisêyin opened the letter by resisting the sale of the land and employing Nêhiyaw diplomatic rhetoric to remind Archibald and Queen Victoria, whom Archibald represents, of their responsibility to the Nêhiyawak:

GREAT FATHER,—I shake hands with you, and bid you welcome. We heard our lands were sold and we did not like it, we don’t want to sell our lands; it is our property, and no one has a right to sell them.

Our country is getting ruined of fur-bearing animals, hitherto our sole support, and now we are poor and want help—we want you to pity us. We want cattle, tools, agricultural implements, and assistance in everything when we come to settle—our country is no longer able to support us.

Make provision for us against years of starvation. We have had great starvation the past winter, and the small-pox took away many of our people, the old, young, and children.

We want you to stop the Americans from coming to trade on our lands, and giving firewater, ammunition and arms to our enemies the Blackfeet.

We made a peace this winter with the Blackfeet. Our young men are foolish, it may not last long.

We invite you to come and see us and to speak with us. If you can’t come yourself, send some one in your place.

We send these words by our Master, Mr. Christie, in whom we have every confidence.—That is all. (Morris, *The Treaties* 170-171)

² The names are inconsistent in their use of Nêhiyawêwin and English translation with no indication of why, whether due to each person’s preference or inconsistency from Christie.

The *okimâwak*'s letter communicated the various issues Nêhiyawak had to contend with in a strong statement resisting the Rupert's Land transfer and asserting their claims to land. Historian Sheldon Krasowski argues that their petition is so "often quoted by historians because Sweetgrass placed the blame for the diminished plains economy on the Canadian government" (189). Wîhkasko-kisêyin stated clearly his and his companions' position on the Rupert's Land deal: they were not consulted, they had not agreed, and they were asserting their long-standing, prior position in the territory. Furthermore, he listed the issues they had to deal with and were now seeking support for, understanding Archibald, as Victoria's representative, as responsible for providing aid in this troubled moment.

* * *

Journal

May 2023, Hunter Street, Hamilton

A question is forming around the word "property" in the letter from Wîhkasko-kisêyin. Whatever Nêhiyawêwin term he spoke was translated and then written as "property," which can readily convey an idea of private property ownership that does not convey the complexities of how Nêhiyawak understood claims to objects, places, animals, water, land. It is concerning how these instances amass, accreting over time as an archival case for ideas of land-as-property or land-as-thing. The resulting "thingification" converts land, water, etc. to something requiring human utility to render it "valuable," "usable," "profitable." Aimé Césaire's equation "colonialism = thingification" (42) refers to the process that "requires the reinvention of the colonized" in ways that justify exploitation and domination of their lives and lands (Kelley 9). In settler colonial contexts, thingification is directed toward lands and waters via private property ownership, rendering Indigenous people as obstructions to settlers' access to land that need to be eliminated or removed (Wolfe 388-389, 397).

I took time today to research Cree concepts of ownership and land relationship. Much of what I found discouraged and exhausted me. The material coming up is older in

the fields of linguistics or anthropology which, while technically informative, gives limited attention to larger Cree relational frameworks to contextualize their studies. The result feels like a narrow examination of how Cree terms match up along the lines of, say, Lockean theories of individual and private property ownership that would require more time and energy than I have available to try to sift through and contextualize them for myself in relation to what I know of Cree ideas of ownership informed by relational frameworks. However, I want to make a note of this, to signal it as a recurring event that I cannot note every instance of. In researching histories of Indigenous knowledge and practice, material will surge up that writes Indigenous people in highly constrained ways while purporting to offer knowledge, missing the complexity, depth, and range of Indigenous history, experience, or intelligence. It creates an odd feeling in some cases that you have happened upon writing about you that isn't meant for you to read or learn from. After having read so much archival material, I notice how writing about "Indians" without imagining them as an audience happens all over the place.

I want to leave this note to remind me: this happens all the time, everywhere. It is a problem and reality of doing this work that I cannot mitigate—of being constantly met by and dealing with research that tries to say something about Cree, Anishinaabe people, claims to offer *knowledge*, but does not *know*.

* * *

13 April 1871, *amiskwaciy-wâskahikan*, Fort Edmonton

The translation was probably the most difficult part of writing this book. Some parts had to be translated a number of times until the elders were satisfied that their words and thoughts had been fully interpreted.

—HAROLD CARDINAL AND WALTER HILDEBRANDT, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* (9)

In the preface to *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations*, the compilers Harold Cardinal and Walter Hildebrandt

engaged in a coordinated editorial effort with translators and elders to review and revise translations into English for their book. The intention was to express with great care the meanings of Cree philosophical frameworks in English language, and they write that the translation work was the most intensive aspect of the writing processes as it required multiple series of revision out of respect for Elders and the history and knowledge shared.

The challenges Cardinal and Hildebrandt experienced with translation illustrate not only the ongoing work of translation but also the historic challenges of translating Indigenous languages and thought. Wîhkasko-kisêyin and his companions' letter, for example, was translated by an interpreter in the moment, written in English by Christie, and then published in *The Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada* that collected government reports and later in Alexander Morris's 1880 account of treaty-making, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories*. Already, the discursive conditions for the *okimâwak*'s expression and assertion for settler audiences are constrained by the limiting factors of language, medium, and audience. Challenges can arise, then, for how to interpret certain terms and phrasings which can even play to contradictory effect. From one perspective, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's letter directly challenges the political authority of settler colonial governance in the prairies. From another, though, his requests for "pity" and familial address can easily register as acquiescence to a paternalistic relationship with government officials. Rather than reading as the assertions they are, the diplomatic language can read as deferential, even self-infantilizing. In its publication in the *Sessional Papers* and Morris's chapter, the *okimâwak*'s discourse was framed by letters that narrated it through colonial anxieties of Indigenous resistance as violent threat, what David Mills, Minister of the Interior, described in 1876 as the Indians' worsening "state of feeling" (*The Treaties* 172). Christie wrote in 1871 that he feared the Nêhiyawak would have "proceeded to acts of violence," perhaps even "an Indian war," had he not "complied" with

their “demands,” later citing this fear as justification for establishing Canadian governance and law in the region (170). Any sense of Nêhiyaw political authority or law was disregarded as affects were narrated as an issue of jurisdiction and political stability.

As with Peguis and the Anishinaabe *ogimaag*, however, parental terms of address and affective language in the 1871 letter were rough approximations of Nêhiyaw relational frameworks in which requests for aid were entwined with assertions of their relationship with Victoria and government officials as non-Indigenous *okimâwak* who had responsibility for settlers encroaching on their territory without respecting or enacting their obligations to Indigenous people. As Paul Williams notes, “Modesty or humility in opening remarks should not be taken as an admission of either ignorance or incapacity. It is a polite, proper element of a good speaker’s words” (110). Certain words and phrases like “pity” and familial references, rather than capitulating to colonial authority, bundle Nêhiyaw legal and political thought that both criticize the current state of their diplomatic relationship with Victoria and her representatives and invite participation in enacting it otherwise—according to Nêhiyaw conceptual frameworks.

The *okimâwak* address their letter using three kinship terms that invoke how they frame the political relationship. Both Wîhkasko-kisêyin and Kehewin refer to Archibald as “Great Father,” who is addressed as the representative of the “Great Mother,” Victoria, and in their messages, Onchiminahos and Keskayiwew address Archibald as “brother” (Morris 171). Familial language of address invokes Nêhiyaw philosophies of *wâhkôtowin* that frame the diplomatic relationship in kinship structures, along family lines. *Wâhkôtowin*, as the law that governs all relationships, operates “internally to structure Plains Cree social and legal lives” as well as forming “international relations” (Lindberg 56). Hadley Friedland (Aseniwuche Winewak Nation) describes how *wâhkôtowin* refers to “each individual existing and inextricably connected within a network of relationships” that inform and “permeat[e]

Cree legal thought and practice” (qtd. in Lindberg 56).

The network of relationships often gets expressed in kinship terms, but rather than being limited to one’s own family, it ultimately encompasses all beings, including the more-than-human world (Cardinal and Hildebrandt 18). Métis writer and Elder Maria Campbell draws out how *wâhkôtowin* grounded a range of artistic, discursive, ceremonial, and embodied expressions as people learned to practice their responsibilities within the web of relation. *Wâhkôtowin*, Campbell writes, referred to “the whole of creation” being “related and inter-connected to all things within it” and “meant honoring and respecting those relationships” in “stories, songs, ceremonies, and dances” that taught “responsibilities and reciprocal obligations” between beings: “Human to human, human to plants, human to animals, to the water and especially the earth. And in turn all of creation had responsibilities and reciprocal obligations to us” (5). Each person as a being embedded within this complex relational ecology held responsibility for how they participated in it, requiring both discursive and embodied expression and practice in the relational ecology.

More than a formality or expression of humility, terms of familial address understood in the context of *wâhkôtowin* located Archibald and Victoria in interconnected web of relations in which, ultimately, all beings are related and carry responsibilities. The expansiveness of *wâhkôtowin* set the frame for closely attending to particular relationships, grounded in ongoing awareness of human beings’ reliance on the rest of creation for survival and well-being. Attending to recurring ways the earth, atmosphere, plants, animals, water, etc. enact their responsibilities made visible, present, and physical the dynamic of *wâhkôtowin* in relationships between people. In their collection of elder teachings from Saskatchewan, Cardinal and Hildebrandt cite examples of *wâhkôtowin* principles that range in specificity and emphasis, depending on the nature of the relationship: “mutual respect” and reciprocal care, loyalty, and fidelity, as in parent-child relationships; recognition of

“close yet separate and independent existence of each” member in family relationships; the principle of non-interference; principles of *manâtisiwin* (being respectful), non-coercion, and *manâcihitowin*, treating each other with care and respect (34).

* * *

STATES OF FEELING I

Adapted from Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada, Chapter IX

We do not want to sell our lands—no one has a right to sell them
 We do not want the animals or the land to be poisoned
 We do not want fires set to our forest or plain
 We do not want the animals or birds to perish

We want *kitimâkêyihcikêwin*
 We want *nîsôhkamâkêwin*
 We want *itamahcihowin*
 We want *pêyâhtakêyimowin*
 We want *otôtêmiwêwin*
 We want *manâcihitowin*

We have resolved not to receive gifts until you have set a time for treaty
 We have resolved unanimously to oppose the running of lines or the making of roads
 through our country
 We have resolved not to be outnumbered or laughed at
 We have resolved to be treated justly

We will not take the bait

* * *

In 1871, Archibald and Victoria (and the people they led) were being called upon to practice their responsibilities where they had not, namely, in the Rupert's Land Deal and the presumption of selling land not theirs. The use of kinship terms to address them by the *okimâwak* points us as readers to their grounding in *wâhkôtowin*, but it would be a mistake to assume that the *okimâwak* thought of Archibald and Victoria in the same category as their own Nêhiyawak kin. Rather, as Lindberg argues, *wâhkôtowin* also provides a located, relational framework that grounds and deepens international relations and diplomacy. The use of the term “great” as an amplifier of the familial language, while appearing as a deferential courtesy, serves to reinforce the prominence of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's and his companions' authority.³ In his statement, Onchiminahos declares, “You, my brother, the Great Chief in Red River, treat me as a brother, that is as a Great Chief” (Morris 171). The parallelism of Onchiminahos' brief statement maps out the entwined aspects of their relationship: they are connected and guided by *wâhkôtowin* principles that are reflected, in this case, with Onchiminahos' understanding of sibling relationship and connection, but there is no hierarchy or differential between them. Rather, framed in the imperative in the English translation, he calls Archibald to honour their relationship as equals, both *kihci-okimâwak* of their respective peoples and informed by the principles of *wâhkôtowin* that guide that relationship.⁴ The respect afforded Archibald in the letter is paired with and measured by Wîhkasko-kisêyin's, Onchiminahos', and the other *okimâwak*'s authority.

³ The amplifier “great” is a translation of the Nêhiyawêwin “*kihci-*” used at the beginning of words. “Okimâw” refers to a chief or leader, while a *kihci-okimâw* is a great leader. The amplification, however, can be of different kinds, depending on the context: power, status, importance, etc.

⁴ Curiously, although at this time Wîhkasko-kisêyin was considered one of the most prominent *okimâw* among the Nêhiyawak of the territory, he is not named as “Great Chief,” being called rather the “Chief of the country” (Morris 170).

How do the calls of support and rhetoric of pity fit in the mutuality of *wâhkôtowin*? Both Wîhkasko-kisêyin's and Keskayiwew's messages use the language of "pity" in English translation. Keskayiwew echoed Wîhkasko-kisêyin, writing, "I want you to pity me" (Morris 171). The English word "pity" is a translation of *kitimâkêyihcikêwin*, which is also translated as "compassion." Mushkegowuk Ininiwuk legal scholar Nigel Baker-Grenier writes,

Kitimahkinawow [take pity on someone] describes the quality of a person's actions when they show kindness, pity, and compassion towards others. Cree law includes a responsibility to treat others with kitimahkinawow, which encompasses a duty to care for the elderly, poor, homeless, and sick. The purpose of kitimahkinawaw is to mitigate suffering, especially the struggles experienced by marginalized people. (2)

Like *wâhkôtowin*, *kitimâkêyihcikêwin* derives from the interrelatedness of all beings, but it emphasizes the dependence of human beings on "pakwataskamik (the land), Kisemanito [Creator], and each other for sustenance" (2). Thus, all human beings in this framework are *kitimâkisiwak*, are all pitiful beings, and share in this state due to their fundamental dependence on the land for survival.

An imperative for mutual care arises out of this foundational condition of dependence, what Baker-Grenier describes as a duty, a responsibility, to enact this Cree legal principle: "Each person has a gift, and we have a responsibility to use these gifts to benefit society, for we are all kitimahkisin. Kitimahkinawaw and kitimahkisin are Cree legal principles which guide relationships between animate beings in Cree epistemology" (2). So, when the *okimâwak* in 1871 invoked the language of pity in their message, they were grounding their relationship with Victoria and her representatives in relation to the "notions of reciprocity developed during the history of interaction between the Nêhiyawak and the British Empire" (McLeod 47). For years, the Nêhiyawak and other Indigenous peoples had hosted Victoria's people in their territories; now, in this intense period of uncertainty and suffering, she was being called upon, as someone who has more to give, to

share with those who need aid, enacting the principles of re-distribution that Baker-Grenier notes are a central part of *kitimâkêyihcikêwin*.⁵ More than a call for sympathy or only an affective response, *kitimâkêyihcikêwin* entwines feeling with action in such a way that, as Baker-Grenier describes, to feel is to enact; those who “take pity,” “have compassion,” *show*, *treat* others a certain way, *care* (for), *mitigate* suffering (2).⁶ Thus, read in the context of Cree kinship thought, emotions are also mobilized toward indictment and criticism: those who should feel have not acted or have acted wrongly.

* * *

⁵ An important and necessary aspect of Cree and Anishinaabe economic, social, and ceremonial practice was gift-giving, which in practice facilitated ongoing re-distribution of materials among members of a particular camp, band, or community. Therefore, an expectation for *okimâwak*, and their allies or people identified as part of one’s kinship network, was to share and re-distribute from their positions of having-more to those they were committed to who had less. In this way, people are responsible to one another for ensuring (as far as possible) the survival of everyone. While Victoria and her representatives were certainly perceived as having more in terms of access to medicine, food, and other material goods, McLeod also notes that the oral history of this relationship may also carry a sense of the Queen being like an older relative rich in relations as well showing that one’s “wealth,” power, or position of “having more” is not limited to material possessions only and also reflects the emphasis on relational dynamics (McLeod 47).

⁶ Framed as they are in the *okimâwak*’s attestations of their authority and leadership as *kihci-okimâwak*, just as Archibald and Victoria are *kihci-okimâwak*, the letter’s calls for pity complicate, and indeed resist, readings of pity as a sentimental invocation for the “civilized” English to condescend to and assume paternalistic authority over the “uncivilized” Indigenous subject, a process in which empathy participates to “legitimate conquest” (Lydon 2).

STATES OF FEELING II

After Deborah A. Miranda; from Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada, Chapter IX

In the neighborhood of Fort Edmonton, on the Saskatchewan, there is **a rapidly increasing population of miners and other white people**, and it is the opinion of Mr. W. J. Christie, the officer in charge of the Saskatchewan District, that a treaty . . . is **essential to the peace, if not the actual retention, of the country**. —WEMYSS M. SIMPSON, Indian Commissioner, 3 November 1871

I had a visit from **the Cree Chiefs**. . . . The object of their visit was to ascertain whether **their lands had been sold or not**, and **what was the intention of the Canadian Government in relation to them**. They referred to the **epidemic that had raged** throughout the past summer, and the **subsequent starvation**, the **poverty of their country**, the **visible diminution of the buffalo**, their sole support, ending by **requesting** certain presents **at once**, and that I should lay their case before Her Majesty's representative at Fort Garry. . . . [T]hey were **most anxious** to hear from myself what had taken place. I told them that the Canadian Government had as yet made no application for their lands or hunting grounds, and when anything was required of them, **most likely Commissioners** would be sent beforehand to treat with them, and that until then they should **remain quiet and live at peace with all men**. . . . [I]f Her Majesty sent troops to the Saskatchewan, it was as much for the protection of the red as the white man, and that they would be for the **maintenance of law and order**. . . . I take this opportunity of most earnestly soliciting, **on behalf of the Company's servants, and settlers in afforded to life and property here as** Commissioners be sent to speak with Government. Had I not complied giving them some **little presents**--no doubt that **they would have** once that had commenced, there **Indian war**, which it is difficult to say **buffalo will soon be exterminated**,

*We want
kitimâkêyihcikêwin*

this district, that **protection be soon as possible**, and that the Indians on behalf of the Canadian with the demands of the Indians--and **otherwise satisfied them**, I have **proceeded to acts of violence**, and would have been **the beginning of an** when it would have ended. **The** and **when starvation comes**, these

Plain Indian tribes will fall back on the Hudson's Bay Forts and settlements for relief and assistance. If not complied with, or no steps taken to make some provision for them, **they will most assuredly help themselves**; and there being **no force or any law** up there **to protect the settlers**, they must either quietly submit to be pillaged, or lose their lives in the defence of their families and property, against such fearful odds that will leave no hope for their side. **Gold may be discovered** in paying quantities, **any day**, on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. . . and, without any form of Government or established laws up there, or **force to protect** whites or Indians, it is very plain what will be the result. I think that **the establishment of law and order** in the Saskatchewan District, as early as possible, is of **most vital importance to the future of the country and the interest of Canada**. —WILLIAM J. CHRISTIE, Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor, Fort Edmonton, 13 April 1871

Official reports received last year . . . showed that **a feeling of discontent and uneasiness** prevailed very generally amongst the Assiniboines and Crees lying in the **unceded territory** between the Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains. This **state of feeling**, which had prevailed amongst these Indians for some years past, had been increased by the presence, last summer, in their territory of the parties engaged in the **construction of the telegraph line**, and in the **survey of the Pacific Railway line**, and . . . a party belonging to the **Geological Survey**. To **allay this state of feeling**, and to **prevent the threatened hostility** of the Indian tribes . . . Morris requested and obtained authority to despatch a messenger to convey to these Indians the assurance that Commissioners would be sent this summer, to negotiate a treaty with them, as had already been done with their brethren further east. The Rev. George McDougall . . . was selected . . . to convey this intelligence to the

Indians, a task which he performed with great fidelity and success: being able to report on his return that although he found the **feeling of discontent had been very general** among the Indian tribes, he had been enabled entirely to remove it by his assurance of the proposed negotiations during the coming year. . . . In view of the **temper of the Indians of the Saskatchewan**, during the past year, and of the **extravagant demands** which they were induced to prefer on certain points, it needed all the **temper, tact, judgment and discretion**, of which the Commissioners were possessed, to bring the negotiations to a satisfactory issue. —DAVID MILLS, Minister of the Interior, Report for 1876

In accordance with my instructions, I proceeded with as little delay as possible to Carlton, in the neighborhood of which place I met with forty tents of Crees. . . . I was also informed by these Indians that the Crees and Plain Assiniboinés were united on two points: 1st. That **they would not receive any presents** from Government until a definite time for treaty was stated. 2nd. Though they deplored the necessity of resorting to extreme measures, yet **they were unanimous in their determination to oppose the running of lines, or the making of roads through their country**, until a settlement between the Government and them had been effected. . . . I resolved to visit every camp and read them your message, and in order that your Honor may form a correct judgment of their disposition towards the Government, I will give you a synopsis of their speeches after the message was read. . . . In a word, I found the Crees **reasonable** in their demands, and **anxious to live in peace with the white men**. . . . **These Saulteaux are the mischief-makers through all this western country**, and some of them are **shrewd men**. A few weeks since, a land speculator wished to take a claim at the crossing on Battle River and asked the consent of the Indians, one of my Saulteaux friends sprang to his feet, and pointing to the east, said: "Do you see that great white man (the Government) coming?" "No," said the speculator. "I do," said the Indian, "and **I hear the tramp of the multitude behind him**, and when he comes you can drop in behind him and take up all the land claims you want; but until then **I caution you to put up no stakes in our country**." . . . At the Buffalo Lake I found both Indians and Half-breeds **greatly agitated**. . . . A report will have reached you before this time that **parties have been turned back by the Indians**, and that **a train containing supplies for the telegraph contractors**, when west of Fort Pitt, **were met by three Indians and ordered to return**. . . . Personally I am indebted both to the missionaries, and the Hudson's Bay Company's officials for their assistance at the Indian councils. —REV. GEORGE McDOUGALL, 23 October 1875

* * *

The final message given by Keskayiwew in the letter re-emphasizes one of the *okimâwak*'s requests overall that Archibald would come and meet with them in person: "My brother, that is coming close, I look upon you, as if I saw you. . . . Come and see us" (171). Again, as with the language of pity, the statement that Keskayiwew "looks" upon Archibald as if he saw him becomes more than a wish for physically being in the same place. It functions as injunction and invitation described in terms of enactment that works to collapse the spatial and temporal distance between Keskayiwew and Archibald. The English translation's grammar puts forward the desire to meet in person both as a future hope and a present, ongoing reality. Through the present continuous tense, Archibald is already on his way, already responding as a "brother, that is coming close." While Archibald is drawing close, Keskayiwew looks upon Archibald in the conditioned present moment ("I look. . . as if I saw") reiterated by the imperative "Come and see us." The letter collapses the temporal and spatial distance between them, working to bring about their meeting in the moment of speaking the message, receiving, and reading it, and the event of their being together in person. The text itself is a continuous event that is occurring now, will occur, and will keep occurring, especially through the actions it initiates.

In addition to Keskayiwew's message, references to gesture and action in the letter as a whole show its role as part of the network of Cree discursive practice and form, Cree poetics, that tie together embodied forms of relation and expression with the discursive. Wihkasko-kisêyin declares, "I shake hands with you," followed by a request for a representative if Archibald cannot come see and speak with them himself (Morris 171).⁷ The

⁷ According to Kâ-miyo-kisikwêw (Fine Day), the practice of shaking hands was relatively recent and started "after the peace," replacing kissing as a gesture of friendship ("Fine Day Interview #14" 11). The "peace" may refer to the alliance made between Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Nêhiyawak in 1871 (Cuthand, "How the

letter extends the role of emissary or envoy as Wîhkasko-kisêyin cannot physically shake hands with Archibald, but, while the letter extends an embodied diplomatic practice, it does not work in isolation, as the repeated calls for Archibald to meet with them attest.⁸

Archibald must practice his responsibilities framed by *wâhkôtowin*, invoked by *kitimâkêyihcikêwin* and respond to the messengers.

* * *

Reading the *Wîhkaskwa* Bundle

The 1871 messages addressed to Victoria and Archibald provide an entry into Nêhiyaw understandings of *okimâw* responsibilities. Although understanding and enactment of *okimâhkâniwiwin* (work of being chief) could vary, studying accounts of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's leadership among Nêhiyawak can elaborate *okimâw* practice for reciprocity and generosity, as expressed in a Nêhiyaw kinship context, and as grounding for his diplomacy and patterns of governance. Within *nêhiyawî-itâpisiniwin* (Cree worldview, thought), Nêhiyawak draw from "collective narrative memory" to put "singular lives into a larger context" that connects ancestors and descendants as well as human beings with the more-than-human

Cree, Blackfoot"; cf. Piyêsiw-awâsis 32-33).

⁸ Messengers played an important role in Cree diplomacy to bring forward both the actions and words of the person they represented, which gives context for how written letters functioned. When Chief Atâhkakohp sent Chief Mistawâsis (Big Child) a message about partnering with Anglican missionaries, he sent his son to represent him. The missionary John Hines recorded the event, even describing it in terms of a letter: "[T]his is the kind of letter he sent—it consisted of a plug of tobacco, and a verbal message by his son." When Atâhkakohp's son found Mistawâsis, "he handed the chief the tobacco, telling him it was from his father. The chief, being one of themselves, knew by this action that the young man was the bearer of a message, and . . . he sent word to the different tents, telling the men he had a messenger in his tent from Star Blanket, and he invited them to smoke the pipe of peace with him and his friend[Atâhkakohp's son]" (Hines 89). When it came to letters written in English with pen and paper, the letter acted as a kind of messenger but not a medicine bundle, which would accompany the carrier of the "words" and gestures. So, when Keskayiwew refers to the act of looking at Archibald, there is a sense in which this is possible through a messenger who reports back to Keskayiwew, only now the role is partially played by the letter. My thanks to Daniel Coleman raising the question of messengers' roles in Cree diplomacy.

world (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 11). To understand “Cree historical experience,” Neal McLeod argues, “[c]omprehension of Cree philosophy and worldview is necessary,” which involves attending to what he calls Cree narrative memory, the body of stories and thought accumulated, reiterated, and added to over time that transmit memory and history (11). In the following sections, I read from the Cree narrative memory of Wihkasko-kisêyin’s life and how these accounts show Nêhiyaw principles of *okimâhkâniwiwin* (work of being chief), particular in relation to his naming. I consider Wihkasko-kisêyin’s name as a bundling signifier that brings together narratives of his past actions with understandings of *wihkaskwa* (sweetgrass) in Nêhiyaw cosmology to expand the interpretive context for his leadership and communication with government officials like Archibald, Christie, and Victoria, as well as the priest Albert Lacombe and the Roman Catholic Church. Wihkasko-kisêyin’s name, I suggest, invokes *mêkinawêwin* (giving gifts), a central practice of Nêhiyaw society formalized ceremonially in *mâhtâhitowin* (giveaway feast). Signified by *wihkaskwa*, *mêkinawêwin* marked not only his *okimâhkâniwiwin*, but also his approach to engaging in diplomatic discourse to navigate his peoples’ survival under painful conditions.

Accounts of Wihkasko-kisêyin’s life emphasize two qualities *okimâw* were expected to embody for acceptance and retention as leaders in Nêhiyaw society: bravery and generosity. Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw (Fine Day), in a 1935 interview with anthropologist David Mandelbaum, referred to both qualities in describing Wihkasko-kisêyin’s life. *Okimâwak* who were “well off were good hunters and good fur trappers” who could care for others:

There also will be a bunch of people camping close to the chief who are unable to look after themselves. The chief has got to give them food every once in a while. By feeding these people and by being brave in war—that’s how he got to be a big chief. Sweet Grass was a short man but a great worker. He set an example for the young men. . . . Sweet Grass was the biggest chief I ever saw. He was brave and had lots of people as well. (“Fine Day Interview #26” 1-2)

According to Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw, *okimâwak* were responsible for caring for those who had less in their communities and for being brave in conflict.⁹ However, Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw added the qualifications that *okimâwak* needed to be both brave and have enough that they could re-distribute to others who had less; they needed to be able to practice *mêkinawêwin*.¹⁰ He recounts that elders who identified someone with potential for leadership would give the following counsel:

It is not an easy thing to be chief. Look at this chief now. He has to have pity on the poor. When he sees a man stuck he must try and help him whatever way he can. If a person asks for something in your tipi you must give it without bad feeling. Give the things away willingly. We are telling you this now because you will meet these things and you must have a strong heart. (2)

Of course, bravery for *okimâwak* mattered in the event of conflict and to defend against violence and theft, but it was also necessary in leading hunts and other ventures requiring risk, with the goal of providing for the well-being of the community overall. Thus, *okimâwak* were invested with the responsibility of care requiring a range of skills to enact, as in the example of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's life. They needed to be able to draw upon *kitimâkêyihcikêwin* in order to practice *wâhkôtowin* through giving gifts and aid to others.

It is worth noting that, as described by Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw (Coming Day) in a 1934 with Mandelbaum, Wîhkasko-kisêyin was not Nêhiyaw but became a member of the

⁹ Cf. Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw and Mandelbaum, "Fine Day Interview #26," 1-2 for examples of an *okimâw*'s responsibility to care for children who had lost their parents.

¹⁰ For this reason, people who were wealthy were not necessarily able to be *okimâwak* because the role required the ability to both acquire resources and administer them in such a way that people were taken care of: "No, no matter how brave a man is and no matter how many horses he brings back, if he's got nothing he can't be chief. . . . No, no matter how well off a man was, if he never went to war—he is no chief" ("Interview #26" 2). Mandelbaum adds a note that "there is a perpetual equation in goods exchanged as gifts," showing the ongoing re-circulation of materials within a community that was also influenced by rank and relationship (2). Day Walker describes how there could be people in a band wealthier than an *okimâw* because the *okimâw* had to take care of the poor, leading to greater recognition and reputation (Day Walker and Mandelbaum 3).

Sîpîwiyiniwak [Cîpiwiyiniwuk], or River People of Nêhiyawak, “who were not very many in number” (1, 2). Wîhkasko-kisêyin rose in prominence as the *kihci-okimâw*, “headman of all the Cree bands—Prairie, House, Wood people and the Stonies too”: “Every tribe had a headman but when they all gathered, Sweet Grass was above them all” (1-2). Wîhkasko-kisêyin was Apsáalooke (Crow), either born in a Cree camp after his mother, an Apsáalooke woman, was taken during a conflict with the Cree, or he was taken and raised by a Cree woman as an adopted son in place of her son who had died (Curtis 59; Cuthand 42; cf. fig. 14). He was raised in the camp and called Okimâsis or Apistchi-koimas, meaning “little chief” and “He-who-has-no-name,” according to Doug Cuthand (*Askiwina* 42).

Some stories of Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s path to leadership include the events of his name change to “Wîhkasko-kisêyin” (Sweet Grass or Old Man Sweetgrass), but his contemporaries’ accounts focus on his bravery in the context of Nêhiyawak and Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot) conflict (fig. 14). Two narratives from Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw and Simon Mimikwas recorded by Leonard Bloomfield in 1934 describe Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s leadership in attacks on Siksikaitsitapi. In Mimikwas’ account, a visit from Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s *pawâkan* (source of power), the mosquito, foreshadows his success.¹¹ After declaring “kitimâkisi” (“you are pitiful”) to Wîhkasko-kisêyin, the *pawâkan* says it will help him become *okimâw* (29-30; cf. McLeod and Wolvengrey 110). Mimikwas’ narrative ends by emphasizing the promise’s fulfillment: “On account of this [event] Sweet-Grass became a chief. All the time since then, to this very day, he is chief” (31). Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw includes a similar acclamation: “For this exploit he who had gone alone . . . became a great chief He was chief among the men of old” (Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw 29).¹²

¹¹ “Mosquitoes” was a term applied to “any group of boys who happened to be out herding horses together” (Mandelbaum 120). The *pawâkan* as mosquito may be significant, offering to assist another skilled mosquito.

¹² Cf. Bloomfield, *Plains Cree Texts* for other stories about Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s bravery and skill as a warrior.

Figure 14: Accounts of Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s Naming and Path to Leadership

The following table shows the occurrence of different events in narratives of Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s life from the following sources:

JA-B	Jesse Rae Archibald-Barber, <i>kisiskâciwan</i> (2018)
EC	Edward S. Curtis, <i>The North American Indian</i> (1928)
AT	Allan R. Turner, <i>Dictionary of Canadian Biography</i> (1972)
Obit	“Abraham Wikaskokiséyin,” obituaries in <i>Annales de la propagation de la foi pour la province de Québec</i> and <i>L’opinion publique journal Illustré</i> (1877)
KP (B)	Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw in Leonard Bloomfield, <i>Plains Cree Texts</i> (1934)
SM (B)	Simon Mimikwas in Leonard Bloomfield, <i>Plains Cree Texts</i> (1934)
DC	Doug Cuthand, <i>Askiwina</i> (2007)
KM (M)	Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw interviewed by D.G. Mandelbaum, “Interview #14” (1934)
KP (M)	Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw interviewed by D.G. Mandelbaum (1934)

Narrative Events	J A-B	EC	AT	Obit	KP (B)	SM (B)	DC	KM (M)	KP (M)
Born in Cree camp to Apsáalooke woman	X		X	X					
Taken as a boy; adopted by Cree mother		X					X		
Becomes known by diminutive name ¹³		X	X	X			X		
Wants to steal horses from Blackfoot because he was poor		X					X		
Reference to his poor status or pitiful position ¹⁴		X				X	X		
Kills Blackfoot man and steals horses ¹⁵		X	X				X		
Gives his mother horses		X					X		

¹³ Known as “Páusti-kuwínis (‘rapid-on small,’ that is, Little Atsina)” (Curtis 59); “Apistchi-koimas (Le Petit Chef)” (Turner; cf. “Abraham Wikaskokiséyin”); and “Okimasis, which means Little Chief and He-who-has-no-name” (Cuthand, *Askiwina* 42).

¹⁴ He either declares himself to be poor as motivation for stealing horses (Curtis 59) or is declared pitiful by his *pawâkan* and told he will become a chief (Mimikwas 29).

¹⁵ Curtis’s account numbers about three hundred horses (59). Turner cites a more modest “over forty.” Cuthand opts for forty-two.

Narrative Events	J A-B	EC	AT	Obit	KP (B)	SM (B)	DC	KM (M)	KP (M)
Asks his foster mother to identify people in need		X					X		
Gives horses to people with few or no horses; keeps the best stallion		X					X		
Gives elder his horse and Blackfoot scalp	X	X					X		
Explicit reference to the plant sweetgrass ¹⁶	X	X	X						
Elder names Wihkasko-kisêyin ¹⁷	X	X					X		
Declared <i>okimâw</i> ¹⁸		X	X			X	X		
Gains respect and made <i>okimâw</i> through bravery and leadership in conflict with Blackfoot ¹⁹		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Gains respect through generosity and gift-giving		X		X			X		X
Becomes important <i>okimâw</i> for other Cree bands			X	X			X	X	X

¹⁶ Curtis notes the scalp is “stuffed with sweetgrass” and that Wihkasko-kisêyin did not have time to stretch it on a hoop, indicating it was being used as a kind of pouch or medicine bag (60). In Turner’s account, Wihkasko-kisêyin holds aloft a tuft of sweetgrass dipped in his enemy’s blood.

¹⁷ Curtis translates Wihkasko-kisêyin as “sweetgrass old-man” (60). McLeod translates the name similarly (“Old Man Sweetgrass”); Wihkasko-kisêyin was referred to as “old man” because his son was also called “Sweetgrass” (100 Days of Cree 109). Cuthand gives the English translation “Kind Sweetgrass Person” (43).

¹⁸ The elder makes the declaration in Curtis and Cuthand. Turner’s declaration is made by the people chanting the name. Mimikwas’ narrates the *pawâkan* makes the declaration preceding any action by Wihkasko-kisêyin. In Curtis’s account, the elder leads the stallion through the camp swinging the gifted scalp and declaring Wihkasko-kisêyin’s new name and position as chief (60). The ambiguity of pronouns in Curtis’s account may have led to Turner’s interpretation where Wihkasko-kisêyin takes on this role in a violent image of martial conquest: “Upon his return, amidst shouts of triumph, he held up a tuft of grass dipped in the blood of his victim; the whole camp took up the cry, ‘Sweet Grass!’” However, the context of Curtis’s account points to the elder as the “he” proclaiming Wihkasko-kisêyin, taking on the role of the crier.

¹⁹ Accounts differ in details. For example, in Kâ-kisikâw-pihtukâw’s account with Bloomfield Wihkasko-kisêyin goes out alone and routs Blackfoot into an attack with his Cree camp, leading to eleven deaths. In Mimikwas’ account, he goes out with a few companions, and the deaths number twenty-two. It is not clear whether these are different events, or different versions of similar events.

In another account, Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw states explicitly that Wîhkasko-kisêyin's rise to leadership was a direct result of his courage in conflict: "The reason why [Wîhkasko-kisêyin] was the highest chief was because he was so brave. When everybody else would take to shelter in a battle, he would get up and charge. . . . There was no other headman as brave as he" (Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw and Mandelbaum 2). For all the emphasis on bravery, however, Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw qualifies his account with descriptions both of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's generosity and the value placed on an *okimâw*'s ability to provide for people in his community: "If Sweet Grass heard that one of his people couldn't make a living he would send for them and give them whatever they need[ed]. That is why his people liked him so. . . . He was kind to the poor and that helped him become a great chief" (Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw and Mandelbaum 2). At times *okimâwak* were given leadership because they were good hunters or providers if not great warriors, but the key quality was a person's ability to provide, which was often facilitated by bravery (2).²⁰

Accounts that include narratives of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's naming emphasize more strongly the necessary quality of generosity as reflected in the meaning of his name and the plant he is named after—sweetgrass. Some of these narratives begin with Wîhkasko-kisêyin venturing off alone in search of horses for himself and his mother who are described as poor (Curtis 59, Cuthand 42). He ends up meeting and killing a Siksikaitsitapi man, stealing his herd of horses and his scalp, and returning to camp. Upon his return, he gives his mother some of the horses and then distributes the rest to people with greatest need. He keeps a

²⁰ Bravery and generosity are connected in that if one is brave, they can afford to be generous. Some accounts seem to prioritize bravery, others generosity as necessary for leadership. Yet, the accounting of how leaders are formed gives us a more complicated situation of how bravery and generosity are interrelated. Survival needs require bravery to pursue hunting, fishing, stealing horses, etc. The need and opportunity for generosity is the context that informs and fuels the need for courage and risk-taking. Those who are in positions to take risks must also be generous and care for those who are not.

stallion for himself. However, an old man had been absent from camp during the give-away, and when he returned, Okimâsis gave him the stallion as well as the scalp of the Siksikaitsitapi man he had killed. Curtis's version describes the scalp as drawn up like a pouch and stuffed full of sweetgrass (60). Upon receiving the gifts and seeing the bundle of sweetgrass, the old man was "filled with joy" and exclaimed: "Grandson, you have no name! But I will give you a name. Hereafter you shall be Wikasku-kîyēsīn ('sweetgrass old-man'), and all shall know you by that name. And more I say. You are a chief, a great chief. Nobody has ever done what you have done, and from this time you shall be our chief" (60). Following this acclamation, the old man led the stallion around the camp while carrying the bundle of sweetgrass, and, performing the role of *osâkitow* (crier),²¹ called out the new name "Wîhkasko-kisêyin" (60).²² Cuthand's version is similar, perhaps relying in part on Curtis's, but his account does not mention the presence of sweetgrass at all. Instead, after receiving the horse and scalp, the old man is "deeply touched" and says "he would give . . . the name Kind Sweetgrass Person. He also told him that, because of his kindness and bravery, someday he would be chief" (*Askiwina* 43). It appears that sweetgrass does not need to be materially present at all to account for Wîhkasko-kisêyin's name. Rather, his actions, showing his generosity, as well as his bravery, signal his identity as a "Sweetgrass Person."

The figure of the *okimâw* emerges in these accounts as an individual who, through his own choices and actions, rises to leadership. However, the ability of *okimâwak* to

²¹ The role of the *osâkitow* (crier), or *oca-kitostamakew* (Mandelbaum's spelling), was typically held by an older man who had been a skilled warrior and involved going around the camp and calling the news of the day, the *okimâw*'s announcements, and other public notices (Mandelbaum 109). The crier was also responsible for announcing the giving of a gift publicly, which the old man does in Curtis's account.

