Nindoodemag: The Significance of Algonquian Kinship Networks in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600–1701

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IN the summer of 1701, the twelve hundred French residents of Montreal played host to some thirteen hundred Native American visitors from communities throughout the Saint Lawrence lowlands and Great Lakes region. They had gathered to ratify a peace agreement, carefully constructed during a decade of difficult and complex negotiations, which was intended to end conflicts among the Haudenosaunee (the Iroquois Confederacy) and the French and their native allies. As Gilles Havard has illustrated in *The Great Peace of Montreal*, the ratification ceremony on August 4 concluded a two-week-long trade fair at a spectacular grand council. There the amalgam of European and Native American diplomatic protocols created a hybridized feast for the senses: the scent of tobacco burning in peace pipes mingled with powder and perfume as the members of the assembly, wearing their finest in dress and adornment, listened to the French and Native Americans give elaborate performances drawn from their respective oratorical traditions. Exchanges of gifts, from wampum and beaver pelts to bread and wine, punctuated the speeches.[1] The relationships forged and strengthened as

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[1] The governor-general of New France, Louis Hector de Callière, gave presents from his own and Native American cultural traditions (see Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott [Montreal, Quebec, 2001], 134).

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a result of this treaty would shape the region's political history for many years to come (Figure I).

This ceremony left behind a documentary record that also drew from distinct cultural traditions. As Havard observed, the text of the treaty followed Native American oratorical conventions with their extensive use of metaphor instead of the numbered clauses of European diplomatic practice. And though French plenipotentiaries and witnesses recorded their assent with signatures, Native American leaders drew pictographic images representing at times, according to the accompanying clerk's note, the mark of a chief, or of a village, or of an entire nation (Figures II–IV). These pictographs of the Great Peace of Montreal bring to the foreground the challenge of understanding Native American collective identities. This treaty was not negotiated between two opposing camps, the French and Native Americans, or really even among three parties: the French, the Haudenosaunee, and France's Native American allies. Aboriginal political organization was far more complex, a fact the French recognized in the preamble to the treaty. The document names twenty-five distinct Native American political entities as parties: the "hurons, outaouacs du Sable [Sable Ottawas], Kiskakons, outaouacs Sinago [Sinago Ottawas], nation de la fourche [Nation of the Fork], sauteurs [people at the rapids of Sault Sainte Marie], pouteouatamis [Potawatomi], sakis [Sauk], puants [Winnebago], folles avoines [Menominee], renards [Fox], maskoutins [Mascouten], Miamis, Ilinois, amikois [Amikwa], nepissingues [Nipissing], algonquins, Temiskamingues [Lake Temiskaming people], Cristinaux [Cree], gens des terres [inland people], Kikapoux, gens du Sault [people of Sault Saint Louis], de la Montagne [people of the mountain], Abenakis, et vous nations iroquoises [Iroquois Confederacy]."[2] Yet the names of these political entities do not consistently correspond with the Native American pictographic signatures on the treaty document itself; there

[2] Havard offers a thorough comparative discussion of diplomatic protocols at the peace (Havard, *Great Peace of Montreal*, 136–38). For an overview of Native American diplomatic protocol in the region, see Havard's first chapter, "Key Elements of Amerindian Diplomacy" (15–26). See also the excellent essays in Francis Jennings, ed., *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1985). The names of nations are as they appear in the manuscript copy of the peace. Names in square brackets are more familiar tribal designations or translations from the French. The manuscript of this treaty is a clerk's copy, made at the time of the signing; the pictographs as well were copied by the clerk. Unfortunately, no original copy of the manuscript treaty is known to exist ("Ratification de la Paix . . . ," Fonds des Colonies, série C11A, 19: folios 41–44 [quotation, 41], Archives nationales, France, Paris). For a comparative discussion of all the images on this treaty, see Yann Guillaud, Denys Delâge, and Mathieu d'Avignon, "Les signatures amérindiennes: essai d'interprétation des traités de paix de Montréal de 1700 et de 1701," *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 31, no. 2 (2001): 21–41.