²² In Allan Turner's version Wîhkasko-kisêyin is the one who holds up the sweetgrass bundle thereby amplifying his martial victory without any reference to the context of gift-giving: "Upon his return, amidst shouts of triumph, he held up a tuft of grass dipped in the blood of his victim; the whole camp took up the cry, 'Sweet Grass!'" (n.p.). Playing into stereotypical depictions of Indian bloodlust, Turner's version centres blood-covered sweetgrass as a material signifier of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's bravery and violent skill in battle only.

practice *mêkinawêwin* also seems to have been determined by their relationships and the *mêkinawêwin* of others, especially women, within the gift economy framed by *wâhkôtowin*. Stories of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's life and descriptions of *okimâhkânîwiwin* predominantly feature the presence and actions of men, but in one account, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's mother features, if only briefly, as a mediator of his generosity. Curtis's narration quickly moves on from the mother's participation, retaining the focus on Wîhkasko-kisêyin's actions and agency, but his mother is the one who facilitates *mêkinawêwin* by identifying those who should receive gifts and guiding a central practice for enacting Nêhiyaw law. That Wîhkasko-kisêyin first gives horses to his mother also indicates Nêhiyaw social practices of resource management and re-distribution highly mediated by women that go unremarked in Curtis's account. Harold Johnson writes that in his family "it was accepted that a woman owned the home and everything in it. If a man left or was put out, he took only his personal possessions" (83).²³ Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw related to Mandelbaum that after a hunt the meat and hides became "the property of the women" ("Fine Day Interview #14" 6). Mandelbaum adds that women "could dispose of them as they pleased" (*The Plains Cree* 58). Women's ownership and control of resources was far-reaching and included anything they harvested, trapped, or hunted (78); tipis and everything in them (89); and dogs and horses, which transported all their goods in *akotâpân* (travois) (66).²⁴

Descriptions of women's ownership and management demonstrate the extended network of Nêhiyaw governance and shared authority in which women's influence and control featured as a primary and widespread component of economic relations in Cree

²³ If a man wanted to paint a tipi cover with a picture of his *pawâkan*, he first needed to gain consent from the woman whose tipi it was (Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree* 89).

²⁴ Since most horses were held and cared for by families, most often used for transportation to haul *akotâpân*, it is possible most of the horses were owned by women (Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree* 62).

society. In the presence of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's mother and her mediation of his giveaway, these aspects of women's authority in Nêhiyaw society find a trace in the settler record. If *okimâwak* were required to be generous, and if most provisions were under the authority of women, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's mother was central to what came to be recorded as his acts of generosity. Generosity and gift-giving depended on the guidance and generosity of those who managed the distribution of food in a community, who directed its economic relations, reflecting also the strong context of shared authority that framed and guided leadership roles such as *okimâw* and *okihcitâw*.²⁵ Wîhkasko-kisêyin's reputation for generosity—and the possibility for being known as a “Sweetgrass Person”—was made possible through the participation and leadership of women, likely both in his youth and in subsequent years of leadership, indicating how conceptions of gift relationships were enacted through complex, dynamic practices of authority, ownership, and relationship—the work of *wâhkôtowin*.

* * *

The plant sweetgrass figures in accounts of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's naming as a bundling signifier of other conceptual layers of Nêhiyaw gift economies, tying them through Wîhkasko-kisêyin's name with *okimâw* practice, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's reputation, and the discursive and conceptual significance of the plant itself. Sweetgrass, called *wîhkaskwa* in Cree, *wîngashk* in Anishinaabemowin, is considered an important medicine for many Indigenous peoples in North America alongside cedar, tobacco, and sage, and it has taken on a range of associations through a process of what Warren Cariou calls “storification” in which meanings are lent to the plant through the practices of its use and the narratives that

²⁵ Harold Johnson describes how *okimâwak* would be selected to deal with times of conflict or crisis with the intention the leader would be freed of the responsibility once the crisis was over, becoming “one of the people again” (77-78). Both the selection process and the *okimaw*'s leadership practice were understood as collective endeavours that required involvement from the entire community (79).

frame and energize these practices (Cariou 342). Although the narratives and practices may differ, sweetgrass consistently signifies the qualities of generosity, reciprocity, and respect, characteristics for which Wîhkasko-kisêyin also came to be known.

For example, the common practice of giving sweetgrass braids as gifts infuses the plant with associations of generosity, and it is understood as gift even before it comes into human possession. Robin Wall Kimmerer draws upon Anishinaabe thought to describe sweetgrass as “the hair of Mother Earth,” and as such, the plant ultimately belongs to the earth and grows as gift to the beings who use the plant (203). Harvesters, therefore, work to gather the plant in ways that honour this relationship and signal respect for it. Sweetgrass is then “braided to show loving care for [the earth’s] well-being” (203). The act of braiding with the “tenderness in braiding the hair of someone you love. Kindness and something more flow between the braider and the braided, the two connected by the cord of the plait” (5).²⁶ Gratitude is embedded in the process for the gift of sweetgrass—and all other gifts from the earth it signifies (5).

Cree elder Jim Kâ-Nîpitêhtêw similarly connects the imagery of Earth as a generous relative that confers upon sweetgrass an important mediating role in ceremonial practice. He describes how the grass must be treated respectfully because it is a gift from Earth:

[I]t will come to pass where you are raising the wafts of your sweetgrass smoke, where you are chanting your prayers, that this sweetgrass will speak for you; for that reason respect it! When you respect your sweetgrass, just as it is beautiful when the Great Mother pushes it up through the ground, that is how your requests will be listened to. (121)

In his description, sweetgrass facilitates one’s participation in a relational ethic grounded in

²⁶ Kimmerer suggests that although braiding sweetgrass can be done alone by tying an end to a chair, for example, the reciprocity that sweetgrass figures becomes even more pronounced when done with two people. As one person holds the strand while the other braids, the two are linked by sweetgrass and there is “reciprocity between you, . . . the holder as vital as the braider” (ix).

kinship thought. The plant brings together memory and action as it calls to mind expectations for how one participates in the relational ecology and influences practices of respect, generosity, and humility facilitated by the work of memory. Kâ-Nîpitêhtêw's description implies the risk of being guided by self-interest, greed, and carelessness, rather than gratitude and generosity; when one does not honour the plant as a gift, one is at risk of the consequences of such carelessness, possibly even amounting to harm.

Instead, as Cariou argues, the gift relationship involves “open reciprocity” wherein “the gift does not initiate an expectation that another gift should be presented to the original giver”; it does not form a closed circle of reciprocity (346). Instead, the “reciprocity relationship” features more like “scattering” as “plants regenerate by releasing seeds”:

The gift is intended to be shared anywhere, without restrictions, as long as it is shared. Thus it does not matter whether there is an imbalance in power between the giver and receiver . . . ; the expectation is that the recipient of the gift will pass that gift along to any other being, including the animate land itself. In this way, the gift relationship resists reification into established social hierarchies or into closed economies. The ceremonial power of sweetgrass is predicated upon its status as an open reciprocal gift, one that inspires further gifts to others. . . Indeed, giving is described here as a way of generating value rather than relinquishing it, and sweetgrass is revealed to be the heart of an economic system that is the opposite of extractive capitalism. (346-347)

Gifts and generosity call for respectful participation in the relationships they move in and through, which involves careful treatment and intentions marked by humility, generosity, and thanks rather than greed and selfishness. Thus, in *wîhkaskwa* practices of *mêkinawêwin* are figured, gesturing toward their even more formalized enactment in *mâhtâhitowin*, which were later banned by Canadian legislation. The plant itself facilitates practices of gift-giving, but its physical material and properties can also stimulate memory through sensory engagement with it, the situation of its giving, and the broader narrative memory of its significance gathered over time (343). Giving sweetgrass, which begins as earth-gift in the

first instance, extends the practice and reminders of generosity, forming a material call for honourable harvesting, careful treatment, and ongoing *mêkinawêwin*.

Wihkaskwa features as a bundling presence and signifier that reproduces its range of meaning through its continued use and narration. It is an example of what Willie Ermine calls the “physical clues of valuable conceptualizations” and of “corporeal sacred acts” that connect a person and their inner world, supported by the “collective energy of a people,” with the external in a process of interrelation (106). Over time and through repeated practice, sweetgrass has taken on a range of images and meanings that signal the plant’s role as participant in a broader relational ecology, gesturing to how entwined human beings are with the rest of the natural world, to personal interactions and their broader implications and effects.

Wihkaskwa, then, opens up a “poetic pathway” and “embodied understandings” for the name-bearer’s “location in understanding the world and reality” (McLeod, “Cree Poetic” 93). The plant bears meanings that can facilitate what McLeod calls Cree poetic discourse, an “embodied, poetic understanding of the world” in which a range of significations foster one’s understanding of “embodied locatio[n],” relationship to place, and “a wider context of collective historicity” (94). When these significations are brought into the contexts of *Wihkasko-kisêyin*’s life narratives, they figure the plant as a key signifier for Nêhiyaw diplomacy and leadership and their embodiment in the person bearing the plant’s name. Naming him after sweetgrass gestures to his participation in the gift economy and land relationships the plant signifies, which are maintained by “mutual sharing relationships that we can have with the natural world when we come to understand that world as the bearer of gifts rather than as the site of resources to be exploited” (Cariou 344-345).²⁷

²⁷ Cariou’s reading of sweetgrass poses challenges for Mandelbaum’s argument that generosity got

Narratives of Wihkasko-kisêyin's *okimâw* practice provide one example of Nêhiyaw governance and its significations in Cree narratives through the associations of sweetgrass and implications of being named after it. Narratives of Wihkasko-kisêyin emphasize his skill in conflict and in caring for his people, which accounted not only for his leadership among his people but also his broader reputation; notices of his death in Roman Catholic publications that circulated in Canada and France referenced his bravery, selflessness, hospitality, and generosity.²⁸ Furthermore, they provide context for how many Nêhiyawak discursively framed their relationships with non-Indigenous leaders of different kinds in the context of *wâhkôtowin* and the principles of reciprocity. While practices of generosity and gift-giving were central to leadership and diplomacy, they were not only expressed in the sharing of material possessions; they were also practiced as generosity of regard and willingness to consider the possibility of engaging in mutual relationships with other peoples, including diplomatic, political ones.

* * *

transformed into a “status asset” in the hierarchy of Cree social life (Mandelbaum 109), whereas Cariou argues that “the gift relationship resists reification into established social hierarchies or into closed economies” (Cariou 347). Yet, one of the key differences between their descriptions are the contexts in and to which each is writing. If it is the case that generosity became instrumentalized at times (as in any human community), the nature of historical practice does not negate the range of thought and alternative practice that surrounds a concept or principle and that can have an afterlife beyond any individual. This seems more of a problem with practicing ideals and the ongoing provisional (and revisable) nature of human social construction. Sadly, Wihkasko-kisêyin did not live up to the significations of his name toward the end of his life. After he died, people in his band learned that he was selling supplies from the HBC to his people that were intended to be gifts, distributed freely. Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw described that they found out after hearing that other chiefs had given the supplies away (“Fine Day Interview #2” 7-8). Wihkasko-kisêyin's generosity in his lifetime was also made possible by acts of violence and conflict with other peoples. These events do not negate the ideal, however, showing rather the challenge, and necessity, of trying to enact it in better ways.

²⁸ “Son caractère aimable et conciliant, et surtout sa bravoure, l'élevèrent bientôt au-dessus de ses compagnons. . . [L]e désintéressement, la libéralité et la prodigalité sont des qualités qui placent bientôt quelqu'un au nombre des grands” (“Abraham Wihkasko-kisêyin” 115). Cf. “Il était aimé de tous, et même les tribus ennemies ne pouvaient s'empêcher de rendre hommage à son mérite, en publiant ses vues pacifiques et son honnêteté. Il s'était acquis sa position par son désintéressement, sa douceur et sa charité envers ceux qui souffraient” (“Nouvelle: Saint-Boniface” 81).

Okimâhkâniwiwin in Missionary Discourse**1870, *misi-paskwâw*, St. Paul des Cris, Brosseau**

In addition to their relationships with Victoria, Archibald, other government officials, *okimâwak* in the late-nineteenth century tested the possibilities for reciprocal partnership with the growing number of missionaries and religious groups in their territories who professed their commitment to Nêhiyawak and other Indigenous peoples in a time of upheaval and uncertainty. For Wîhkasko-kisêyin, Atâhkakohp, and other *okimâwak*, missionaries held potential as supportive intermediaries between Nêhiyawak and settler peoples, culture, and influence, especially in the midst of growing settler colonial dominance more broadly. Thus, with their purported commitments to care and service, missionaries' discursive environments appealed as possible avenues for communication along *wâhkôtowin* values and being understood by settler audiences in those terms.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Nêhiyawak experienced a process of growing alienation that, as McLeod argues, occurred in two “two interrelated and concurrent ways” (*Cree Narrative* 55). “Spatial exile” involved alienation from land and was accelerated by the decline of the fur trade and initiation of the treaty process. Nêhiyawak also experienced “spiritual exile” as they were alienated from stories and languages “brought about by coercive government policies and legislation” that banned religious ceremonies and made residential school attendance mandatory (55). In McLeod's description, government policy, law, and their enforcement initiated alienation, yet the process began prior to “official” intervention by the Canadian government, as McLeod also alludes to. The decline of the fur trade, disappearance of the bison, scarcity of other food sources, disease epidemics, and gradual settler incursion deeply troubled Indigenous peoples' sense of reliance on their lands for survival. Losses had been compounded due to dramatic changes in the ecological rhythms they could reasonably expect in the past and

which had been disrupted as a result of settlers' presence. One strategy *okimâwak* employed was pursuing alliances and partnerships with settler leaders, including missionaries. Like Peguis, other Indigenous leaders increasingly perceived missionaries, who also actively positioned themselves favourably, as worthwhile partners in the changing environment.

Wihkasko-kisêyin met Albert Lacombe, OMI, after a Roman Catholic mission was founded at St. Paul des Cris in 1865 on the north side of *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* (North Saskatchewan River) where Brosseau, Alberta is located today. The mission's location was strategic as the *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* linked Fort Edmonton and Fort Pitt, facilitating travel and trade between them as well as the surrounding area. Lacombe had been working with Siksikaitsitapi and Nêhiyawak while serving Métis at Lac Ste. Anne, and he requested permission of his bishop to follow them in their seasonal movements in the territory (Huel 50). At St. Paul des Cris, an agricultural mission was established, and Nêhiyawak who participated cultivated plots, planting them before leaving for the summer bison hunt and returning to harvest before the winter hunt. Lacombe would accompany the hunts to assist and provide religious instruction (Huel 51). For several years, Wihkasko-kisêyin resisted Lacombe's attempts to convert him, reportedly stating, "Leave me alone! I will tell you if I need your white man's religion!" (Breton 67). Another source cites him less emphatically but with more foreboding, using Jesus' own phrasing: "Leave me alone; I will tell you when my time has come" (Hughes 187).²⁹ Eventually, Wihkasko-kisêyin did tell Lacombe that he

²⁹ The phrasing "when my time has come" echoes phrasing from the gospel of John referring to the arrival of Jesus' revelation as the Messiah: "My time/mine hour is not yet come." This likeness adds a narrative layer that would register for Roman Catholic and other Christian sensibilities in which narratives of Christian conversion evoke typological reminders in image and word of biblical figures and events. Wihkasko-kisêyin's obituaries put it this way: "*Le père lui parlait souvent de religion, mais Wikaskokiseyin soutenait toujours que le temps n'était pas arrive pour lui*" ("*Abraham Wikaskokiséyin*" 197). Such renderings rhetorically to the "precursor" confirm the "rightness" of the happening in the present, building the argument of Christian conversion and therefore re-authorizing and re-authenticating the mission of the church. In the foreword to the new edition of her book responding to reviews from outside Canada, Katherine Hughes writes, ". . . [W]here I repeat

wanted to share in the white man's religion. As with narratives of Wihkasko-kisêyin's life, accounts vary as to how and why he assented to the Christian faith, but two biographers of Lacombe emphasize instances of personal and collective crisis as the background and impetus for conversion, revealing the shifting roles of missionary partnership in this period for *okimâwak* like Wihkasko-kisêyin.

Paul-Émile Breton's 1955 account emphasizes a personal crisis that influenced Wihkasko-kisêyin to accept Lacombe's "solicitation" to be baptized. Wihkasko-kisêyin brought his son-in-law to Lacombe for medical aid. The son-in-law's hand had been amputated after suffering a gunshot wound, but two months later his arm was gangrenous. When Wihkasko-kisêyin brought his relative to Lacombe for care, the priest reportedly asked, "What can I do? . . . I am not a doctor, nor do I have the necessary equipment" (Breton 67). Wihkasko-kisêyin replied ("snorted," according to Breton), "If we were Christians you would certainly do something for him. But for us you will do nothing," criticizing the difference in commitment toward those who had been baptised in contrast to those who had not in an emerging hierarchy in which partnership with missionaries held a promise of deeper commitment with material benefits.³⁰ According to Breton's account, Lacombe reluctantly agreed to operate with what supplies he had. Three weeks later, "much

conversations in Père Lacombe's Life I am not making magnificent guesses at what these people likely would have said. I am repeating from the lips of participants what actually was said—or what I myself heard" (x). Hughes' assertion raises an interesting question regarding the relationship between narrative projects and memory, adding to the complexity of communication, translation, and recording history in the period and to ascribing agency in utterance.

³⁰ The account given in Wihkasko-kisêyin's obituaries describes him in a more conciliatory way: "*A l'arrivée des missionnaires au milieu de ses gens, il se montra bon, généreux et hospitalier en vers eux, mais il tarda longtemps à inscrire son nom sur la liste des catéchumènes, tout en encourageant les siens à se faire chrétiens*" ("Abraham Wikaskokisêyin" 197). However, the criticism in Breton's account encapsulates the growing phenomenon of Indigenous converts being privileged over "heathen" and the emerging hierarchization of different "kinds" of Indians in the perception of Euro-Canadian people.

to his surprise, the young man was completely recovered” (67). Breton describes this event as a miracle that spurred Wîhkasko-kisêyin to give a speech at a later prayer meeting: “My friends, you all know who I am. You have seen me presiding at our medicine feasts. Today, in the presence of the ‘Great Spirit,’ I turn away from all the beliefs of our fathers to follow those of our friend, the ‘Man of Prayer.’ His religion is one of kindness, I want to join. I have spoken” (68). Lacombe and his religion “of kindness” seem to connect with Nêhiyaw values of leadership and compassion, and perhaps Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s words indicated something of this for his Nêhiyaw audience. His conversion “caused a great commotion in the Cree camps” and influenced many elders and “ferocious warriors” to do the same (68).

In contrast to Breton’s focus on a more personal crisis, Katherine Hughes’ account, published thirty-five years earlier than Breton’s, centres a collective one as the context for Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s conversion. An epidemic of smallpox, the same referred to in the 1871 letter, rapidly spread through the Saskatchewan Valley in 1870 resulting in numerous deaths, eventually killing a third of the population in the Saskatchewan District (Ray et al. 94). In addition to the suffering the disease caused, anger grew among Indigenous people who understood that smallpox was “a white man’s disease,” as described by John McDougall (qtd. in Daschuk 86). Attempts were made to vaccinate and limit the spread. Christie sent an urgent request for the vaccine in 1869, but none came until 1870 (Daschuk 84). When it did, supplies ran out (86). In some areas, Cree isolated themselves and limited the spread, either by their own choice or at the encouragement of Methodist and Anglican missionaries (87). In other areas, however, especially those ministered to by Roman Catholic missionaries, the disease spread as missionaries encouraged people to gather together (87-88).

Focused on relating Lacombe’s missionary biography, Hughes’ 1920 account converts this great loss into a narrative of success, writing that Christianity made “great progress” in the wake of the epidemic as Indigenous converts were moved by the “absolute devotion”

and “unpretentious heroism” of the Oblates as well as the “religious consolation” experienced by those suffering from the disease. Thus, the Oblates experienced their own “consolation” that their “absolute devotion to the Indian had not gone unrewarded” (187). Lacombe expressed as much in his own description of the epidemic. After a long journey, he returned to the mission at St. Paul when he heard that the illness had reached the mission:

Hardly alighted from my horse, I had to respond to the cries of the sufferers, calling on me with all their might. When I now recall to mind the two months I passed, exposed to the plague, and worn out with fatigue, I most gratefully acknowledge the visible and special protection of Providence. Poor Indians! What a pitiful sight they then offered, and still offer, as a great number still labor under this painful disease. Every one implored my aid and charity,—some for medicine, others for the benefit of the last sacraments. Day and night I was constantly occupied. . . . On the other hand, my toils are amply repaid by the consolation I experience in witnessing the happy dispositions of the poor Indians at the hour of death. This tacit teaching of the “Master of Life” has done more among the Savage Tribes than all our sermons. (“Extracts of a letter” 70-71)

Lacombe describes the desire Nêhiyawak expressed for comfort by medicine and the sacraments in a time of great suffering, but he adds to it his own consolation that the “Savage Tribes” are comforted through his religious instruction at the time of death. The *Journal of St. Paul* recorded two thousand baptisms of adults and children the summer the illness spread (Hughes 187).

Toward the close of the epidemic, Lacombe called a prayer meeting and was “astounded to see Sweet-Grass and several of his pagan warriors enter and kneel with the rest” (188). Hughes quotes Wîhkasko-kisêyin in a speech following the opening prayer and hymn:

My relatives, my friends. . . . You are surprised to see me here. You have known me as a strong follower of the beliefs of our fathers. I have led in the medicine-feasts. To-day, in the presence of the Great Spirit and before our friend *Kamiyo-atshakwe*, I turn away from all that. It is past, and I will hear the teachings of the Man-of-Prayer. (188)

Following this speech, by Hughes' account, Wihkasko-kisêyin kneeled before Lacombe and asked him to make the sign of the cross on him after which he participated in daily teaching from Lacombe along with others of his band who joined. In Hughes' narrative, Wihkasko-kisêyin joined the many seeking consolation in the midst of their grief and collective pain.

Both narratives give different reasons for Wihkasko-kisêyin's acceptance of Christian faith, but they share paternalistic framing in common with missionary writing across denominations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Canada and the United States. Lacombe's and Hughes' accounts especially take the opportunity to frame Indigenous suffering from smallpox as an opportunity to celebrate the advancement of the Catholic mission effort while framing the Oblates, particularly Lacombe, as the heroic missionary.³¹ In a subtler way, the speeches ascribed to Wihkasko-kisêyin rhetorically position him in submission to Lacombe's tutelage and authority. Wihkasko-kisêyin declares in both that he will "turn away" from the beliefs and practices of his "fathers" and "turn toward" the "Man of Prayer" and his teaching. The language of "turning" is revolutionary and absolute, conveying the sense of ontological transformation. For Lacombe, to convert, to "turn," one who presided over medicine feasts was a major success and boost in the

³¹ Writing about the Methodist missionary Egerton Ryerson Young, Brian Gobbett remarks, "It would be a mistake to conflate Young's writings with all missionaries. . . . Nevertheless, as Carol Higham thoroughly illustrates, the image of the 'wretched Indian' stood alongside that of the 'noble savage' and the 'redeemable savage' as dominant metaphors that 'guided' non-native understanding of Indigenous peoples" (170). Higham's work focuses on Protestant missions, but Roman Catholic missionary writing shows similar narrative correspondences. Famously, the graphic catechism tool commonly referred to as "Lacombe's ladder" that hung in every Oblate missionary establishment depicted Indigenous people as mostly travelling the Way of Evil (*Voie du Mal*) past "winged devils and evil spirits to Hell." Lacombe adapted the design from another priest in 1872, and variations circulated world-wide through the mid-twentieth century. The rhetorical impact of the "ladder" was intense and lasting; Bill Whitehawk "remembered that the side that ended up in Hell was the Indian side of the poster," conveying the message "If you participated in your rituals and things like that, that's where you were going to end up." J.R. Miller writes, "Nowhere were the racist attitudes underlying missionary work in the residential schools more graphically revealed than in the famous 'échelle de Lacombe'" (*Shingwauk's Vision* 191).

narrative of Roman Catholic missions in the North-West.³²

Narratives of Indigenous conversion to Christianity, however, were complex, dynamic, and varied in their practice, intention, and narration. Conversion can be individual or collective, voluntary or coerced, occurring for “a great variety of reasons, whether strictly religious, or social, economic, or political,” and it can mean very different things to the missionary than it does to the Indigenous person (Lindenfeld 9). Furthermore, what has been called “conversion” has not always been experienced or practiced in absolute terms. As scholars of mission history have shown, missionary hopes for absolute, radical transformation were often challenged by the more dynamic, complicated, sometimes syncretic, sometimes resistant, workings-out of Indigenous peoples’ relationship to Christianity and the ways it was communicated to them. Thus, what might be learned of Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s thought is ambiguous at best in these narratives, which reveal more about the Catholic writers than Wîhkasko-kisêyin himself.³³

Furthermore, the accounts’ focus on the individual neglect the complex dynamics of decision-making for *okimâwak* who can act independently but are also responsible to their communities for important decisions, raising the question of when and to what extent an *okimâw*’s decisions bore more collective influence. Whatever importance Lacombe and others might have placed on Wîhkasko-kisêyin as an ideal convert, Wîhkasko-kisêyin

³² Also, Albert Lacombe believed that “Christianization was related to civilization because, in ‘civilizing’ the Indians and elevating their morals, the missionary was reforming them and placing them in their proper perspective, that is, man made in the image of God” (Huel 76). Drawing from James Axtell, Raymond Huel describes how conversion was a “very dramatic and traumatic process” that involved total rejection of Indigenous peoples’ “whole cultural being” (76).

³³ One account from Doug Cuthand drawing from oral history suggests there was an aspect of personal consolation for Wîhkasko-kisêyin. Cuthand writes that Wîhkasko-kisêyin had confessed to Father Lacombe that he had “become a chief by killing a man and stealing horses”: “All his life since, he had been haunted by the death of the man because he had shot him while the man was saying his prayers. Later, Sweetgrass was baptized a Christian and took the name Abraham” (*Askiwina* 43).

himself was deeply aware and committed to the responsibilities of *okimâhkâniwiwin* (work of being chief), and, when read in this context, accounts of Wîhkasko-kisêyin's conversion raises questions for *okimâhkâniwiwin* and Nêhiyaw diplomacy in unprecedented times. For example, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's actions in Breton's account indicate the reciprocity he expected and enacted both in personal and collective relationships, as demonstrated by narrations of his rise to leadership. His acceptance of Lacombe's religion features as reciprocating a service rendered to himself and his son-in-law,³⁴ and it follows Lacombe's past service to the Cree people as a demonstration of the care given by the Oblates that held promise for future provision. In a way, Lacombe's actions in corresponding to aspects of *okimâhkâniwiwin*, particularly *kitimâkêyihcikêwin* and *mêkinawêwin* by giving aid, exert a kind of persuasion that registered with Nêhiyaw expectations of leadership, creating a context for reciprocity in return from people like Wîhkasko-kisêyin and others.

By framing Wîhkasko-kisêyin's relationship to the Roman Catholic missionary in the context of crisis and the work of *okimâhkâniwiwin* within it, narratives of his conversion connect to his role as *okimâw* negotiating different kinds of spiritual, discursive, political, and material power and influence. Extremities of the smallpox epidemic, examples of care demonstrated by the Oblates for his people, and persistent and repeated expressions of commitment to him and his people created conditions in which partnership with the Oblates appeared beneficial not only in times of acute crisis but for their future life together in the prairies. Missionaries appeared, and even positioned themselves, as desirable alliances in the drastically shifting ecology and economy of the prairies in the nineteenth century that led Indigenous peoples to do what they have always done and negotiate

³⁴ In his obituary, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's request for help is framed in terms of reciprocal action: "*Homme de la prairie. . . soigne-le quand même, et je me mettrai de la Prière, quoique tu ne le guérisses pas*" ("*Abraham Wikaskokisêyin*" 197).

alliances for mutual survival and wellbeing in the broader contexts of shifting relations.³⁵ Partnerships had appeared beneficial and were supported by expressed and implied commitments to the well-being and service of Indigenous peoples by missionaries. In the case of Lacombe and other priests, Wihkasko-kisêyin and other Cree, Blackfoot, and Métis people who knew them observed the priests participating in bison hunts and other kinds of work, enacting a commitment to their respective communities by labouring to remain in proximity and good relation with them.³⁶ Partnering with missionaries was a way of entering alliances that had already looked—and sounded—promising.³⁷

Such accounts of the Oblates' aid, while indicating the painful contexts in which some Nêhiyawak sought missionary support, ignore how the presence of smallpox was a result of Europeans' presence in the land and that the crisis of epidemic the Oblates tried to ameliorate was also a crisis in which they were implicated. Although missionary accounts work to narrate Lacombe's services for Nêhiyawak as heroic sacrifice, attention to what the

³⁵ It must be emphasized that grounding, and often guiding, Indigenous-settler negotiations were ongoing or new inter-tribal alliances in which different Indigenous peoples would share information, discuss strategies, and often agree on plans of action. For instance, a long-standing peace was made with the Blackfoot in the summer of 1870 which held strong afterward, and George McDougall's account of Indigenous feeling in 1876 offers glimpses into the strategizing that was happening out of view of government officials (Morris 173-175).

³⁶ Perhaps, Wihkasko-kisêyin understood Lacombe as having access to some kind of spiritual power, influence, or knowledge that would benefit not only himself but his people in the future. Only Breton includes an explicit rationale for Wihkasko-kisêyin's conversion which may also speak to the relational ethic he perceived in Lacombe and other Oblates. He describes the religion of the "Man of Prayer" as "one of kindness," enacted through the personal service rendered to Wihkasko-kisêyin's family as well as accounts of Lacombe's and other priests' service to the Cree, Blackfoot, and Métis during the epidemic.

³⁷ Obituaries of Wihkasko-kisêyin remark on his generosity and hospitality to Lacombe, perhaps revealing his commitment not only to their friendship but also to the broader partnership with the Oblates: "*A l'arrivée des missionnaires au milieu de ses gens, il se montra bon, généreux et hospitalier envers eux. . .*" ("*Abraham Wikaskokisêyin*" 197). Cf. a longer description of Wihkasko-kisêyin's general reputation: "*Il s'est toujours montré le protecteur des blancs, et, plus d'une fois, il a prouvé la sincérité de ses bonnes dispositions envers eux, par ses conseils conciliants et sa sagesse dans les assemblées de sa tribu. Il était aimé de tous, et même les tribus ennemies ne pouvaient s'empêcher de rendre hommage à son mérite, en publiant ses vues pacifiques et son honnêteté. Il s'était acquis sa position par son désintéressement, sa douceur et sa charité envers ceux qui souffraient*" ("*Nouvelle: Saint-Boniface*" 81).

narratives miss or exclude re-position such services as a process of acclimating Indigenous people to settler-initiated crises. What might have registered for Nêhiyawak as gestures of *wâhkôtowin* and *kitimâkêyihcikêwin*, and, therefore, as evidence of relational possibility, become fraught with ambivalence, rendering conversion as a constrained choice within the conditions of settler occupation.

* * *

20 April 1872, *misi-paskwâw*, St. Paul des Cris, Brosseau

Following his acceptance of Lacombe's faith, Wîhkasko-kisêyin was baptized in 1870, and his relationship with Lacombe led to Wîhkasko-kisêyin's participation in another discursive context, that of Roman Catholic missionary communication, in order to extend his partnership with the larger Roman Catholic Church. In image and word, Wîhkasko-kisêyin engaged in a kind of discursive *mêkinawêwin* by giving of his discursive presence in missionary communications that were intended to garner support for the Roman Catholic mission in the *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* region and other missions in the prairies. Presumably, the *okimâw* expected support would respond to his community's pressing needs for survival, reflecting the expectation of many Nêhiyawak who engaged with Christianity and different mission efforts as an adaptive strategy (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 42).

Wîhkasko-kisêyin's first entry into Roman Catholic missionary discourse was a letter of thanks published in French alongside a letter from Lacombe in *Les Missions Catholiques*, the weekly newsletter of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In his letter, Lacombe gave context for Wîhkasko-kisêyin's, writing to the Society's central council expressing financial need for the mission in the prairies (Letter to the Central Council 541). Lacombe particularly emphasized the drastic impact of the smallpox epidemic on Cree people that resulted in numerous deaths (541). Following his letter, Wîhkasko-kisêyin's was published. The letter, which had been translated from Cree, likely by Lacombe, thanked the

supporters of the Society for showing kindness to strangers they would never meet by sending missionaries to help him and his people in their time of pain (Letter to the Supporters 541). The letter expressed appreciation for Christian teaching and worked to emphasize the relationship between Wîhkasko-kisêyin's people and his audience by rhetorically invoking *kitimâkêyihcikêwin*. He referred to his peoples' state as worthy of pity ("*Nous étions bien misérables. . .*") and repeated his recognition of his audience's compassion, describing them as charitable men with good hearts who through their generous actions had benefitted his people (542).

Wîhkasko-kisêyin's letter did not make any explicit requests, working indirectly alongside Lacombe's direct request, emphasizing instead the relationship of care between the Nêhiyawak and supporters of the Roman Catholic mission, but as with his message to Archibald in 1871, the processes of writing and translation convey a message that, while certainly expressing affinity with the Christian faith and Roman Catholic supporters, displace the nuances of Nêhiyawak discourse into colonial mission rhetoric. What might have been terms of *kitimâkêyihcikêwin* grounded in Nêhiyaw gift thought and practice with their emphasis on mutuality and reciprocity shift into expression that seem to participate in the racialized hierarchies of colonial Christian discourse that reinforce unequal and paternalistic relationship.

Dated 20 April 1872 and opening with an acknowledgment that Lacombe would be travelling to visit supporters, Wîhkasko-kisêyin wrote the letter likely at Lacombe's request as he prepared for a fundraising tour. That spring, Lacombe's bishop, Vital-Justin Grandin, commissioned Lacombe to raise funds for and promote French Canadian colonization of the prairies, which included a new initiative: "adequately equipped schools in which the white man's civilization might be inculcated in the children" (Hughes 205). Grandin impressed upon Lacombe in a letter the stakes of this project for their shared mission's

future and for civilizing Indigenous people:

It is necessary . . . to procure resources in some way; our zeal will be paralyzed for lack of means to carry on the work. . . . Go I pray you, into your own country holding out your hands to your friends and mine. . . . This project blessed by the Bishops and by our Holy Father, would also be blessed of God and would be one of the most powerful means while conserving the savage tribes, of civilising them—this taking hold of the rising generations in our schools. (Hughes 206-207)

After receiving his commission, it seems Lacombe wasted no time in asking Wîhkasko-kisêyin for a letter that could testify to the mission's value. In July, Lacombe forwarded the letter with his own to the Society, and they were published in the 6 September issue of *Les Missions Catholiques* that same year.

* * *

June 1872, *maskotêw*, *wînipêk*, Winnipeg

In the summer of that year, Wîhkasko-kisêyin made his second entry into missionary communication in portraits photographed during a visit with Lacombe to St. Boniface for a celebration of the feast of John the Baptist (“*La fête*” 2). Lacombe had begun his fundraising trip to Quebec by way of St. Boniface and Fort Garry, and he had asked Wîhkasko-kisêyin to join him for the trip to St. Boniface where celebrations were held at the cathedral attended by the archbishop, large gathering of clergy, and attended by other dignitaries. During the visit, Wîhkasko-kisêyin was confirmed at the cathedral, and he and Lacombe visited J. Penrose’ photography studio where Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s three *cartes de visite* were taken.

As with the portraits of Thomas Moore Keesick taken over two decades later, Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s *cartes de visite* stage a narrative of civilization and conversion through the visual, aesthetic rhetoric of altered dress and appearance from one image to the next, showing him in one image in “Indian” dress and in another in a suit and hat (fig. 10, 11). Sherry Farrell Racette writes that such “before and after” images had a precursor in George

Catlin's portrait of a Nakoda man, *Wi-jún-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going to and Returning from Washington* (52), but the conventions of narrating Christian conversion also offered dramatic possibilities for a medium which made use of the visual language of theatre and performance. Lara Perry describes how approaches to *cartes de visite* in the nineteenth century drew at times from "a currency of expression that circulate[d] outside of, but around" bodies of photography (738). In the nineteenth century, Indigenous people also negotiated a range of iconography ensconced in stereotypes of "heroic warrior," "noble Indian," authentic or traditional Indian, and converted/Westernized/assimilated/civilized Indian (Flint 192-195). As Kate Flint argues, particularly in the case of Anishinaabe visitors to England, Indigenous participation in image-making ranged from more performative exploitation to attempts at complicating simplistic notions of Indigenous duality to refusal of "performing pastness" (195).

In three frames, Wìhkasko-kisêyin's portraits build a narrative of conversion from heathenism and primitivism to advancement, modernity, civilization, and Christianity. The first image signifies his "Creeness" with bison robes, feathers, a bow and bundle of arrows (fig. 10). The middle, intermediary image shows the Oblates' role in facilitating the transformation, and the third image completes the narrative by signifying Wìhkasko-kisêyin's conversion and Christianness in modern dress, a crucifix, and the absence of feathers, bison robes, and his tools (fig. 12, 11). The visual "enactment" figures Wìhkasko-kisêyin as willing participant in the Christianizing and civilizing project and dramatizes missionaries as central, necessary intermediaries between Nêhiyawak and the Catholic church and settler society.

As *cartes de visite*, the portraits made use of new technological developments that resulted in a "dramatic increase in the volume and circulation of photographs" in the nineteenth century (Rudd 196). *Cartes de visite* were made with a camera that could create

“up to eight exposures on a single plate,” which “allowed sitters to adopt a variety of poses” and “allowed studio photographers to create multiple photographic images with relative rapidity and at a relatively low cost” (197). Rather than being an exclusive “artisanal product,” photographic images were transformed into a mass-produced commodity with wider public circulation, creating a medium perfectly suited for adaptation to promotional ends (198). So, using multiple frames, Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s portraits visualize the kinds of familiar narratives that circulated in missionary reports and publications for the purposes of keeping mission supporters in Canada and Europe informed on mission activities and promoting ongoing financial support.³⁸ Thus, the images worked doubly, both as performances or reenactments of conversion but also as evidence, along with Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s letter, to support the veracity of these reports.

Neither Hughes nor Breton mention that when Lacombe travelled to St. Boniface he invited Wîhkasko-kisêyin to accompany him, and, although another biography, *Le Père Lacombe*, provides more details of the trip, it gives no indication of why Wîhkasko-kisêyin went too or how Lacombe persuaded Wîhkasko-kisêyin to join him (Soeur de la Providence 129). Perhaps he made the case in broad terms, suggesting that this was a way Nêhiyawak could receive gifts they needed in this troubled time. Lacombe might have appealed to status: to participate in an important ceremony (confirmation) at an important place (the cathedral) attended by other important leaders. Perhaps he described the journey as an opportunity to solidify their partnership with the broader church Wîhkasko-kisêyin initiated in his conversion and the wider, growing settler community in the prairies with

³⁸ France Lord also documents the use of material objects and images in the Catholic Church as “missionary things” that “became a preferred medium of propaganda to instruct the faithful at home” (205). Lord gives examples from the Society of Jesus in Quebec that collected and exhibited artefacts and other materials from 1843 to 1946 to document and promote their mission efforts in Canada, Alaska, and China.

whom many Nêhiyawak were re-negotiating their relationships. Perhaps there was yet another appeal: possible mediation with colonial government officials from settler partners with positions of some influence and facility with settler languages and discourse.

What we do know is that Wîhkasko-kisêyin assented, likely perceiving an opportunity to extend his *okimâhkâniwiwin* and provide for his people. He trusted Lacombe, considering him a friend, and perhaps this was another opportunity to enact principles of *wâhkôtowin* and his diplomatic practice. It is out of these dynamics that Wîhkasko-kisêyin's portraits emerge as a performance of multiple things at once: indigeneity, conversion and civilization, the success of Oblate missionaries, but also of an *okimâw*'s attempt to assert a voice, a presence, and thus an influence, in a discursive ecology (in this case, primarily Roman Catholic and French) highly-constrained by stereotypes and notions of heathenism circulated within it. Whether audiences respond with sympathy, general interest, curiosity, admiration, or some other feeling, the end goals were to “educate and edify the faithful at home, to inspire vocations, as well as to raise money” (Lord 206). Wîhkasko-kisêyin's portraits are also like Keesick's, then, in that they were created as “desperate attempts by insecure institutions to secure legitimacy as part of a broader colonial apparatus,” indicating the contingency and emergence of these institutions (Brady and Hiltz 66). The key difference is that the “insecure institutions” using Wîhkasko-kisêyin's imagery were the missionary Oblates and western French Roman Catholic mission fearing minoritization and loss of influence in the prairies with growing English settlement rather than the underfunded industrial schools “promoted” by Keesick's images in the Department of Indian Affairs' annual report. What better way to promote the success of missionary efforts in the prairies than to depict the conversion of an exemplar—a Nêhiyaw *kihci-okimâw*?

Wîhkasko-kisêyin's images might appear as straightforward enactments of the civilizing, Christianizing project and Wîhkasko-kisêyin's participation in it. Yet, the

portraits create shifting rather than stable impressions of what they convey both in theme and the participants' intentions. Even the historical use of *cartes de visites* raises the complicated dynamic of using photography for “social performance” and self-fashioning and using it for information, evidence, and knowledge production (Rudd 211):

From early in photography's existence, people had employed the medium in support of new varieties of knowledge production: photography offered the promise of novel and distinctly visual ways of “knowing” the world and its inhabitants, and it held the potential to render things that might be distant or even unknown “conceptually and visually more accessible” . . . (Rudd 203).³⁹

Wihkasko-kisêyin's portraits appear to give knowledge about Indians to Euro-Canadian audiences, but they are instead performances for non-Indigenous audiences using signifiers connected to “wildness, the outdoors, ‘savagery,’ and human and animal—as opposed to mechanistic” that contrast “modern urban life” (Flint 189). The role of the camera, facilitated by its absent presence, is exempt from this collection of significations. Thus, his portraits play into a phenomenon of colonial knowing in which loose signifiers and performance count for knowledge. Kate Flint argues, “the nineteenth-century British knew—or thought they knew—what an Indian was at least *supposed* to look like—even as this visual stereotype shifted” (191). It is likely non-British audiences of Lacombe's communications had a similar approach to images of Indians.

Even these signifiers of his “Indianness” are themselves destabilized in the images. Wihkasko-kisêyin is not wearing a particularly “Cree” outfit in his portraits, and his dress lacks the individuality, personality, and specificity of many other portraits from Cree people from the nineteenth century. Rather, Wihkasko-kisêyin's dress looks put together for the

³⁹ Cf. “Photographs provided an apparent authenticity and presentism lacking in more stylized line illustrations in fiction and illustrated papers—even as these offered up the images of the Indian that conditioned the public's visual expectations” (Flint 189).

purpose of signifying a broad “Indianness” for non-Indigenous audiences. He wears bison robes and leather fringe in a time when Indigenous peoples’ dress often incorporated suits, dresses, coats, and other kinds of settler-style garments. The bison robes and leather fringe are unadorned, missing variations in traditional regalia, beadwork, clothing combinations, styling, and pose.

In a symbolic disavowal of adaptation to new technology (belied, too, by photographic technology’s absent presence), he holds a bow and arrows in his hand to signal primitivism or pastness in a time when many Indigenous people had added rifles to their hunting kits. In *La Père Lacombe*, the author writes that Wîhkasko-kisêyin used arrows and his old rifle, so he prized a new revolver when Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris gifted him one in St. Boniface (Soeur de la Providence 130). Even the feathers appear tucked into a headband in a perfunctory way, betraying a makeshift instability to what the image asserts: a “true” depiction of an Indian in the pre-conversion state. The third portrait of Wîhkasko-kisêyin in a suit shows slightly more individuality and flair with his decorated hat and moccasins, but the presence of his moccasins and feathers still register as retained symbols of his Indianness from which he has purportedly been civilized, as signified in the removal of weapons and tools (apart from the crucifix) and wearing a suit.

In these portraits, Wîhkasko-kisêyin gave the gift of his image and participation in this moment of narrative-making, likely with some sense of possibility for what it could afford his people. I also take the destabilizing presences in the portraits as traces of his *mêkinawêwin* that hint what Gerald Vizenor describes as the “tease,” the “wink of trickster stories,” of Native literary or discursive giveaways that work as “creases” beyond “outside institutive surveillance,” or, in this case, outside the framing attempts of the portraits’ narrative (54). Thus, as Vizenor argues, images of Indigenous people are polysemic. In one sense, the images are examples of the “interimage of the *indian*,” the inter-referential body

of colonial imagery of Indigenous peoples that rest on “the absence of the unnameable native” and instead put forth “simulations” of the *indian*—colonial constructions of Indigenous people—that work as “*specious evidence*” of one another in a recursive, self-reinforcing process of building colonial knowledge (146). Such images have the effect of displacing Indigenous peoples in colonial discourse and re-placing them with simulations that work to reinforce racialized colonial hierarchies (151).

As Vizenor also contends, “[p]ortraiture as evidence” is more than “eternal silence,” and images of Indigenous people can, as part of their polysemy, also register “an elusive native presence” (156). Moreover, such images can also betray their own processes of meaning-making, undercutting what they assert and betraying the instability and unevenness of colonial knowledge formation. Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s portraits put forward a linear narrative of conversion and civilization, but in traces of their constructedness, stereotypes they rely on, and misplaced visual signifiers, they also undercut notions of conversion completed or even of its possibility. They also show that even as the images work to form a contained narrative and image of Wîhkasko-kisêyin, he remains in excess of them, the not-fully-knowable reality refusing and resisting unification and stability as a subject under the terms of colonial Roman Catholic discourse. Wîhkasko-kisêyin features as an “eccentric subject,” to borrow feminist scholar Teresa de Lauretis’ term,⁴⁰ in which the portraits work to contain him within colonial discourse of the Indian while also excluding him from participation or influence within it (115). As with Peguis and the CMS, the images also betray colonial Christianity’s “limited universality,” with conversions’ impossible completion, and the “bounded civility” of the colonial project in which Indigenous people can never fully advance along “the scale of modernity” (Coleman 12, 14).

⁴⁰ Refer to de Lauretis, “Eccentric Subjects” for her discussion of the term in the context of feminist theory.

Kate Flint argues that in some cases, Indigenous participation in photography revealed self-awareness of how “images would be read, and measured up against representations already in circulation,” but in the case of Wîhkasko-kisêyin the results are ambiguous, shifting, at times appearing exploitative, at others an attempt at diplomacy. The portraits oscillate, blur and clarify, with the give-away of image in a diplomatic gesture of generosity: an effort to assert a voice and presence, and thereby an influence in an extended discursive ecology that links him with an extended network of relations who have expressed commitment via the Oblates to him and his people.⁴¹ The discursive environment in which the images circulated relied on the “legibility” of Indigenous peoples as saveable and civilizable, therefore converting whatever Wîhkasko-kisêyin might have asserted in his *mêkinawêwin* into willing participation in promoting colonial Christianity’s ongoing, and expanding, project.⁴² Even so, Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s participation in Roman Catholic missionary communication reveal his efforts to locate some room in colonial discourse to practice *wâhkôtowin* through *mêkinawêwin*, particularly in relation to settler audiences, and this was a possibility mission discourse seemed to offer.

* * *

⁴¹ Trying to account for Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s diplomatic practice also needs to be qualified by the fact that an *okimâw* did not act or speak unilaterally for the people he represented, and Indigenous perspectives and strategies in this period were, as they have always been, diverse in expression and practice. As was the case with other chiefs, dissent was present, and people could leave a band and join another if they did not want to follow a certain *okimâw* anymore.

⁴² The particulars of conversion were expanding with efforts to establish schools as instruments of civilization, which Lacombe was promoting, that would convert children into “productive” members of society (Huel 114-115).

*Journal***February 2023, Hunter Street, Hamilton***after Tina M. Campt*

If you listen to an image, what can you hear?
 Polyvocality many-speeched interrupting
 Each otherall talking atonce
 Low hum reverberating purr, barely there, unquiet
 Shifting voices, (who is) changing the voice
 Circulating echo
 Frequencies wave out
 Shifting quiet
 Breath

In 1873, two engraved portraits of “Abraham Wikaskokiséyinn” were published in the 20 June issue of *Les Missions Catholiques*. The engravings are based on the *cartes de visite* portraits and show Wîhkasko-kiséyin in “*costume sauvage*” wearing bison robes and a feather headpiece (which gets front-page prominence) and in “*costume européen*” (relegated almost to the back pages) (fig. 15, 16). In the first engraving his face seems marked by weariness and gazes to the viewer’s left with an expression of pensive worry or concern. In his right hand, he holds a long staff crossed with a bundle of arrows and another, oddly-shaped tool held in his left. He stands on a smooth floor before a rustic high stone wall, and his feet are clad in heeled boots. My attention keeps returning to the curved tool in his hand. The list of things it reminds me of: a floss pick, a long-handled coping saw, a face razor, a badly formed pelt scraper. I think, *Perhaps it’s a tool I don’t know. Maybe I haven’t seen it before.*

So, I turn to digitized collections of ancestral or cultural belongings⁴³ held in

⁴³ I borrow the term “ancestral or cultural belongings” from Tanya Lukin Linklater to describe how materials “were touched by our ancestor-makers, who transformed” them “through cleaning, drying, tanning, and curing” to create objects “held, touched, and cared for” in “the social relations of everyday life in their



Figure 15: Giuseppe Barberis and Francesco Canedi, Abraham Wikaskokiséyinn, grand chef des Cris, en costume sauvage, woodcut engraving. *Les Missions Catholiques: bulletin hebdomadaire illustré de l'œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi*, vol. 5, no. 211, 20 June 1873, p. 289.



Figure 16: Francesco Canedi and Giuseppe Barberis, Abraham Wikaskokiséyinn, grand chef des Cris, en costume européen, woodcut engraving. *Les Missions Catholiques: bulletin hebdomadaire illustré de l'œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi*, vol. 5, no. 211, 20 June 1873, p. 299.

museums of anthropology to find a likeness. I search for Cree tools and weapons, scanning images from the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia and the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford, these being the first institutions that come to mind that I know have cabinets and cases stuffed with objects. But I can't locate anything quite like it. Nothing that makes sense either practically or aesthetically for a long-handled object with such a short string or blade at the end bare of any adornment—that might be held in a fist with a bundle of arrows.

Finally, I go back to photographic images the engraving is based on; I look again.

homelands" (*On Felt Structures* 79, 80). Although ancestral belongings may be re-contextualized in museums' archives, they retain memory of this history and "ongoing energetic exertion" linking them to the people and places who made them (80).

There—the blurred edges and shape of a bow held tightly in the hand (fig. 17). I look closely and see the bowstring stretched straight as it should be from one limb to the other, but, apart from one end that appears more clearly, only the faintest shading in the image betrays the separation of string and limb. The shape of the bow is blurred, appearing with the arrow bundle and staff



Figure 17: Detail, *Sweetgrass*, head chief of the Cree in St. Boniface Manitoba, *carte de visite* photograph. June 1872. CU184333, Glenbow Library and Archives Collection, Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections, University of Calgary. Image courtesy of Glenbow Library and Archives Collection.

as shafts of bright white marked in the centre by Wihkasko-kisêyin's clutched fingers. For the engravers, these shafts and blurs emerged in their imaginations as a wholly new object. And then, in their engraving, they included it, this unknown tool or weapon, as they placed Wihkasko-kisêyin in a more rustic environ than the portrait studio of the original, thereby adding to the growing collection of Indigenous "others" for readers of *Les Missions Catholiques*. The tool, then becomes another object and example of colonial knowledge and how imagining works in colonial knowledge-making of Indigenous peoples. The blurred end of a bow gets translated through the artists' imagination into an entirely new object that circulates as part of "*costume sauvage*," indicating something "known" of Indigenous people. But, the tool did not exist and has never existed except in the imagination and creation of the artist, emerging as another entry in the catalogue of colonial knowing that reveals its own precarity and inconsistency.

Two columns flank the portrait sharing correspondence from Albert Lacombe, Missionary Oblate of Mary the Immaculate, on missionary efforts in the Canadian North-West. Lacombe was visiting France and reports over multiple pages of *Les Missions Catholiques* on the development of Roman Catholicism in the North-West. In his

correspondence, Lacombe dismisses Nêhiyaw governance, disavowing any political authority his friend Wîhkasko-kisêyin practiced or held as a Nêhiyaw *okimâw*.

A different artistic “take” on the portraits combines imagery from each while still privileging the “*costume sauvage*” (fig. 18). This portrait was published alongside Wîhkasko-kisêyin’s



Figure 18: Abraham Wikaskokiséyin, Chef de la tribu des Cris, décédé. *L'Opinion Publique*, vol. 8, no. 17, 26 Apr. 1877, p. 198. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec.

obituary in 1877 and features the innovation of taking him outside and placing him in a picturesque natural environment—a fitting context for his “wildness.” The feathers are removed from his headband, but added is his crucifix. He is not wearing heeled boots.

* * *

MY FRIEND, THE CHIEF

From a letter by Albert Lacombe published in Les missions catholiques, 20 June 1873

I only want to talk about the savages who form the vast majority of the population of this country. I am glad for the aid and generosity of our friends in France. The wild ones of the prairies live in large subject to bad passions the woods. They live in government other than a presides over the camp only nominal, rather than indulge in violence and among them. The young return from fighting large number of horses to their friends and one can attract the acquire influence and the Enclosed is a photograph Crees. I thought you double portrait. One represents his wild costume and ornaments, and the other shows him dressed in European style the day after his confirmation.



camps. They are more than the ones who live in large groups with no sort of grand council that with a leader invested in real, authority. They easily excess. War is frequent warriors show off and loaded with spoils and a they kidnap and distribute relatives. In this way a wild sympathy of his people and dignity of a leader. of the great chief of the would be pleased with this

—ALBERT LACOMBE, OMI



* * *

Autumn 1874, *mistatihkamêkohk*, Whitefish Lake

Through the 1870s, partnerships with missionaries continued to appeal as possible supports for Cree people. Like Wîhkasko-kisêyin, Atâhkakohp (Star Blanket), another *okimâw* and signatory to what would become Treaty Six, considered missionaries as a possible source for learning that could benefit his people. In the fall of 1874, Atâhkakohp and his son visited the Anglican missionary John Hines where he was camping at Whitefish Lake with David, an Indigenous guide, and another companion. Hines was in the process of seeking a place to establish a mission in Saskatchewan as part of the Church Missionary Society, and Atâhkakohp's visit figures as a key moment in Hine's missionary account of making just such a connection.

When Atâhkakohp met Hines, he gave a speech that further outlines the concerns *okimâwak* were dealing with that had worsened since 1871 when Wîhkasko-kisêyin and company sent messages to Archibald. In his speech, Atâhkakohp describes how he has been looking for “praying masters” (i.e., missionaries) to partner with in response to the changing conditions he and his people have had to deal with:

I have travelled many miles since I saw you. I never had to go so far before to seek buffalo, and then we only saw a few. The buffalo are getting very scarce and our country is becoming very poor. When I think of the large herds of buffalo and other animals that used to roam about our country, and compare the state of things then with what they are now, my mind gets troubled. The wild animals may last my time out, but when I look into the faces of my children and grandchildren, my heart weeps for them, for I cannot see how they are going to live. I am not like many of my countrymen. I have seen this calamity coming upon us for years past, but some will not believe it even now, and I have had a longing desire to settle down and get my living like the white man, but I have had no one to teach me. (Atâhkakohp qtd. In Hines 79)

Like the *okimâwak* in 1871, Atâhkakohp saw the kind of training missionaries had to offer,

especially horticultural and agricultural, as a potentially effective response to drastic changes in the ecology and economies of the prairies in this time, most starkly shown in the loss of the bison.

This was not, however, Atâhkakohp's first attempt to connect with a priest. He recounts in his speech to Hines how he had met a Roman Catholic bishop eleven years prior who spoke with him about religion and wanted to baptise Atâhkakohp:

I told him I did not know enough to be baptised, but I promised that if he would send a priest to live among us and teach us I would settle in some suitable place, and collect my followers around me. The Bishop was pleased, and said if I would be at Carlton the next summer about the same time of the year, he would arrange to have a priest there who should remain with us, and I agreed to do so. He tried hard to get me to be baptised before we parted, but I refused, not because I hated religion but because I did not know enough about it. The next summer came and I kept my appointment, and true enough a party of priests arrived from Winnipeg, and I made myself known to them. But they said they had no instructions to remain with any Indians at or near Carlton, but they would be pleased to baptise any children there might be in my camp—in fact any adults too who would submit to be baptised. (79-80)

Atâhkakohp describes being “disappointed” with the bishop for forgetting his promise, but the pattern of disrespect continued for the eleven years following. Atâhkakohp relates how each year more priests would arrive and ask to baptise his people, and each year he would refuse until his people had first been taught. Each year the promise would be renewed by the priests but was never followed through. Atâhkakohp described not only the broken promises but that “quite a number of [their] children” had been baptised by the priests, “but not with their parents’ consent” (80). Atâhkakohp's son was one of these children.

In Hines, Atâhkakohp saw a different option of what he hoped for in a relationship with missionaries, perhaps someone who might enact the kind of partnership he expected framed by *wâhkôtowin*. Hines was glad to respond. Perhaps a different branch of the church

would provide better and more consistent treatment than Atâhkakohp had received from the Roman Catholic priests. His persistence, however, also reiterates the strong need *okimâwak* felt to respond to the crises they faced and to seek partnerships with religious people and bodies who appeared to mediate greater networks of support, knowledge, communication, and influence their people might benefit from materially as well as politically. Not only did missionaries facilitate access to food, medicine, and other supplies, they also figured as purveyors of different kinds of education and literacies that promised to foster communication and commitment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In his speech, Atâhkakohp gives context for wanting “praying masters” and the potential promise of settled life he envisions for his children, all framed by reciprocity in equal relationship with expectations of demonstrated commitment, consultation, and consent. However, Atâhkakohp also gestures toward a recurring problem in Indigenous dealings with settlers and a risk in his future with Hines: the unequal share of the work of memory and enactment—the unequal share of *wâhkôtowin*.

Even as Atâhkakohp actively pursues settler agricultural and religious knowledge, seemingly along the terms set by missionaries he has met with, he is repeatedly denied the terms of accessing such knowledge purportedly available to him and his people. Coming through his criticism of repeated deferral and denial from priests is another instance of the contradictoriness embedded within colonial discourse and conceptions of Indigenous people. The clergy have communicated the universal availability of Christian teaching, practice, and belonging in the network of believers that extends to Indigenous people, hence Atâhkakohp’s understanding that he and others can avail themselves of the invitation. At the same time, however, the clergy contradicted their own teaching and practice by denying Atâhkakohp and his people capacity and agency to know, to exercise intellectual and spiritual acuity, skill, and power as they do, making the universal

availability of Christianity a limited one premised on Atâhkakohp's and his peoples' unknowing submission to the clergy's unilateral authority. Even as he tries to participate in settler colonial knowledge along the terms set by it, Atâhkakohp, like Wîhkasko-kisêyin, is actively denied participation.

As Atâhkakohp's speech reinforces, Nêhiyawak and other Indigenous people were actively pursuing means of easing their precarious condition in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Some Nêhiyawak like Atâhkakohp and Wîhkasko-kisêyin pursued strategies of accommodation through settler partnerships and engaging settler agricultural and religion, but the shifting power dynamics in the prairies at this time gradually minoritized Indigenous people as settlers increasingly asserted unilateral authority and assimilation in their dealings with Indigenous people. Whether from missionaries, colonial officials, or settler neighbours, Indigenous people heard promises of benefit from settler colonial thought and practice that were available to them if they wanted.

As Atâhkakohp's and Wîhkasko-kisêyin's experiences showed, accommodations to settler thought and its discourse were not as available as they seemed or as had been communicated; they were often contingent on assimilative expectations and submission to settler colonial authority, whether governmental, religious, or that of emerging racial hierarchies in their shifting social milieu. Attempts to make concessions showed how accommodating one's self, or assimilating, either to settler discourse or ways of living and being, was ultimately impossible. Whatever "possibility" colonial discourse, governance, and culture offered was continually revoked, deferred, or displaced, refusing entry it continually promised. Moreover, colonial discourse often retained a sense of its own troubledness through Indigenous peoples' assertions and expressions within it. Even as different forms of settler colonial discourse attempted to shape ideas of and exert influence over Indigenous people, Indigenous people like Wîhkasko-kisêyin and Atâhkakohp were

continually in excess of its terms, even as they were also constrained by them, revealing colonialism's inconsistencies, inherent contradictions, and the failure of its own assimilationist project.

Furthermore, Atâhkakohp's and Wîhkasko-kisêyin's discursive practices held settler colonial discourse in relation to Nêhiyaw thought, offering through their presence and engagement the possibility of relationship understood by the terms of *wâhkôtowin*. If they were constrained by the limits of colonial discourse, their discursive efforts also showed the failure of settler colonial discourse, and settler society, to attend to and learn from the forms of relation and bodies of knowledge the *okimâwak* tried to share. Their presence in the colonial archive thereby retains their exertions of *wâhkôtowin* influence in contrast to the terms of assimilation that tried to frame them and the false promises of partnership they were offered.

Part 3: Placing Treaty

And this layer is the treaty,
this layer is the treaty. . .

—MATTHEW JAMES WEIGEL, “Inside the Pop-Up Box”

The “Uneasiness” of the “Indians of Manitoba”

Journal **June 2022, *maskotêw kapâtowinihk, mashkode onigamiing, Portage la Prairie***

Today we are visiting the thrift store in the top of the church hall at St. Mary’s, but instead of thinking about what I might buy, this time my mind is on the church door. Or, rather, my mind is with the church door of this building as an emblem of the door from its first building, constructed some time earlier and in a different location. I have visited this place many times over the years, ascending the stairs to look for sweatshirts, dresses, books. Now, I am thinking the whole time about what was declared on its old doors years ago. The building is not the same, and in a different place than it had been then, but for me it has a symbolic, presencing, memorial power. My mind is with church doors as sites where Indigenous resistance was once published.

* * *

14 June 1871, *maskotêw kapâtowinihk, mashkode onigamiing, Portage la Prairie*

On 14 June 1871, four leaders of the Portage la Prairie Anishinaabeg posted a public notice to the door of the Anglican church in Portage la Prairie. In their message written in English (it is uncertain by whom), Ozaawigwan (Yellow Quill), Ayeetapepetung (He Who Sits By It) [I-ee-be-pee-tang], Zhoo-shou, and Moosoos (Moose Calf) [Moose-Orise] made a clear declaration of resistance to settler encroachment in their area, signalling that this was only the more recent message in a history of asserting their claims to the land:

As you have encroached somewhat on our rights . . . we have thought it proper to say a few words. . . . This land that you are wanting to take without our permission, don’t you think the government would ask you how did you get it? Why we speak to day, is

because we are poor but we still hold the land for our children that will be born afterwards. When we speak first we speak softly; but when we speak again we will speak louder. We hardly need say that this alludes to an attempt that has been made to claim and occupy lands that does not yet belong to them, for they know that we have not received anything for our lands, therefore they still belong to us.
(Ozaawigwan et al., “Communication”)

As the *ogimaag* described the situation, settlers had been claiming lots in the area and harvesting timber without consent from or compensation for the Anishinaabeg as the number of settlers moving into the region steadily increased in the wake of the so-called transfer of Rupert’s Land from the HBC to the nascent Dominion of Canada.

Desire for prairie settlement was rapidly growing, along with settlers arriving in the area, and Ozaawigwan and his companions’ notice showed the effects on their community. A couple weeks later, their statement was published on the front page of *The Weekly Manitoban and Herald* after being submitted by the Portage settler John Garrioch who described it as “an Indian protest” of interest to the general public. On the front page of *The Manitoban*, the Portage band’s statement was separated by only a column from an opening article describing the fervour of settlement at the time:

The excitement is tremendous. In the hotels, by the wayside, in the stores and outside the stores, can be seen at any hour on any day, excited men talking excitedly. . . . But what is all this excitement about? Why of course it is the land question. The Land! the land! everybody is talking about the land. (“The Land”)

The article continued, asking for “the exercise of reason” and avoidance of “factional or party news” in the midst of eagerness to settle:

As the matter is discussed by certain parties, it would seem to be a foregone conclusion that, because Manitoba shares with the other Provinces in the Dominion grant, therefore the people of the Province have as it were sold their birth-right, and must humbly bow the knee to every one who comes along hailing from other Provinces. (“The Land”)

The article was mainly concerned with relations between the Métis and settlers from Upper Canada, England, Scotland, and Ireland, referring to the risk of newcomers seizing lots without regard to Métis claims and settlements, and it was written partly in response to resistance from readers to previous articles that had elaborated on the issue and cautioned against encroachment.¹ As Ozaawigwan and his companions' statement also showed, Anishinaabe and Cree bands were being taken advantage of. The *ogimaag* concluded their notice by urging settlers who had already claimed lots "to keep them and not sell them," but they qualified their generosity by framing it as a gesture of hospitality rather than relinquishment: "We don't say we have already given you these lands, but allow you to remain on them" ("Communication").

It is significant that before the Portage band's notice was published and circulated in *The Manitoban* as "news," it was first published on the church door in Portage la Prairie—a structure built on the lands the notice dealt with. The image of posting a notice to a church door may evoke images of Martin Luther in 1517, then-monk and professor of theology, "nailing" to the door of a church in Wittenberg his Ninety-five Theses criticizing the practice of indulgences. While the precise historicity of Luther's act has been debated, the action of nailing his criticism to a church door took on a mythic quality that continues to persist in popular memory of the Reformation movement in the history of Christianity and the history of modernity (Marshall 1).² For some, the act of nailing a protest to the door of a church signifies a gesture of force and strength, a dramatic, resistant assertion not only in the content of posted writing, but in the movement of striking these words to a *church*

¹ For examples, refer to articles titled "Crown Lands," *The Manitoban* (17 June 1871, 2; 24 June 1871, 2).

² Refer to Pettegree, *Brand Luther*, 13, 71 and Marshall, 1517, "Prologue: Postings" for discussions of the historicity of the Ninety-five Theses and their place in cultural imagination of the Reformation movement.

door—the physical manifestation and “home” of the ideas, practices, and forms of relation being resisted. However, as scholars of Luther’s popular mythology have noted, the drama ascribed to the moment of posting sensationalizes historical uses of church doors in Wittenberg as sites of publication, as “bulletin boards” likely “crowded” with news of forthcoming events, thesis defenses, and all kinds of “academic paperwork” (Pettegree 36).

Although Luther’s church door was very much at a remove from the Portage *ogimaag*’s door historically (354 years), spatially (*Manitowapow* to Germany), and

culturally (German Catholic rather than CMS Anglican), thinking of one in relation to the other helps draw out some of the significations for what the Anishinaabeg of Portage la Prairie asserted and how they did so in the discursive ecology of late nineteenth-century Manitoba. The first important connection is that, although it was unlikely Luther posted his theses in a dramatic moment of strong affect, the energy of posting a public statement to the church door in the case of the Anishinaabeg was certainly a gesture fuelled by steadily growing frustration and anger with settler disrespect and disregard.

Second, the Anglican church in Portage la Prairie, St. Mary’s la Prairie founded in the 1850s by William Cockran, would have also been a common meeting place for settlers



Figure 20: Site of St. Mary’s la Prairie church founded between 1853-1855 by CMS missionary William Cockran where Ozaawigwan and other Portage *ogimaag* posted their notice. The stone monument in the foreground commemorates where the old church building was located. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2023.

and Christian Indigenous people alike where notices could be posted and news circulated (fig. 20). One story from eleven years prior, for instance, shows how Indigenous people in the area keenly understood the communicative function of church doors. In 1860, William Cockran shared a story in the CMS *Proceedings* about “a leading Indian, Pechito” who, after “two very long conversations,” was expected to “give himself up,” that is, become baptized. However, Cockran continued, Pechito had added “so singular a condition,” that Cockran could not at the time of writing proceed with the baptism:

It was, that I should take him to England for the purpose, and there baptize him in the largest church, by doing which he would become a great man, and I would also become very great from baptizing him. He would like it then to be certified on the door of the church that “in it Pechito was baptized.” (206)

Cockran ascribed Pechito’s stipulation to “human vanity” and “foolishness” while also acknowledging his “shrewdness” as a hopeful sign that after four years’ teaching, Pechito might eventually acquiesce.

What Cockran might have missed was Pechito’s insight into the workings of discourse and recognition that he perceived in the growing settler community at Portage la Prairie. Not only did he understand something of Indigenous conversion for Cockran’s status in the CMS and among its supporters in England, that is, the role of garnering converts in the status economies of the CMS, he also understood the role of publishing, or *promoting*, to use a common CMS word, narratives of baptism, and that posting on a church door was one way to go about it. Why not use one of the largest church doors to ensure the greatest impact?³ In emerging settlements, church buildings, often the first if not the only

³ A further irony of Cockran’s story lies in Cockran’s disavowal of Pechito’s understanding. In one sense, Pechito can be read as showing quite a thorough understanding of baptism’s significance in Christian practice and, therefore, the importance of “telling the story.” This possibility of Pechito’s knowing does not enter Cockran’s interpretation, however, described rather as “foolishness” and calling into question the possibilities for Indians to be equal “knowers” and claimants of Christian thought and practice. If Cockran recognized

public meeting spaces, housed gatherings for a range of community activities, and the Anishinaabeg could be sure a written notice at the church would get the attention of most settlers in their area.

The third connection with Luther's story lies in his act of "making public" his theses on the Wittenberg door, highlighting acts of posting in public places as acts of publication. For the Anishinaabeg, publication of their notice in *The Manitoban* as a news item occurred after the fact of their first publication on the land, facilitated by the church door, thereby working from their knowledge of both Anishinaabe discursive practices and newer modes of expression facilitated by settler discursive forms. For example, *doodemag*, as Cary Miller describes, not only identified members of a community on treaty documents also "in the daily messages they left for one another" (37). Anishinaabeg wrote *doodemag* on birch bark or other surfaces and "commonly hung these communications at encampments" to leave messages for visitors who stopped by when they were not home, perhaps communicating where they were or asking them to leave a message (37). Miller also remarks that the notices worked across tribal lines, conveying messages to allies as well as enemies, and they were even used in messages to the United States government (37-38). Like the *doodemag* notices, the Portage band's notice written in English functioned as a key communication strategy within a particular place, focused toward the land and a particular social network to establish the reciprocity they expected from their settler guests and neighbours.

Even the phrasing of the *ogimaag*'s notice employed word bundles that evoked Cree and Anishinaabe counselling speech practices. The *ogimaag* wrote, "When we speak first we

Pechito's "shrewdness" as demonstrating some understanding of Anglican thought and the significance of its symbols and gestures, for Cockran, Pechito's understanding is misapplied, not being sufficiently tempered by the Christian humility Cockran expects of Indian converts. Cockran's criticism of Pechito's "vanity" sets up a contrast between Pechito and Cockran's implied humility, again reasserting Cockran's position of authority and understanding that mediates Indigenous peoples' relationships to Christianity.

speak softly; but when we speak again we will speak louder,” demonstrating a feature of Métis, Cree, and Saulteaux (Plains Anishinaabe) counselling discourse Gail MacKay terms “listening to a quiet way of telling” (354). On one level, “listening to a quiet way of telling” works as a pedagogical strategy of teaching or counselling quietly, usually to the younger generation (354). A “quiet” approach to counselling also implicates the audience’s responsibility to learn and actively interpret the discourse, consider their relationship to it, and, depending on the nature of the discourse, embody its themes or teaching (Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* 7-8; cf. Simpson, “Bubbling” 111).⁴ The “quiet” approach can also double as an approach of subtle complexity; Cree and Anishinaabe discourse practices often used implication, indirectness, and thematic and conceptual layering to encourage the audience’s interpretive skill (MacKay 356; Lightning 20).⁵

Ideally, Elders and teachers engaging in counselling discourse only needed to take a “quiet” approach, as Nêhiyaw Elder Jim Kâ-Nîpitêhtêw argues, particularly with regard to children (62-65). However, Ozaawigwan, Ayeetapepetung, Zhoo-shou, and Moosoos were not addressing children in their public statement, and their message described a process of escalation that also links rhetorically to *Aanjigone*, an “ethic of non-interference” that requires one to be “very, very careful with making judgments and with the act of criticism” (Simpson, *Dancing* 54). Beginning in a “quiet” approach perhaps also indicated the *ogimaag*’s attempts to be very careful and deliberate in their criticism. However, they spoke and wrote to adults who had disregarded their “quiet,” careful approach, when they had “spoke[n] softly,” implicating the white settlers as an audience who could not be trusted or expected to

⁴ Walter C. Lightning refers to the “assumption of mutual thinking” between Elder and audience, creating a “frame of mind where the minds can meet” (19).

⁵ Johnston emphasizes how one story “may embody several themes or meanings” and requires time and deliberation to interpret (*Ojibway Heritage* 8).

engage responsibly with the terms of the discursive political relationship and required amplification, “speaking louder” by means of their statement posted to the church door and stronger resistance in the future.

Although the Anishinaabe leaders’ imagery focused on speech, the gesture of posting their words on the church door grounded the oral and written word in physical, material, spatial, bodied ways, reflecting again the dynamics of Indigenous discourse that interconnected gesture and enactment with story and word. The *ogimaag*’s public notice was an expression of Indigenous gestural rhetoric that refused separation of the word, act, and place in their assertion of sovereignty. Drawing upon Anishinaabe rhetorics from *doodemag*, birch bark notices, and counselling speeches, they expressed themselves in new discursive forms gaining purchase in their environment as settlement increased: English-language writing in the form of a public notice, published on the door of a church, with subsequent publication in the newspaper.

* * *

1869-1870, *Manitowapow*, Manitoba

The Indians in Manitoba, in the fall of 1870, had applied to the Lieutenant-Governor to enter into a treaty with them, and had been informed that in the ensuing year negotiations would be opened with them. They were full of uneasiness, owing to the influx of population, denied the validity of the Selkirk Treaty, and had in some instances obstructed settlers and surveyors. In view of the anxiety and uneasiness prevailing, these gentlemen were of opinion “that it was desirable to secure the extinction of the Indian title not only to the lands within Manitoba, but also to so much of the timber grounds east and north of the Province as were required for immediate entry and use, and also of a large tract of cultivable ground west of the Portage, where there were very few Indian inhabitants.”

—ALEXANDER MORRIS, 1880 (25-26)

The Portage la Prairie *ogimaag* published their notice on the church door a month before council proceedings began for Treaty One. However, rather than being an isolated event, their public statement shows the continuation of what Indigenous people had been doing for years in their dealings with colonists and settlers, not only on the Red River but across

the prairies: communicating, protesting, resisting, and demanding that they be dealt with along the lines of Indigenous relational ethics. The discursive work of their resistance and assertion was expressed in a range of forms, such as written letters and public notices, often published in newspapers, and gestural rhetorics of publishing notices on the land and active resistance to encroachment. References to council practice and gifts also carried Indigenous diplomatic approaches and treaty histories into the colonial records of their assertions.

A decade prior, Peguis published notices around the Red River settlement warning settlers not to cut hay or harvest resources without permission or payment (Peers 198) in addition to the messages he and other *ogimaag* sent via the APS, which were published in *The Nor'Wester*. Bands at Riding Mountain had “distinctly forbidden anyone to approach their territory” (“The Indian Treaty” [29 July 1871] 2). Ozaawigwan and his band successfully drove off settlers from the area of Muskrat (Rat) Creek in the summer of 1869, and William MacTavish, Governor of the HBC, sent James McKay to negotiate a three-year agreement “for the admission of settlers” (Morris 128). A copy of this “Indian Agreement” signed by Ayeetapepetung [Jeutupatang] and other leaders was published in *The Nor'Wester* accompanied by a letter from MacTavish stating, “The mere occupation of the land by settling will not interfere with the Indian’s right to the land” (Letter to McKay). For their part, the Portage leaders agreed, “fully expecting that some arrangements [would] be made with [them] before the expiration of the three years, about [their] lands” (“Copy of the Indian Agreement”). And, famously, Métis resisted settler encroachment, leading to the Red River Resistance in 1869-1870.

The rapidly shifting conditions of the prairies also led *ogimaag* to respond by relying on their long-standing practices for holding council to negotiate inter-tribal diplomacy. In their engagement with different Canadian officials, *ogimaag* tried to assert their discursive environment of Anishinaabe governance in its range of forms in order to influence and

shape their relationships with the changing order of settler society in their territory. In early November 1869, William McDougall, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, held council with Kewetayash (Flying Round), *ogimaa* for a band of Anishinaabeg often associated with Roseau River, but whose territory and movements extended beyond the river, ranging between Pembina, the Assiniboine River, and Lake of the Woods. After beginning the council with a pipe ceremony, another bundling signifier, to solidify peace and friendship between them, Kewetayash, who wore a Selkirk Treaty medal, posed an important question to McDougall: Had he bought their land from the HBC? With clear reference to the Rupert's Land deal and the history of the Selkirk Treaty, Kewetayash insisted that "his ancestors had never sold their title to any part of it—they had only *lent* as much as a man could see under a horse's belly on both sides of the River to the Company, and he now wanted to know what I was going to do with his land" (McDougall 4, emphasis in the original). Kewetayash later emphasized that Selkirk "only *borrowed* the land along Red River" (6, emphasis in the original). After McDougall assured Kewetayash that the "arrangement" with the HBC left his rights, "whatever they might be just as they stood before," the Lieutenant Governor stated he only wanted to know what territory Kewetayash claimed, "what it was they pretended to own," and was not prepared to negotiate or initiate treaty (5). In reply, Kewetayash related that he had held council with "'Peguis,' near Lake Winnipeg, 'Fox,' of Prairie Portage, and 'Grose Oreille,' of Oak Point" the previous winter when they "agreed . . . upon a division of the country between them" (5-6). He later added "that he could not make any cession of their rights without consultation with the other chiefs" (6).⁶

⁶ According to McDougall's account, the council with Peguis, Makasis (Fox), and "Grose Oreille," or Nashake-penais, would have been held in the winter of 1868/1869, but Peguis had died in 1864, and his son Miskookenew Henry Prince had succeeded as *ogimaa*. Either the timing of the council was misconstrued by McDougall and it occurred a few years earlier, or the reference to "Peguis" was a looser reference to the St.

McDougall's council with Kewetayash featured a few aspects of Anishinaabe council practice and its discourses, which we can read in a range of bundled significations. First, they began with a pipe ceremony to "help guide the decisions of the council in a good way" by linking them to the *manidoog* and with each other (C. Miller 107). Kewetayash wore his Selkirk medal as a diplomatic gesture linking them to the history of relationship between their peoples. They engaged in practices of oratory to discuss the issues they were meeting about, and when the question of territory claims came up, Kewetayash emphasized the limits of his authority to speak for other *ogimaag* and Anishinaabeg, employing a word bundle reflecting the "ethic of non-interference" which acts as a boundary for who can speak on behalf of others and prevents decisions being made without all relevant parties present in a collective decision-making process of council (Simpson, *Dancing* 54; C. Miller 103-104). We also get a rare reference to an inter-Indigenous council held among *ogimaag* in which many of the same expressions of Anishinaabe law, *inaakonigewin*, would have been enacted. This *ogimaag* council also demonstrates the collective effort of Anishinaabeg supported by a complex intra-tribal relational and communication network they had sustained prior to and through European settlement. Indigenous declarations and actions were not isolated occurrences but persistent, repeated, and often shared, showing the continued "effectiveness of the communications network" maintained through visiting, trade and hunting partnerships, and kinship (Peers 203).

Taken together, these different iterations of asserting Indigenous sovereignty and land claim formed a sustained pedagogy of treaty that long preceded the official councils for Treaty One held in the summer of 1871. I use the term "treaty pedagogy" to refer to various

Peter's band and his son, Prince. McDougall did note that his interpreter was "a French Canadian settler, who spoke a little Chippewa and about as much English" (4).

ways Indigenous people repeatedly drew from and asserted their own conceptions and practices of governance, diplomacy, and treaty-making with settlers with the *expectation* that their audience would “show the face of kinship or allyship” rather than “the face of death,” as described in the Anishinaabe story of seven fires (Whyte 53).⁷ Drawing from Cree oral history, Harold Johnson describes this expectation, framed as an address to settlers:

No one thought you would try to take everything for yourselves, and that we would have to beg for leftovers. . . . We thought that maybe, if you watched how we lived, you might learn how to live in balance in this territory. The treaties that gave your family the right to occupy this territory were also an opportunity for you to learn how to live in this territory. (20-21)

Johnson narrates an expectation many Indigenous people had that their diplomatic efforts with colonists and settlers would lead to mutual partnerships and treaties like those they had developed with other Indigenous nations through history; they expected settlers to participate in learning. In addition to Johnson’s emphasis on hopeful expectation, my sense of treaty pedagogy makes room for a range of other affects that can motivate and shape expectation such as doubtfulness, suspicion, and anger, for, as the seven fires story warns, in addition to the faces of “kinship/allyship” and “death,” there is also “the face of kinship . . . superficially presented to mask what’s really the face of death” (Whyte 53).

Treaty pedagogies found their expression and enactment in the range of Indigenous discursive practices directed toward issues of sovereignty, land claim, and political

⁷ What is commonly called the “Seven Fires Story” or “Seven Fires Prophecy” refers to a story of “history and futurity” in which each fire relates to a certain period of time (Whyte 53). Whyte notes the story could feature seven or eight fires, depending on the telling. One of the main themes of the story is “the persistence and flourishing” of Anishinaabeg “in the face of diverse challenges, including social and environmental challenges” such as the “increasing power” of settler people, requiring the Anishinaabeg to discern the newcomer intentions (53). Like Whyte, I am interested in how the story’s themes relate to iterations of colonialism through time rather than tethering the story to specific historical events (54). For further discussion of the story, refer to Simpson, *Dancing*, 65-66.

relationship. They therefore composed part of what Paul Williams calls the “ecosystem” of treaty (22). For example, treaties between the Haudenosaunee, Crown, and the United States, Williams argues, exist in an ecosystem of Haudenosaunee law, “a long series of international councils, governed by rules of process and interpretation, assisted by precedents in the *Kayanerenkó:wa* [Great Law] itself” (21). What he calls the “legal environment” of treaties is also a discursive one in which the “images, words, and even the sequences of words used in treaty councils are linked not only to all other treaty councils, but to their sources in the laws of the Confederacy” (21). I want to offer a slight opening to the concept of treaty ecosystem to include not only those discourses that figured into formal treaty councils, but also those emergent moments of treaty pedagogy and expressions of governance that, while often treated as prefatory in accounts of treaty, reveal the longer history of Anishinaabe treaty-making that preceded the “official” negotiations for Treaty One and the expansive “text” of treaty that includes a range of expressions in writing and gestural rhetoric beyond the “official” treaty document.