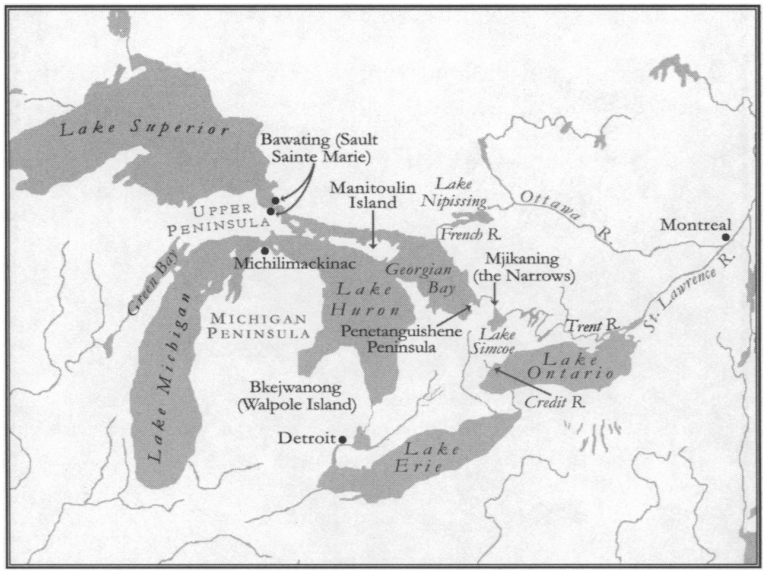

FIGURE I

Significant Anishinaabe sites in the central and eastern Great Lakes region. Adapted from a map created by Joey Morin, freelance artist. Drawn by Rebecca L. Wrenn.

are thirty-eight or thirty-nine distinct pictographs (depending on how one counts).

Similar images appear on a few scattered treaties and deeds from regions of New England and the middle colonies from the seventeenth century, but the Great Peace of Montreal contains the earliest known images of such inscriptions on a treaty document by France's Native American allies of the Great Lakes region. Twenty of these images, those of catfish, crane, beaver, bear, plover, thunderbird or eagle, marten, sturgeon, and other fauna, display a remarkable similarity to pictographs on late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century treaties with the French allied Algonquian-speaking Anishinaabe peoples, who may be more familiarly known to scholars of these periods as Ojibwa (or Chippewa), Ottawa (or Odawa), Potawatomi, and Algonquin. In these later periods, the images clearly represent the *nindoodemag*, or kinship networks, of those Anishinaabe signatories. In this cultural tradition, people inherited their *nindoodemag* identities from their fathers; they conceived of themselves as related to and having kin obligations toward those who shared the

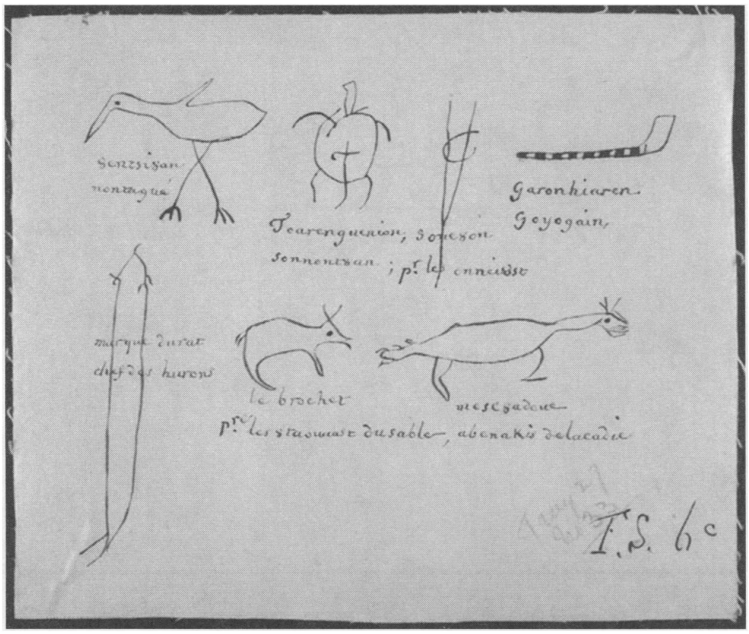

FIGURE II

Signature page from the 1701 Great Peace, folio 43, recto. Clerk's copy. "Ratification de la Paix . . . ," Fonds des Colonies, série C11A, 19: folios 41–44. Courtesy, Archives nationales, France, Paris.

same other-than-human progenitor being. Evidence from a wide range of sources, including oral traditions, iconography, linguistics, and material culture, all speak to the importance of these networks in Anishinaabe social and political life. *Nindoodemag* shaped marriage and alliance patterns and facilitated long-distance travel; access to community resources was also negotiated through these networks.[3] Sources dating from the

[3] "Algonquin" refers to those eastern Anishinaabe people from the Ottawa River region. "Algonquian" is the name given by linguists to the family of related languages including those spoken by Anishinaabe peoples (as well as the Fox, Illinois, Menominee, Cree, Abenaki, and many others). *Nindoodem* is the singular; *nindoodemag*, the plural. Pronunciation is straightforward: nin-doo-dem or nin-doh-dem (as in them) and nin-doh-dem-ag. *Nindoodem* is written here with the first-person possessive pronoun, translating literally as "my doodem." This format is the standard convention for this class of nouns, which never appears without a possessive pronoun. My thanks to Rand Valentine for bringing this convention to my attention. For examples of other northeastern North American treaty documents signed with pictographs, see the comprehensive survey of these documents: Alden T.

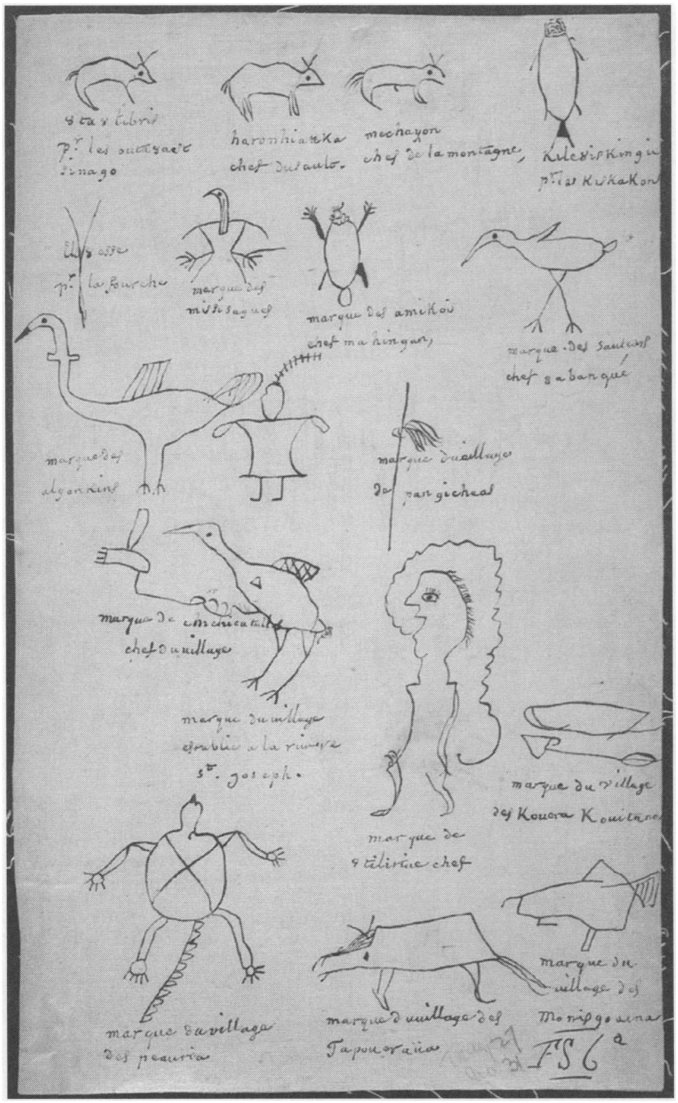

FIGURE III

Signature page from the 1701 Great Peace, folio 43, verso. Clerk's copy. "Ratification de la Paix . . . ," Fonds des Colonies, série C11A, 19: folios 41–44. Courtesy, Archives nationales, France.