Thus, just as studying the dynamics of the discursive ecosystems of treaty leads to a more expansive understanding of what Anishinaabe and Cree people were trying to assert, tracing their presence in written records of the treaty process also shows the ways they were often diminished or erased. Kewetayash’s account of intra-tribal council, for instance, is a rare record-in-writing of Indigenous councils at which settlers were not present. His story illustrates how the written treaty archive can have a limiting effect because what gets presented or uttered depends on who is writing the record, what they understand of Indigenous discourse and thought, acts of disclosure and withholding, editorial choices of inclusion or dismissal, etc. When read primarily in their written forms of government reports and newspaper items, acts of Indigenous assertion can feel isolated, surrounded as they are by pages and columns of writing typically not written for or by them.

Alexander Morris begins his chapter on Treaties One and Two in *The Treaties of Canada* by referencing Indigenous affects of “anxiety” and being “full of uneasiness” due to settler encroachment that had led to the assertive actions of obstructing settlers and surveyors. While Morris acknowledges Indigenous assertions, he glides over the particularities of the “Indians of Manitoba” in a discursive move that flattens and combines the range of Indigenous expression and removes identifications of who did what and when, while the “gentlemen” Morris refers to who coordinated the treaty process receive thorough identifications in honorifics, full names, and government titles or positions (Morris 25). The “Indians” are reduced to a vague body through a discursive move of sanctioned ignorance⁸ that fosters colonial unknowing,⁹ rendering their identifications neither necessary nor relevant to the narrative of treaty—even if what these “Indians” expressed and enacted provoked a wealth of response as recorded in government records and Morris’s own book. The resulting narrative, and justification, of the Numbered Treaty process operates by pairing selective negation with selective acknowledgement of Indigenous actions that make the “extinction of the Indian title” desirable in the interests of settlement and settler movement, agriculture, and resource use.

John Leonard Taylor notes that much of Morris’s “material duplicates that in the *Sessional Papers*,” which bore the “official record of making the Numbered Treaties, but Morris “does include some additional accounts of treaty negotiations and some of his own views” for the four treaties he was involved in as commissioner: Three, Four, Five, and Six (“Canada’s North-West,” 207-208). The *Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada* collected and published reports by government officials, forming records of government activity and

⁸ My use of the term “sanctioned ignorance” derives from Coleman’s use of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s coinage (Coleman, “Grappling with Respect” 84). Refer also to Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 9, 31.

⁹ Refer to Vimalassery et al. for discussion of colonial unknowing.

decision-making, including the Numbered Treaty process. While Morris's tendency to generalize arises from his own narrative decisions, it also reflects his primary source archive that he relied on so heavily. The "Indians of Manitoba" he purports to speak for are also found in reports of the "Indians" by Adams Archibald, the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba. However, the discourses of Kewetayash, Ozaawigwan, Ayeetapepetung, Zhoo-shou, and Moosoos demonstrate the dynamic range in form and expression of treaty pedagogy Indigenous people communicated prior to the holding of official treaty councils.

* * *

October 2023, *maskotêw*, *wînipêk*, Winnipeg

In the papers of Adams G. Archibald at the Archives of Manitoba, three undated letters by different *ogimaag* are numbered consecutively and arranged alongside one another in a file with other material: a message from Miskookenew Henry Prince numbered 768 on behalf of the "natives of the Parish of St. Peter's" (Letter to Archibald [n.d.]; Appendix B10); a letter numbered 769 from five leaders representing the area ranging from Portage la Prairie to Pembina to Lake of the Woods and Upper Fort Garry (Nashake-penais et al.; Appendix B11); and item 770 from Kewetayash, one of the five *ogimaag*, following up after a meeting with Archibald (Letter to Archibald; Appendix B12). Although Kewetayash's message was likely sent a few months after the other two, the archival arrangement of the three messages links them, almost hinting at their shared concerns and attempts to communicate them. On the backs of two of the letters, labels "(Indian)" and "Indian Chief" have been added in different handwriting and ink colour, likely an additional method for categorizing and organizing the new Lieutenant Governor's full portfolio in an emerging administrative structure of settler government that requires the category "Indian" be created and affixed to messages (fig. 20, 21). Similarly, another letter by the *ogimaa* Moosoos is labelled as an "Indian Notice" (fig. 23). Each letter references issues that impact their respective peoples' survival and

emphasizes Archibald's responsibility in addressing them, and, although the letters themselves are undated, their contents correspond to Archibald's reports on his interactions with Indigenous people in the first year of his tenure.

* * *

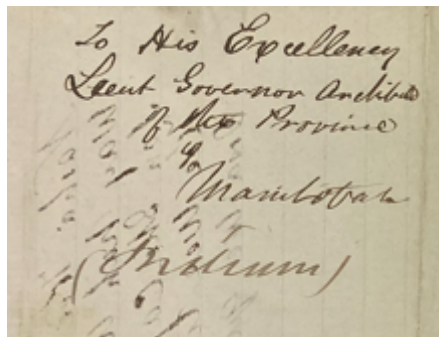


Figure 21: Detail of letter by Nashakapenais, et al. to Archibald. The label “(Indian)” was added under the address in a different ink and handwriting. n.d. P7924/1, Item 769. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2023.

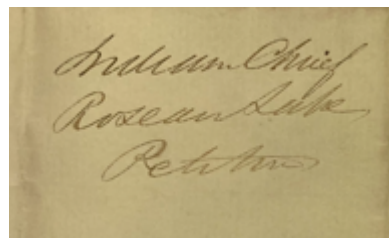


Figure 22: Detail of letter by Kewetayash to Archibald with the label “Indian Chief, Roseau Lake, Petition” on reverse. n.d. P7924/1, Item 770. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2023.

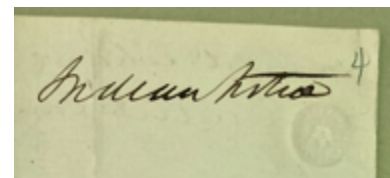
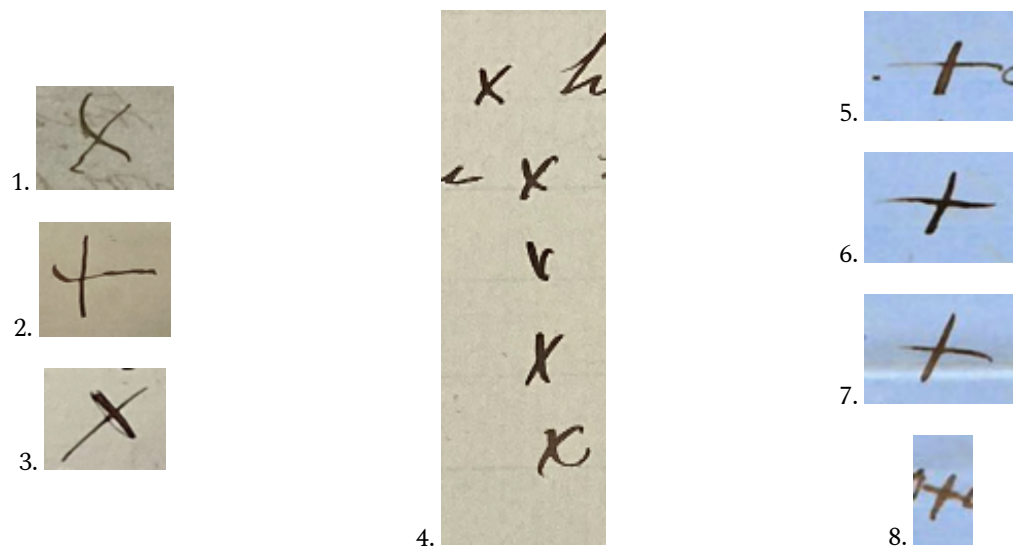


Figure 23: Detail of public notice by Moosos with the label “Indian Notice” on reverse. Public Notice, Witnessed by Fred A. Bird, 17 Dec. 1870. P7919/7, Item 150. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. Photo: Johannah Bird, 2023.

Figure 24: GALLERY OF X MARKS

1. Miskookenew Henry Prince. Letter to Archibald, n.d. P7924/1, Item 768. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. • 2. Kewetayash [Keweetiash]. Letter to Archibald, n.d. P7924/1, Item 770. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. • 3. Moosoos. Public Notice, 17 Dec. 1870. P7919/7, Item 150. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. • 4. From top to bottom: Nashake-penais [Nasha-Kee-Pesnais], Nanawananan [Way-Nah-Wenenah], Ien-She-Capo, Kewetayash [Kee-Wee-ti-as], Ozaawigwan [Oosa-We-quan]. Letter to Archibald, n.d. P7924/1, Item 769. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. • 5. Ozaawigwan [Yellow Quill], 6. Ayeetapepetung [Iei te pee tung], 7. Moosoos [Moosose], 8. Zhoo-ou [Shoo-ouh]. Resolution from Portage la Prairie Chiefs to Archibald, 30 May 1871. P7921/3, Item 332. Adams G. Archibald fonds. Archives of Manitoba. Photos: Johannah Bird, 2023.

* * *

Fall 1870, *Niizhoziibean*, *Nestawa'ya*, The Forks

On 2 September, Archibald arrived at Fort Garry, also called the Stone Fort, to begin his official duties of appeasing the “Indians” and make preparations for settlement (Meredith 8; cf. Archibald, “Reports” 9). Only a few days after his arrival, Archibald began receiving messages from Cree and Anishinaabe leaders in the region demanding to meet with him. These letters show some of the detail in Archibald’s communications with Indigenous people that gets reduced in Morris’s book and Archibald’s reports. Henry Prince’s message, for instance, was likely sent on 6 September enclosed with a letter from John Schultz who wrote he has “the honor to enclose . . . a communication from Henry Prince the Chief of the Ojibways in the Parish of Saint Peter,” having been tasked with expressing “the urgent wish of the Chief, Headmen, and Indians” that Archibald would “at as early a date as possible see them and make known the intentions of the Government towards them” (Schultz 1).¹⁰ In his letter, Prince welcomed Archibald to the territory and, after expressing a desire for “peace & friendship” to reign in their midst and apologizing for bringing matters to Archibald “on the threshold” of his charge, he called for an interview, a council, with Archibald before his people dispersed to hunt and fish for the winter (Letter to Archibald [n.d.]; Appendix B10).

Not long after Prince sent his message, five *ogimaag* followed with their own asking Archibald to meet with them.¹¹ Nashake-penais (Flying Down Bird), Nanawananan (Centre of Bird’s Tail), Ien-She-Capo, Kewetayash (Flying Round), and Ozaawigwan (Yellow Quill)

¹⁰ Although Schultz refers to an enclosed letter from Prince, none is included with his in the archive file, and the archival description states “no enclosure.” Yet, the undated letter from Prince fits Schultz’s description of urgency and call for meeting in the early days of Archibald’s arrival.

¹¹ Although the letter is undated, it was likely sent on 16 September 1870. Archibald wrote in a letter that after meeting with a group of “Indians” on 15 September he received a message the next day requesting “another Council,” which he granted. At this next meeting was “a great body of Indians assembled, with six chiefs,” including the son of Les Grandes Oreilles—Nashake-penais (Letter to Howe [21 Sep.] 18).

collectively signed a letter following up from a meeting Archibald had with their representative the day prior (Appendix B11). Like Prince, the *ogimaag* expressed their desire for peace, and, like Prince's father Peguis and Wihkasko-kisêyin, employed kinship terms to communicate their need for provisions, referring to Archibald as the "representative" of their "great Mother" who could assist them "to make a living. . . during the coming winter" (Nashake-penais et al.; Appendix B11). In their request for an interview, the *ogimaag* foregrounded the pressured environment they were navigating and their efforts to ensure they would be understood. Although their representative had met with Archibald, "time was so limited" he could not "explain things clearly." To ameliorate this, the *ogimaag* ask for set conditions on their interview: to meet with Archibald, an interpreter, and "Indians" only to prevent interference from self-interested parties: ". . . we think the meeting would be conducted to better advantage by the non-interference of men who has our interest very little at heart" (Nashake-penais et al.; Appendix B11).

When Archibald was appointed as Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, he was given a series of instructions as he commenced his official duties which included securing the travel route between Lake Superior and Manitoba by establishing "friendly relations" with the "Indians"; ascertaining the Indians' "wants and claims," numbers, and suggestions for the "improvement of their condition"; determining "desirable" lands "to open up at once for settlement"; and assessing the extent and state of legal, economic, and administrative structures in the region in preparation for further settler expansion (Meredith 8). Overall, he was tasked with establishing such relations, systems, and structures that would facilitate the expansion of the newly-formed Dominion of Canada into the west by gaining access to Indigenous lands and minimizing settler-Indigenous conflict in order to do so.

For Indigenous people in the prairies, a new structure of settler governance had been imposed that also structured Indigenous-settler communication differently than in the past.

Where previously they had dealt with trading companies and their officials, missionaries, and some interest groups like the Aborigines' Protection Society, now a more centralized interlocutor presented himself as the representative of the current colonial *ogimaakwe*, Queen Victoria. In addition to longstanding Indigenous networks for travel, trade, hunting, kinship, and communication alongside newer communication networks of post and newspapers, new forms of settler governance imposed in the prairies structured the discursive environment Indigenous people were still trying to participate and have an effect in. Archibald's role introduced a new way of "linking" Indigenous people across the prairies as demonstrated by communications he received not only from leaders in the Manitoba region but from Wihkasko-kisêyin, Kehewin, Onchiminahos, and Keskayiwew at Fort Edmonton. Also, Indigenous communication acts started appearing in new kinds of records for the government of nascent Canada and, with them, the glosses and framing of the colonial representatives who recorded them.

For some Indigenous people, Archibald's role as a "nearer" emissary of Victoria held some promise for being understood on their own terms with a representative in their own lands. Repeatedly, Indigenous people invoked kinship in a range of ways as they had done previously. Whether from the Plains Anishinaabeg like Prince, Nashake-Pesnais, and the other *ogimaag*, or the Cree *okimâwak* at Fort Edmonton, Indigenous leaders continued to assert diplomatic expectations framed by their kinship frameworks by naming Victoria as "mother," calling for gifts and provisions, and requiring being dealt with equally as equal leaders with the settler *ogimaag/okimâwak* Archibald and Victoria.

The personal dimensions of this relational understanding even extended in some cases beyond the *ogimaa*-to-*ogimaa* communication often registered in the archive. In the fall of 1870, Archibald received another message dated 10 September addressed from Joseph Smith of the Red River Settlement who describes himself after his signature as "An Indian

Xtian,” perhaps in an attempt to leverage emerging hierarchies of attention for “Christian” rather than “heathen Indians” (Smith).¹² In his letter, Smith appeals to Archibald as the governor on behalf of his sister: “I beg of your excellency . . . your advise[sic] regarding to my sister, if she dies from the wounds that she got from another man” (Smith; Appendix B13). Smith does not elaborate on the circumstances of the violence against his sister, but their severity moves him ask for counsel and also for support in the ten days he has not been able to work, instead caring for his sister: “I could not leave my sister, and not being able, even to give a mouthful to those that would come & sit with us during the night time. Please your excellency, I beg some thing to eat & a little tea” (Smith; Appendix B13). In a more personal way, Smith invokes the protocol of *ogimaa* leadership in appealing for support and some kind of justice to be done in this matter, maybe because the assailant was white and therefore falls under Archibald’s jurisdiction as one of his people.¹³ The personal dimension, then, of *ogimauwiwin* includes responsibility for personal and intimate forms of violence and harm as part of “governmental” or diplomatic relational matters since they are framed by kinship frameworks and also deal in daily living.

Whatever potential Archibald might have represented for Indigenous peoples navigating Indigenous-settler relations in a period of heightened tension and anxiety, the process of communicating with him brought further limitations requiring new kinds of effort on the part of *ogimaag* to work diplomatically. Generally, the messages from Prince, Nashake-penais, and others adopted strategies of appeasement by using conciliatory language stressing their hopes for peace. They also acknowledge that sending letters has

¹² “X” has long been used as an abbreviated form for “Christ” both on its own and when forming part of a larger word such as “Xtian” for Christian or “Xmas” for Christmas. Refer to “X, Noun,” *OED*.

¹³ Although the context of the letter does not indicate anything about the assailant other than it was a man, it is more likely that had the perpetrator been Indigenous, Smith would have appealed to the *ogimaag* and members of the perpetrator’s community for help rather than Archibald.

become a necessary secondary strategy where it has been made clear that Archibald can give them limited time and access: “We are very sorry indeed to bring before your Excellency’s notice on the threshold of your charge” (Prince, Letter to Archibald [n.d.]; Appendix B10); “. . . your time seems to be so much taken up by necessary circumstances, we beg to address you in writing” (Nashake-penais et al.; Appendix B11).¹⁴ With limited opportunity for in-person discussion, writing provisionally bridges the distance between them until they can meet, although meetings in person are emphasized over textual mediation. In a context of constant mediation through translators, transcribers, and dealing with different representatives, visiting and discussion afforded more immediacy in communication and the embodied interaction of sound, gesture, voice, tone, expression, multiple witnesses, etc., all hopefully leading to better understanding one another in the midst of constant translation. And, as Nashake-penais and his companions argue, interference from self-interested parties posed an ongoing threat to Indigenous peoples’ interests, leading them to set controlled conditions for meeting as a preventative strategy. All of these conditions constrained opportunities for reciprocity and challenge further efforts to work from Cree and Anishinaabe frameworks.

* * *

13 September 1870, *maskotêw*, *miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi*, Red River

The issues emerging in messages from *ogimaag* to Archibald also came through in notes recorded in English of a meeting with Miskookenew Henry Prince and about two hundred of his people at St. Peter’s Parish School, archived in Archibald’s papers. They also show how Archibald’s approach to Indigenous people relied on perfunctory acknowledgement of

¹⁴ In a report, Archibald himself commented on his limited time which he ascribed to the “primitive condition of affairs” at Fort Garry in which “the most trivial matter must be brought to the notice of the Governor” (Letter to Howe [17 Sep.] 16).

Anishinaabe council discourse and practice for the sake of expediency rather than good-faith engagement.¹⁵ In the interview, Prince and Archibald spoke through an interpreter, and Prince repeated his strategy of appeasement while also asserting his claims, perhaps another instance of *Aanjigone*. He emphasized his loyalty to Victoria, citing his services rendered in support of the Canadian forces during the Red River Resistance and his father's precedent which he followed:

But as I acted of late so did my Father act long ago. When the snows of a hundred winters had passed over his head he called me to himself and said, "My Son do as I have done and always act with loyalty." Thus my Father was loyal through all his life, loyal till the time came when the dark grave closed over his body. ("Notes of Interview"; Appendix B14)

However, he also stated he had not been paid or rewarded for his and peoples' services, though they had "suffered much on account of [their] loyalty," adding several men had come to his people claiming "they were sent by the Queen" but who never "helped . . . in any way" and revealing another dimension to how his and other Indigenous people were being misled and possibly taken advantage of ("Notes of Interview"; Appendix B14). In contrast, he argued that Archibald's presence showed their relationship would be honoured properly: "Now that we have her true representative he will act justly to us" ("Notes of Interview"; Appendix B14). Later in the meeting, he repeated the point his father repeated in the decades previous: ". . . we were never paid for these lands which Lord Selkirk borrowed from us" ("Notes of Interview"; Appendix B14).

Archibald's recorded speeches from the meeting revealed his priorities of appeasing Indigenous people and deferring their demands without deep engagement with their concerns or approaches to diplomacy, a theme that also recurred in his reports in the

¹⁵ Archibald approximates about two hundred Indigenous people had gathered (Letter to Howe [17 Sep.] 15).

Sessional Papers. In his initial speech he states that he had wanted to meet “without further delay” so Prince and his people could return to their hunting grounds and “make provision” for their families for the winter, adding that since the provincial government was not “yet fully established,” he would be unable to make treaties until the following spring (“Notes of Interview”; Appendix B14). As another inducement to disperse Prince and his people, Archibald added that smallpox had appeared in Portage la Prairie: “This is another reason why you should return to your Hunting Grounds at once so that the infection may not spread” (“Notes of Interview”; Appendix B14). After Prince raised the issue of the Selkirk Treaty, Archibald reiterated his points, stating he would address treaty when “the affairs of the Government [were] in a more settled state,” when laws were enacted for the “protection of the Indian & the Whiteman alike” (“Notes of Interview”; Appendix B14). He ended the meeting re-emphasizing the threat of smallpox to them as an added motivation to depart.

Prince’s speeches as recorded in the interview notes are expressed in humble language often used in Anishinaabe “requesting” discourse where one party invokes a relationship of mutual care and interdependency in which one’s need, communicated with humility, creates a responsibility for the other party to fulfill (C. Miller 25). To emphasize his loyalty to Victoria, he stated, “Through the cold and dreary winter now past I have often felt pain, often felt weak, often felt sleepy but instead of resting idly I have worked for the Queen. . .,” before asking for help and compensation (“Notes of Interview”; Appendix B14). After making his request, he returned to his humble rhetoric, again to reiterate not only his goodwill, but Archibald’s responsibility toward Prince and his people: “If I speak anything not of peace I trust the Governor will make allowance as we are all [then?] poor and weak and unlearned” (“Notes of Interview”; Appendix B14). Set as they are on the page alternating with Archibald’s speeches, Prince’s speeches lose some of the meaning they have in the context of Anishinaabe discourse as they appear framed by Archibald’s commendations of

the Queen's loyal "subjects," and Archibald's deferrals of their demands and requests subsume them under, and place them in lower position in, the project of establishing Canadian governance in Manitoba and its legal structures. Different kinds of assumption occur in Archibald's speeches, working discursively to assume the primacy of Canadian law and governance and the Queen's ruling authority over Indigenous legal systems and forms of governance, thereby displacing Prince's invocations of responsibility, framed in expressions of humility, into colonial discourse of his presumed subjecthood to the Queen's sovereignty.

As Archibald ended their council, he showed some awareness of Anishinaabe gift thought by indicating he had gifts for Prince and his people, but he emphasized they were gifts of friendship rather than "recompense for past services," again deferring any obligatory and reciprocal dynamic of gift-giving in an attempt to limit its depth of signification and, thereby, its implications for him in Anishinaabe relationality. Prince, however, tried to push further in another attempt at influencing Archibald to engage properly with Anishinaabe gift practice by ending with a statement that his people needed ammunition for hunting and that they did not have money to buy any. Archibald replied he would do something about it and subsequently authorized some provisions for Prince's band. Archibald's use of gifts demonstrated to some degree his awareness of their role as bundling signifiers of relationship and diplomacy in Anishinaabe thought, but his practice of gift-giving continually tried to limit the extent to which they implicated him in the kinds of political engagement he was being held accountable to. Prince had tried to assert these significations by indirect means and invoking the history of his peoples' relationship with settlers and his knowledge of colonial discourse. Prince's entries in Archibald's administrative records are examples of insistence that counter Archibald's attempts to limit them.

* * *

In his reports of meeting with Indigenous people, Archibald demonstrated the various ways he tried to ignore or disavow Indigenous peoples' attempts to hold him and settler society accountable, further showing the challenges Indigenous people faced in their efforts to engage the discursive environment of Canadian political and diplomatic communication as settler governance sought to establish itself more firmly in the region. Archibald repeatedly deferred Indigenous claims until other government matters could be dealt with, engaged in perfunctory use of gifts as appeasing strategy, and prioritized settler peoples' comfort and safety over Indigenous calls for just treatment. Archibald's report on his meeting with Prince, for example, described how "the people of that neighborhood," that is, the settled people around Indian Mission and Lower Fort Garry, informed him "the Indians" would not "disperse" until the interview was held, advising Archibald to visit them as soon as possible since the people were "unwilling to have [the Indians] come up to the Fort" with possible "drunkenness and quarrelling" given as the reason (Letter to Howe [10 Sep.] 11). Archibald described the "Indians in this neighborhood," in his habit of using the broad category, as being "in a state of considerable excitement":

They are very much demoralized by the transactions of the last few months. They do not seem to see why they should not have some share of the property, which they know to be in the possession of people who are not its owners. It will be necessary at a very early date to make some arrangements with these Tribes to put their relations with us on a satisfactory footing. (11)

Indians were framed as another component of the citizenry Archibald was responsible for and to, but whose claims and demands must defer to settlers' anxiety about Indigenous presence in the—that is, *their*—neighbourhoods, even as Archibald, paradoxically, acknowledged in a limited way Indigenous peoples' claims. In his report, he restated the situation: "The people of the neighborhood were very anxious to have the Indians disperse" (Letter to Howe [17 Sep.] 15). To that end, he acknowledged he "used the fact that the small-

pox” was “prevailing most extensively on the Saskatchewan, and that a case of it had occurred at Portage la Prairie” to “induce them to leave” since “[t]he Indians are in great terror of this disease, which proves so fatal to persons of their race” (15). He also noted that the “pow-wow ended, as these meetings must always end, in ordering them a present” (15).

In such a context, gifts became a compromise for Archibald that achieved two purposes: placating Indigenous affects and urgent material needs and, thereby, facilitating Indigenous peoples’ departures to their hunting grounds or home places away from the settlement. Meetings with bands proceeded in a similar way. On 15 September Archibald “found another group of Indians,” likely representatives of the Roseau and Fort Garry bands, “wishing a pow wow—which of course had to be granted, with the usual termination” (Letter to Howe [17 Sep.] 15). When he met them again on the 19th led by Nashake-penais, identified by Archibald only as “the son of ‘Les Grandes,’” they gathered about 550 people by Archibald’s count including other *ogimaag* and women and children, communicating in their enactment that the work of governance and diplomacy was not only for male *ogimaag* but involved the whole community. Archibald reported they criticized the gifts he gave them, saying they were “only a mouthful for each” and “they had been waiting all summer, being informed” that as soon as Archibald arrived a treaty would be made with them (Letter to Howe [21 Sep.] 18). Like Prince and his band, they expressed their need for food, clothing, and ammunition in order to hunt for the winter. Archibald acknowledged “some justice in their claims” in his report, but he enacted his usual policy of deferring the issue of treaty and finding a way to disperse them away from the settlement “without much delay” lest they be “a burden on the people” or “provoke hostile collision between them and the people” to “a very disastrous effect” (18). After consulting those who “know best the habits of the savages” to ascertain “what was absolutely necessary to get them away, and

afford the means of their earning a living for themselves,” he gave them a “small present” after making them promise that they would leave immediately (18-19).

What emerged in Archibald’s reports, later reflected in Morris’s treaty accounts and other settler writing of the time, was the affective economy, to borrow Sara Ahmed’s term, in which settler anxiety became ascribed to Indians. These fearful emotions became “attached” to Indigenous bodies framed discursively as violent threat that needed managing through placating strategies creating physical distance between Indians and settlers. This affective economy had a few effects for processes of discursive and material dispossession. First, interpretations of Indigenous peoples’ gestural agency became increasingly interpreted by Canadian officials and settlers as threat. Second, this affective economy served as another narrative justification for settlement and settling Indians that worked to “bind the imagined white subject and nation together” (Ahmed 118). Indigenous mobility and land relationships prevented the full realization of settler expansion, but, reconfigured as chaotic, troubling, *unproductive*, presence, Indians became another element of the wild-but-promising prairies that only needed the benefits of cultivation to also be fully realized. And, contradictorily, pursuing treaties to settle Indigenous land claims could be the means to stabilize this troubling presence. Thus, Archibald’s writing facilitated a settler structure of feeling that bolstered justifications of settler governance over Indigenous people.¹⁶

In a report to Joseph Howe dated 21 September 1870, Archibald cited the Indians’ troublesomeness as cause for his own sense of urgency in addressing their claims, not as a matter of their rightness or justice, but to ameliorate the perceived threat of trouble. He wrote it would be “absolutely necessary” to “have these Indian claims settled upon a permanent basis” (Letter to Howe [21 Sep.] 19). In the meantime, he continued, the best

¹⁶ Refer to Mark Rifkin, “Settler States of Feeling” for discussion of the “settler structure of feeling.”

strategy was to get the Indians away from the settlement and “avoid the danger to themselves and the settlement which would have attended their remaining here” (19). In a later report to Howe, he commended his gift policy, describing its success in defense of its expense for the government by describing how it enabled “these poor Indians” to return to the interior with supplies “to earn a living” (4 Feb. 1871, 24). Without the assistance he gave, he argued, they would have been “quartered on the settlement for the winter” and suggested again the perceived strain and threat of “having some hundreds of these poor creatures” at the settlement “without food or employment, in constant danger of coming into collision with the settlers” (24). He argued that gifts were a necessary expense, that the “amount, as compared with the result obtained,” was “inconsiderable,” as his policy of gift-giving was a means of getting Indigenous people “away to their hunting grounds” where “they must earn their own living” (24). Framing Indigenous people as source of settler anxiety, then, also became a way of justifying certain economic policies and arguments and refusing, again, Anishinaabe gift thought and gift economy. It also narrated spatial relations, distinguishing which people could remain in certain places, doing so along racial lines. What goes unacknowledged in Archibald’s reports but implied in many Indigenous assertions his archive preserved was the extent to which the HBC and settlement in general had been and continued to be dependent upon the lands, labour, and partnership of Indigenous people—supplies given and funds drawn upon had been afforded by Indigenous people’s alliance in the first place, generations prior. Indigenous peoples’ responses as recorded in his archive, however, did acknowledge this in resistance to settler dismissal.

* * *

Winter 1870-1871, *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, *miskwaagaamiwi ziibi*, Red River

Although Archibald congratulated himself on the success of his approach to Indigenous claims, the *ogimaag* who were trying to deal with him were not so satisfied. Rather, they

persisted in asserting their claims through the winter in response to Archibald's policies and settlers' ongoing disregard for their demands. One *ogimaa*, Kewetayash, from a band located around the Roseau River wrote to Archibald sometime in the winter to tell Archibald his gifts had not been adequate to provide for his people:

You are aware that our last fall presents were very small. This has turned out a very severe winter inasmuch that our usual hunt has totally failed. Thus families returned from the hunt two days ago having obtained nothing; and in a starving condition: therefore we hope you will be able to devise some method of relief. (Letter to Archibald; Appendix B12).

Kewetayash had signed the letter previously sent to Archibald in the fall with Nashake-penais, Nanawananan, and others asking to meet with him, and he was likely at the council with Archibald, Nashake-penais, and other *ogimaag* in the fall when Archibald gave them "small presents" and sent them away (Letter to Howe [21 Sep.] 18-19). As with other messages, Kewetayash begins with expressions of respect and offering "the hand of friendship" as the entryway, and perhaps a rhetorical trace of *Aanjigone*, to criticizing the gifts and pursuing a means of relief for his people, working from expectations of mutual regard in their diplomatic relationship.

Kewetayash also remarks on the effort required to maintain the relationship with Archibald, thereby signalling the shifting power dynamics in which Indigenous people must initiate travel to and communication with Archibald:

We hope your Excellency will not forget us altho' we have not an opportunity of seeing you so often as other chiefs—and that when you have any matter of importance under consideration affecting our interests that you will be pleased to convey such intelligence to us. (Letter to Archibald; Appendix B12)

Part of Kewetayash's work now as an *ogimaa* entails reminding other *ogimaa* like Archibald to practice his responsibilities of the relation in keeping Kewetayash's people in his mind and attention, and communicating with them on matters that affect them.

Another letter from Prince sent in February 1871 also illustrates the ongoing work *ogimaag* had to undertake as their settler neighbours ignored them and government officials put off dealing with their concerns. Prince wrote to Archibald that “strangers” had been working across the Red River from the Indian Settlement, apparently without Prince’s or his people’s consent as he had “written to them twice to leave off or cease working” (Letter to Archibald, 7 Feb. 1871, 1). To his first letter, the men “only laughed at it,” and the second was treated “with the same contempt” as they told Prince’s messenger they would not stop (1). Even when Prince met with another official for some kind of mediation or advice, he was referred to Archibald. Prince’s letter to Archibald gives some sense of what *ogimaag* were dealing with and the recalcitrance and disrespect that made them worried for how they and their people would be treated in the future. Therefore, *ogimaag* also continued using public notices to assert their demands, perhaps in some cases as a means of ensuring they were widely known and not getting lost in more personal communication with individuals like Archibald. In December 1870, Chief Moosoos wrote a public notice posted on the land which he also sent to Archibald prohibiting settlers from cutting wood in the “lands west of the fifty mile boundary line at High Bluff” (Moosoos; Appendix B15). His notice reminded his readers that “the Indian title” to those lands had “not been extinguished” and those harvesting had “no right or title thereto”: “I hereby warn all such parties that they are infringing on lands that as yet virtually belong to the Indians. I do hereby call on them to desist on pains of forfeiting their labour” (Moosoos; Appendix B15). Whoever wrote the notice for Moosoos used the structure of a contract or other legal document by opening the notice with “whereas” statements laying out the current standing of Indigenous land claims in the area to emphasize for Moosoos’ audience that ongoing disregard for their claims and refusal to seek permission or consent have not gone unnoticed.

* * *

November 1870, Niizhoziibean, Nestawa'ya, Upper Fort Garry at the Forks

Since he had taken up his post as lieutenant governor, Archibald consistently demonstrated a unilateral approach in his relationships with Indigenous people, and, in his writing, continually worked from his assumptive expectations for Canadian and settler expansion in the prairies and the notion that “Indians,” as he constructed them in his reports, need to be managed rather than engaged with on their terms. Instead, he continually centred himself as the arbiter of Indigenous claims, asserting his position of authority over Indigenous governance. In preparations for the Treaty One council, he reported in November 1870 to the Secretary of State for the Provinces, Joseph Howe, that until

the truth could be ascertained, it would be useless to enter on negotiations with any one tribe to obtain a cession of its claims when it might turn out that the same lands were claimed by a different tribe. The negotiations would then either prove abortive or entail upon us the payment of a double tribute for the extinguishment of claims for the same land . . . Besides[,] a treaty with savages, to whom time is of no value, can only be made after much talk and great delay. (qtd. in Daugherty)

Archibald placed himself in the position of determining the “truth” of Indigenous claims, working from a framework that excluded any form of Indigenous land-sharing agreements, previous council work negotiating territories, or other forms of Indigenous diplomacy. Thus, in his writing, he both negates Indigenous peoples’ legal and political systems and replaces them with the “Indians” who cannot govern themselves. Thus, he converts Indigenous relationships to land into a more absolute understanding of property ownership and unitary land claim that must be *fixed*.

He also dismissed the *work* of discourse, referring to Indigenous peoples’ demands for time to engage in *Naakgonige*, deliberate, and hold council effectively, to test the proposals, and consult with many people in their communities, as another indication of their “savage” carelessness, or “disregard,” for time, rather than addressing the labour

required for governance and care in decisions Indigenous people knew could potentially transform their relationships with settlers and the lands and waters they had lived in close relationship with for so long. While Indigenous people may have been trying to resist Archibald's priority-setting and either his slowness and deferral or his urgency and haste, they were also insisting on their own forms and structures of governance, perhaps also trying to bring him into their way of negotiating treaties and relationships with the land. Archibald's reporting reveals an ongoing theme of another process of conversion through the gradual centring of Canadian government officials as arbiters of the veracity of Indigenous claims and as mediators between Indigenous peoples. As Canadian government officials continually asserted their decision-making authority over Indigenous peoples, they also disavowed Indigenous collective efforts and shared decision-making.

* * *

30 May 1871, *maskotêw kapâtowinihk*, *mashkode onigamiing*, Portage la Prairie

As before, the lack of response to Indigenous assertions provoked further assertions. It would seem Moosoos' notice did not have the desired effect as a few months later in May 1871, the *ogimaag* Ozaawigwan, Ayeetapepetung, Moosoos, and Zhoo-ou sent another formal declaration to Archibald on behalf of seventy-three "principal" leaders of their bands. This time, the *ogimaag* set aside statements of friendship and peace, offering instead "a Statement of resolutions" passed at their own council that they were "determined to stand by" for "the future, or until such a time that a treaty be made" (Resolution; Appendix B16). As in other instances, the council's resolutions responded to settlers' treatment of their people: "... the Settlers do not look at us in the light they ought to,—at this time, we are thinking a great deal of how they have treated us, & how they are treating us at the present" (Resolution; Appendix B16). However, settler encroachment in this instance involved settlers' "searching . . . tents, and carrying . . . people away to other lands." The

council had therefore resolved that they would “stand up for [their] rights”: for every one of their people taken by force, five pounds sterling would be paid to the bands; one pound would be paid for each day the person is detained; and five pounds paid for each day someone is imprisoned.

The specific resolutions passed addressed the issue of settlers apprehending their people, but the *ogimaag* contextualized the issue in the larger problem of settler disregard for Indigenous lives and lands and the ongoing Indigenous practice of working from their own understandings of Anishinaabe law and diplomacy. They explained that they had never received “any thing for the land and the woods that belong to [them], and the settlers use to enrich themselves” (Ozaawigwan et al., Resolution; Appendix B16). Furthermore, they astutely summarized the settlers’ understanding of their relationship with Indigenous peoples: “We always thought & wished to be friendly with you (the settlers) but can now see that you look upon us as children & we feel that your[sic] are treating us the same.” In response, the council did what their people had done for generations: “. . . we feel fully justified in passing these laws amongst ourselves and for our own protection. . . . stern necessity compels us to do so.”

* * *

HOW TO NEGOTIATE A TREATY: AFTER ARCHIBALD

From 22 July 1871 letter to Howe by Adams G. Archibald

First, we will generalize from the specific:

I look upon the proceedings, we are now initiating, as important in their bearing upon our relations to the Indians of the whole continent. In fact, the terms we now agree upon will probably shape the arrangements we shall have to make with all the Indians between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains. It will therefore be well to neglect nothing that is within our power to enable us to start fairly with the negotiations.

Second, always bring in the army:

With that view, I have, amongst other things, asked Major Irvine to detail a few of his troops to be present at the opening of the Treaty. Military display has always a great effect on savages, and the presence, even of a few troops, will have a good tendency.

Third, unfortunately, we will need to spend money, both now and in the future:

I fear we shall have to incur a considerable expenditure for presents of food, etc., during the negotiations, but any cost for that purpose I shall deem a matter of minor consequence. The real burden to be considered is that which has to be borne in each recurring year.

Fourth, the money we spend, really, is little compared to what we will gain:

I doubt if it will be found practicable to make arrangements upon so favorable a basis as that prescribed by his Excellency the Governor General, as the maximum to be allowed, in case of a treaty with the Lake Indians. Nor indeed would it be right, if we look to what we receive, to measure the benefits we derive from the coming into possession of the magnificent territory we are appropriating here, by what would be fair to allow for the rocks and swamps and muskegs of the Lake country east of this Province.

Indigenous Discourse at Treaty One

[T]he whole country is with all its interests on the highroad to manhood and feels as all youths must out of their teens do very independent. In that condition then 'this Canada' is at present and we have begun to boast a little of our progress. Public sentiment has assumed a healthy tone. We feel somewhat of the incipient strength of a people and a national sentiment in a feeling of interest in our resources and a desire to advance and turn them to practical account has arisen. It is right to cherish such a feeling. There is no earthborn sentiment more pure and excellent than patriotism.

—ALEXANDER MORRIS, ca. mid-1850s (qtd. in Talbot 35-36)

July 1871, Nîizhoziibeán, Nestawa'ya, Upper Fort Garry at the Forks

The process of displacing Indigenous assertions and their expressions through writing continued over the course of documenting the negotiations for Treaty One, and the discursive moves employed in prior government reports persisted in Archibald's and the Treaty Commissioner Wemyss Simpson's oratory in the negotiations, their "official" written accounts of treaty-making, and news coverage published in *The Manitoban*. Also, just as the various forms and details of Indigenous insistence were obscured in previous government reports, they were significantly reduced in official reports of treaty and, to a lesser degree, in *The Manitoban's* coverage.