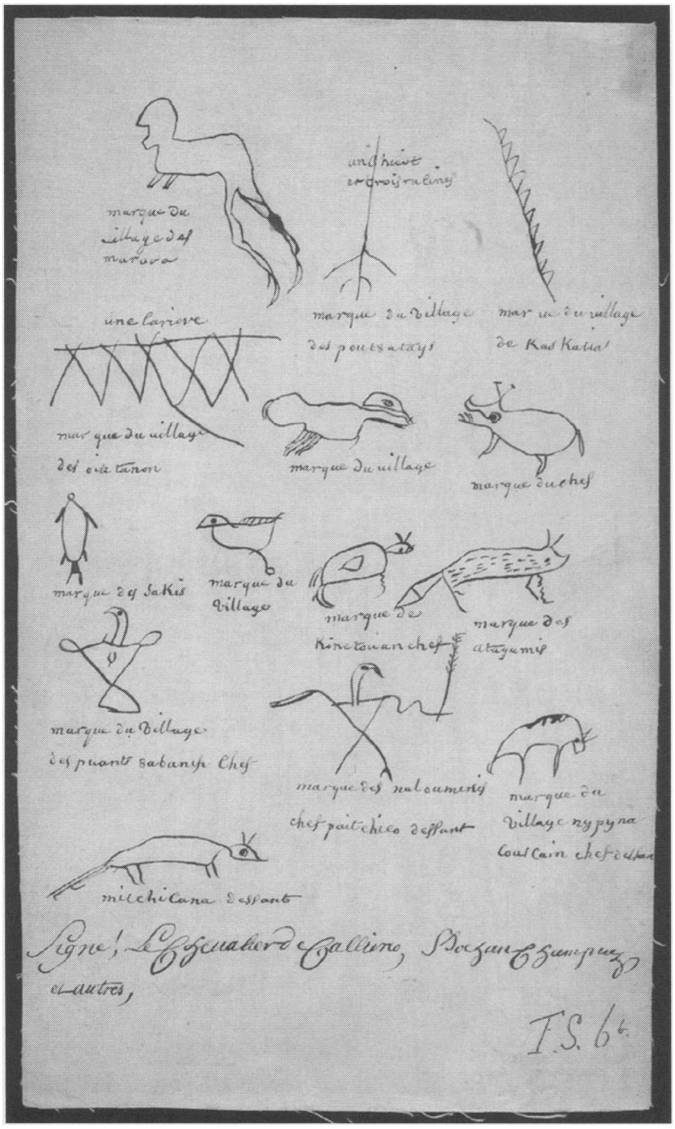

FIGURE IV

Signature page from the 1701 Great Peace, folio 44, recto. Clerk's copy. "Ratification de la Paix . . . ," Fonds des Colonies, série CIIA, 19: folios 41–44. Courtesy, Archives nationales, France.

seventeenth century suggest that in this earlier period and likely before contact, *nindoodemag* operated as an important component of Anishinaabe collective identities, fulfilling similar social and political functions. For historians of Anishinaabe peoples, the implication of the *nindoodem* identity is clear: though alliances with the French were important, they were not necessarily central to the Anishinaabe sense of collective identity.

The issue of collective identity lies at the heart of ethnohistorical scholarship, and is central to Richard White's *The Middle Ground*, the most influential work on the region's history to date. In it White described the intercultural accommodation that shaped the alliance between the French and their aboriginal allies as a middle ground, a space of common meaning and sometimes creative misunderstandings in which neither side had the force to compel the behavior of the other. White's middle ground thus sets up a space between two cultures, with the French on one side and their aboriginal allies on the other. A crucial component of White's argument is that these aboriginal allies formed a distinct collective identity on the basis of their relationships with the French. White included in his definition of Algonquian all those aboriginal inhabitants of the Great Lakes region who were not members of the Iroquois Confederacy, proposing that these peoples shared two important common bonds from which they could create a distinct collective identity. In addition to their ties with the French, they were all enemies of the Iroquois Confederacy, whose continual attacks beginning in the 1640s had forced them from their homes and turned them into refugees. The initial chapters of *The Middle Ground* are the story of Algonquian-speaking Anishinaabe peoples piecing together a new collective identity from the ruins of what White describes as their "shattered" world with the "imported imperial glue" supplied by French mediators. Once reconstructed these refugees entered into a relationship of mutual cultural accommodation with the French; they metaphorically constructed "Onontio" (the governor of New France), as their father.[4] Later chapters explore how the middle ground as a cultural space survived (just barely) the defeat of the French in the French and Indian War, when officials in the British Indian Department, led by William Johnson, were able to

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Vaughan, ed., *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607–1789* (Washington, D.C., 1979–). For my doctoral research, I analyzed hundreds of *nindoodemag* images on treaty documents to understand and map out Anishinaabe kinship networks (see Heidi Bohaker, "*Nindoodemag*: Anishinaabe Identities in the Eastern Great Lakes Region, 1600–1900" [Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 2006]).

[4] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, 1991), 1–2, xi ("Onontio").

broker a new alliance with the former French allies by assuming the mantle of father. But after the War of 1812, dramatically increasing settlement pressure and peace between the British and Americans reduced the need for aboriginal allies and firmly tipped the balance of power; at this point the middle ground, and its associated common Algonquian identity, collapsed.

In the fifteen years since the publication of *The Middle Ground,* an explosion of scholarly research on aboriginal historical experiences has prompted a reevaluation of White's propositions that first, Great Lakes peoples should be characterized as refugees in the 1650s, and second, they formed a new collective identity as a result of their alliance with the French. Ethnohistorians researching the eastern Great Lakes of the seventeenth century have all faced the same challenges that confronted White: the patchiness of available documentary evidence. There are large gaps in coverage of time and space. The resulting ethnohistorical research has been shaped by these primary sources. For White the paucity of documentation from which he had to work results in "a historical landscape that consists largely of dim shadows." Thus, he argues, "a fractured society has been preserved in fractured memory. To pretend this world exists otherwise is to deceive." The dim shadows of this historical landscape, however, can be more clearly illuminated when scholars become familiar with Anishinaabe communicative practices. Through iconography Anishinaabe peoples communicated their collective sense of selves. These people employed what semioticians would describe as a nonalphabetic semiotic system, which was used for private and public communications.[5] Anishinaabe peoples inscribed images of icons and symbols on sacred scrolls, treaty documents, ceremonial and everyday objects, and their own bodies by tattooing and painting. Today one can find examples of these icons and images in archives, museum collections, and at rock painting sites on a range of media including

[5] Two edited collections have been particularly helpful in shaping my thinking on the writing of aboriginal history. See Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds., *Reading beyond Words: Contexts for Native History* (Peterborough, Ontario, 1996); Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny, eds., *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500–1700* (Toronto, Ontario, 2001). Patricia Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis, 1500–1700* (Lincoln, Neb., 1995), helped me to think about the formation of aboriginal collective identities, and Alice Nash, "The Abiding Frontier: Family, Gender and Religion in Wabanaki History, 1600–1763" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1997), underscored my sense of the centrality of kinship in supporting the continuity of Native American identity and cultural traditions. In contrast, White saw a sharp discontinuity in parallel with the disruption of a French recording presence in the region (White, *Middle Ground*, 2). Africanists are developing new techniques for reading indigenous knowledge systems as historical sources. For a discussion of nonalphabetic semiotic systems in an African context, see Simon Battestini, *African Writing and Text* (New York, 2000).

birch bark, paper, wood, cloth, hides, and stone. Interdisciplinary scholarship in other fields of study now offers well-established methodologies for historians seeking to work with these diverse sources and to incorporate evidence from oral traditions and aboriginal languages.[6] Through exploration of these different streams of evidence produced in the century preceding the signing of the Great Peace of Montreal, it becomes clear that Anishinaabe peoples had an entirely different method for organizing their sociopolitical world than the Europeans they encountered. A crucial component of this world, as expressed through *nindoodemag*, centered on kin.

Evidence from origin stories and linguistics dates the *nindoodem* identity to well before Champlain's 1603 visit to the Lachine Rapids in the Saint Lawrence River. Anishinaabe peoples explained to the French that members of each *nindoodem* could trace their descent from an other-than-human progenitor being, such as the First Beaver or First Bear. Fur trader and interpreter Nicolas Perrot presented one of the earliest known records of the oral tradition of the system in his *Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes et relligion des sauvages de l'Amérique septentrionale.* Perrot spent a good portion of his adult life living among various communities in the Great Lakes region in the later part of the seventeenth century. He acquired fluency in Anishinaabemowin (the Anishinaabe language) and wintered with a number of communities.[7] In his account

[6] For examples of semiotic systems in practice in the Great Lakes region, see Selwyn Dewdney, *The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway* (Toronto, Ontario, 1975); Thor Conway, "Ojibwa Oral History Relating to 19th Century Rock Art," *American Indian Rock Art* 15 (1992): 11–26. In his analysis of rock art, Conway sees strong patterns of continuity between early (pre-seventeenth-century) and nineteenth-century practices. See also Ruth Bliss Phillips, "Dreams and Designs: Iconographic Problems in Great Lakes Twined Bags," in *Great Lakes Indian Art*, ed. David W. Penney (Detroit, Mich., 1989), 53–68; Grace Rajnovich, *Reading Rock Art: Interpreting the Indian Rock Paintings of the Canadian Shield* (Toronto, Ontario, 1994). For examples of wampum, see Francis Jennings, ed., *Iroquois Indians [Microform]: A Documentary History of the Diplomacy of the Six Nations and Their League* (Woodbridge, Conn., 1984), reel 50. Germaine Warkentin discusses this system in action during a peace negotiation in 1645 (Warkentin, "In Search of 'The Word of the Other': Aboriginal Sign Systems and the History of the Book in Canada," *Book History* 2, no. 1 [1999]: 1–27). This list is a very small selection of writings on the expressive culture of Great Lakes peoples. For working with oral tradition and the use of evidence from linguistics, see in particular the work of Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, Wis., 1985); Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison, Wis., 1990).

[7] Nicolas Perrot, *Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes et relligion des sauvages de l'Amérique septentrionale*, ed. Jules Tailhan (Montreal, Quebec, 1999). Perrot's manuscript was written at the end of his career to inform the new intendant of New France of the pertinent information necessary for understanding the indigenous peoples of the region. For a concise biography of Perrot, see Claude Perrault, "Nicolas Perrot," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* vol. 2, s.v. "Perrot."