In the days leading up to the official treaty council for Treaty One, Archibald and the correspondent for *The Manitoban* framed Indigenous assertions within the settler affective economy that emerged in writing the year prior, only now it became a way of understanding the function of treaties. In his 19 July report days before the treaty council, Archibald referred back to events from the past year: assertions from Miskookenew Henry Prince, Nashake-penais, and their bands; councils they held; his policy of deferring them and dispersing them to their hunting grounds; and his unilateral approach that instructed he would appoint the time and place for the treaty council (Letter to Howe, 19 July 1871, 10). Archibald proceeded to again narrate these events in relation to settler, over Indigenous,

feelings of anxiety and perceived threat. After reminding his readers in Ottawa of his relative success “dispersing” the “Indians,” he reported that in the spring, “they became anxious about the Treaty” sending “repeated messages enquiring when the Treaty was to come off” and appearing “very much disappointed at the delay” (10). He cited the specific actions taken by Ozaawigwan and other leaders to publish their demands and act against settler encroachment, describing how they “interfered with emigrants, warning them not to come on the ground outside the Hudson’s Bay Company’s surveys” and “posted up a written notice on the door of the church at Portage la Prairie, warning parties not to intrude on their lands until a Treaty should be made” (10). All these events and, especially, *feelings*, caused the more pertinent effect, for Archibald, of preventing settlers from work:

With this anxiety and uneasiness among the Indians, with a feeling of danger on the part of emigrants seeking lands and ready to commence work, but *subject to enforced idleness* by the danger of entering against the will of the Indians, you will easily understand that I awaited with much anxiety and hailed with much pleasure the arrival of Mr. Simpson. (11, emphasis added)

Indigenous peoples’ feelings of dis-ease owing to settler disregard went unnoted. Rather, they were positioned in Archibald’s report as the foundational cause of settler “idleness,” unproductivity. Meanwhile, settler responsibility for fraught relationships with Indigenous people was continually disavowed. For Archibald, the “problem” of Indigenous anxiety caused not only settler anxiety in Manitoba, it delayed land cultivation and settlement, which further delayed the nation-expansion project Archibald was responsible for facilitating. He also managed to frame Indigenous anxiety as the cause of his own anxiety as he eagerly awaited the arrival of the Treaty Commissioner, Wemyss Simpson, who would assist him in allaying this problem. Put another way, Archibald’s framing of anxiety worked from a position of “crisis epistemology” that perceived imminent threat and required “swift action” to cope (Whyte 54-55).

Public attitudes to treaty also participated in the affective economy Archibald described, registering treaty as a process to alleviate perceived threat. In a brief discussion of treaty in *The Manitoban* on 22 July, a journalist wrote that when news of the Indian Commissioner's arrival to Manitoba had circulated, "every one breathed more freely, more especially as the Indian tribes for the last few months have been evidently restless, and it was taken for granted that a permanent treaty would be entered upon at once, and peace and comfort secured" ("Indian Treaties" 2). Treaty was configured discursively as prophylactic to *Indigenous* "restlessness," invoking the stereotype of Indians as mobile, chaotic presence. Treaty was not understood in Anishinaabe, Cree, or other Indigenous terms as a permanent, ongoing relationship of respect, reciprocity, maintained through practices of renewal (Stark, "Renewal"). News articles reflected the Canadian officials' perspective that treaty was a permanent, contractual arrangement marked by finality and fixedness—treaty would "fix" the trouble of land ownership and claim that threatened settler stability in the region. Rather than establishing a permanent relationship, as in Indigenous peoples' understanding conveyed in *Ago'idiwin*, *Agooiidiwin*, and *Tibamagaywin*, settler discourse of treaty understood it as a means for establishing permanent *disrelation*, not only by assuming the absence any future relation or connection, but, to use the term quoted by Morris, also securing the "extinction" of any present or ongoing relationship (26).

The Manitoban journalist further highlighted a report from a correspondent who "had it on authority" that "any dealings with the Indians at present [would] be merely of a tentative and temporary character" ("Indian Treaties," 22 July, 2). The reporter added, were this the case, "[W]e protest against any such course," arguing that "the Indians" anticipated a "permanent treaty" and treaty otherwise would have the effect of keeping "the Settlement in suspense," "the lives of the people in jeopardy by much tardiness," and "the great impediment to immigration unremoved" (2). The idea of treaty as a permanent, contractual

obligation appeared in another article in the issue, describing the negotiations at Fort Francis as involving “high contracting parties” who were to sign a “permanent Treaty” (“Indian Treaties: Chippewas in Council,” 2). *The Manitoban* writer expressed anticipation that many in the settlement shared: “We hope the negotiations . . . will be final” (2). The sentiment was repeated in a subsequent issue, “It is to be hoped matters will soon all be settled” (“The Indian Treaty” [29 July] 2). Again, the permanence of treaty was not that of an ongoing, renewed relationship but rather of removing the “impediment to immigration”—Indigenous people and their claims to the land.

Indigenous concepts and embodied practices integral to negotiating critical relationships were constantly diminished in written records of treaty, even as they featured centrally in and framed how Numbered Treaties were negotiated. As Pamela Klassen argues, the history of treaty shows how the “churchstateness” of Canadian governance “is made from the enmeshment *and* the contest of rival religiopolitical sovereignties” (114).¹⁷ Held between “Indigenous leaders and representatives of the Crown—including lieutenant governors and missionaries,” treaty negotiations “were conversations held in multiple languages and paced with the rhythms of ceremonies such as smudging and pipe smoking” (114). That is, negotiations featured conceptual and discursive polyphony mediated by translation and influenced by the uneven socio-political terrain that was emerging into stronger power imbalances.

One of the emerging structures for colonial assertions of power and possession were the discursive practices of writing treaty as official, legal text and writing about treaty in

¹⁷ By “churchstateness,” Klassen is referring to how “colonial settlers . . . define[d] their own ways of structuring religious and political authority—churchstateness—over and against those articulated and embodied by Indigenous nations and alliances,” claiming “power over and responsibility for a territory and its people by saying the law while undergirded by the divine authority of a God or Creator” (“Spiritual Jurisdiction” 110, 117).

Canadian government reports and news coverage by correspondents invested in the project of settlement and expanding settler land bases. As Klassen notes, “printed words of the treaties gave little attention to the wider multilingual and ceremonial context of treaty” (115). Written treaties also often missed or omitted terms that were deliberated through oratory and agreed to verbally (Stark, “Respect” 150). Other written records of treaty-making, as in *The Manitoban*, often summarised, condensed, or rendered as insignificant Indigenous peoples’ oratory and actions, thereby displacing Indigenous treaty expressions and their locatedness in particular bodies, places, languages, and cultural contexts into texts that prioritized the languages, expectations, and cultural registers of their writers and readers (Craft, “Living Treaties” 14). Indigenous gestures traceable in the texts were framed within colonial assumptions of treaty making, as in the case of gift protocols at the Fort Frances council where the commissioners “made” the Indians “some presents which were, we are informed, accepted as wiping out all claims of the past” (“Indian Treaties: The Chippewas in Council” 2). Rather than gifts initiating and maintaining relationships, as understood by Anishinaabe and Cree people, gifts were figured as ending relationship in a move of dismissal that is finalizing, permanent, fixing—“wiping out. . . the past,” as the journalist describes, reflecting again the “extinction” Morris highlighted in his book.

However, treaty negotiation took the form of a council and thereby created a larger, embodied, more public enactment of the patterns that appeared previously, including expressions of Indigenous assertion and pedagogies of treaty, which are also traceable in the written accounts. In news reports of *The Manitoban*, the treaty negotiations were described using “council” terminology, both by referring to Canadian representatives and Indigenous peoples being “in council” and through references to what Aimée Craft terms Anishinaabe “procedural law”—those protocols, practices, and gestures of Anishinaabe diplomacy, including councils, that communicate and create “substantive normative

expectations” and “obligations” in the context of treaty relationships (*Breathing Life* 71; “Living Treaties” 11). An article about Wemyss Simpson’s earlier attempt at negotiating treaty in 1870 with bands between Lake of the Woods and Lake Superior at Fort Frances described how the “Indians were very friendly and quite ready to enter into a Treaty,” but “after several talks and presents, the Council broke up, with the understanding that in another year both parties were to meet and make a Treaty” (“Indian Treaties: The Chippewas in Council,” 2).¹⁸ The correspondent for *The Manitoban* used a few key words that, read as word bundles, open up the broader context of Anishinaabe conditions and procedures for diplomatic meeting. Simpson and the Anishinaabeg at Fort Frances held “council” for five days, which involved “several talks and presents,” that is, the sustained work of oratory and gifting, significant components of negotiating the relationship. When negotiations for Treaty One were reported, the writer referred in a subtitle to the “Chippewas and Saulteaux in Council” with similar references to participation in gift protocols, oratory, and other gestures of council practice (“The Treaty” 2).

The naming of council and its attendant practices of engaging in “talks and presents” operate as word bundles in settler colonial discourse of treaty, linking to a broader framework of Anishinaabe diplomacy and law that shaped treaty negotiation practice and discourse. As a “long-standing tradition” among Indigenous peoples, treaty-making and its practices evident in treaty records show how Indigenous people “brought their own understandings of treaty making into the process” (Stark, “Respect” 148). As in previous alliances with traders, Indigenous people continued to assert their diplomatic practices in treaty councils, enacting a pedagogy of treaty that sought to exert a shaping, influencing

¹⁸ This treaty was eventually re-negotiated in 1873, resulting in Treaty Three, also known as the North-West Angle Treaty. For further discussion of the significance of the treaty’s initial failure in 1870, refer to Krasowski, *No Surrender*, 39-50.

force through the process of holding council. Anishinaabe elder Mervin Huntinghawk emphasizes this pedagogical aspect, framed in gift thought:

Our treaties were meant to protect our rights to the land and to provide a base for a lasting relationship with the Crown. They represent political arrangements which we gave to the Crown in order to regulate how we shared our land and resources in nation-to-nation relations. (qtd. in Stark, “Respect” 152-153)

Through the history of past alliance-making with Europeans, Anishinaabe diplomatic thought and its gestures, or protocols, determined and shaped how those alliances were conceptualized and enacted over time (Craft, *Breathing Life* 29). Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark argues, drawing on the work of Raymond DeMallie, that Anishinaabeg “did not conceptualize treaty exclusively as a written document. Instead, they understood that the treaty consisted of the entire council proceedings coupled with events preceding its development and following its implementation” (“Respect” 148). Or, put another way, treaty, understood as negotiating relationships, included all the events, utterances, and actions that shaped and informed the relationship, extending beyond the council itself.

As Huntinghawk and Stark emphasize, treaty councils were not solely about land and material resources. Rather, the treaty process located “the protection of land, resources, and peoples” within the larger context of “building relationships vested in reciprocal responsibilities” for land, resources, and people (Stark, “Respect” 152, 153). As Craft puts it, treaty councils were enactments of *inaakonigewin*, Anishinaabe law, which is “all about relationships . . . among and between ourselves and . . . with other animate beings” that “give rise to rights, obligations, and responsibilities” (“Living Treaties” 10).

* * *

25-26 July 1871, Niizhoziibeau, Nestawa’ya, the Forks and the Stone Fort

In written contemporary accounts of Treaty One, Anishinaabe gestures of governance were often minimized or ignored altogether in a discursive move of sanctioned ignorance. Or,

when they were addressed, they were not discussed as diplomatic action or protocol but rather re-interpreted in relation to settler colonial constructions of “the Indian.” Council sessions for Treaty One had been scheduled to commence 25 July at Lower Fort Garry (the Stone Fort), but, as *The Manitoban* noted, “[the Indians] stated that they were not ready to open a Treaty, as a large number of tribes . . . were not present” (“The Treaty” 2; fig. 25).

Commissioner Simpson reported that on the 25th, he and Archibald, “finding that only a small portion of the Indians had arrived,” held “a preliminary conference” with Miskookenew Henry Prince to begin gathering information for who would represent the different bands (qtd. in Morris 35). Prince refused, however, and said he could not enter any negotiations, neither was he “empowered to speak or act for those bands . . . not then present” (35). As Craft argues, when certain parties were absent from council, as in the case of Treaty One, respecting autonomy meant practicing “principles of non-interference,” waiting as Prince did for others’ arrival and refraining from speaking on their behalf without authorization (*Breathing Life* 73). In this way, Prince also demonstrated the requirements for seeking consensus and consent of all relevant participants for council, including setting the terms for meeting (C. Miller 36). These requirements meant no one could act unilaterally, and *ogimaag* would consistently delay decision-making until they had consulted with everyone they needed to, often to the frustration of non-Indigenous participants who interpreted delays as “weakness and indecisiveness” (C. Miller 105).

The Canadian officials, Craft notes, “recognized and accepted” these protocols as necessary and chose to wait two days (*Breathing Life* 72). However, assessments of the delays in Simpson’s reporting and *The Manitoban* framed delays not as a gesture of Anishinaabe governance or a consequence of the Canadian officials’ unilateral decision-making, but as evidence of “Indian” recalcitrance and changeability. Simpson ascribed delays to “suspicion

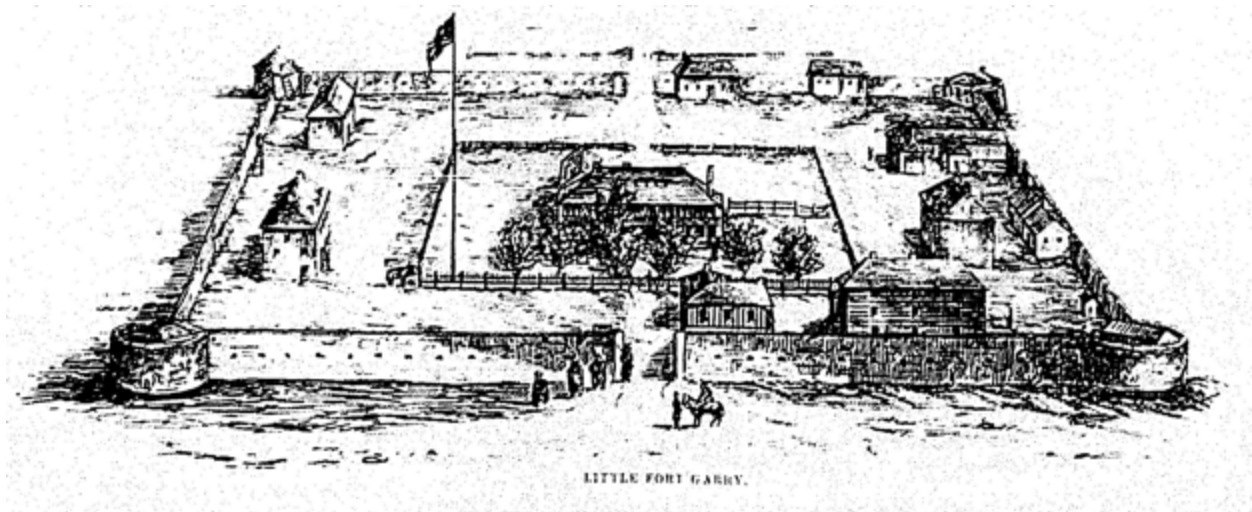


Figure 25: Little Fort Garry. Illustration of Lower Fort Garry facing southeast. The Red River is located on the southeast side of the fort. *The Canadian Illustrated News* [Montreal], vol. 4, no. 10, 2 Sep. 1871, p. 156.

and jealousy” he understood as characteristic of Indians: “Amongst these, as amongst other Indians with whom I have come in contact, there exists great jealousy of one another, in all matters relating to their communications with the officials of Her Majesty” (qtd. in Morris 38). The reporter for *The Manitoban* directed blame for delays squarely on the “Indian, with his usual disregard to times and seasons” who “is evidently in no hurry; so the Commissioner must just wait his convenience. . . . Some of the aborigines are still hanging about the forks of the rivers, and pointedly refuse to attend the treaty” (“The Indian Treaty” [29 July 1871] 2).¹⁹

Further reporting gave some reasons for delay and revealed another layer of Anishinaabe governance. Bands remaining at the Forks had “flatly refused to come at all” on “the ground that the Treaty ought to have been made in their District” (“The Treaty” 2). Simpson reported “only one band of Indians” had arrived at Lower Fort Garry, St. Peter’s

¹⁹ Reporting in *The Manitoban* assumed treaty as a highly desirable, necessary movement toward opening the land for settlement and expressed this perspective in enthusiastic, even eager, tones. Consequently, coverage of “this long-expected Treaty” being delayed reflected this perspective (“The Treaty” 2): “It would appear that, up to Thursday, nothing had been done in the way of a treaty” (“Indian Treaty” [29 July] 2).

band led by Miskookenew Henry Prince, which likely indicated the inter-band partnerships of the previous fall underpinned this action and that the bands gathered at the Forks were not only the bands of that area but were likely joined by others expected at the lower fort (e.g., Portage la Prairie and Roseau bands). Neither Simpson nor the news correspondent dealt in such detail in their written accounts, minimizing what was likely a significant gesture of inter-band collectivity (supported in part by Prince's insistence on waiting).

Coverage in *The Manitoban* did not understand such refusal in relation to Anishinaabe protocols, but this is precisely what they were—assertions of and insistence upon consensus against unilateral decision-making. In this example of treaty pedagogy, the Anishinaabeg at the Forks resisted Archibald's and Simpson's assumptive expectations of their own authority to "govern" the process and determine terms for council, including where to meet, yet the officials either ignored or misrecognised what the *ogimaag* were trying to teach them about holding council, ascribing their actions instead to "jealousy."²⁰

The framing of this treaty moment in settler colonial discourse works on the sanctioned ignorance of Anishinaabe protocols alongside constructions of "the Indian" to facilitate dispossession of Indigenous peoplehood, with its knowledge and practices, toward displacement from their lands and waters. Ignorance (or dismissal) of Anishinaabe councils created space in which notions of Indian "disregard to times and seasons," along with meeting-place, could be named as such and read as further evidence of Indian unsettledness and need for settling. In one sense, such framing erases Anishinaabe council practices; in

²⁰ It is also worth noting that this gesture of spatial resistance asserts *Niizhoziibe*, *Nestawa'ya*, the Forks against Lower Fort Garry (Stone Fort) as the site for council. Although *The Manitoban* frames the matter in terms of the bands centring themselves and their territory, the historical and conceptual significance of the two-rivers meeting place for Indigenous people in Manitoba at least raises the question of what other motivations and kinds of spatial, land-and-waters-relationships were in play (e.g., asserting a significant site of Indigenous meeting and governance against a structure emblematic of colonial governance).

another, the claim to “Indian disregard” also erases the deep land knowledge, including of “times and seasons,” Indigenous people respected and relied on to survive in precisely this place. Through these erasures, Indigenous relationships and claims to the lands they lived in were thematically undermined in narrations of treaty council, aided by emphases on additional notions of their migratory habits and mobility that contributed to a discursive destabilizing of their emplacedness in the land, rendering it tenuous. The correspondent for *The Manitoban* fostered this theme by describing the Anishinaabeg as a tribe “a good deal scattered, occupying strips of the country” between Lake Superior and Shell River whose “hunting grounds” were “within this Province” (“The Treaty” 2). Key word choices and phrasing like “hunting grounds,” being “scattered,” and “occupying . . . strips” minimize the solidity of Anishinaabe relationships to the lands they lived in. Later during the treaty council, Archibald would also rely on such characterizations in his arguments for treaty.

Furthermore, Anishinaabe insistence on meeting at a particular place, the meeting of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers at the Forks, may have been a way asserting its centrality as a site of governance and diplomacy, drawn from its historical and ongoing significance as a place for cultural, relational, and diplomatic gathering. Perhaps Archibald’s attempts to “disperse” them from the Fort and settlement the previous year had not gone unnoticed and were in the background as an added motivation. But, in a moment of asserting their placedness and refusing to be mobile at the behest of Victoria’s representatives, they were called “absentees,” “lingerers,” those who were “still hanging about the forks” (“The Treaty” 2). In one sense, the correspondent’s descriptions proved contradictory, criticizing both Indigenous movement and placedness. In another sense, if Indians were understood to be unsettled and scattered, their refusal to relocate offered another example of the Indians’ (unreasonable) inconsistency and unpredictability. Whether Indians remained in place or moved, their actions were interpreted under the rubric of “Indianness” set by settler

colonial discourse that, with its reliance on tropes of unpredictability and recalcitrance, could reliably read any number of Indigenous expressions and actions in these terms.

* * *

27 July 1871, the Stone Fort on *mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy*, *miskwaagaamiwi ziibi*, Red River

Eventually, everyone did gather at the fort, and over a thousand “men, women, and children” gathered “to be treated with” over 25 July to 3 August 1871 as projected by *The Manitoban*’s correspondent (“The Treaty” 2). The Indigenous people formally participating in the treaty council were mainly Anishinaabeg, with a smaller number of Mushkegowuk participating who had joined the Anishinaabeg at St. Peter’s under the leadership of Peguis (Craft, *Breathing Life* 49). The following *ogimaag* participated with their bands: Ozaawigwan (Portage la Prairie), Ayeetapepetung (Portage la Prairie), Nashake-penais (Upper Fort Garry and Pointes-des-Chênes on the Seine River), Kewetayash (Roseau River region, between Upper Fort Garry and Pembina), Nanawananan (Roseau River region, between Upper Fort Garry and Pembina), Wakowish (Roseau River region, between Upper Fort Garry and Pembina), Miskookenew Henry Prince (St. Peter’s on the Red River), and Kakeka-penais William Pennefather (Fort Alexander).²¹ Other observers included “a considerable body” of Métis people and local settlers who “await[ed] with some anxiety to learn what should be announced as the policy of the Government” (Archibald to Howe, 29 July 1871, 33).²²

²¹ Each of the places identified for the bands at Treaty One should be understood in terms of Indigenous place-practice wherein bands claimed regions or areas in which they maintained different camp and work sites they moved between, often from a main home site. They would spend time at different sites depending on the season, the type of work they were engaged in at the time (e.g., hunting, fishing, trade, harvesting resources, gardening and farming), or people and communities they need to visit, whether relatives, for sharing in work (hunting or work parties), trade, governance and council, getting supplies, etc. Thus, the bands at Portage la Prairie or Fort Alexander need to be understood in the sense of a larger region than contemporary understandings of city limits, and the reserve territories outlined by bands at the treaty council illustrated this regional sensibility.

²² Aimée Craft suggests that the number of Indigenous participants projected in *The Manitoban* may have counted Indigenous men as those to be treated with, which suggests the numbers of Indigenous people may

In preparation for the council, the Anishinaabe and Cree participants camped adjacent to the fort in a semicircle formation of over a hundred tents and lodges, with the lodges of the *ogimaag* located in the centre.²³ The encampment at the lower fort was a larger demonstration of the council meetings held with Archibald the previous fall, demonstrating Anishinaabe governance practices of gathering where, ideally, all the members of a community participated in the council to discuss important issues affecting them all. The spatial protocol of the camp's formation facilitated everyone "hearing the deliberations firsthand" (C. Miller 104), especially since official council sessions were held outside. *The Manitoban's* reporter described the encampment as "a very lively scene":

Most of their lodges are of birch bark, but a considerable number have good tents. Each lodge or tent has a fire in front or inside, where the Indian women are everlastingly baking bread or making tea. Any number of horses and dogs roam through the camp, and along in the afternoons one or more large crowds gathered near the tents . . . ("The Treaty" 2)

This description also alludes to other examples of labour required for governance: materials were gathered for lodges and fires, each lodge needed to be made, each tent raised, horses and dogs cared for, fires tended to, food prepared. These were "the most ordinary of actions," but they were also "significant and meaningful gesture[s]," to borrow an argument from Sherry Farrell Racette—"transformational gestures" that prepared the space, transforming it into a site of council and *Naakgonige* to deliberate critical issues affecting their future and their relationship with white settlers ("Kitchen Tables and Beads" 87).

Although these gestures were integral to the work of council, their appearance in the news coverage minimized Indigenous women's labour and their participation in the work of

have been higher: ". . . more than 1,000 Indigenous men, accompanied by women and children . . ." (*Breathing Life* 48).

²³ The correspondent for *The Manitoban* projected 100 to 120 lodges ("The Treaty" 2).

governance. *The Manitoban's* fleeting references to baking and making tea bely the central involvement of Anishinaabe women in governance, including *Naanaagede'enmowin*, “the art of thinking to come to a decision” on community issues (Simpson, *Dancing* 57; C. Miller 67). Another correspondent for *The Canadian Illustrated News* who sketched the proceedings went further, taking the opportunity not only to render Indigenous women at Treaty One domestic but also sexualize them in a comparison with “modern” (white) women:

It was interesting to wander at evening among the wigwams and study Indian proclivities in their simple home-life. Some of the squaws possess chevelures of raven locks which a modern belle might envy; but here all comparison ceases, for of their further attractions the less said the better. (“The Manitoba Indian Treaty” 162)

As they were “configured through domesticity” and through racialized, gendered assessments of their “attractions,” Indigenous women were discursively separated from and minimized within written accounts of the broader work of council (Stark, “Criminal Empire”). Instead, news correspondents discursively dispossessed Indigenous women of their political authority through limited narrations of domestic activities and appearance.

Any participation women had in the consultations, any discussions conducted on the crucial matters they participated in and facilitated with their creative, intellectual, and physical labour were absent from or minimized in the journalist's account as well as government reports, disappeared from written narratives of the treaty council in a process of discursive dispossession that supported Indigenous peoples' displacement from their lands. As Vanessa Watts argues, as the “voices and thoughts” of women and land were “silenced and then corrupted, the acquisition and destruction of land” could become “all the more realized” (30-31). Gina Starblanket writes, “The extension of settler political authority over Indigenous peoples required the removal or erasure of Indigenous polities,” especially those “dimensions of Indigenous political orders that call[ed] into question settler claims to sovereignty” (447). The “high level of power and authority exercised by Indigenous women”

in many Indigenous societies conflicted with the patriarchal structuring of settler colonial governance (447). Anishinaabe women made up one of the three political classes in addition to *ogimaag* and the brave young men (warriors) whose consent and support were necessary for decisions in Anishinaabe society (C. Miller 66). Through their refusal to “deal with the whole body of people,” as Craft argues, and their insistence on dealing with a small number of spokespeople (assumed male), the commissioners effectively denied women’s political authority and power (“The Role of Indigenous Women”; Starblanket 447).

In other ways, written records of treaty omit or reduce the work of community members in the council process, prioritizing instead the names and utterances of the few leaders who represented their communities in the “official” council sessions and omitting those “informal” council meetings held outside official meetings. Cary Miller notes how decisions involved “much prior caucusing, negotiation, and compromise” as leaders took time to learn different peoples’ opinions and knowledge on a matter and gather “evidence . . . to support their positions in council” (102). Anishinaabeg holding council would often gather days earlier than the official start date to “visit and discuss the issues before meeting formally” (106). After formal sessions ended for the day, deliberation continued as community members engaged in *Naanaagede’enmowin* and *Naakgonige*, discussing the issues around campfires with their leaders (104). While seemingly “informal,” these consultations, Miller argues, “were as important a part of the political process as the formal council itself” (106). Krasowski suggests the Anishinaabeg and Cree at Treaty One did hold such councils leading up to the official meetings and that the record of them was held in oral history rather than the written records by government officials or journalists (59-60).

However, the written records do allude to informal councils held throughout the treaty negotiations. *Ogimaag* and their spokespeople referred to councils they would hold with one another and the rest of their communities. On the third day of the council,

Kamatwakanaanin, speaking on behalf of Miskookenew Prince, stated, “We did not rightly understand why the Reserves were to be made for the Indians, instead of allowing them to choose a Reserve for themselves,” remarking on Archibald’s and Simpson’s unilateral role in making decisions about land (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). Kamatwakanaanin added that “all should work harmoniously” before reiterating that, on the question of reserves, “the Indians wish it to be distinctly understood that they are to have a voice in that alone” (2). George Kasias, orator for Nashake-penais’ band, stated at the close of proceedings on 28 July that “chiefs would consult with each other,” and, on the next day, after being pressured to describe their reserve areas, Kasias invoked the collective discussion by stating, “The reserve is not the question which we intended to speak about. We intended to leave it to the last . . .” (2; emphasis added). In other moments, although expressed or framed in different styles, *ogimaag* and spokespeople demonstrated their connectedness through shared questions and subjects in their speeches.

Further confirmation of the ongoing informal councils came in Archibald’s and Simpson’s practice of two other requisite gestures of council: providing food and tobacco. In a report dated 22 July, Archibald complained about having to “incur a considerable expenditure for presents of food, etc., during the negotiations,” recognizing, at least, the continued necessity of material participation in Anishinaabe and Cree gift protocols as a matter of expediency if not full participation in their significance for his relationship with Indigenous people. “The individual who sought a decision from the council,” Cary Miller writes, “supplied the tobacco and food necessary for their deliberations” (107). During the ceremonies that opened the official council on 27 July, “a sly old brave” offered another instance of treaty pedagogy by telling a story about an *ogimaa* at a past council who shared “the strongest tea” out of “the biggest kettle” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2). Although his story was met with applause and shouts of laughter, its intent also held a

serious purpose. The story communicated “proper hosting,” as Craft argues, with “a clear indication about how the Anishinaabe expected to be treated in the negotiations—as they had been in the past—with provisions for the duration of the negotiations” (*Breathing Life* 78). Later that day, Commissioner Simpson promised to supply tobacco for the bands’ deliberations that evening after the official session ended, thereby facilitating their pipe ceremonies and following the practice of giving “*asemaa* (tobacco) and gifts to secure relationships or when asking something of another” (Craft, *Breathing Life* 77).²⁴ However, the officials did not always hold their responsibilities in mind. Later, on the fourth day of council, Wasuskookoon, spokesperson for the bands between Upper Fort Garry and Pembina,²⁵ had to remind Simpson and Archibald of their hosting responsibilities: “Is it [the Great Mother’s] wish that this day her children should go to the hunting ground to bring in fresh meat?”²⁶ Simpson and Archibald “took the hint” and had food prepared (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). Even so, in his report, Simpson missed the point that whole communities were involved in council and suggested that so many community members gathered, including children, because food was provided (qtd. in Morris 38).

Accounts of later Numbered Treaties often referenced significant opening gestures, such as pipe ceremonies, that would formally begin the treaty councils, but written accounts for Treaty One did not offer any specific reference to them apart from Simpson’s promise to

²⁴ Although pipe ceremonies at treaty councils are often discussed in the context of “official” proceedings, even “informal” or “small discussions involved set rituals” including pipe ceremonies (C. Miller 107).

²⁵ Wasuskookoon was spokesperson for the bands of Kewetayash, Nanawananan, and Wakowish (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). The bands were often identified with Roseau River, but the areas they occupied extended from Pembina to Upper Fort Garry, as described by Wasuskookoon.

²⁶ Wasuskookoon’s timing seems particularly strategic in the context of discussion. Immediately before Wasuskookoon posed his question about food, Simpson and Archibald, through translators, severely criticized the bands’ demands for reserve areas, calling them “preposterous.” Wasuskookoon’s question, then, reads as another moment of treaty pedagogy, asserting council protocol by reminding the officials’ of their hosting responsibilities, and, potentially, of their responsibilities of showing respect and deference.

provide tobacco. As Craft argues, Archibald's and Simpson's participation in these long-standing practices conveyed at least some acknowledgment of how important pipe ceremonies were to Anishinaabeg and the work of council: "The pipe ceremony is conducted to ensure peaceful dealings and to secure friendship among people or between the Anishinaabe and the Creator" (*Breathing Life* 80). Framed as it is by practices of giving thanks, commitments to honesty and peace, acknowledgment of interrelatedness with each other and the more-than-human world, and invoking the Creator as witness to the council, the pipe ceremony worked to also frame governance work in these terms, that is, in *inaakonigewin* and its rhetorics (81). As Elder Fred Kelly puts it, "And so they filled their pipes . . . that's where the Anishinaabe placed his thoughts, his laws, and how they got along" (Cote et al. 31). Elder Victor Courchene of Kakeka-penais William Pennefather's band shares the oral history that the leaders at the Treaty One council did smoke the pipe, and, as they did, "lots of things were talked about" (Hyslop et al. 140).²⁷

Opening gestures that did find their way into the written record continued to assert the Indigenous participants' individual as well as collective political authority through various forms of identification. The treaty council began with dances and preliminary orations, which included the "tea and kettle" hospitality story. "[T]wo orchestras" made up of women and men accompanied different dancing styles ("The Chippewa Treaty" [5 Aug. 1871] 2). The Anishinaabeg and Cree wore their regalia which included "ribbons, feathers, paint and clothing, . . . all the colors of the rainbow," some with bison horns and bear claws (2). Generally, the journalist for *The Manitoban* framed these opening gestures as entertainment, describing the dances as "war dances," orations as "tales of . . . war prowess

²⁷ Elder Victor Courchene's community known as the Fort Alexander band in the Treaty One accounts is known as Zaagiing, Sagkeeng First Nation (Hyslop et al. 212).

and battle wounds,” and the kettle story mainly playing for laughs (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2). Yet, as Cary Miller argues, “[m]ost formal meetings, including those that involved dances and feasts. . . had purposes other than social interaction” or entertainment, for which they were often mistaken by outsiders (177).

Dances, for example, had spiritual significance, at times working as calls for aid by *manidoog* or encouraging the people to bravery (C. Miller 114, 68). Leaders also demonstrated through dances and oration their past successes in other critical moments affecting their people and their ability to persuade and influence people (113). Opening oratories often related Anishinaabe history as a way of reminding “leaders of the living history of which they were a part” and responsible for as “the latest carriers of tradition” whose “decisions would impact the next seven generations” (108-109). Often, *ogimaag* and other leaders would establish their “authority in public by saying how they came to any political, intellectual, or religious authority they claimed to exercise,” which also required “publicly defining the limits of the authority each *ogimaag* claimed” (109). These public performances worked several ways, then, for leaders to identify themselves in relation to their skills and political authority, muster courage for the difficult work ahead of the community, commemorate a community’s history, invoke *manitou* support, or, in the case of the kettle story, continue their pedagogy of treaty relationship and council practice.

The Manitoban’s journalist did not, or could not reflect, detailed story-telling practice of dances and the range of meaningful gesture in the reenactment of personal and collective stories of the community. Similarly, news coverage selectively focused on visual and material signifiers of “Indianness” when describing regalia without commenting on the number of people who would have also worn suiting, dresses, trade and treaty medals, focusing rather on feathers, paint, and, with repeated emphasis, on nakedness or limited

clothing.²⁸ “Some of the chiefs and braves,” the author writes, “were in the most fashionable style of dress—that is, dressed as little as possible; having merely breechclouts on” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2). The journalist also remarked more than once on Ayeetapepetung’s appearance, describing the Portage la Prairie *ogimaa* one day as “naked all but the breech-clout” and another day as “having nothing to wear as usual” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). By focusing on dress and appearance as “Indian curiosity,” the reporter neglected the range of symbolism in different kinds of regalia that connected to animal nations, community labour, the land, Anishinaabe understanding of the relationship between the physical and spiritual, histories of Indigenous-settler diplomacy, and the embodied expressions of political authority.

Such sanctioned ignorance also ignored that these gestures communicated identification and affiliation: who people were, how they conducted themselves individually as well as collectively, their roles, and what guided them in both the quotidian and critical events of life. Ayeetapepetung also carried an eagle’s wing when he spoke at the council, and Nashake-penais wore eagle feathers, signifying their authority and care in exercising it (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 3).²⁹ Ayeetapepetung also wore clay on his body to signify his close relationship and identification with the lands they were discussing (2). Names were dismissed, as when Kewetayash was described as “an unspellable name,” or omitted altogether, and the reporter confused the Mushkegowuk as a branch of the

²⁸ The exception to this was a short description of a woman, the daughter of an *ogimaa*, who wore “a couple of medals,” reflecting the common and longstanding practice of wearing medals for diplomatic events that had been received previously in the history of political engagement with colonists. It is likely other leaders at Treaty One wore medals as well received in trade relationships or from the Selkirk Treaty.

²⁹ The passage describing the *ogimaa*’s dress does not name Nashake-penais, but Kasias refers to him as “my chief.” Elsewhere, the article notes that George Kasias was the spokesperson for “Grand Oreilles,” Nashake-penais (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2-3).

Anishinaabeg rather than a distinct people.³⁰ The complexity of Indigenous peoples, languages, cultures, histories, and names was obscured through narrations written for audiences generally assumed to be white Canadians both in Manitoba and Upper Canada, contributing to “sanctioned ignorance” in settler colonial discourse.

Multiple references, however, to Indigenous modes of opening diplomatic discourse and performance counter their narrations in news coverage and invoke the cosmologies from which they derived. While settler correspondents narrated these actions in relation to their own notions of Indigenous expression, their descriptions, even if limited, indicate the broader conceptual frameworks Indigenous people asserted in preparation for treaty council, showing that this work required thorough-going demonstrations and affirmations of process, leaders’ abilities to hold council, and shaping narrations of how the multiple parties would engage with each other.

* * *

27 July 1871, *asinii waakaa’iganing, asiniwâskahikan*, Lower Fort Garry

Of the several “pow wows” reaching over seven days we need not speak.

—NEWS CORRESPONDENT, “The Manitoba Indian Treaty”

Oratory featured as one of the most important discursive practices in the treaty—or any—council. “Strong oratory,” Cary Miller writes, “was an important leadership skill in a consensus-based society that relied on verbal persuasion and interpreted eloquence as credibility” (87). Oratory was so important that “if an ogimaa feared that his oratory might prove weak, he asked another to speak his meaning for him so that his ideas might have a better opportunity for acceptance” (87). At Treaty One, for example, Wasuskookoon spoke

³⁰ The treaty, the reporter wrote was to be made “with the Salteaux[sic], or Swampies (a branch of Chippewa tribe), and the Chippewa Indians generally” (“The Treaty” 2). The journalist’s conflation was likely based on St. Peter’s Band which by that time included a number of Mushkegowuk (“Swampies”) who had moved into the area and joined the Anishinaabe (“Salteaux,” “Chippewa”) band under Peguis’ leadership.

for Kewetayash, Wakowish, and Nanawananan; George Kasias spoke for Nashake-penais; and Kamatwakanaanin spoke for Miskookenew Henry Prince, although he also spoke for himself. Oratory facilitated and demonstrated *Naakgonige* and speakers' *Naanaagede'enmowin* as participants deliberated their relationship and its future, including what practices and actions, and their attendant principles, would constitute it with regard to land and water relationships and Indigenous-settler relationships, in the moment of council and for the future.



Figure 26: Illustration showing council held near the camp outside the fort. *The Manitoba Indian Treaty*. *The Canadian Illustrated News* [Montreal], vol. 4, no. 11, 9 Sep. 1871, p. 161.

While Simpson's and Archibald's reports of the treaty council tended to summarize and generalize oratory, *The Manitoban's* correspondent provided more detail of speeches and arguments made over the council sessions. However, even with this additional detail, the correspondent omitted and dismissed what were likely important entries in the course of deliberations: "Several chiefs and warriors having spoken with a good deal of flourish and vehemence without uttering anything worth noting—pretty much as members of Parliament sometimes do. . ." ("The Chippewa Treaty" [12 Aug. 1871] 2). As Craft notes, the reporter at times "condensed" speeches into "nondescript passages" or "portrayed them as insignificant," raising the issue of editorializing speeches that were already mediated through translation by the appointed interpreters ("Living Treaties" 14). Krasowski also

notes how, for example, the sixth day of negotiations, while being one of the longest, received “only a single column,” and the last day received “only thirteen lines of text” (60). In these different ways, the written records of treaty, both

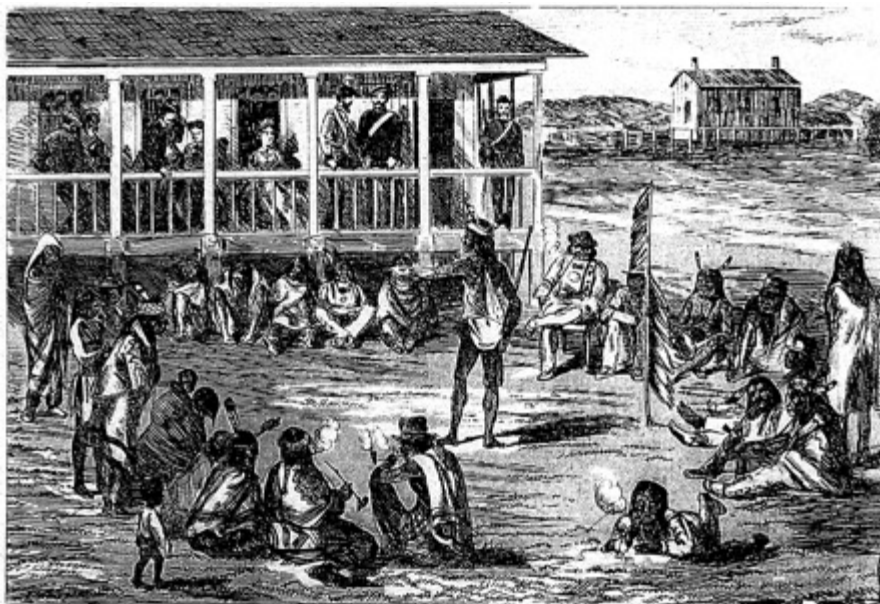


Figure 27: Illustration showing when council moved inside the fort. *The Manitoba Indian Treaty. The Canadian Illustrated News* [Montreal], vol. 4, no. 11, 9 Sep. 1871, p. 172.

reports and news, diminished not only the range of oratorical expressions, in their “flourish and vehemence,” but also the range of arguments, ideas, and stories deployed in reasoning out this critical relationship.