Perrot presents an Anishinaabe creation story as a general statement of North American indigenous peoples' beliefs concerning the creation of the world and human beings. This sacred story is part of what Anishinaabe peoples call *aadizookaanag*, or the grandfathers. Stories of this genre are set in time immemorial; they explain how the world came to have its present form and furnish embedded observations on how the beings who currently inhabit it should relate to one another. Anishinaabe peoples share a variant of the earth diver story with the Haudenosaunee, with some crucial differences. The opening is common, with the world initially existing entirely as a great sea, all the first animals floating together on a raft. But in the Anishinaabe version, there is no Sky Woman. Instead the Great Hare, as the leader of the animals, enlists the aid of the divers (the Beaver, the Otter, and finally the Muskrat) to secure a grain of sand from the water bottom and from that sand, they created land. With this new world, each of these first beings sought the best place to locate "for obtaining therein their pasture or their prey."[8]

When these first beings died, Perrot explained that "the Great Hare caused the birth of men from their corpses, as also from those of the fishes which were found along the shores of the rivers which he had formed in creating the land." This story explains the origin of *nindoodemag*: people took as their identity that which they shared with their apical, or first, other-than-human ancestor. And, Perrot notes, by extension they gave the name of the *nindoodem* to their villages, in reference to "the animal which has given its people their being." This oral tradition, recorded in the mid- to late seventeenth century, connects the inhabitants of a village with a particular other-than-human progenitor and with distinct geographic locales. At the mission to the Potawatomi in 1666, Father Le Mercier also observed this expansive concept of relatedness between beings having different corporeal forms. After the death of an elderly man, Le Mercier reported: "it is held beyond dispute that this old man's father was a Hare, —an animal which runs over the snow in winter, —and that thus the snow, the Hare, and the old man are of the same village, —that is, are relatives." Likewise Perrot was in attendance at the June 1671 ceremony held in Sault Saint Marie, at which the

[8] For a Wendat (Huron) version of the earth diver story, see Bruce G. Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 2 vols. (Montreal, Quebec, 1976). Daniel K. Richter discusses Haudenosaunee traditions in Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992). The Anishinaabe story appears in the writings of Nicolas Perrot. The version cited here is taken from the English translation (see Emma Helen Blair, ed. and trans., *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes* . . . [Cleveland, Ohio, 1911], 1: 35–37 [quotation, 37]).

French delegates attempted to claim the Great Lakes region for France and to cement the alliance between themselves and the people of the region. Perrot observed that there was an official document that the governor's delegate "made all the peoples sign [by their chiefs], who for their signatures depict the insignia of their families; some of them drew a beaver, others an otter, a sturgeon, a deer, or an elk." Jesuit Sebastian Rales expanded on Perrot's story in 1691, identifying the "family of Michabou, —that is to say, of 'the Great Hare,'" the "family of the Carp" and the "family of the Bear" as also recognizing descent from other-than-human progenitors.[9]

The linguistic evidence for *nindoodemag* reaches back to Proto-Algonquian and underscores the antiquity of Anishinaabe kinship networks. In Proto-Algonquian */*ote/* is a reconstructed verb stem likely meaning "to dwell together as a group/village," and **nint/ote/-m* is therefore "my fellow clan-member." In one of the earliest known extant Algonquian dictionaries, the 1661 Sulpician Dictionaire algonquin-français manuscript, */*ote/* appears in reference to a house or a family. *Nindoodem* is a dependent noun; like other Anishinaabe kinship terminology, it always appears with a prefix indicating the possessed relationship with respect to the speaker. The root */*ote/* also takes a possessive suffix, *-m*. When speaking of the class of words that take the possessive suffix, Anishinaabemowin linguist J. Randolph Valentine notes that "all of these exceptional nouns appear to represent items of great cultural antiquity and close personal possession." None of this evidence directly links the concept of */*ote/* in Proto-Algonquian with *nindoodem* identity or with belief in descent from an other-than-human progenitor. As anthropologist Charles A. Bishop has pointed out, "the concept in proto-Algonquian may simply have referred to some category of relatives, primarily those related by blood but perhaps including affinal kin too." The presence of origin stories connecting people to others sharing the same *nindoodem* and to other-than-human progenitors, however, strongly argues in favor of the antiquity of the system, among most, if not all, eastern Great Lakes Anishinaabe peoples. Furthermore if the system arose

[9] Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 1: 35–37, 347. The *Jesuit Relations*, another set of texts crucial for seventeenth-century Great Lakes studies, is also published in translation and widely available. I use the seventy-three volumes of the Thwaites edition (Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791: The Original French, Latin, and Italian Texts, with English Translations and Notes* . . . [Cleveland, Ohio, 1899], 51: 33 [quotation], 67: 153, 157). For the importance of considering the production of the *Jesuit Relations* as part of the hagiographic tradition of Catholic writing, see Allan Greer, "Colonial Saints: Gender, Race, and Hagiography in New France," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 57, no. 2 (April 2000): 323–48.

as a means of keeping in contact with relatives displaced by war and disease in the mid-seventeenth century, those events would still have been fresh in the minds of those relating accounts to Perrot and others. The stories would not have taken the narrative form of *aadizookaanag*.[10]