Oratory relied not only on the other framing practices of council but extended what they initiated. Spatial protocol of the camp’s arrangement, process of consultation, and practices of identification were important because they made it possible for community members to follow the deliberations, give their own counsel or criticism, know who their leaders were, and understand why and how they represented the community. The formal meeting of the *ogimaag* and Canadian officials officially initiated oratory at the council for Treaty One. Again, the Anishinaabe and Cree participants demonstrated their inter-band partnership through a collective gesture. The journalist for *The Manitoban* described how the “Indians moved to meet the Commissioner *en masse*” with the *ogimaag* in front, meeting them outside the fort next to the camp (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2). They juxtaposed Archibald, Simpson, and their attendants who incorporated their own regalia

and assertions of governance (fig. 26). Simpson and Archibald both wore uniforms, a colonel's uniform for Simpson and a Windsor uniform for Archibald, and they were accompanied by their *aides-de-camp* and a group of "ladies and officers" who sat with them under an awning ("The Treaty" 2; "The Chippewa Treaty" [5 Aug.] 2).³¹ Later, the council would move inside the fort, as reported in *The Canadian Illustrated News*, where "the Indian braves delivered their harangnes[sic] and had their innings" ("The Manitoba Indian Treaty"). The correspondent made sketches of both scenes inside and outside the fort (fig. 26, 27). Archibald also requested a few troops to be present at the opening of the treaty council, stating in a report to Joseph Howe that "the presence, even of a few troops, [would] have a good tendency" since "[m]ilitary display has always a great effect on savages" (22 July 1871, 13). The visual signifiers of British military dress and the physical presence of Canadian military troops was its own kind of assertion and framing for the oratory that followed—assertion of settler colonial governance and is military power.

Oratory that was recorded extended dynamics and themes that emerged in Archibald's dealings with the Anishinaabeg over the year prior and leading up to the council—namely, assuming the expansionist project and continually re-asserting settler colonial governance and authority. On the second official day of council (first day of open deliberations), Archibald reiterated his assumption of Victoria's rule and governing authority over her Indigenous subjects and her expectations for her "good and true children" as their "Great Mother":

Your Great Mother wishes the good of all races under her sway. She wishes her Red Children, as well as her White people, to be happy and contented. . . . She would like

³¹ The correspondent for *The Canadian Illustrated News* remarked that oratory commenced outside the fort near the camp, but then at some point moved inside the fort where "the Indian braves delivered their harangnes[sic] and had their innings" ("The Manitoba Indian Treaty"). The correspondent made sketches of both scenes inside and outside the fort (fig. 26, 27).

them to adopt the habits of the whites—to till land and raise food, and store it up against a time of want. She thinks this would be the best thing for her Red Children to do[.] (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2)

As in past usage, what evoked for Indigenous audiences Victoria’s responsibilities to them framed by Anishinaabe views of kinship, was rendered as the paternalistic assumption of “Indians” as her subjects under the British Crown. Discursively, Cree and Anishinaabeg were converted into subjects, and with them, the land as the property of the Queen to dispense with as an exercise of her benevolent care toward them:

Your Great Mother . . . will lay aside for you lots of land, to be used by you and your children forever. She will not allow the white man to intrude upon these lots. She will make rules to keep them for you, so that as long as the Sun shall shine, there shall be no Indian who has not a place that he can call his home, where he can go and pitch his camp, or, if he chooses, build his house and till his land. (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2)³²

In this formulation, Indigenous freedom has been premised on their submission first and solely to Victoria’s rule, contrasting, Anishinaabe *inaakonigewin* of love, kindness, and caring, with their obligations, as Craft argues, which invoked an ongoing commitment of care that assumed and retained autonomy (*Breathing Life* 88-89). What was understood in *inaakonigewin* became converted into “dependence and submission,” as understood in Euro-Canadian family relations (90; cf. J. Miller, *Compact* 184).

Building on the premise of Victoria’s authority, Archibald posed that the claims of Indigenous and settler people, whether arrived or incoming, held equivalent status under Victoria’s authority, undercutting Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination by

³² The history of illegal land surrenders or other forms of pressured removal and relocation that followed treaty showed, of course, that promises of “protection” were meaningless. For bands who formed Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, refer to Canada, *Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation 1903 Surrender Inquiry*. For the illegal surrender of St. Peter’s Band/Peguis First Nation, refer to Canada, *Peguis First Nation Inquiry* and Gowriluk, “This First Nation was Swindled.”

claiming “fairness and justice”: “The old settlers, as well as the settlers that are coming in, must be dealt with on the principle of fairness and justice as well as yourselves, your Great Mother making no distinction between any of her people” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2). Of course, Archibald’s notion of fairness belied the ways in which he clearly made distinctions, as the Queen’s representative, between Indigenous people and settlers as demonstrated in his management of the affective economy of Indigenous threat and settler anxiety the previous year.

Even more to the point, however, Archibald did not, or could not, address how his assertions fundamentally contradicted the purpose and reason for holding council in the first place: Indigenous sovereignty and claims to land that directly threatened, and had prevented, settlement. As Stark puts it, the process of achieving “state sovereignty is constituted through the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty” and required treaties to “legitimately acquire lands” and thereby legitimate Canadian settlement (“Criminal Empire”). Treaties, Stark continues, performed a “discursive function” that translated, or converted, Indigenous “visions of living relationships toward a contractual event.” Yet, the process of discursive dispossession was wide-ranging and sustained, as Archibald’s oratory demonstrates, employing a range of arguments that consistently re-shaped Indigenous peoples into subjects and their land into the property of the Crown:

Till these lands are needed for use, you will be free to hunt over them, and make all the use of them which you have made in the past. But when lands are needed to be tilled or occupied, you must not go on them any more. There will still be plenty of land that is neither tilled nor occupied, where you can go and roam and hunt as you have always done; and if you wish to farm, you will go to your own reserves, where you will find a place ready for you to live on and cultivate. (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2)

The relationship he posed relied on assumptions of settler control, protection, unilateral decision-making, and colonial governance structures.

Archibald and Simpson even presumed to tell the Anishinaabe leaders what their expectations should be and how to think about their work in council. They used the phrase “You must not expect” multiple times. What they must not expect are larger reserves than what the government officials have deemed useful, useable, or “enough” for farming. As Simpson stated,

The Government of Her Majesty is perfectly willing and anxious to provide for the welfare of her Indian subjects, as you have heard; but you must not imagine for a moment that in a country such as this with immense cultivable acres, and with white people thronging into it, it is the intention of the Government to allow immense reserves to different bands of Indians. The Government will give to the Indians, reserves amply sufficient. The different bands will get such quantities of land and will be sufficient for their use in adopting the habits of the white man, should they choose to do so. (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2)

Consistent with the theme, Simpson emphasized Victoria’s sovereignty over Indigenous people and re-asserted her authority to make decisions for the Indians based on her and her representatives’ ideas of sufficiency.

Simpson also introduced a theme that both he and Archibald deployed throughout the council, that of the inevitability of settlement and the threat of crisis for Indigenous people who did not accept treaty due to the changing ecology. Again, arguments they made on this theme disavowed settler responsibility for and implication in the crises they used as a persuasion tactic for treaty. By referencing crisis, officials encouraged Indigenous people to adopt new relationship to the land: “. . . even if there was not a buffalo or a fur-bearing animal in the country, you could live and be surrounded with comforts by you and your children forever” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug.] 2). Should the ecology transform, the crisis of that transformation, framed only in terms of its effect on human lives never mind the loss of animal species integral to the ecology, would be ameliorated by Victorian farming methods, as argued by Simpson:

[T]he day will come, when the country is filled up by white people, when the miserable grasses now only to be found in some sections will be replaced by luxuriant cultivated grasses The course to make [the Indians] wealthy, is not to trust in the wild grasses for raising cattle and horses, but to fence in land, cultivate it, and thus get far more easily abundance of hay for their animals. (2).

Settlement was framed as hoped-for and inevitable and, in the face of anticipated ecological loss, offered, according to Simpson and Archibald, amelioration of that loss facilitated by settler colonial decision-making and land relationships.

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28 July 1871, *asinii waakaa'iganing*, *asinîwâskahikan*, Lower Fort Garry

The tenor of Archibald's oratory, however, did not go unnoticed or unremarked upon by the Indigenous leaders, and they asserted—and insisted upon—their own governance and law in response, resisting his attempts to discursively center settler law. However, they did not do so only with oratory but required action. On the third official day of council, Ayeetapepetung “spoke well . . . in a very talkative and vehement manner, constantly flourishing an eagle's wing” in his hands and declared an “obstacle” was in the way, preventing him from responding to “the Queen's words.” Some young men of his band had been jailed, and he wanted their freedom: “I am not fighting against law and order; but I want my young men to be free, and then I will be able to answer. I hold my own very sacred, and therefore, could not work while any child is sitting in the dark” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). In reply, Archibald asked “if [the Indians] were under the impression that they were not liable to the law” (2). The journalist wrote that after “a prefatory flourish about Indian lands” which was not recorded, Ayeetapepetung replied, “Let us finish this Treaty fairly, and then everything will go on in your own way. . . . I am not defying the law, but would wish to have the Saulteaux at present in jail liberated” (2). Archibald finally assented, doing so as a matter of “favor” rather than “right,” after he reiterated Indigenous

subjecthood to Victoria, declaring, “the Queen knew no distinction between her subjects” and for all, whether white or Indian, “the law is the same, he will be punished” (2).

Craft points out the difficulty of ascertaining from Ayeetapepetung’s words his understanding of his peoples’ relationship to settler law, likely British law as applied to Manitoba (*Breathing Life* 75-76). Ayeetapepetung’s men had breached a contract with the HBC and were jailed as a result. Craft suggests that within this context Ayeetapepetung’s affirmation of law could infer a nuanced limitation derived from inter-national relation “in which Indians agreed to enter into a relationship where they would subject themselves to British law,” and in this moment of council, “the issues of jurisdiction over Anishinaabe people was put squarely on the treaty table (77). Whether Victoria’s representatives intended to or not, they recognized “Anishinaabe jurisdiction over their own people” by participating in the “protocol of starting things ‘in a good way,’” which required certain situations to be righted before council was underway (76).³³

Furthermore, Archibald’s response assented, if even indirectly, to Ayeetapepetung’s insistence on his jurisdiction and, thereby, law. Had the attention been given to the “prefatory flourish about Indian lands,” the audience might have understood to some degree an argument about the relationship between Indigenous lands and Indigenous law, which, incidentally, did not rely on the same carceral punishments. In spite of his assertions, Archibald’s action further demonstrated how settler colonial law and governance were in process of establishing themselves in Manitoba rather than being firmly finalized, and treaty councils were sites of contestation and unevenness that brought forward the discursive formations of settler colonial assertions of power and Indigenous people’s

³³ Craft references the Portage La Prairie *ogimaag*’s declaration from May 1871 declaring fines for their people being taken away as important context for this crucial issue being introduced at the treaty council (*Breathing Life* 76).

continued invocations of their own sites and sources of authority and law in resistance to these assumptive notions. Thus, Ayeetapepetung insisted on a public demonstration, a gestural enactment, of Archibald's commitment to the council process and to his relationship with the Anishinaabeg, requiring Archibald to reveal himself and his intentions before they would continue to other important issues.

As *ogimaag* established their authority in public before the whole community, Archibald was also required to identify himself and account for his understanding of who the Anishinaabeg were in turn. To hold council, each party must know the other, with their plans and intentions. *Ogimaag* and their spokespeople asked questions for clarification and greater detail on "what the Queen intended," how others were treated with, what Archibald and Simpson envisioned for reserves, etc. throughout the council ("The Chippewa Treaty" [12 Aug. 1871] 2). However, when Anishinaabe leaders invoked the question of, and obligation for, knowing and understanding each other, Archibald and Simpson often repeated their position, missed the point, or dismissed them entirely.

On the fifth day of council, Miskookenew Prince handed a copy of his father's will to Simpson, to which Simpson replied, "We know all about that will, and recognise you as chief," mistaking the will's sole purpose as confirming Prince's authority ("The Chippewa Treaty" [12 Aug. 1871] 3). Yet, if Simpson had known "all about that will," he would have understood the will had less to do with recognising Prince as chief and more to do with how to conduct their relationship, as Peguis wrote explicitly:

So I beg whoever will . . . see this paper, I hope you will respect my son, as you have always respected me (i.e.) if he follows my steps in conducting himself aright. . . . My son will shew this paper when he sees a strange gentleman, and I hope you will look upon as you would have done to me. When a tree grows, be it ever so strong and large, it rots away gradually and down it goes at last, but through time another young tree shoots forth from there, and as it grows, it gathers beauty and strength . . . Once more I would say, Friends, I have been a good Chief. Everybody has been very kind to

me because they hear the character I bear, and therefore I am not ashamed to ask you a favour, to be kind to my son, as every stranger has done to me. I hope a great many of the Canadian or English gentlemen will see this and try to help my son and advise him how to conduct himself through life. This paper, I hope, will be handed down through many generations in my family, that all may know what life I have led.
(Peguis, Last Will)

Unfortunately, the memory Peguis hoped for was shrugged aside by Simpson, denying the very terms of Anishinaabe diplomacy Peguis called upon that were based on principles of respect, responsibility, and also renewal (Stark, “Respect” 153, 155). In this case, renewal emerged in Peguis’ hope, illustrated by the image of an old tree falling away as a young one grows, that respect and responsibility would move through generations of diplomatic relationship, continuing with his son.

Ayeetapepetung also drew upon the obligation to *know* when he alluded to the issue of the incarcerated men on the opening day of council: “You . . . know me. When you first found this country, you saw me on my property” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug.] 2). Archibald replied he had seen Ayeetapepetung at the Stone Fort last fall, perhaps attempting to clarify Ayeetapepetung’s meaning since Archibald identified Ayeetapepetung’s “property” as being at Portage la Prairie rather than the Stone Fort. Ayeetapepetung replied,

When you first saw me, you did not see anything with me. You saw no canopy over my head—only the house which Creation had given me. This day is like a darkness to me; and I am not prepared to answer. All is darkness to me how to plan for the future welfare of my grandchildren. (2)

On the surface, Ayeetapepetung’s speech seems to evoke Anishinaabe discourse of “pity” to preface a request for help, but in the broader context of his arguments through the council, his speech also conveyed a subtle assertion in the word “property” and reference to the Creator’s gift. “Property” asserts land claim even if the translation does not accurately name

Anishinaabe theories of possession, and, when paired with the reference Creator's gifts and Anishinaabe gift thought, perhaps conveys a state of independence from Archibald's re-framing of Indigenous relationships to land as governable by Victoria and in need of being provided for.

Ayeetapepetung's "darkness" refers not to his own confusion or bewilderment, but to the blocks Archibald himself has put in the way for full understanding and proceeding with council. The first block, of course, was the issue of imprisoned community members. The second, however, was Archibald's and Simpson's ongoing assumptions that Victoria and her representatives knew best what Indigenous people needed, possessed authority to administer Indigenous peoples' relationships to land, and could presume the authority and ability to add to and improve upon what the Creator had already given. Framed this way, questions of identification and appropriate self-understanding in the relationships one is embedded in have enormous consequences for the ability to hold council and move forward in determinations about those very relationships.

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29 July 1871, *asinii waakaa'iganing*, *asinîwâskahikan*, Lower Fort Garry

The following day began with a range of speeches from the Indigenous leaders, which were only briefly covered in *The Manitoban* and, in the moment, dismissed by James McKay, who interpreted for Simpson and Archibald. The journalist recorded McKay as telling the leaders "they had been dealing merely with preliminaries, and it was time to proceed at once to the real business of the treaty," applying pressure for the leaders to detail their respective reserve areas ("The Chippewa Treaty" [12 Aug.] 2). The response was mixed. On behalf of the "Fort Alexander Indians and those from Oak Point Manitoba and the lower district," Kamatwakanaanin obliged and began to outline a reserve area, but he was followed by George Kasias who, after stating they had not planned to speak about reserves, qualified

the area on behalf of Nashake-penais. Wasuskookoon followed on behalf of the Roseau region *ogimaag* with a speech “much more flower than convincing, in support of this tremendous demand” (2).

The pressuring from Victoria’s representatives had created a moment of tension, which Ayeetapepetung brought forward in a “reproach” to those who began naming their reserve areas “before they knew what the white man would offer,” and he added “that he did not yet thoroughly understand the limits of the territory about to be treated for” (2).³⁴ Simpson through McKay “defined the limits of the Province,” but Ayeetapepetung remained attuned to the charged dynamics the officials created and replied to Simpson not on the point of reserve areas, the content of Simpson’s speech-in-translation, but on the point of Simpson’s gestures and expression: “When you got up, you looked at me hard, and if I used any improper language, I did not mean to be insulting. I want, first, to know what you are offering; and then I’ll tell you my offer” (2). In his short address, Ayeetapepetung signalled keen attention to how and what Simpson and Archibald communicated beyond speech, astuteness in council, and recognition of Simpson’s and Archibald’s tactic of trying to exert control in discussion. While Simpson’s feelings are ambiguous, it appears he betrayed something of his frustration and impatience with how the council was proceeding, focused in this moment on the *ogimaa* most willing to directly address the problems that Simpson and Archibald created by their ongoing efforts to shape deliberations. For his part, it seems Ayeetapepetung recognized that Simpson and Archibald believed they held a position of greater leverage and bargaining power, demonstrated by their ongoing attempts to direct

³⁴ Ayeetapepetung’s reproach paired with Kasias’ statement that the leaders had not planned to discuss reserve areas yet also indicate that this may have been an approach to the negotiations the leaders agreed on prior. Read in this way, Ayeetapepetung’s frustration derived not only from his personal feelings on how they might be weakening their bargaining position but also from his peers breaking with the negotiation strategy they had collectively agreed on.

the council and their assumptive arguments about the land. Thus, Ayeetapepetung flipped their assumption back, positioning *himself* as having greater leverage, who should hear what *they* have to offer first, in another refusal of what the officials kept trying to assert.

However, they pressured him again to define his reserve and he finally supplied them with a map, but only after responding to them with even greater strength and directness:

I will tell you what I mean to reserve. When first you [Archibald] began to travel (from Fort William), you saw something afar off, and this is the land you saw. At that time you thought I will have that some day or other; but behold you see before you now the lawful owner of it. I understood you are going to buy the land from me. Well God made me out of this very clay that is besmeared on my body. This is what you say you are going to buy from me. (2)

Not only did Ayeetapepetung communicate how much he understood the certainty Archibald and Simpson felt in their project and remind them again of the reality of their position in seeking *lawful* claim to the land, Ayeetapepetung also countered their understanding of land relationship with his own. As on the previous day, his body was smeared with white earth clay which, as he described, was the clay from which the Creator made him. Evoking Anishinaabe creation stories, Ayeetapepetung highlighted the absurdity of Archibald's and Simpson's presumptions and re-framed "ownership" as being "*made of the land*" (Craft, *Breathing Life* 94). Thus, as Craft notes, the land was kin, a living relative that could not be understood or related to as a thing "in isolation from the Anishinaabe practices of treaty making and relationship building," that did include complex approaches to sharing territory but did not understand these in terms of British property law (98).

Consistent with his approach, Simpson deflected Ayeetapepetung's pointed arguments by expressing his indignance at the reserve areas the *ogimaag* outlined: "If all these lands are to be reserved, I would like to know what you have to sell!" ("The Chippewa Treaty" [12 Aug. 1871] 2). He assumed there was a "misunderstanding as to what the Queen

meant by reserves” and proceeded to explain the reserve areas would be 160 acres for each family of five which “would be amply sufficient to enable the Indians to cultivate the soil and live comfortably” (2). He further bolstered his argument by invoking the looming certainty of settlement as a threat: “The Commissioner . . . strongly urged the Indians, as their friend, to accept the terms offered them . . . terms which they would not get if they refused to make a Treaty, and lingered until immigration came in . . . like a flood” (2).

Building on Simpson’s arguments, Archibald called for a more rational response on the subject of reserve areas:

They [The Indians] might at once and for ever dismiss from their heads all nonsense about large reserves; for they could not and would not be granted. The matter must be looked at by them like men of common sense, who see the Queen trying to save a home for them; if they refuse her offer, it will not be made to them again. (2)

Without acknowledging what the Anishinaabeg had asserted, Archibald invoked appeals to “common sense,” effectively calling into question the leaders’ thinking and bolstering his and Simpson’s position as one of rational authority.³⁵

* * *

31 July 1871, *asinii waakaa’iganing*, *asinîwâskahikan*, Lower Fort Garry

Simpson opened the fifth council day by asking if the *ogimaag* had come to a decision about what they discussed. Miskookenew Henry Prince responded with reference to two objects that connected him to his father’s diplomatic history. He brought out Peguis’ will, and, after it was dismissed, he gave a speech expressing his “strong attachment to the British flag,” which evoked Peguis’ own use of the flag in encounters with traders, missionaries, and settlers. He then continued in his own diplomatic style, saying it seemed the question of

³⁵ News coverage picked up on and reiterated this argument: “. . . the Indians made new and extravagant demands”; “Another meeting and more speechifying—the Indians continuing their extravagant demands as before” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 3).

treaty “would not be brought to a decision,” but he hoped they could all “be candid with one another” and that the Queen would treat them as she had “treated her children in the East” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug.] 2). Simpson expressed his hope for finishing the council in return, but he argued “the delay rested with the Indians altogether” (2).

By acknowledging the treaty would not be decided on and asking for candidness, it almost seems Prince was priming the audience for Ayeetapepetung who, picking up themes from the previous day, expressed his frustrations directly:

I have not given you any right answer yet. True, I am foolish, stupid, blind. But God gave me this land you are speaking to me about, and it kept me well to this day. I live at the end of the Settlement, in a clean place (unsettled); and as I travel, led through the Settlement, I looked on nothing but my property! I saw pieces of land high up (meaning bridges)—these are my property! When I went into the houses by the wayside, those too I considered my property—(laughter). I have turned over the matter of a treaty in my mind and cannot see anything in it to benefit my children. This is what frightens me. After I showed you what I meant to keep for a reserve, you continued to make it smaller and smaller. Now, I will go home to-day, to my own property, without being treated with. You (the Commissioner) can please yourself. I know our Great Mother the Queen is strong, and that we cannot keep back her power no more than we can keep back her power no more than we can keep back the sun. If therefore the Commissioner wants the land, let him take it. (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2)

At once, Ayeetapepetung developed his own arguments from previous speeches while also addressing a range of arguments Simpson and Archibald had put forward: accusations of unreasonableness, constraints for reserve areas, and assertions of the Queen’s authority and the inevitability of settlement. While even allowing for some of their arguments, he reemphasized even more strongly his emplacedness in the land, translated in *The Manitoban* as “property,” perhaps from *daniwin* that means belongings, wealth, riches, but, as Vizenor argues, “cued common interests more than a private and avidious tenure,” in contrast to Archibald and Simpson’s attempts to acquire land (186).

More directly, Ayeetapepetung's speech brought out the paradox of Archibald and Simpson's position in which they "simultaneously affirm[ed] and den[ied] Indigenous proprietary interests in land" (Nichols 32); they pursued Indigenous assent to a land deal, based on Indigenous claims to the land, while also denying Indigenous peoples' claims to that land. Ayeetapepetung's strong statement of claim, then, reveals the absurdity of their position by continually presuming to claim the very thing *under negotiation*. His speech also expands what can be understood as the "darkness" he referred to on the third day of council. Not only had Simpson and Archibald not given him any clear sense of benefit treaty would give his children, thus creating "darkness" on how to "plan for the future," the constant formulations and arguments Archibald and Simpson relied on were themselves confused, full of contradiction that Ayeetapepetung kept calling them to account for. Furthermore, at this point in the council, the confusions and contradictions—and Archibald and Simpson's persistence in them—appeared so thoroughgoing that Ayeetapepetung was inclined to leave council, not perceiving a way to agreement.

This time, Archibald replied deploying the trope of Indian mobility and unsettledness in a theological argument for the inevitability of settlement:

God . . . intends this land to raise great crops for all his children, and the time has come when it is to be used for that purpose. Some hundred years ago he gave the Crees liberty to come into the country, and at that time your grand-fathers were not here, but were wandering on Lake Superior. When the buffalo went west-ward, the Crees went with them; and the Chippewas, finding the land unoccupied, came in and stopped here; but they have no right to the land beyond that. The time has come when this land must be cultivated. White people will come here and cultivate it under any circumstances. No power on earth can prevent it. ("The Chippewa Treaty" [12 Aug. 1871] 2-3)

By emphasizing the Cree and Anishinaabeg (Chippewas) as "wandering," Archibald attempts to destabilize Ayeetapepetung's strong sense of place, converting Indigenous land

relationships as transitory and superficial, and erasing histories of Indigenous treaty-making and land-sharing. Settlement expansion, in Archibald's argument, is inevitable because it is predetermined and providential, the necessary forward movement of human history in which Indians must either participate or find themselves alienated.

Rather than offer an extended speech in reply, Ayeetapepetung worked from the terms of Archibald's own argument and simply asked a question, also on the topic of history: "You say the white man found this country, and that we were not the first Indians in it. What is the name of the first Indian found along the sea coast? (3). If Archibald was going to recount his version of history to justify his arguments, he had better be sure he knows his history. And, perhaps, Ayeetapepetung was further drawing out the absurdity of Archibald's position—of claiming, as a newcomer, greater knowledge of the land and its history. Rather than take his point, Archibald deflected via *ad hominem*, saying with a smile, "he was afraid some evil bird was whispering in council" (3).

In spite of the continued challenges from the Indigenous leaders, Simpson and Archibald continued to reiterate their positions. Simpson issued another warning "the white men would come in and take up land, and that without the treaty the Indian would in the long run be left without any thing to cultivate" (3). So strong was Simpson and Archibald's confidence in their project that later, when asked about basing reserves on family sizes, Archibald replied that, if children got more numerous "they will be provided for further West": "Whenever the reserves are found too small the Government will sell the land, and give the Indians land elsewhere" (3). Again, it did not seem absurd to Archibald that he was already committing lands "further West" that the government had not even begun to negotiate treaties for.

For their part, the *ogimaag* and their spokespeople continued to resist. An elder pointedly expressed the concern many Indigenous people felt by telling a story of his

brother's counsel:

An old Indian from the Lower Settlement came forward and said that his late brother had spoken to him a great deal about the land, on the east side of Red River, and at Netley Creek, urging him to hold it, and not let emigrants, who would come in, dispossess him. (3)

On behalf of Nashake-penais, George Kasias criticized the terms offered as the *ogimaa* could not see how he would be “enriched by them” (3). Wasuskookoon, joined by Kewetayash, Wakowish, and Nanawananan, approached and, after shaking hands with Archibald and Simpson, “harangued the crowd, protesting that he could not live on ten shillings if he were to settle down” (3). He “complained of the insufficiency of reserves” and argued that the support offered was too little for the radical change in land relationship the officials were calling for: “Look . . . at the farmers with all their property; they spent a great deal of money before getting to be as they are. We want the reserve we have asked for and cannot take your terms” (3). After further consultations, Simpson finally threatened to “break up the negotiations unless they came to a close the next day” (3), again taking the unilateral position of setting the terms for council.

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3 August 1871, *asinii waakaa'iganing*, *asinîwâskahikan*, Lower Fort Garry

The following day, Simpson re-emphasized they “had ample time to deliberate—and he wished their final answer, as this would be the last day's sitting” (3). Miskookenew Henry Prince gave a speech in which he picked up the threads from previous arguments of Ayeetapepetung and others:

I would like to have the proposition made, turned over and over before me. How are we to be treated? The land cannot speak for itself. We have to speak for it; and want to know fully how you are going to treat our children. My father settled some of his children in the Indian Settlement. Are you now going to make a reserve for them outside that, or what are you going to do? I cannot see through it. Then again, it is

said the Queen wishes the Indians to cultivate the ground. They cannot scratch it—work it with their fingers. What assistance will they get if they settle down? Again, I wish to say that nearly the last words my father said before dying were—There is the line—keep it; and we want to retain it. (3)

Prince's repetition of themes, and even phrases, from previous speeches showed how councils outside official proceedings continued as the Cree and Anishinaabeg worked out their positions and responses to Victoria's representatives. He referred again to the question of how their children would be affected, the ongoing lack of specificity from the officials, and overall insufficiency of the treaty terms. As Krasowski argues, Prince drew upon his knowledge of the Selkirk Treaty, his own father's history of asserting Indigenous claims, and his understanding of the government's negotiating tactics to challenge Simpson and Archibald (Krasowski 63). Although often framed in more conciliatory ways than other orators like Ayeetapepetung, Prince also questioned the terms of negotiation, and through the combined efforts of the leaders in council, they were able to negotiate increased terms around farming assistance and other terms. Krasowski argues that, "although the text of Treaty One was influenced by earlier treaties, many of its provisions were unique and genuinely reflected the negotiations" (Krasowski 63, 72).

The oratory throughout the treaty council showed simultaneous processes of ongoing Indigenous insistence on their sovereignty and self-determination and the emerging assertions of settler colonial governance in the prairies. Oratory, and the different futures it anticipated, showed the project of asserting settler expansion as a highly contested one, the terms of which were acutely challenged at various points. Traces of Indigenous peoples' resistance persisted in the range of expression recorded, both verbal and gestural. On the sixth day of council, bands threatened to leave altogether in another demonstration of insistence on *their* authority to set the terms—and limits—of council.

* * *

On the seventh day of council, the *ogimaag* signed the treaty document. James McKay had persuaded the bands to remain another night, “promising that . . . he would try and bring the Commissioner and Indians closer together” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 3). What McKay said as they held council that night goes unrecorded, but whatever it was presumably led to signing the next day.

However, the treaty remained contested, almost immediately after its signing. As Krasowski argues, the “most controversial addition to the text of Treaty One was the surrender clause,” which include the terms “cede, release, surrender and yield up” (72). To what extent this was communicated to the Cree and Anishinaabeg is not clear, but it is highly unlikely, based on their history with the Selkirk Treaty and their arguments throughout the council, that they agreed to surrender (73; cf. Craft, *Breathing Life* 102-103). Oral history of so-called “outside promises” demonstrated the persistence of collective, intra-community memory and process of diminishment not only in written accounts of treaty council but the treaty text itself. What were called “outside promises” had “actually been made during the negotiations” (Krasowski 78). Indian agent Molyneux St. John reported in a letter to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs what had happened:

When Treaty No. 1 was in process of negotiation the spokesmen of the several Indian Bands enumerated the gifts and benevolences which they required from Her Majesty’s Representatives in return for the surrender of the Indian Country. Some of these were accorded; some refused, but in the natural desire to conclude the Treaty, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and Mr. Commissioner Simpson assumed, as it afterwards proved, too hastily, that their distinctions and decisions were understood and accepted by the Indians. . . . So the Treaty was signed, the Commissioner meaning one thing, the Indians meaning another. (1-5)

Unsurprisingly, St. John ascribed the omissions to Archibald and Simpson’s “haste” to conclude the treaty and their assumptions that they had been fully “understood and accepted.” St. John added that only a “short time” after the proceedings, it “became evident

that there was some misunderstanding,” and Simpson, Archibald, McKay, and St. John signed a memorandum detailing those things “severally and collectively understood” to have been promised “but not mentioned in the Treaty” (5-6). He acknowledged that the list “by no means covered the understanding of expectations of the Indians,” and from the time of signing treaty in 1871 to the time of writing his letter in 1873, he and other Canadian representatives had not “visited any band, parties to that Treaty, without the untrustworthy nature of the Commissioner’s and Governor’s promises being thrown in our teeth” (6-7).

St. John further noted the range of refusal and resistance the bands demonstrated subsequent to signing treaty. In the summer of 1871, the Pembina and Portage Bands refused their annuities, calling for fulfillment of the promises (6-7). When he visited the St. Peter’s Band, the “Indians . . . were loud in their complaints” and kept St. John “for six hours in discussion with their Chiefs and spokesmen before they could be pacified and persuaded to accept their annuity” (8). St. John related that Indigenous signatories continued to show their shared knowledge of what had transpired and been agreed upon at the council, and they strongly asserted their shared memory repeatedly to Indian agents:

There is no difference of sentiment amongst [the Indians] on this point; however remote they may be from one another, their demands and assertions are alike; in every case the cry has been the same and there is not a shadow of a doubt that when they left the Grand Council at the Stone Fort, they were firmly impressed with the idea that the demands which they had made had been, with few exceptions, granted by the Queen’s representatives. (9)

Indigenous peoples’ anger at the failure of Victoria’s representatives to enact what they had promised was persistent, voluble, and accompanied by actions of refusal or delay that sought to remind Victoria’s representatives that theirs was “a substantive agreement . . . to enter into a relationship of mutual assistance and care” (Craft, “Living Treaties” 6). They had negotiated from the priority of “*mino-bimaadiziwin* (good life) for themselves, their

children, generations to come, and all people” (6), and when their treaty partners contravened the terms of their council, they demanded a renewal—in action as well as word—of respect and fulfilling responsibilities. They demanded that the work of *Ago’idiwin* be taken seriously in ongoing acts of “bringing together.”

At one point, they “enlisted the aid” of John Schultz, a local Member of Parliament, who wrote to the Secretary of State communicating their frustration and expressing his support of sending a delegation from the bands to Ottawa (Daugherty). “The Indians,” Schultz wrote, “urgently wish this themselves” (Letter to Howe [23 Sep. 1872] 7).

Commissioner Simpson rejected the request, giving his reason in a letter to Howe:

I have but to say in reference to this, that if such a course was permitted, the authority of the commissioner and agents throughout the Indian country would be entirely destroyed, and the Department would be subjected to endless applications from Indians for receptions in Ottawa. (12 Dec. 1872)

In spite of Simpson’s protectionist strategy, the petitions continued. As they had done before, Kewetayash, Nanawananan, and Wakowish addressed a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor, this time Alexander Morris:

[T]hey don’t follow the agreement at all. [I]t is not for three dollars a head that I would have sold my land. I didnt[sic] sold neither signed the treaty before they had promised me what I asked but now they don’t even give us enough to eat. . . . Now we all the chiefs want our rights of the treaty. . . . Now we ask your honor to give us what they have promised us. (30 Sep. 1874)

After years of controversy and repeated petitions, the government finally addressed the matter in 1875 through an order-in-council that acknowledged the “outside promises,” committing to some but not others and calling for Indigenous people to abandon further claims in the matter (Krasowski 83-84).

Through the negotiations for Treaty One, Indigenous people continually had to address the challenge of discursive reconfiguration, both of themselves and their

relationships to land, that emerged in government reports in the year leading up to treaty and persisted in written accounts of the treaty process. Settler colonial discourse diminished the force and complexity of their expressions, converting them in various ways through tropes, erasures, generalizations, and other discursive moves into “Indians” who could circulate within settler justifications of expanding the Canadian nation-state. Even so, the presence of Indigenous peoples’ varied assertions in these records left traces of their resistance and its array of expression in oratory, writing, performance, gesture, objects, and symbol. Their arguments insisted on both narrating their epistemologies of relation and directly challenging Canadian officials’ assumptions and dismissals, leaving records of Indigenous deliberation that continue to trouble their colonial frames.

* * *

June 2022, *maskotêw kapâtowinihk*, *mashkode onigamiing*, Portage la Prairie

As I flip through Collier’s local history, I pause on a map showing the network of Indigenous trails spreading through the town I grew up in (fig. 28). They extend outward, following the paths of rivers, reaching outward toward the lake. Collier notes that the trail following the Assiniboine river, stretching from Winnipeg to as far as the Qu’Appelle Valley in Saskatchewan, came to be named after Ozaawigwan, “Yellowquill Trail” (5). She adds, portions of the trail remain in the land, some stretches “well-travelled,” some closer to the river’s bank “only mud holes,” others now “gravelled thoroughfares” (6). Then, Collier adds a remark I can’t stop thinking about: “We also learned that although the Yellowquill Trail passed through property which became privately owned, the landowners could not close their gates to the travelling Indians. This trail belongs to them” (6).

I feel the meagreness of “This trail belongs to them,” but I also feel something else—a slight shift in energy, tentative amusement, an inner feeling of reaching. Even after displacement to reserves and increasing confinement by legislation, racism, and ongoing

narratives of their dispossession, when Ozaawigwan and his people, even generations after, used their trails, moving across the land, no one could (or would) stop them, even if they were fenced or gated. They kept re-wearing their paths, leaving the presence of their bodies by continued footfall, asserting their place in the land—more entries in the history of Indigenous assertion—*here*.

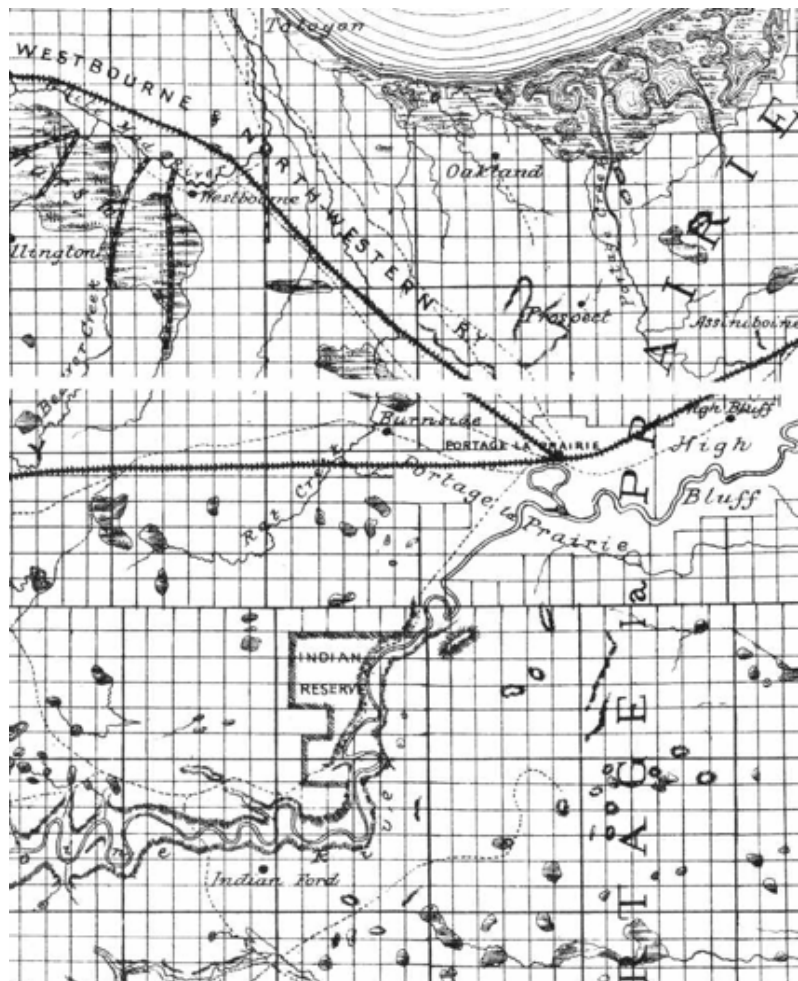


Figure 28: Edited detail of a map of Portage la Prairie referenced in Collier's book. Dotted lines show Indigenous trails that cross the grid. *Map of the Province of Manitoba, Canada, Winnipeg, J.F. Ruttan and Co. Real Estate Agents, 1882.*

Conclusion

Desire. . . compels us to imagine the possible in what was written as impossible; desire is haunted.

—EVE TUCK AND K. WAYNE YANG (235)

I have gotten, on occasion, too close to the materials I study.

I am the materials I study.

—MATTHEW JAMES WEIGEL, “List of Rules I Have Broken in the Archive”

Throughout this project, I have tried to offer a re-thinking of what was expressed in nineteenth-century settler records of Cree and Anishinaabe leaders and how we understand Indigenous discourse through a practice of what I have described as reading for different discursive environments in a broader (discursive) ecology. My approach of trying to attend to various kinds of interrelation in and around these texts emerged from my own sense of involvement within this broader discursive ecology through time and in relation to the places I narrate. Thus, my notion of discourse as enmeshed with place, with its various energies and exertions within it, grew into a more contextualized experience of working to be in relation—to places, texts, people, narratives—in order to attend to them closely and possibly learn from them.

The particular features of my selected literary archive also served as provocation through the sense of trouble I felt in trying to read for Indigenous voice in records and archives that often felt very containing. This trouble emerged from worries I felt and feel about re-inscribing settler colonial tropes of Indians in their various iterations. In a way, acknowledgment of these aspects became an important part of my reading practice, not in an end in itself, but as an implication of something else, of *more*. But first, I began with trying to name the trouble, often felt as grief or anger or weariness, followed slowly by emerging language to describe what began in the realm of feeling, of affect, and bring it into a kind of narration. Then, when these layers had been narrated, I would return again and

read for other possibilities and traces of the assertion or persistence of Anishinaabe and Cree people and their philosophies.

Approaching texts as part of discursive environments enabled, then, reading for what texts show, what can be considered *there* or present, but in another sense, it also led me beyond and around the texts for the webs of reference and signification they were, are, or could be in relation with. In this iteration of my project, I tried to read for a range of discursive forms, both alphabetic and not, relationships to embodiment and land, and various connections to Nêhiyaw and Anishinaabe thought. This approach to reading was also a way of trying to read more expansively, especially for Indigenous expression, and to do so with strength and without accepting settler discursive frames or narrations as given. However, as Niigaanwewidam Sinclair notes, interpreting Indigenous discourse, as in the “power within words like Winnipeg” and the knowledge and frameworks they evoke, is “not easy; it’s difficult, intellectual work—like trying to form a relationship with knowledge itself” (“The Power” 207). In the case of my literary archive, challenges and difficulties remain. I do not deny their ongoing potential for marking grief and loss, but neither am I willing to understand them only by their “logics of pain” (Tuck and Yang 231). I wish neither to deny these archives’ contestations and trouble, nor do I claim to recover, overwrite, or overtake them anew. Rather, I have tried to offer a more robust consideration of what the possibilities are for reading Indigenous discursive formations in settler-recorded texts to push beyond the containment of settler discourse, without claiming to overtake it, and tease out the multiple, complex dynamics that engage Indigenous discursive practice, beginning from the assumption we cannot take the narrative frames, and their representations of Indigenous peoples, as presented.

I now understand such desire as emerging from a kind of refusal—of settler frames and their logics as offered, narrated, and effected in Indigenous life. My practice of reading

seeks to refuse the frames, even as I account for them, in order to read through and past them, against the “tel[os] of colonial future,” to consider what traces there were and are of other futures “[r]ooted in possibilities gone but not foreclosed,” refusing the narrative that “colonization was inevitable and has a monopoly on the future” (Tuck and Yang 243). In my critical writing, then, I try to be with the difficulty as a means of exposing the contingencies in settler colonial logics and, without ignoring the problematics of my archive and its afterlives, through reading and writing, to trace and mark creative agency, layering the possibilities of different forms of relation, different futures posed. Tracing Indigenous discourse and its interconnections, I suggest, is a way of emphasizing and historicizing them not only in the past but in how they continue to assert themselves now, even in the midst of ongoing settler colonial assertions.

For example, my reading of treaty discourse elaborates how during the Numbered Treaty process, settler jurisdiction was asserted discursively over Indigenous legal orders, sovereignty, and governance. This reading finds resonance in James (Sa’ke’j) Youngblood Henderson’s argument that Canadian approaches to reconciliation, jurisdiction, law, and treaty continually prioritize and rely upon settler legal understandings and frameworks, showing the continuing problem of how settler colonialism continues to re-centre itself. Rather, Henderson argues, constitutional reconciliation—the reconciling of Canada’s constitution with Indigenous law and sovereignty understood as “equal and unassimilable” to the laws of Canada (118)¹—requires “displacement and decolonization of colonial values and institutions,”² getting beyond “Eurocentric thought and method” to “develop a narrative

¹ The Supreme Court of Canada, Henderson writes, “has affirmed Aboriginal sovereignty as the pre-existing and continuing Aboriginal legal traditions central to Aboriginal and treaty rights,” existing as “independent sources of sui generis constitutional rights and powers” (120).

² This process entails, according to Henderson, “a reformation of Canadian law, morals, values, scholarship, and memory” (123).

of the future that centres Aboriginal peoples” (123). Such a process would require the Crown to relinquish its position in “constitutional litigation” that relies on continued acceptance of “established conventions and practices developed in the colonial era” (121). Rather, the Crown’s “colonial privileges, conventions, and institutions cannot be the controlling source of the future of Canada,” requiring also the Crown and public learning from and being challenged by, in other words, reconciling themselves to, Indigenous “cosmologies, sensibilities, and legal traditions” (123). My discursive attention highlights how processes of recentring settler colonial frames occurred at the outset of treaty negotiations, connecting Henderson’s argument about law with my own elaboration of the kinds of Indigenous legal and political discourses that were dismissed during the Numbered Treaties, the very things Henderson suggests Indigenous people will “have to rely on” to continue rebuilding their “sovereignty, territories, knowledge, and heritage” (123). While such connections may need to be elaborated more fully and differently, depending on the field and audience (Henderson’s approach is legal and jurisdictional, mine is literary), my approach to discursive ecology suggests the generative potential for reading across fields, across discursive environments, linking and layering knowledge to bring out different correspondences that thicken our understanding of Indigenous thought, law, sovereignty, and history and their discursive, rhetorical dimensions.

It is also my hope that reading for discursive ecology can help generate projects that also continue stretching beyond the Indigenous-settler frame to centre even more strongly Indigenous networks of communication, negotiation, diplomacy, and kinship. While my current project retained as its focus Indigenous-settler dynamics with Nêhiyawak and Anishinaabeg, gesturing toward Indigenous inter- and intra-community interactions and relation as they emerged, possibilities remain for reading even more fully the range of Métis, Nakota, Dakota, and other Indigenous discourses alongside one another, considering,

for example, how they might conceive of and express relationality in related or divergent ways. Tracing the discursive ecology also signals connections across archives, potentially bringing Indigenous prairie literary studies into closer conversation with Black prairie literary studies and its archives, as documented by Karina Vernon, for shared discussions that continue to reimagine and re-narrate the prairies and its discursive genealogies beyond “the timeless, homogeneously unraced microcosm of the Canadian regional imaginary” (3).

My continual return to landed terms of “ecology” and “environment” is also a discursive reminder to help me read for the range of non-alphabetic forms, to centre land, water, and place, to attend closely to embodiment, not to turn away from writing but to exercise it as a practice of relation with land. I am interested, for instance, in kinds of reading that centre place, embodiment, and material objects as Indigenous discourse in addition to alphabetic texts, and in practices of writing that foster different kinds of embodied memory, territory, ways of being in and with place and its people, as they have begun to do in this project.

As I described elsewhere in the project, my practice of reading, as a way of being with these discourses, was born from a desire to be in relation with Indigenous histories, literary genealogies, and knowledge. The provocations I felt along the way emphasized this desire and its expectations for different ways of reading and, therefore, different ways of relating. What I have been describing as “provocations” were moments of first-felt resistance to the frames as presented, encountered, initially met, and the idea that something *else* must be going on, that there is *more* both within and beyond the frame. Thus, attending to the “feltness” of the work is another way of responding to the inheritances of and connections with the discursive ecology and its changes over time in response to places, archives, texts, names, etc., again, not to eradicate difficult feeling, but to consider what it produces and what it also links with. My affective attention reflects somewhat Dian

Million's concept of "felt knowledge" that accumulates through the "desire to feel/link" different experiences, stories (32, 31). We can closely engage with these stories, derived from felt knowledge, Million suggests, interpreting them in relation to the "discursive relations of our times" (33).

In my writing, I have chosen at times to work more by juxtaposition rather than explication in connecting entries of my experiences of reading and creative entries with critical readings of my literary archive. Partly, this approach has been a way of reflecting in writing the sense of adjacency I feel in reading and trying to respond to the work alongside it, not to overtake it but to signal different ways of relating to it in different moments. My approach of "writing adjacently" finds correspondence in Dylan Robinson's discussion of "apposite methodology" in which forms of writing can "share space alongside or move in relationship with another subjectivity," as expressed in creative works, through a process of "writing with," side-by-side or alongside, rather than always "writing about" (81). Apposite writing, Robinson suggests, can convey experience with art and discourse (Robinson's focus is music) as "an encounter between subjectivities" of the creator, audience, the work itself, writer, reader, as well as space, space in which the work is experienced and space-as-medium by which the work operates (page, screen, etc.) (80). Thus, this approach understands the "nature of proximity between subjects" as intersubjective and relational but without assuming a single approach (82). Apposite writing may convey "intimacies" of the work's presence, "distance," and "oscillations between intimacy and distance" (82). Like Robinson's concept of apposite writing, my approach of writing in adjacency to archives is an effort to show feltness, in proximity, distance, and oscillation, without, hopefully, imposing it. Rather, I want to signify *a way of feeling* history and discourse, with their openings and blockages, that will have different registers, find different forms of expression for other readers and writers, writing to be in relation to the archive and its significations,

not to claim ownership of them, but to resignify them again (Antwi 142).

I was reminded of how so many Indigenous poets, artists, writers, thinkers continue to find ways of being in relation to and re-signifying our histories, literary genealogies, archives, and cultural belongings when I was invited to write in relation to Tanya Lukin Linklater's art exhibition *Inner blades of grass (soft) inner blades of grass (cured) inner blades of grass (bruised by weather)* in the summer of 2024. Lukin Linklater's artistic practice is itself often an exercise in "being with" (Hopkins 1), asking, and then responding in a range of media, how she can be in relation to un-repatriated cultural belongings, like a gutskin parka, Sugpiaq knowledge and methods of making, colonial history, and particular geographies as Indigenous space and place. Through her art, as Candice Hopkins describes, Lukin Linklater creates new processes of being with older objects in order to produce new relationships with them as a means of possible repair, especially when cultural belongings are separated from the communities that made them (2). As I wrote in relation to Tanya's exhibit, I kept returning to the idea of adjacency as a way of respectfully engaging it and responding, not to claim comprehensive knowledge of it, but to honour its subjectivity and also claim space for myself to respond from my bodies of knowledge and realms of experience, honour those things brought up for me in relation to her work without imposing them on it, and think about correspondences without falling into conflation. This process of engagement also emerged from our prior relationship and shared, but also different, investments and knowledge of Indigenous histories and the ongoingness of our contention with them as Indigenous people. Her attention to matter, the body, different forms of media in her art re-energized my attention to the dynamic range of Indigenous creative expression and the ways we continue to re-layer, -form, and -frame our genealogies through it and do so in ways that help us reclaim older forms of expression. The following poem was written in response to her work . . . *the ongoing storms of colonialism, weather*

patterns that weather us. (2024) as a way of honouring how creative expression can form new relations across time and space as we engage in the different histories and places that engender us.

* * *

here is a sacred gift:

when water bends wood

when hands form clay

when shell edge gives

when peel scrape write

 stitch smoke carve

 weave slice shake

 paint steam burn

 mark cut smear

when Ayeetapepetung, covered in white earth, waved *migizi's* wing at treaty 1

and said:

When you came here you thought you would have this land some day or other; I understood you are going to buy the land from me. Well, gizhe-manidoo made me out of this very clay that is besmeared on my body.

This is what you say you are going to buy from me.

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Glossary

Indigenous Language Terms

ANISHINAABEMOWIN (OJIBWAY)

aaniin: greetings!, hello!; or how?, in what way?, why?

Aanjigone: “the idea that one needs to be very, very careful with making judgments and with the act of criticism” (Simpson, *Dancing* 54)

Agō’idiwin: treaty; bring together (Hyslop et al. 177; Cote et al. 106)

Agoo’idiwin: treaty; bring together (Craft, “Living Treaties,” 5n12)

agwaa’amaazo: s/o comes ashore singing

aki: earth, land, ground

anima’amaazo: s/o goes away singing

animaapi: s/o goes away laughing

animishimo: s/o dances away

babaama’amaazo: so goes about singing

babaamaapi: s/o goes around laughing

babaamishimo: s/o dances about

bagamaapi: s/o arrives laughing

bagijigan: an offering, presentation, gift (Sinclair, *Nindoodemag* 18)

bawaajiganan: dreams, visions

bekaa: hold on!, slow down!, wait!

biijishimo: s/o comes dancing

biskaabiiyang: to look back, process of “returning to ourselves” (Simpson, *Dancing* 49-50)

daniwin: riches, property, belongings

dibaa’imowinan: personal stories (Simpson, *Dancing* 46n58)

doodaemiwiwin: totems (Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* 20)

doodem(ag): totem(s), clan(s)¹

gaganoonidiwag: they talk to each other, have a conversation

gautawaewauwissoowin: providing the necessities (Johnstons, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* 20)

Gdoo-naaganinaa, *Gidonaaganinaa*: Our Dish (Simpson, “Looking After” 39n1; Corbiere, “Gidonaaganinaa” 22; cf. Simpson, *Dancing* 117n161)

gichi-manitou, *gichi-manidoo*: the creator, great spirit

gizhaudauwissoowin: safe guardianship (Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* 20)

¹ While *doodem* appears here as an independent noun, this is an adapted form for writing in English. In Anishinaabemowin, *doodem* is a dependent noun always accompanied by a personal prefix indicating possession (whose *doodem*). Refer to Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, 28n2. Cf. Sinclair, *Nindoodemag*.

kikinoomaugaewin: teaching (Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* 20)
manitou, manidoo: spirit, power; *manidoog*: spirits, powers
mawadisidiwag: they visit each other
migizi: bald eagle
mikinaak: turtle
mino-bimaadiziwin: life lived well with longevity, good health, freedom from misfortune (C. Miller 25)
misaabooz: jack rabbit
Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan: the Dish with One Spoon (Jacobs and Lytwyn, 192)
Naakgonige: “to carefully deliberate and decide when faced with any kind of change or decision” (Simpson, *Dancing* 56)
Naanaagede’enmowin: “the art of thinking to come to a decision” (Simpson, *Dancing* 57)
naundiwiwaewin: healing (Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* 20)
nimiigwechiwendam: I am thankful, grateful; acknowledging gifts received
nindoodemag: my/our totems, clans (Sinclair, *Nindoodemag* 64)
ogaa: walleye
ogimaa(g): chief(s)
ogimauwiwin: leadership (Johnston, *Anishinaubae Thesaurus* 20)
onda’amaazo: s/o comes from a certain place singing
ondaapi: s/o comes from a certain place laughing
Tibamagaywin: treaty; an agreement of exchange (Craft, “Living Treaties,” 5n12)
wiikondiwag: they feast with each other
wiingashk: sweetgrass
zaagi’idiwin: love, mutual love
zagimekaa: many mosquitoes
zhawenjigewin: unconditional love, blessing, mercy, kindness

NÊHIYAWÊWIN (CREE)

âcimisowin(a): story (stories) about oneself/autobiography (autobiographies) (Reder, *Autobiography* xi)
akotâpân: travois, load sled
aniskwâcimopikêwin: the “act of interconnecting stories together” (McLeod, “Introduction” 14n28)
itamahcihowin: health
kâ-kîwâtisi: He who is orphaned
kakakiwatcihotcik: Homeless (Fine Day and Mandelbaum, “Interview #26” 1)
kakiwticicik: Parentless (Fine Day and Mandelbaum, “Interview #26” 1)

kihci-okimâw: great chief

kitimâkêyihcikêwin: compassion, pity

kitimâkisi: (you) be pitiable now

mâhtâhitowin: giveaway feast, potlatch

manâcihitowin: mutual respect, veneration

manâcihitowin: treating each other with care and respect

manâtisiwin: being respectful

manitow: spirit, spirit being

mêkinawêwin: giving gifts, presents; a gift give-away

ninanâskomon: I am thankful, I give thanks; acknowledging gifts received

nêhiyawî-itâpisiniwin: Cree worldview, Cree thought (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 138; Beeds, “Remembering” 61)

nêhiyawî-mâmitonêyihcikan: Cree consciousness (Beeds, “Remembering” 61)

nîsôhkamâkêwin: assistance, support, backing someone

oca-kitostamakew, osâkitôstamakêw: camp crier (Mandelbaum, *The Plains Cree* 109); one who cries or announces for the people²

okihcitâw(ak): warrior(s); worthy young provider(s) (Beeds, “Remembering” 62)

okihcitâwiskwêwak: woman warriors

okimâhkâniwiwin: chieftaincy, being a chief; the act of being a chief

okimâskwêw: woman who is boss/chief, queen, woman of high position; older woman “rich with relatives” (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 47, 103)

okimâsis: little chief, boss

okimâw(ak): chief(s), leader(s), boss(es)

osâkitow: camp crier, announcer

otôtêmiwêwin: friendship

pawâkan: spirit helper, dream spirit

pêyâhtakêyimowin: peace

wâhkôtowin: relationship, kinship relations, the laws of relationship

wîhkaskwa: sweetgrass

CAYUGA

Deyohahâ:ge:: two roads (Hill and Coleman 340)

Tekani teyothata'tye kaswenta: Two Row Wampum belt (Hill and Coleman 343)

² Mandelbaum's spelling seems to combine *osâkitow* and *-ôstamakêw* with additional emphasis on the role's communal responsibility to the people. Refer to *nipôstamakêw* (s/he dies for people) or *nikamostamakêw* (s/he sings for people) in *itwêwina: Plains Cree Dictionary* or Wolvengrey, *Cree Words* for comparison.

KANIEN’KEHA (MOHAWK)*Kayanerenkó:wa*: the Great Law of Peace (Williams 1)*Teioháte Kaswenta*: two row wampum belt [“two paths” wampum belt] (Williams 1)*Tsioneratasekowa*: tree of peace [white pine] (Debicki 239)

* * *

Names: Places

The following place names are ordered by the first name used in the project, either Nêhiyawêwin or Anishinaabemowin. Unless otherwise indicated, Nêhiyawêwin names are from *itwêwina: Plains Cree Dictionary* and *nêhiyaw masinahikan: Online Cree Dictionary*, both of which heavily rely on Arok Wolvengrey’s valuable resource *Cree: Words*, and Anishinaabemowin words are from *The Ojibwe People’s Dictionary* or *Nishnaabemwin: Odawa and Eastern Ojibwe Online Dictionary*.

amiskwaciy-wâskahikan**(Nêhiyawêwin)****Fort Edmonton****(English)**

The literal meaning of the Nêhiyawêwin name *amiskwaciy-wâskahikan* is “Beaver Hills House” (Wolvengrey 344) or “Beaver Mountain House” (LeClaire et al. 257). The area where Edmonton is now located was also named by Nakota and Niitsitapi Blackfoot, and “[i]t is possible too that the fort was known by other names as well, in languages which have yet to be revitalized” (“Origins of Naming in Edmonton”).

asinii-bwaan ziibi**(Anishinaabemowin)*****asinîwipwât-sîpiy*****(Nêhiyawêwin)****Assiniboine River****(English)**

The Assiniboine River flows eastward toward the Red River in Manitoba. Its name derives from the common exonym for the Nakota, likely from Anishinaabemowin *assinii-* meaning “stone” and *bwaan* for “Dakota,” “Nakota,” or “Sioux” (Manitoba Conservation 14). One 1916 source notes that the river had also been called the Beaver River (14). So, alternate names could be *amisko-sîpiy* (Nêhiyawêwin) or *amik ziibi* (Anishinaabemowin).

asinii waakaa’iganing**(Anishinaabemowin)*****asinîwâskahikan*****(Nêhiyawêwin)****Stone Fort, Lower Fort Garry****(English)**

Council for Treaty One was held at Lower Fort Garry on the Red River, MB, and it was and is often referred to as the “Stone Fort.” The literal meaning of *asinii waakaa’iganing* is “stone house,” and I borrow the name from Elder Victor Courchene, a member of Kakeka-penais William Pennefather’s band at Fort Alexander (Hyslop et al. 139).

kâ-têpwêwi-sâkahikana**(Nêhiyawêwin)****Qu'Appelle Lakes****(French, English)**

kâ-têpwêwi-sâkahikana means “calling lakes,” as adapted from *kâ-têpwêwi-sîpiy*, meaning “calling river” (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 103). Although *kâ-têpwêwi-sîpiy* flows through six major lakes (Lower Qu'Appelle 8), when Morris refers to Treaty Four being made at the “Qu'Appelle Lakes” (*The Treaties* 77), he is referencing the four lakes surrounding Fort Qu'Appelle: (from west to east) Pasqua, Echo, Mission, and Katepwa.

kâ-têpwêwi-sîpiy**(Nêhiyawêwin)****Qu'Appelle River****(French, English)**

kâ-têpwêwi-sîpiy literally means “calling river” (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 103). Bill Barry notes the name refers to a Cree place-story for the river about a calling *manitow* (spirit), and the French name for the river, Qu'Appelle, means “Who calls?” (347).

kipahikanihk**(Nêhiyawêwin)*****Gibayiganing*****(Anishinaabemowin)****Fort Qu'Appelle****(French, English)**

The literal meaning of *kipahikanihk* is “at the enclosure” (e.g. “at the weir; at the fort; at the jail”). The Anishinaabemowin name *Gibayiganing* (Hyslop et al. 183) seems to be a Saulteaux, Plains-Anishinaabemowin adaptation of *kipahikanihk*. However, *Gibayiganing* is not unlike *gibaakwa'igan*, meaning “something stick-like that shuts off or blocks: a barricade, a dam, a gate,” which shares the word part *gibaakwa'* with the word for jail (*OPD*). *Gibaakwa'* means “shut or block” something as well as “jail, imprison” someone, reflecting the meaning of *kipahikanihk*. The name Fort Qu'Appelle follows the French name for *kâ-têpwêwi-sîpiy*, Qu'Appelle River, and its valley, Lower Qu'Appelle Valley.

kisiskâciwan**(Nêhiyawêwin)****Saskatchewan****(Anglicized)**

kisiskâciwan means “it flows swiftly, it flows fast,” from which the anglicized “Saskatchewan” is derived after the river's name, *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy*.

kisiskâciwani-sîpiy**(Nêhiyawêwin)****North Saskatchewan River****(English)**

The Nêhiyawêwin word *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* literally means “swift-flowing river.” *wâwâskêsiw sîpiy* is another name for South Saskatchewan River literally meaning “elk river,” but both branches of the river were and are also called *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy* (Barry 378).

Manitowapow**(Nêhiyawêwin, Anishinaabemowin)****Manitoba****(Anglicized)**

There are “many alternate and legitimate versions and claims” for explaining the meaning

and history of the name *Manitowapow* (Sinclair and Cariou 4). For example, the CMS missionary Abraham Cowley wrote the name in 1846 as “Manito oopwā,” translating it as “God’s Straits,” which echoed for him his own sense of difficulty in the area (Cowley to Davies). One version Niigaanwewidam Sinclair and Warren Cariou offer is one of the most common: that the name originates

in the Cree words *Manitou* (Great Spirit) and *wapow* (sacred water), or in Ojibway, *Manito-bau*. From the Narrows of Lake Manitoba, where waves dashed against the rocky shores of Manitou Island, these sounds were thought to be sacred beats that dashed throughout Creation and created beauty, definition, and meaning. This is the voice of the Great Spirit, Manitowapow. (4-5)

maskotêw
(Nêhiyawêwin)

miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi
(Anishinaabemowin)

Red River Settlement
(English)

Prior to being the City of Winnipeg, the area was known as the Red River Settlement, after the Red River, and by the “Prairie and Swampy Cree” name “Muskootao” (Manitoba Conservation 299). “Muskootao,” or *maskotêw*, means “bald prairie, prairie, grassland.” Winnipeg was known as the Red River Settlement for “over fifty years.” “The name Winnipeg first appeared on the title page of the *Nor-Wester*, February 24, 1866. The previous issue was headed Red River Settlement, Assiniboia” (Ham 107).

maskotêw
(Nêhiyawêwin)

wînipêk
(Nêhiyawêwin, Anishinaabemowin)

Winnipeg
(Anglicized)

Niigaanwewidam Sinclair writes that the name Winnipeg is a Cree and Anishinaabe word “derived from wiinad-, meaning ‘dirty’ or ‘muddy,’ and nibiing, meaning ‘waters.’ The original phonetic pronunciation was likely Wînipêk or Wiinabik” (“The Power” 203). The area was also known by another Cree name: “Muskootao was the name given to the Red River Settlement by the Prairie and Swampy Cree” (Manitoba Conservation 299). “Muskootao,” that is, *maskotêw*, means “bald prairie, prairie, grassland.”

maskotêw kapâtowinihk
(Nêhiyawêwin)

mashkode onigamiing
(Anishinaabemowin)

Portage la Prairie
(French)

Archival records offer different versions of the place name “Prairie Portage” for Portage la Prairie. La Vérendrye described it as a “carrying place” in his 1739 journal from the Assiniboine River to Lake Manitoba. Historically, seasons of high waters could shorten the portage between the river and lake to a short distance, according to Hind (Manitoba Conservation 217). The Nêhiyawêwin and Anishinaabemowin names I provided are my rough translations of “Prairie Portage.” Although Portage la Prairie is a French name, English-speaking residents anglicize the pronunciation.

misi-paskwâw
(Nêhiyawêwin)

St. Paul des Cris
(French)

Brosseau
(French)

In Joseph Dion's book *My Tribe, The Crees*, Michel Sandy Cardinal tells of crossing the Saskatchewan River "at Wide Meadow, now known as Brosseau Crossing, in the annual hunt for the buffalo" in 1871 (70-71). I use the name *misi-paskwâw*, meaning "big open meadow" (Wolvengrey). St. Paul des Cris was a Roman Catholic mission founded in 1865 by Albert Lacombe, OMI on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River where the town of Brosseau, Alberta is located today. A heritage plaque currently shows the vicinity in which the mission was located ("St Paul des Cris"). One of the reasons the site was chosen for the mission was because it was an important stopping place for Cree people in the round of seasonal movements: bison hunting in summer, returning in the fall to harvest, and leaving again for the winter hunt. It was also a strategic location between Fort Edmonton and Fort Pitt along the North Saskatchewan River.

miskwaagaamiwi-ziibi
(Anishinaabemowin)

mihkwâkamîw-sîpiy
(Nêhiyawêwin)

Red River, MB
(English)

French explorers called the Red River *Rivière Rouge*, after the "Indian" name *miskwagama sipi*, which means "red water river" (Ham 107). Frederic Baraga spells the name *miskwâgamîwi-sibi* in his dictionary (208). My spelling follows the conventions of *The Ojibwe People's Dictionary*.

mistatihkamêkohk
(Nêhiyawêwin)

Whitefish Lake
(English)

mistatihkamêk refers to whitefish. In addition to Whitefish Lake, Saskatchewan, *mistatihkamêkohk* is also the name of Big River. *mistatihkamêk sâkahikanihk* is another form of the name for Whitefish Lake.

Nibo-ziibi
(Anishinaabemowin)

Nipiwin-sîpiy
(Nêhiyawêwin)

Netley Creek, MB
(English)

Netley Creek was called "Nipuwin or Nipuwinsipi" and "Nebowesebe," which all refer to "Death River" or "River of the Dead" (Manitoba Conservation 190). Alternative spellings could be *Nipiwin*, or *Nipiwin-sîpiy* and *Nibo-ziibi*.

Niizhoziibean
(Anishinaabemowin)

Nestawa'ya
(Nêhiyawêwin)

The Forks, MB
(English)

Nestawa'ya is the original Cree name for the Forks where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet. *Nestawa'ya* means "three points," and according to Niigaan Sinclair; Three Points refers to "the ways people came from three different directions to be [there]" (Bettens). *Niizhoziibean* means two rivers in Anishinaabemowin. The name was given to South Point of

the Forks in 2018. An advisor on the naming project, Niigaan Sinclair, described how the name “honours the part that the Red and Assiniboine played historically” in the area (“Niizhoziibeana”). Elders Clarence and Barbara Nepinak were offered tobacco in early 2018 to uncover a name for the South Point path. In August of that year they received the name during a traditional naming ceremony. Sinclair described how the process of reclaiming Indigenous place names calls for different approaches: “Nowadays, we are re-discovering the original names of our home. Some have names we can find carried by elders or we can find in archival documents. Some we ask for from living people today” (“Niizhoziibeana”).

oksana kê-asastêki

(Nêhiyawêwin)

Regina

(English)

Oksana kê-asastêki (often in the form “Wascana”) roughly means “pile of bones” in English, and it was the Cree name for the settlement and area now commonly called “Regina.” The name Regina was applied in 1882 to honour Queen Victoria by Princess Louise, one of the queen’s daughters, and wife of the governor general of Canada at the time (Barry 353).

wâwâskêsiw sîpiy

(Nêhiyawêwin)

South Saskatchewan River

(English)

The Nêhiyawêwin word *wâwâskêsiw* refers to elk, deer, or red deer. *wâwâskêsiw sîpiy* is a Nêhiyawêwin name for the South Saskatchewan River; it can also refer to Red Deer River.

* * *

Names: People

The following notes offer some context for spellings used in this project due to inconsistent usage in archival sources. Unless otherwise specified, Nêhiyawêwin names follow Archibald-Barber, *kisiskâciwan: Indigenous Voices from Where the River Flows Swiftly*.

NATION/COMMUNITY NAMES

Anishinaabe(g): Ojibwe; Ojibwe person (people); have also been known as Chippewa(y);

Plains Anishinaabeg are also referred to by the French exonym “Saulteaux”

Apsáalooke: Crow people

Dene: also have been known by the exonym “Slavey” people

Haudenosaunee: “People of the Longhouse,” historically referred to as Iroquois, consisting of the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Kanyen’kehà:ka, and Tuscarora

Kanyen’kehà:ka: Mohawk people of the Haudenosaunee

Mushkegowuk: Mushkeg Cree; also referred to as Swampy Cree or Northern Cree

Nakota, Nakoda: Assiniboine people, Stoney people; “Stonies”

Nêhiyaw(ak): Plains Cree; Plains Cree person (people)

Nîpisîhkopâwiyiniwak: Willow People of Nêhiyawak led by Kâ-miyêstawêsit

Siksikaitsitapi: Blackfoot people

Sîpîwiyiniwak: River People of Nêhiyawak Wîhkasko-kisêyin led as *okimâw*; spelled “Cipiwiwiniwuk” by Mandelbaum (Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw and Mandelbaum 1-2)

Wâskahikaniwiyiniwak: House People of Nêhiyawak led by Atâhkakohp and Mistawâsis

PERSONAL NAMES

Atâhkakohp (Star Blanket) was a leader among the Wâskahikaniwiyiniwak of Nêhiyawak in the region of Fort Carlton along with his cousin Mistawâsis (Archibald-Barber 34). He was a signatory to Treaty Six in Saskatchewan. Variations of his name include “A-ta-kwa-koop” (Hines 88), “Ah-tuck-ah-coop” (Morris 222), “Ah-tuk-uk-koop” on the treaty text (Morris 356), “Ahtahkakoop” (Krasowski 185).

Atakawinin (The Gambler) spoke on behalf of his *ogimaa* Waywayseecappo, leader of the Fort Ellice band of Anishinaabeg, during Treaty Four negotiations (Krasowski 142; Archibald-Barber 28). He also spoke on behalf of Kâ-kîšîwê and Mîmîy Gabriel Cotê. In Morris’s book, Atakawinin is identified as “O-ta-ha-o-man” (90), “O-ta-ka-o-nan” (97), and as “Peicheto’s Son” (90-91), signalling his relationship to the Portage la Prairie band of Plains Anishinaabeg and to his father Pechito. Along with Pechito’s, Atakawinin’s name appears in Garrioch’s list of Anishinaabe names at Portage la Prairie (94).

Ayeetapepetung (He Who Sits By It) was a Plains Anishinaabe *ogimaa* in the Portage la Prairie region and orator at the council for Treaty One in Manitoba. My spelling borrows from Krasowski (60), but other variations include “Je-ta-pe-pe-tung” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [5 Aug. 1871] 2), “Ayee-ta-pe-pe-tung” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2), “Aindibeyhting” (Garrioch 94), “I-ee-be-pee-tang” (Ozaawigwan et al., “Communication” 1) and “Iei-te-pee-tung” (Ozaawigwan et al., Resolution).

Kâ-kîsikâw-pîhtukâw (Coming Day) was a Nêhiyaw storyteller of the Sweet Grass Reserve (Sweetgrass First Nation) interviewed both by linguist Leonard Bloomfield in 1925 and anthropologist David Mandelbaum in 1934-1935. When Bloomfield met him, he described him as “a blind old man,” “which would date his birth to sometime in the mid-1800s” (Archibald-Barber 86).

Kâ-kîšîwê (Loud Voice) was a prominent *okimâw* leading the Qu’Appelle River Cree at Treaty Four negotiations in 1874 (Archibald-Barber 27). Although he is usually referred to by the English translation of his name, Loud Voice, in Morris’s account of treaty-making, his

name also appears as “Ra-ku-shi-way,” “Ka-kie-she-way,” “Ka-ku-ish-may,” “Ka-kii-shi-way” (*The Treaties* 88, 110, 115, 334).

Kâ-miyêstawêsit (Beardy) was an *okimâw* leading the Nîpisîhkopâwiyiniwak of Nêhiyawak around 1870 (Archibald-Barber 42). He was a signatory to Treaty Six, on the text of which his name is spelled “Kah-mee-yis-too-way-sit” (Morris 358).

Kâ-miyo-kîsikwêw (Fine Day) became a war chief of the Sîpîwiyiniwak of Nêhiyawak for Pîhtokahânapîwiyin and participated in events of the 1885 Resistance (Archibald-Barber 66). He became a notable storyteller and was interviewed in 1926 when he was about seventy by Campbell Innes (11). He was also interviewed many times in 1934-1935 by anthropologist David Mandelbaum.

Kakeka-penais (Everlasting Bird or Bird Forever) William Pennefather was an *ogimaa* of the Plains Anishinaabe band of Fort Alexander and signatory to Treaty One. My spelling follows that on Treaty One, which gives the translation “Bird Forever” (A. Morris 316). *The Manitoban* also used “Ka-kee-ga-by-ness” translated as “Everlasting Bird” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). “Ka-ke-ke-penois” was also used on revisions to Treaty One (A. Morris 341).

Keeskesimakun was a Nêhiyaw *okimâw* who signed letters with Makasis to the Aborigines’ Protection Society in defense of their land claims. Spellings of his name include “Keskismakuis” (Peguis, “Native Title,” 3) and “Keskissimakum” (Makasis 2). I take my spelling from the 1860 letter he wrote with Makasis (Keeskesimakun and Maksis 1).

Kehewin (The Eagle) recorded a message to Adams Archibald in 1871 with other Nêhiyaw *okimâwak*. The recorder, W. J. Christie wrote Kehewin’s name “Ki-he-win, The Eagle” on the letter (A. Morris 171). My spelling reflects the more common usage by Kehewin Cree Nation and descendants of Kehewin in Carlson, et al., *Disinherited Generations* (cf. Hall 12).

Keskayiwew (Bobtail) was a Nêhiyaw *okimâw* who sent a message with Wîhkasko-kisêyin, Kehewin, and Onchiminahos. In Christie’s letter, Keskayiwew is referred to as “Kis-ki-on, or Short Tail” in Morris’s text. My usage of “Keskayiwew” follows Barkwell (“Alexis Piché” 2) and Devine (232). More common and widely used is the English translation of Keskayiwew to “Bobtail,” from *kîskâyowêw*. Other sources use various spellings that include Kiskiyew (Fromhold), Keskayo (Barkwell and Fromhold 2n3), Kiskayo (G. MacDonald 60), and Kiskiyo (Littlechild 111). Keskayiwew also had the French Métis name Alexis Piché (Barkwell “Alexis Piché” 2; Devine 232-233).

Kewetayash (Flying Round) was an *ogimaa* of the Plains Anishinaabe band of the Roseau

River area (Keweetiash 1). He also signed Treaty One. My spelling is taken from that on the text of Treaty One (A. Morris 316), but other variations include “Kewaytinós” (Cowley, Journal, 11), “Keweetiash” (Kewetayash, Letter to Archibald, 2), “Kee-Wee-ti-as” (Nashake-Pesnais et al. 2), “Kiwetias” (Kewetayash, Letter [to Anderson] 513), “Kewetaosh” (McDougall 3), and “Qu-a-ty-ash” (Krasowski 61). Another translation of his name given in *The Manitoban* is “Driven Round by the Wind” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). Although many variations of his name exist, the journalist documenting the negotiations for Treaty One could not bring himself to attempt a spelling: “The chiefs of the bands within the Province are—. . . a warrior, with an unspellable name,—the translation of which is; ‘He who Flies Round,’ who is dominant over those in the Pembina quarter” (“The Treaty” 2).

Makasis (Fox) was a contemporary with Peguis and a Nêhiyaw *okimâw* who also wrote at least one letter to the APS in 1858 protesting the sale of land and settler encroachment.

Mîmîy (Pigeon) Gabriel Côté led a band of Plains Anishinaabeg and was a signatory to Treaty Four. In Morris’s text, he is usually referred to as “Cote,” and sometimes “Mee-may” (*The Treaties* 97, 334).

Miskookenew (Red Eagle) Henry Prince followed the naming practice his father, Peguis, initiated at baptism. When Peguis was baptised, he took the name Peguis William King, and Miskookenew Henry Prince and his siblings took the surname “Prince” (Thompson 31). The name “Miskookinew” means “Red Eagle” and derives from the words *miso-* (red) and *giniw* (golden eagle). In Peguis’ will, Prince’s name is spelled “Miskookinew” (Peguis, Will). On the text of Treaty One and revisions which he signed, his name is spelled “Mis-koo-ke-new” and “Mis-koo-ke-neu” (A. Morris 316, 340). “Miskookenu” appears in notes on his interview with Archibald (“Notes of Interview” 1). He was an *ogimaa* for the St. Peter’s band of Plains Anishinaabeg and Mushkego Cree.

Mistahi-maskwa (Big Bear), one of the most well-known of nineteenth-century *okimâw*, was likely Nêhiyaw-Anishinaabe (Archibald-Barber). Mistahi-maskwa famously refused to sign treaty and was the last to accept it in 1882 through a Treaty Six adhesion.

Mistawâsis (Big Child) was a Métis-Nêhiyaw leader among the Wâskahikaniwiyiniwak of Nêhiyawak in the region of For Carlton along with his cousin Atâhkakohp (Archibald-Barber 31). He was also the maternal uncle of Pîhtikwahânapiwiyin (Dempsey, “Pîhtikwahanapiwiyin”). He was a signatory to Treaty Six in Saskatchewan. Variations of his name include “Mis-tow-asis” (Morris 222), “Mist-ow-as-is” on the treaty text (Morris 356), “Mis-ta-wa-sis” (Hines 88).

Moosoos (Moose Calf) was a chief in the Portage la Prairie area (Garrioch 93-94). In one account, he is described as a “sharpshooter” (Collier 8). Other variations of his name appear as “Mooses” (Collier 8), “Moosnos” (Krasowski 54), and “Moose-Orise” (Ozaawigwan et al., “Communication” 1).

Nanabush, or Nanabozho, as Leanne Simpson writes, is a “prominent being” in Anishinaabe thought, who teaches “lessons by never learning and representing the ordinary human struggle to live a good life” (*Dancing* 73). In numerous stories, Nanabush “constantly succumb[s]” to weakness and, at times, moments of strength or generosity, and experiences the resulting consequences (*Dancing* 73).

Nanawananan (Centre of Bird’s Tail) was an *ogimaa* of the Plains Anishinaabeg identified with the Oak Point band on the Seine River, MB and a signatory to Treaty One. My spelling borrows from that listed on the Treaty One text, “Na-na-wa-nanan,” but in other treaty documents it is sometimes spelled “Ma-na-wa-nanan.” On the 1870 letter to Archibald, his name is written as “Way-Nah-Wenenahu” (Nashake-pesnais et al. 2), similar to “Wa-na-wan-na-nang” (Kewetayash et al., 36). Krasowski uses “Na-na-wyn-an.” “Nan-ow-en-an-an” is used in *The Manitoban* with the English meaning “He who cannot succeed in laying hold” (“The Treaty” 2).

Nashake-penais (Flying Down Bird) was an *ogimaa* of a Plains Anishinaabe-Métis band located in the region of Upper Fort Garry and Pointes-des-Chênes on the Seine River, MB and signatory to Treaty One.¹ His father Ouckidoat had added his *doodem* to the Selkirk indenture in 1817 and was also known as “Grandes Oreilles” and “Le Premier.”² Nashake-penais was also known as “Grandes Oreilles” (Krasowski 54; cf. “The Treaty” 2). Krasowski spells his name “Na-sa-kee-by-ness,” following the spelling in *The Manitoban* (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). Other variations in the archival record include “Nasha-

¹ Krasowski identifies Nashake-penais’ band as “the Oak Point community on the Seine River” (Pointe-des-Chênes), drawing from coverage in *The Manitoban* (60-61; “The Treaty” 2). Barkwell suggests that the identification with Pointe-des-Chênes emerged from the band’s regular seasonal encampment on the Seine River near the Oak Point (at present-day Sainte-Anne-des-Chênes). Citing research by historian David Burley, Barkwell argues that Nashake-penais’ band lived at and around the Forks and Upper Fort Garry on a semi-permanent basis along with other Anishinaabe-Métis bands (“The Métis-First Nation Band” 1). Because the band used several sites regularly, including Oak Point and Fort Garry, singling out either “Oak Point” or “Fort Garry” misses the regional span of their (and other bands’) territory.

² On the manuscript copy of the Selkirk indenture, Ouckidoat’s *doodem* is circled in pencil with the additional notation “alias Grandes Oreilles” (“Deed and Map”). Archibald identifies Nashake-penais as “the son of ‘Les Grandes Oreilles’” (Letter to Howe [21 Sep.] 18).

Kee-Pesnais” in a letter to Archibald and “Na-sha-ke-penais” on the text of Treaty One (Nashake-Pesnais et al. 2; A. Morris 316).