When Europeans first arrived in the Great Lakes region, they encountered people who asserted their *nindoodemag*. As anthropologists Harold Hickerson and Bishop have noted, there are strong parallels between some of the ethnonyms recorded in texts and on maps by early European observers and *nindoodemag* described in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These names answer the question "*awenen windoodemiwaan*," or what is their *nindoodem*? The answer might be "*kinoshe odoodeman*," the pike is their *nindoodem*, or "*kinoosehspirini*": they are pike people. For example Champlain met a group of these Quenongebin, or Kinounchepirini, on his first visit up the Ottawa River in 1613. Depending on the context, *irini* can mean either people or men, though men is the logical interpretation given the patrilineal and patrilocal preferences of Anishinaabe peoples. *-Irini* is the eastern

[10] For nineteenth-century indigenous explanations of this system, see G[eorge] Copway, *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (London, 1850); Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians With Especial Reference to Their Conversion to Christianity* (London, [1861]); William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway Nation* (1885; repr., Minneapolis, Minn., 1970). For an anthropological discussion, see Charles Callender, "Great Lakes-Riverine Sociopolitical Organization," in *The Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger, vol. 15 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, D.C., 1978), 621. Missionaries prepared manuscript dictionaries and word lists to aid in language learning. These can provide important sources of information about aboriginal social and political structures. See, for example, Anonymous, Dictionnaire algonquin-français [1661], original in Séminaire de Montreal, les Prêtres de Saint-Sulpice, microfilm at the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. J. Randolph Valentine is a leading authority on the grammar of the Anishinaabe language and is undertaking research into historic forms (Valentine, *Nishnaabemwin Reference Grammar* [Toronto, Ontario, 2001], 202). Anthropologists have historically been more interested in studying aboriginal kinship systems than historians, but for the Anishinaabe, only a few scholars have really approached the question. See Charles A. Bishop, "The Question of Ojibwa Clans," in *Actes du Vingtième Congrès des Algonquinistes*, ed. William Cowan (Ottawa, Ontario, 1989), 52. The narrative structures of Anishinaabe oral traditions reveal important insights into the time-depth of *nindoodemag*. The narrative structures of *aadizookaanag* (sacred stories) and *dibaajimowin* (ordinary stories or histories) are distinctly different. In *aadizookaanag* the details may shift and time is immemorial but the core teachings remain observable. *Dibaajimowin* are histories in which there is a sense of time and specific details of events. See an example of this sort of history in the account by Pierre Pastedouchan's grandmother of the sixteenth-century encounter between the French and Montagnais (Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 5: 119). See also Mary B. Black-Rogers, foreword to Thomas W. Overholt, J. Baird Callicott, and William Jones, *Clothed-in-Fur and Other Tales: An Introduction to an Ojibwa World View* (Lanham, Md., 1982), 1–3; Christopher Vecsey, *Imagine Ourselves Richly: Mythic Narratives of North American Indians* (San Francisco, Calif., 1991).

Anishinaabemowin suffix for men. As women generally married in from other families, the only pike women Champlain would have met in this location would have been unmarried girls living with their parents. The wives of the pike men would have had their own *nindoodemag*. Other names that appear in early documents that can be directly linked with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *nindoodemag* were: *Amikwa* (beaver), *Passinouek* (echo maker or crane), *Marameg* (catfish), *Nikikouek* (otter), *Kiskakon* (cut-tail or catfish), *Monsoni* (moose), and *Outchougai* (heron). The names *Passinouek* and *Kiskakon* are metaphors for their respective *nindoodemag*. Nineteenth-century Ojibwa author William W. Warren explained that the literal translation of *Passinouek* means echo maker, in reference to "the loud, clear, and far reaching cry of the Crane."[11] In the early twentieth century, anthropologist William Jones collected a long list of clan names for Anishinaabe peoples; most names had one or more associative metaphors. For example *Wawa* (swans) were also known as *Pamaangik* (they that pass by singing). *Amikwa* (beavers) could also be described as *Pimaawidassiwag*, or carriers.[12] It is also quite

[11] A few anthropologists have made a study of Anishinaabe ethnonyms: Harold Hickerson, *The Chippewa and Their Neighbors: A Study in Ethnohistory* (New York, 1970); Bishop, "Question of Ojibwa Clans." Theresa M. Schenck has also written on the Anishinaabe kinship system and the misapplication of that system by anthropologists to other contexts (see Schenck, "The Algonquian Totem and Totemism: A Distortion of the Semantic Field," in *Papers of the Twenty-Eighth Algonquian Conference*, ed. David H. Pentland [Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1997], 341–53). Samuel de Champlain recorded some of the earliest known ethnonyms in his writings and on his maps (Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, ed. H. P. Biggar [Toronto, Ontario, 1925], 2: 264). If the letter "i" is inserted between the "s" and the "p," the word would be *kinosehsipirini* and could then be translated as pike river people. Thanks to Alan Corbiere of Kinoomaadoog Cultural and Historical Research on Manitoulin Island for bringing this problem to my attention. William Warren provides an extensive discussion of *nindoodemag* as a system (Warren, *History of the Ojibway Nation*, 47).