Onchiminahos (Little Hunter) also signed a letter to Adams Archibald in 1871 with Whîkasko-kisêyin and the other *okimâwak* in 1871. I follow the spelling “Onchiminahos,” pronounced “Oonah-tah-mee-na-hoos,” from Judy Half, a Nêhiyaw member of Onchiminahos’ Band and descendant (“Little Hunter, Blue Quills”; cf. Lemire et al., “Judy Half” 420). The spelling “Onchaminahos” is also common (Half, “Dew Claw Bags” 294; cf. Carlson and Steinhauer 122, Hall 115). Devine uses the spelling “Ohimnahos” (146). Onchiminahos’ is also recorded as “Nee-ta-me-na-hoos” (Hall 12; Dempsey, *Maskepetoon* 174) following its use in *The Nor’Wester* (Flett 3; also qtd. in Woolsey).

Ozaawashkogaad (Yellow Legs) was an Anishinaabe *ogimaa* from the Lake Winnipeg region and the great-grandfather of Tabasigizikweas William Berens who shared oral history and stories with A. Irving Hallowell (Gray; cf. Berens).

Ozaawigwan (Yellow Quill) was an *ogimaa* for the Portage la Prairie band of Plains Anishinaabeg and signatory of Treaty One. On the treaty text, his name appears as “Oi-za-we-kwun” (A. Morris 316), but I have opted for “Ozaawigwan,” a brown or yellow feather (*The Ojibwe People’s Dictionary*). Other variations include “Oosa-We-quan” (Nasha-Kee-Pesnais et al. 2), “Do-za-we-kiwin” or “Oo-za-we-kwun” (Krasowski 60), “Oosaokwon” (Garrioch 94), “Auzawaquin” (E. Morris), and “Ozaawikon” (Hyslop et al. 190).

Paketayhoond (Stricken) was a spokesperson, possibly an *ogimaa*, from the Portage la Prairie region. According to Garrioch, Paketayhoond (spelled “Puhkiteoon”) meant “Stricken,” referring to “a hump over his right shoulder blade” (94). Paketayhoond wrote an article for *The Nor’Wester* in June 1861 as part of the debate about the validity of the Selkirk Treaty. My spelling is taken from this article.

Paskwâw (Prairie), a Nêhiyaw *okimâw* of a Nêhiyaw-Anishinaabe band, signed Treaty Four in 1874. His name literally means “prairie.” He was a critic of the Rupert’s Land Deal and later wrote his account of the treaty in pictograph. His name appears as “Pis-qua” (Morris, *The Treaties* 106), “Paskwâ” (McLeod, *Cree Narrative* 105), and “Pasqua” (Tyler).

Pechito (Image) was a prominent member of the Anishinaabeg at Portage la Prairie. He was a trader, often doing business with the Americans, and lived in the second-largest house in the area, which had the “distinction of being the only house, besides the church and parsonage, with a shingled roof” (Garrioch 95-96). Garrioch gives the translation “image” for Pechito’s name, spelled “Pacheetoo” (94). Pechito’s name perhaps derives from the Cree

word *naspisîhtâw* meaning someone “makes an image of something.” The spelling “Pechito” appears in the CMS *Proceedings* for 1860, which I use. Other variant spellings include “Picheito” (Collier 8), “Pachetoo” (Peers 162), and “Peicheto” (Morris, *The Treaties* 90).

Peguis (Chip) William Prince was a prominent *ogimaa* of the Netley Creek Anishinaabe band that later became known as St. Peter’s Band and Peguis First Nation. One of the early archival records referencing Peguis spell his name as “Be-gwa-is,” which means “little chip” or “wood chip” (Sutherland 1). His name comes from the Anishinaabemowin root word “bakwe-” which means “a piece, a fragment, a chip” (*Nishnaabemwin*) or “piece out of something, missing a piece” (*OPD*). For example, the word “bakwezh” means to “cut a piece off” something (*OPD*). Other variant spellings of Peguis’ name include “Pegouisse,” “Pegowis,” “Peekwahis,” “Pech-quaa-is,” “Peeh-quaa-is,” “Pigeois,” “Pigwys,” and “Be-gou-ais” (Sutherland “Peguis, Woodpeckers”; Sutherland, *Peguis* 2; Thompson 80n1). “Pigwys” is frequently used in CMS writing. When Peguis was baptized by William Cockran in February 1838, Peguis took the “Christian name” William and the surname King, “the surname in recognition of his position in the tribe, and William in admiration of William Cockran” (Thompson 31). Peguis’ sons took the last name “Prince” in recognition of their status as descendants of the *ogimaa*; none of them took the name King (31).

Pîhtikwahânapiwiyin (Poundmaker) was an *okimâw* of the Sîpîwiyiniwak of Nêhiyawak. His name literally means “Man who Sits at the Pound” (*itwewina*). At the negotiations for Treaty Six, he was not yet an *okimâw* but had an “important presence” as a skilled orator and critic of the treaty (Archibald-Barber 55). Eventually, he signed Treaty Six after years of resistance. He was the nephew of Mistawâsis on his mother’s side (Dempsey, “Pîhtikwahanapiwîyin”).

Piyêsiw-awâsis (Thunderchild), a Nêhiyaw *okimâw*, refused to sign Treaty Six but later accepted an adhesion in 1879 (Archibald-Barber). He shared stories with Edward Ahenakew on Piyêsiw-awâsis’ reserve in 1923. They were published in *Voices of the Plains Cree*.

Wakowish (Whipporwill or Night Hawk) was an *ogimaa* of a Plains Anishinaabe band in the Roseau River region and signatory to Treaty One. The text of Treaty One translates his name as “Whipporwill” (A. Morris 316), but *The Manitoban* gives the translation “Night Hawk” along with the spelling “Wa-Kooish” (“The Chippewa Treaty” [12 Aug. 1871] 2). Krasowski uses the spelling “Wa-ko-wish” (61).

Wîhkasko-kisêyin (Sweet Grass, “Old-Man-Sweetgrass”), a prominent *okimâw* among Nêhiyawak in the late-nineteenth century, was also known by his baptismal name Abraham Wikaskokisêyin, as in notices of his death (*Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi* 115-119;

“*Abraham Wikaskokiséyin*” 197). His name is usually translated as “Sweet Grass,” but it also means “Old Man Sweetgrass” (*Itwewina*). Other spellings include “Wikaskokiseyin” (Hall 12; Ray 209) and “Weekaskookeeseyin” (Carlson, et al. xxviii). When written about in French, Wîhkasko-kisêyin was also called “*Herbe-Odoriférante*” (“Le R.P. Lacombe, V.G.” 2; Soeur de la Providence 111). McLeod in *Cree Narrative Memory* uses *wîhkasko-kisêyin*. In accounts of his life, Wîhkasko-kisêyin is called “Okimâsis” or “Apistchi-koimas,” meaning “little chief” and “He-who-has-no-name,” according to Doug Cuthand (*Askiwina* 42). “Apistchi-koimas” appears to be formed from *apisci-*, meaning “small” or “little,” and *-koimas* as a variant of *okimâw* or *okimâsis* (little chief, boss).

Zhoo-ou was an ogimaa in the Portage la Prairie region who signed two messages, one to Archibald and a public notice, with Ozaawigwan, Ayeetapepetung, and Moosoos (Ozaawigwan et al., “Communication”). My spelling of his name combines both used on the two messages: “Shoo-ouh” and “Zhoo-Shou.”

Appendix A: Notes to the Poems

ON THE “SAULTEAUX CHARACTER,” OR WHAT WERE MY ANCESTORS LIKE?

The poem draws heavily from Abraham Cowley’s letter to Richard Davies (Appendix B4). The phrase “a more excellent way” appears in Cowley’s letter and comes from 1 Corinthians 12.31 (KJV), the last verse before the famous chapter, 1 Corinthians 13. Cowley established the mission at Partridge Crop, now Fairford, *Binemoodaang*, in 1842, and he worked there until 1854 when he left to work with William Cockran at St. Peter’s. One biography remarks that he was good at teaching Indigenous people to farm but “less successful in translating Christianity into terms they understood” (Goldsborough). Although I do not have direct relatives in *Binemoodaang* (that I know of), Cowley does note he speaks of the Saulteaux “as a whole,” “upon an average.” He is buried in the cemetery at St. Peter’s Dynevor along with Peguis, my grandparents, aunties, uncles, and cousins.

STATES OF FEELING I-II

States of Feeling I draws upon quotations from a range of Indigenous people that are quoted in the beginning of Chapter 9 of Morris’s book. In Wihkasko-kisêyin’s message recorded by W.J. Christie, neither the word *kitimâkêyihcikêwin* nor any of the other Cree words used appear in Morris’s text or the Canada Sessional Papers from which it is sourced; the word “pity” and other English substitutes are used instead in the published source texts. The last writer quoted in *States of Feeling II*, Rev. George McDougall was a Methodist missionary who in 1866 stole *Manitou Asinîy*, a 145 kilogram meteorite that is a sacred object and visited by Indigenous people. McDougall moved the Manitou Stone to Victoria Methodist College in Cobourg, Ontario where he hoped it would draw Indigenous people to Christianity. The stone was transferred to the Royal Alberta Museum in 2001 where it currently resides (“Manitou Asinîy”).

MY FRIEND, THE CHIEF

The text paraphrases passages from Albert Lacombe’s letter published in *Les missions catholiques* (Lacombe, “Correspondence” 289-291, 293).

Appendix B: Sources for Parts 1 and 3

The following excerpts are from sources not readily available via publication or digital archive access.

* * *

1. “Their appearance was truly ridiculous”—David Jones, CMS Journal Entry, 22 May 1824, pp. 104-105.

A Band of Indians came today with their Chief at their head to beg some wheat or seed; their appearance was truly ridiculous, the old Chief dressed in a field officer's uniform given him by Lord Selkirk some years ago; they had about 30 Birch rind Canoes with a flag in the foremast, given them by the Company, and thus they proceeded up the river, beating an old drum and shouting, and yelling; their appearance altogether was a representation of human nature in its lowest state of degradation. I reminded the Chief of his promise regarding his children on a former visit, he said, “Tis true I cannot read, but for all that I can remember, and I am not a man to throw my mouth into the ground, my brother, but you must wait a little longer.” This being Saturday, he said, “I will call for the seed tomorrow.” I said, “I will not give it tomorrow as it is Sunday, we keep that day holy, as the Great God has told us; and I should be very glad to see the Indians observing it too, it is time that they should know these things now.” “Well, well, my brother,” said he, “this is fine talk now I tell you, Indians have never done so much harm to white people as they have to the Indians.” I could not but feel this keen retort, and it is worthy of being recorded as a proof of the acute discernment of this uncultivated Nature of the forest, as well as a proof how little impression, humanly speaking, can be made upon these Indians untill [sic] they are softened by education and gradual introduction to the knowledge of the truth.

* * *

2. “White people promise much and give nothing”—David Jones, CMS Journal Excerpt, 7 Nov. 1823, pp. 90-92.

Entered my little Parsonage today—parted with regret from Capt. Pelly's family, as Christian Society is so congenial to the mind of him whose trust is in the Lord. My greatest trial now will be the want of social intercourse, but I trust the Lord will neither leave me nor forsake me, and in “his presence there is feelings of joy.”

Today Pigwys, one of the Seaultaux Indian Chiefs, with his band, called upon me agreeably to his intimation to me when I was coming up the river. His object was to get Rum from me, and my object was to put him in mind of his promise to Mr. [John] West on his departure. I placed no value on the interview as it would be of little or no advantage to

get children from Indians that frequent the Colony as this band does, as they would always be unsettling them and probably taking them when clothed.

After they were seated, I told them, by an interpreter that “I was glad to see them and to have some talk with them; that I wished to impress upon their minds that many of the White People beyond the great Waters loved the Indians very much and that they wished them well, and were willing to do them good at a great expense to themselves—that they have built School houses and a Church here to accommodate them, and that they have sent me here on purpose to instruct them in the knowledge of the Great Spirit and to be a father to their children—that I hoped Pigwys would not let me write to these kind friends of the Indians to say that he will not let his children learn what the White People know, and especially the Book which the Great Spirit has given them to teach them to be happy when they die.” He then replied nearly as follows—“I have listened very much to what you say, and they are fine promises; we want our children to become like White People, to get plenty of Indian Corn, Wheat, and Potatoes, for since you White People have got our lands we are very poor; before that we had plenty—our woods were full of game—our creeks full of Beaver—our rivers full of fish, and we always conquered our enemies; but now the White People promise much and give nothing. And now you come and want our children, but I do not know what to say, for I hear so many reports, one saying one thing, and another another thing, that I am quite distracted and know not whom to believe; last year a new Chief came, now he is gone and another is come, I do not know what to do of all this changing, but I shall see how things will go on. I will call my people together when I go home and tell them what you say, and it is probable I shall send you a dozen in the Spring when the river breaks up; and as you speak of my promise to your brother, I will also say that I hope he will not forget his promise to me, of sending me a Roll of Tobacco, by the Ships next year.”

This ended my conference with Pigwys, just as I expected: he is a very shrewd man, and a very harmless and inoffensive Indian, but completely spoiled by being initiated into habits of drinking in which he is more indulged than they commonly are from his contiguity to the Colony. [. . .] It is very surprising how these wretched creatures pride themselves upon their independence, with all the wretched appearance of Chimney Sweepers in the streets of London they are full of boasting and triumph in their self dependent state and superior skill. In witnessing this I often think of the idea entertained by Missionary Students in England in regard to the ignorance of the Heathen. It is very natural for a person when coming from the Lecture Room of a College or the Study of a Private Tutor, to a country inhabited by a barbarous and ignorant race of beings to expect to be looked up to with admiration and applause on account of his superior qualifications of mind; but a short residence in the land of Pagans will convince him of the contrary, for he will there find

himself looked down upon by ignorant Natives with much more pity and contempt than he does upon them.

The conduct of Europeans in this country is certainly not calculated to enhance in their estimation the attendant blessing of Gospel civilization; I have been often astonished at the amazing degeneracy which they have shewn in falling by degrees into the habits of the Indian. The Trader found the Indians with fishing nets peculiar to themselves both in structure and mode of setting—this he has adopted; he found the Indian in his small Birchrind canoe—he gets into it and performs voyages of hundreds of miles in it; he found the Indian preparing his food in a way peculiar to himself that of making it into Pemican—this is now the food of the labouring class throughout the country. [I]n short the European follows the same track that the Indian did—lives by the Chase—travels in winter in the Indian Carioles drawn by Indian Dogs—adopts the Indian dress—with many other things that may be enumerated; nor is the Indian heedless of this, but often brings these very instances forward to show their superiority over the White People. An Indian told me lately, “’tis true the English know somethings which the Indians do not, but the Indians know much more in some respects than the White People.” I asked him to point me out an instance. He said “White Man goes to the Woods and gets lost; cannot come home; when did an Indian do this? A dog will find his way home, but a White Man cannot.” I had nothing to say to this sharp reply but “concede” and at the same time admired his adroitness in selecting an instance much to the point.

* * *

3. A Schoolboy’s Education on the Red River—David Jones, CMS Journal Excerpt, 7 Feb. 1824, p. 102.

The Indian Boys came as usual in the evening to my house to say their Catechisms and to sing, and it is indeed the most pleasing part of the Sabbath to me to join them in the simple service, and to hear them singing the praises of the Only true God. This evening I was more than usually interested, as it was the first time that I witnessed them shedding tears. In giving out to them the 236th Hymn of the “Sunday Scholar’s Companion,”—“Lord, while little heathens bend,” (etc.), it was natural that I should be led to tell them of the cruelties practiced in the East, which are alluded to in that hymn, and they were all much affected; and one of them, an Assiniboia Indian, asked “Sir! is no Schoolmaster there to tell them not?” I told them that many were gone from home to tell of Jesus Christ, as I had done, to come to them. They looked at one another with smiles which indicated their inward approbation. Alas! thought I when they were gone, what noble feelings of Philanthropy and affection and zeal are smothered in the mind of the North American Indian under the

rubbish of ignorance; yea! what sweet strings are here mute to the praises of God through the chilling influence of Barbarity and Heathenism!!! Oh then

“Let the Negro, let the Indian
Let the rude Barbarian see
That divine and glorious conquest
Once obtained on Calvary.”¹

* * *

4. On the “Saulteaux Character”—From Abraham Cowley, Letter to Rev. Richard Davies, 17 July 1846, pp. 116-118.

You are fully aware of the Saulteaux character, and know from official Communications that the Manitoba is the most hopeless and yet perhaps the most irksome of all the Stations in this part of the world. And why wonder for if we be allowed a little play upon the word its very name imports it. Manito oopwā as pronounced by the Indians and as I understand it signifies God’s Straits. In such a situation who cannot but expect difficulties? My trouble arises however not from the place but among those who inhabit it. You will gain a better idea of what I wish to convey if I lay before you the actual state of things here and the mode of my proceedings under the present circumstances of the Mission.

It is now four years since the first attempt was made to establish a Mission among the Manitoba Indians and nearly two years that my time has been fully given to the Station, yet not one Convert is made to Christianity. The Indians are still Heathen. The[sic] conjure in every way as before. They observe their feasts, idolatrous rites, dances, singing and drumming with apparently as much devotion as ever. When spoken to they argue so absurdly and stubbornly almost as though no one had ever shown them a more excellent way. I speak of them as a whole, and of their conduct upon an average. I must now state my proceedings among them in order to show another part of their character.

When we came among them, I looked upon and treated them as savages whom I wished to conciliate and win over to Christ’s Kingdom. My house was always open to them by day and by night. Whenever any of them called I gave to each of the men and sometimes to the women about an oz of tobacco of which they are excessively fond (this is the custom of the trade) and provided a meal for them. During the time occupied in smoking my custom

¹ Jones was fond of quoting lines from various hymns in his journal entries. “O’er Those Gloomy Hills of Darkness” is an eighteenth-century Welsh hymn calling for the “light” of the Gospel to chase the darkness in the world: “Fly abroad, thou mighty Gospel, / Win and conquer, never cease.” The hymn uses language of conquest and domination for racialized peoples while also referencing “freedom and redemption.” In spite of this incongruity, E. Wyn James notes the hymn became a favourite among Black Christians in the United States in the eighteenth century (n.p.).

has been to converse with them and thus preach Christ crucified. Such parties I have always allowed to remain eating and drinking such things as we had to give as long as they though proper conversing frequently with them and inviting them always to attend our devotions, when the Scriptures were explained to them. This has been my practice towards Indians coming from any distance. As it respects those who happened to be tenting near, of course the case was different. To these I occasionally gave a piece of twist tobacco, allowed them to make my house as common as their own tents and seldom if ever turned away one begging without giving him a part of such food as I possessed pemican, flour, fat, dried meat, milk, fish, beef or bread and butter; such opportunities I embraced for preaching the Word, and pointing out the advantages of civilization. These also I often visited at their tents for the same purpose. I held prayers morning and night and pressed them to be present on the latter occasions. On Lord's days I urge them to attend the services of the day after which at first I gave them something to eat at my own house but finding this inconvenient and the source of unpleasantness upon my return from the R. R. [Red River]. I tried to collect them on Sundays without the food, but found this impracticable though I invited them day by day. "Give us food and we will come to hear you" or some such answer was their constant reply. This distressed me very much and often very often have I been quite ashamed and disheartened to be here to preach and to have no one to hear me you can have little idea of the poignancy of such a case. Rather than that the Indian should not hear the Word I determined to allow to each man or woman who should attend the service a pint of flour each day. Since then we have always had a congregation when the Indians have been at hand. The very same difficulties have presented themselves in the School department, and we have been obliged to allow to each child from the tents half a pint of flour daily as an inducement to attend school.

We have obtained with very great difficulty fifteen children as boarders during the past winter but their remaining is as uncertain as the wind. This grieves me greatly, as they learn quickly and are the most hopeful part of my charge. To secure a congregation and better the condition of the poor creatures around me I continually urge them to locate themselves upon the banks of the river and farm. Knowing their destitution and to encourage them I offer to assist any that are disposed to build and farm. The assistance I have proffered is as follows: To lend axes to cut, and oxen and sleds to haul home the building wood, fencing poles, and firewood. To help to put up the house. To give the owner upon his going into it one pound to enable him to buy a few necessary articles, one calf and one pig to commence stock with, to plough the land he may prepare and furnish seed for it for nothing. All this I have been doing but I find that it involves me in an outlay that the increasing wants of an increasing family (notwithstanding all the economy and coarse living that I practice) prohibit or bid me curtail. For besides the above in addition to the

Interpreter and School Master whom the Society generously pay I find it necessary to keep two other competent men upon very high Salaries for the purpose of managing the farm, the cattle, the procuring firewood, fish, etc. and to enable me to visit the Indians far or near without leaving the establishment unprovided for during my absence. Upon these occasions I leave the Schoolmaster in charge of the place and use one of the others as Interpreter the remaining individual taking charge of the cattle and attending to the wants of the house the fishing etc. both these men assist the Indians in building and farming as above.

I think the above will throw light on the character of the Salteaux[sic] and explain how it is that they attend our Services, build and farm, and yet retain their heathen habits and dispositions.

The length of time they have heard the Gospel of our salvation opposed to their conjurations, feasts, dances, and other religious observances that they have heard the terrors of the holy law of God that they have been invited and urged to accept of salvation through Christ alone as the only way in which men can be saved that they have been wooed by the love of Jesus a love stronger than death and all without effect especially under the above circumstances causes me to fear that their day of grace is not yet come and that I am doing wrong by spending the Society's means among so hopeless a people.

* * *

5. A Bishop's Assessment of Conversion—David Anderson, report in the *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society*, 1859-1860, pp. 205-206.

This [migratory character] may, in the good providence of God, carry onward the tide of population, and scatter it over the wilderness. It may thus ultimately answer a good purpose; but its tendency at the time is felt by most of us very painfully. It weakens parishes, and very materially checks education, rendering it more expensive and difficulty to be extended to all. It keeps the mass in a state of greater poverty, and prevents their growth and rise. It lessens the amount of public spirit and local attachment, and perpetuates man of the habits of Indian life. It parts and separates, where, if united, all would be combination and strength. . . . There is, too, the want of a deeper religious life, even amongst the more advanced Christians. Here there is stagnation instead of movement. The Word is heard with joy and receive with readiness; but it is the development of the rich fruit which the minister looks for, and looks too often in vain. Measuring themselves rather by that from which God hath saved them—the condition of the heathen who know not God—than by the standard of by-gone generations and of other countries, they are satisfied with smaller attainments—they rest contented with a lower level, and do not press forward to the measure of the stature of a perfect man. Their condition is a matter of rejoicing to the minister of God, at

first, as they are eager to hear. It is in their after course that he suffers disappointment. The building stops before he is prepared: the growth terminates suddenly, after advancing for a time with rapidity; and there is not the higher experience of the divine life.

* * *

6. “Placing an ignorant savage on a piece of land”—William Cockran, Letter to Thomas Woodrooffe and Dandeson Coates, CMS Secretaries, 20 Oct. 1832, pp. 3-4.

The Land is now become too valuable in the settlement for it to fall into their [Mushkegowuk] hands.² The 100 acre lots, which are only 6 chains in breadth, at the river, and run two miles in a direct line into the plains, are sold at 10 S. per acre by Lord Selkirk’s agent. The lots being so narrow and long, can never be turned to advantage. The only way they can become useful is by purchasing two or three lots together. It is evident from the price of the land, and the manner it is laid out, that it can never become the property of a naked savage who has only his gun and blanket. Towards Netley Cree there is a large quantity of land, which has been hitherto viewed as an Indian reserve. And every settler has been taught that he ought not to go there for timber or any thing else because it was such.

While this tale is current, and treated with respect, by the existing Powers, I think it highly desirable to endeavour to form an Indian Settlement upon it. For I cannot see any particular reason why those who now sell land in the neighbourhood, where I live, at ten shillings per acre, may not sell land at Netley Creek at the same money 10 years hence.

Seven Years ago, they could scarcely get any to squat in the vicinity of the Rapids. Though they promised lands for nothing. No one ever thinks of settling at Netley Creek; therefore the land is of no value. But safer as an Indian reserve, and less destroyed, than it would be, if it were the reserve of a half civilized man who has an axe and saw. At present they are negotiating with the Old Chief for a large piece of land called the Sugar Point, because of the large quantity of maples that grow upon it. They offer him a keg of rum and 3 blankets for it. I have dissuaded the Chief from it hitherto; but I fear they will get round him some unfortunate moment. The point is about 1 ½ mile across it. This will show how easily an Indian reserve can be made their own to sell at 10 s per acre. [. . .]

Placing an ignorant savage upon a piece of land which has been allowed by all parties to be his own is a desirable object in [lean?] times, when little money can be obtained to make a purchase for him. Seizing and preserving his rights while they are acknowledged by all parties to be inviolable, is another valuable point. And to make room for the weather beaten wanderer of the North to drift in and find a retreat when he can

² In this letter, Cockran describes his rationale for forming an Indian Settlement at Netley Creek for Mushkegowuk who were moving to the Red River area from the north to access the fort and for trade.

weather the storms of his native woods no longer, is an object of too much importance for even the philanthropic mind to lose sight of.

* * *

7. Thanks for the Gift of a Pipe—CMS Secretary Dandeson Coates, Letter to Peguis, ca. 1838-1839?, pp. 152-153.³

To Pigwys the Indian Chief

Friend Pigwys,

Mr. Jones your friend has presented your Calamet [calumet, pipe] & letter to the Committee of the Church Missionary Society. They regard you as a Christian Brother: they wish you peace and every blessing from Christ. You speak to their heart when you ask for more Missionaries. These men shew you the way of salvation. Christ is the way. Repent and believe the Gospel. Serve God with your spirit in the Gospel of his Son. This is life eternal. The present life is full of sorrow and suffering; because it is full of sin. In Christ there is peace with God, deliverance now from the dominion of sin by the power of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life with the Great Spirit when the body returns to dust as it was.

Friend Pigwys lay these things to heart. Your friends West, and Jones, and Cockran have brought you the good way: walk in it. Death comes quickly. Then how blessed to be in Christ Jesus. To such there is no condemnation: no poverty: no hunger: no piercing cold: no death. No: all life; all happiness, and that forever.

Friend Pigwys follow on then to know the Lord. Love Him. Serve Him. Christians are industrious; honest; sober. Be you so: encourage your people to be so. This is good for you and for them.

Friend Pigwys another Missionary is coming to your country. Follow his instructions. This is the comfort and reward of a Missionary. Comfort Mr. Cockran thus. He loves you and your Tribe and all the Red Men. Tell them all to believe in Christ and serve God and it will be well with them for ever.

Friend Pigwys we shall never see each other's face on earth. May we be children of God by faith in Christ Jesus and we shall have a happy meeting when Christ comes to judge the quick and the dead.

³ The letter does not have a date, but context clues indicate that "Mr. Jones," likely the CMS missionary David Jones, delivered the letter along with the pipe to the CMS head office either in 1828, when he returned to England on leave, or August 1838 when he returned to England permanently. The latter date is perhaps more likely as Peguis was baptized in February 1838, which would create the context for Coates to address him as "a Christian Brother" and encourage his continuation in the Christian faith. Jones' permanent departure from Red River would also create the motivation for the letter—to request another missionary.

* * *

8. Hoisting a Flag in Honour—CMS Bishop David Anderson, Letter to Henry Venn, 22 Nov. 1849, p. 566.

The Church of the Indian Settlement was very familiar to us from the sketch in the Bishop of Montreal's Journal, and in your own Missionary Records. . . . I would have called on the Chief, but I was anxious to press on, and reach the Lower Fort that evening. Pigwys the Chief had however hoisted his flag in honor of my arrival, and he since came up to see me, when I presented him with two handsome Bows, which I had brought from England. He seemed much pleased with them and also with some books which I gave him—nor was he less delighted at hearing some sacred music played by my sister on the Instrument which came out with us in the Prince Rupert. He wore as usual his medal (one of George III) which is with them the badge of royalty, the same as a crown with us; to take away the medal is then the same as to dethrone.

* * *

9. Hoisting the Flag on Christmas Eve—CMS Bishop David Anderson, Letter to Henry Venn, 22 Jan. 1850, pp. 588-589.

The ride from the Fort to the Indian Church is the prettiest in the settlement, and the day was bright and beautiful, so that I saw it to great advantage. The greater part of the way you drive through the woods, until you suddenly come on the River at a small Island where the River widens and forms a large sheet of water, almost like a lake, between the Island and the Indian Church. The flag was hoisted in front of the house of the Chief Pigwys and before Mr. Smithurst's house in honor of my arrival.

* * *

10. "We also wish to have an interview"—Chief Miskookenew Henry Prince, Letter to Adams G. Archibald, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, ca. 6 Sep. 1870?, Item 768.

We natives of the Parish of St. Peter's beg to express our gratefulness in being privileged to see the happy and safe arrival of your Excellency in this Province to preside over this Territory. We longed to see the day, more so, on account of the unfriendly feeling which prevailed and made us all unhappy; we trust for the future we shall through divine providence be saved from such trouble, & have peace & friendship reign in our midst.

We are very sorry indeed to bring before your Excellency's notice on the threshold of your charge, the baneful influence of intoxicating liquors on our Indian brothers which

often prove death among us; we beg your Excellence to use your influence to prohibit its circulation to the camps, so to save many of them from untimely grave.

We also wish to have an interview with your Excellence at your earliest convenience, as the season is fast advancing when some of our party must retire to our hunting lands and fisheries.

We thank our great Mother the Queen for appointing you to come and live among us. We trust Her Majesty's Militia will find their homes comfortable amongst us.

We have the honour to be Your Excellency's most humble and obedient servants.

		his
Signed	Henry Prince	X
	Chief	mark

* * *

11. "We the undersigned chiefs"—Nashake-penais, Nanawananan , Ien-She-Capo, Kewetayash, and Ozaawigwan; Letter to Adams G. Archibald; ca. 16 Sep. 1870?, Item 769.

We the undersigned chiefs of this part of the country would wish to address you a few words, and as your time seems to be so much taken up by necessary circumstances, we beg to address you in writing.

Yesterday one of our number spoke to you on behalf of the rest but as time was so limited he had no time to explain things clearly.

In the first place we would beg to state that it is our intention as well as our wish to live in peace with all men, and we would humbly ask how are we to live this winter we are poor and as you are the representative of our great Mother sent to rule over this country and us, we would ask if you are able in any way to assist us to make a living for ourselves during the coming winter.

We would respectfully beg of Your Excellency to grant us an interview as early as is convenient with you, and please let us know what day and what time of said day would be most suitable for us to see you.

As regards the interview we would wish so far as possible that the meeting be composed of Indians solely with the exception of your Excellency and an interpreter as we think the meeting would be conducted to better advantage by the non-interference of men who has our interest very little at heart.

In conclusion we would wish that your Excellency may enjoy many days of prosperity in this country and that you may always remain a friend to Indian in this country.

Nasha-Kee-Pesnais X his mark
 Way-Nah-Wenenahu X his mark
 Ien-She-Capo X his mark
 Kee-Wee-ti-as X his mark
 Oosa-We-quan X his mark

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12. From the Chiefs of the Roseau River—From Kewetayash, Letter to Adams G. Archibald, ca. Winter 1871?, Item 770.

May it please your Excellency—

The undersigned Indian Chiefs of the Roseau River beg leave to approach your Excellency with profound respect and offer you the hand of friendship and then after you the officers of the little army here and all others holding positions of trust in the Province.

Since we saw you last fall we have ever treasured up in our minds your advice and every morning remember you in our prayers—and pay no heed to any bad reports that may be conveyed to us and will continue in this opinion until we have the pleasure of seeing you again.

We hope your Excellency will not forget us altho' we have not an opportunity of seeing you so often as other chiefs—and that when you have any matter of importance under consideration affecting our interests that you will be pleased to convey such intelligence to us.

You are aware that our last fall presents were very small. This has turned out a very severe winter inasmuch that our usual hunt has totally failed. Thus families returned from the hunt two days ago having obtained nothing; and in a starving condition: therefore we hope you will be able to devise some method of relief. Duncan Sinclair Esquire undertakes to be the bearer of this letter.

Your Excellency's faithful children
 Keweetiash +

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13. Requesting Help for Sister—From Joseph Smith, Letter to Adams G. Archibald. Richard Davies, 10 Sep. 1870.

I beg of your excellency the governor, the Dominion of Canada, and of your advise[sic] regarding to my sister, if she dies from the wounds that she got from another man. Of course I trust for the best, and also to give me advise, what I have to do, concerning this affair. Another thing, your excellency the Governor, now its more than ten day[sic] since,

that I am not to earn any thing, owing to this, that I could not leave my sister, and not being able, even to give a mouthful to those that would come & sit with us during the night time. Please your excellency, I beg some thing to eat & a little tea.

I remain you servant truly—

Joseph Smith, An Indian
Xtian

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**14. Notes of an Interview between Miskookenu Henry Prince and Adams G. Archibald,
13 Sept. 1870.**

Notes of Interview between the Lieut. Governor of Manitobah and Henry Prince (Miskookenu) Chief of the Salteaux & Swampies at St. Peters Parish School on the Morning of Tuesday the 13th Sept 1870.

Interpreted

Governor Archibald I have been sent here as you are aware by the Governor General of the Dominion of Canada as the Representative of your Queen and I thus take the earliest opportunity of meeting you Prince and your people so that without further delay you may return to your hunting grounds and make provision for your families during the coming Winter. The Government of this Province has not as yet been fully established and it is impossible just as yet to make treaties but in the spring when matters are in order I shall be most happy to meet all our Indian friends again and talk over and arrange all that is necessary. The Queen has heard of the loyalty of her children here and of their Chief and I am directed to convey her thanks to you for past services and to express the hope that in the future you will all act as loyally as you have done heretofore and thus emulate the loyalty of your late chief and Father who was rewarded for his devotion to the British Crown. I must now allude to another matter which causes me much pain to mention and it is this the small pox I have been told has made its appearance in the Country a case of it being reported at Portage la Prairie. This is another reason why you should return to your Hunting Grounds at once so that the infection may not spread. So then as soon as possible and when the spring comes, I shall be happy to see you all—When the proper time arrives for holding a council I will summon you to it through your Chief. Again I desire to express a trust that you will continue to prove yourselves good and loyal subjects of the Queen and act wisely. I shall now be glad to hear what Prince or any of his People wish to say to me and I also desire that of any of the brothers of this chief or other men of Consideration be present that they should come forward so that they might be introduced to me.

Prince in reply said I speak in your presence as if I stood in that of the Queen. All the words you have spoken this day to us are true. If my Father had not acted wisely in the days that are past I would not have been standing here now nor would I have worked as I did work in the past winter for the cause of the Queen. But as I acted of late so did my Father act long ago. When the snows of a hundred winters had passed over his head he called me to himself and said, “My Son do as I have done and always act with loyalty.” Thus my Father was loyal through all his life, loyal till the time came when the dark grave closed over his body. No one now living, No one in this settlement ever told me to act as I have done. I acted as my Father desired me. I acted because it was my own will, my own desire so to act. I have endeavoured to be loyal. You know whether I have been so or not. Through the cold and dreary winter now past I have often felt pain, often felt weak, often felt sleepy but instead of resting idly I have worked for the Queen and I say these words in the presence of all, that before I would have consented to join those that made this great trouble in the country that I would have died. I cannot tell anything about those matters which caused the rebellion. I had nothing to do with it. My people had nothing to do with it. No dark skinned man had any thing whatsoever to do with it. I grieve to say that there were men who acted thus foolishly in other parts of the settlement. I am sorry that such is the case. I will not however speak of what does not concern my people but of that which does. I have no pay in my hands for my services and that of my Indians though we have suffered much on account of our loyalty. I behold however my reward inasmuch as I see this day before me the representative of our Queen.

If I speak anything not of peace I trust the Governor will make allowance as we are all [then?] poor and weak and unlearned. I would also want to add that we have had several men coming and saying that they were sent by the Queen but they never helped us in any way. Now that we have her true representative he will act justly to us.

Governor Archibald The Queen appreciates your loyalty because it was spontaneous and entailed sacrifice. The loyalty which costs nothing is worth nothing. I would be no true Representative of her Majesty if I did not treat all her loyal subjects well.

Prince I would now speak of one of the deeds of my Father. When my Father died he left all the tribe of the Salteaux Indians in my care and beside these his own people there was another gave the Christian Swampies. When these were settling here he did all that he could to help them. These also he looked upon as his children and he committed them as well as the others when he was dying into my hands to look after & parted. All are now as one . [. .] I want to keep them as one. I want to protect the one tribe as well as the other.

Governor Archibald In thus following the good example of your Father you are acting rightly. [. . .] [I]t is thus far nobler to endeavour to join brethren together in loving bonds than to engage bloodshed & generally corrupt me.

Prince That is true, and now I wish to mention that we were never paid for these lands which Lord Selkirk borrowed from us.

Governor Archibald That is approaching a question which can only be settled as I have already said next spring when the affairs of the province are in a more settled state. We must first proceed to enact laws for the protection of the Indian and the White man alike. Let your Indians show a good example and act loyally above all. [L]et me impress upon them the necessity of abstaining from Strong drink. I must now bring this Council to a close and return to the Upper Fort in order that steps may at once be taken under the help of Divine Providence & restrain the scourge of small pox which now threatens us. Before leaving I have some presents to give you. I do not wish them to be considered in any sense as a recompense for past services but [more?] as gifts of friendship. Again I would ask you will you take my advice & go at once to your Hunting Grounds?

Prince We will. [I]t is to see you we remained—This was the only reason. You were he who we watched for. Before going I would desire to say that I cannot keep my Indians from strong drink. [T]hey will always drink it when they can get it. Let the White man be kept from selling it and all will be well.

Governor Archibald Your words are words of wisdom and they shall be acted on.

Prince [. . .] Will the Governor say where we will meet in the Spring. Will the Stone Fort answer?

Governor Archibald Yes

Prince My people have no ammunition & have no money to buy any.

Archibald I will order a supply what will assist them for the present to be given them at the Stone Fort.

* * *

15. “Whereas the Indian title . . . has not been extinguished”—From Moosoes, Public Notice and Letter to Adams G. Archibald, 17 Dec. 1870.

To all whom it may concern.

Whereas the Indian title to all lands west of the fifty mile boundary line at High Bluff has

not been extinguished &

Whereas those lands are being taken up & the wood thereon cut off by parties who have no right or title thereto,

I hereby warn all such parties that they are infringing on lands that as yet virtually belong to the Indians. I do hereby call on them to desist on pains of forfeiting their labour.

his
Moosoos X
mark

Witness Fred A. Bird

The Chief complains that people come and cut wood without leave and permission and that it is not right.

That the woods belong to the Indians and it seems to them that the people are stealing.

That in the smallest bargains, an agreement is come to between parties but here there was none, and he would like to have some understand about it.

The Chief says that the most of the tribe are out on the Hunting Grounds and that he was left in charge, and that it is not right to cut their wood without even consulting them.

* * *

16. Resolution from the “Principal Indians” of Portage la Prairie —From Ozaawigwan, Ayeetapepetung, Moosoos, and Zhoo-ou, Letter to Adams G. Archibald, 30 May 1871.

To His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba

We Seventy-three of the Principal Indians of Portage la Prairie think well to send to you, a Statement of resolutions passed by us, at a council held here today. May 30 1871.

We this day and for the future, or until such a time that a treaty be made with us, are determined to stand by what we pass at this council.

Its[sic] true that the Settlers do not look at us in the light they ought to,—at this time, we are thinking a great deal of how they have treated us, & how they are treating us at the present.

Why we think so much at the present time, is, because they come about searching our tents, and carrying our people away to other lands, where we think they have no business with us at all.

We 73 in all at this council agree that if any of our people are taken prisoners again,

as they have been taken prisoners before, we are determined to stand up for our own rights. We resolve at this Council that if any of our people are taken by force from amongst us, that these shall be paid to us, the sum of five pounds sterling for so doing.

Also for every day that he is detained, we require for him the sum of one pound (£1) per day—or if he should be imprisoned, we demand the sum of five pounds per day for every day he is retained in gaol.

Why we pass these resolutions at our council held today is because that we never have yet, seen or received any thing for the land and the woods that belong to us, and the settlers use to enrich themselves.

[W]e might not have felt so hard at the present time at the usage we have rec'd of late, had we ever rec'd any remuneration for the said lands & woods that rightly belong to us, so we feel fully justified in passing these laws amongst ourselves and for our own protection.

We feel sorry to have to express these resolutions at our Council today, but stern necessity compels us to do so. We always thought & wished to be friendly with you (the settlers) but can now see that you look upon us as children & we feel that your[sic] are treating us the same.

What was said last fall by the Governor we still remember all.—We were promised by Governor Archibald that we should be treated with as early this spring & that there should be a law for the White Man and a law for us, and that we should assist in making that law.

	his	
Signed	Yellow + Quill	Chief
	mark	

	his
Iei te pee tung	+
	mark

	his
Moosose	+
	mark

	his
Shoo + ouh	
	mark