[12] Twentieth-century anthropologists were still able to find elders who could talk about the system. The Harvard-educated William Jones was able to obtain additional insights as he was Fox, and was born on a Fox and Sauk reservation in 1871. See Jones, "Ethnographic and linguistic field notes on the Ojibwa Indians," folder 1, American Philosophical Society. The name "cut-tail" was described by Johanna E. and Christian F. Feest as referring to the bear clan because of the reference to the bear's nearly absent tail (Feest and Feest, "Ottawa," in Trigger, *Northeast*, 776). The Kiskakon signature on the treaty of 1701, however, is clearly a fish (see Figure III, top right). Alan Corbiere, a historical researcher for the M'Chigeeng First Nation, has suggested a possible explanation. The first part of the word, "Kisk," is written today as "Giish" and means "to cut." The second part of the word, however, does not make sense unless one is talking about a fish. As Corbiere explains: "usually, when Nish are talking about tails . . . they use the final morpheme '-aanowe' (-aanwe in Manitoulin dialect). Some examples . . . include ginwaanowe 'It has a long tail'; takwaanowe 'It has a short tail,' titibaanowe 'It has a twisted tail'; waabaanowe 'It has a white tail.' Therefore, theoretically, 'cut-tail' in this context should be 'giishkaanowed' or

possible that other recorded ethnonyms in early documents may be additional metaphors for *nindoodemag*; it will likely require collaborative efforts between first language Anishinaabemowin speakers and French language specialists to decode metaphorical meanings embedded in the haphazard orthography of seventeenth-century European observer-writers.

Further complicating research is that some of the ethnonyms on early maps and in early documents actually have no association with *nindoodemag*, such as Champlain's name "Cheveux relevés" for the party of warriors he met at the mouth of the French River in 1615. Anishinaabe peoples also had other collective identities. The people who gathered annually around Allumette Island in the Ottawa River were *Kitchisipirini*, or Great River people. This name reflects the Anishinaabe practice of also identifying local groups with geographic features. These *Kitchispirini*, however, signed the Great Peace of Montreal with a crane. Anishinaabe peoples living east of Lake Huron referred to those people living on the Michigan peninsula as the *Outagami*, or "person of the other side of the water."[13] In addition to their *nindoodemag*, Anishinaabe peoples had a sense of themselves as members of a small, extended family band who wintered together, as well as a larger group of people who inhabited the same region or area (quarter) during the summer season.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, Champlain, Sagard, and the Jesuits all used "nation," "nations," and "natio" when referring to groupings of indigenous peoples. However, what they were seeing expressed was *nindoodem* identity. The French word nation is defined in an early-seventeenth-century French dictionary, Niçot's *Thresor de la langue françoyse*, by the Latin words *gens* and *natio*. In Latin these terms can be synonyms, as Cicero used them, for example, in reference to distant and barbarous people. *Natio* specifically connotes birth, and

'Giishkaanowe.'" Corbiere has examined William Jones's collection of Anishinaabe stories and notes the use of "-agwan" instead for fish tail, making kiskakon, giisshkagwan—"cut tail of a fish." Though this finding is preliminary, Corbiere's work underscores the need for nonnative historians to collaborate with aboriginal language speakers to extract more nuanced understandings from the available primary sources (Alan Corbiere, personal communication, Jan. 13, 2004). The translation "cut-tail of a fish" makes sense from a biological perspective as well, since the mature catfish has a deeply forked caudal (tail) fin that is clearly visible when viewed from above.

[13] Champlain named the "Cheveux relevés" (or High Hairs) because of their elaborately combed hairstyles, which in his opinion rivaled those of the courtiers in France (Champlain, *Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 3: 43 ["Cheveux relevés"]). For the *Kichesipirini*, see the earliest enumeration of aboriginal nations in the *Jesuit Relations* in 1640 (Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 18: 227–35). The specific reference to the *Kichesipirini* is on 229. The *Outagami* are also known as the Fox or Renards (see Ives Goddard, "Fox Social Organization, 1650–1850," in *Papers of the Sixth Algonquian Conference, 1974*, ed. William Cowan [Ottawa, Ontario, 1975], 131).

through that definition "a breed, stock, kind, species or race," whereas *gens*, whose root is gen—that of which belongs together by birth or descent—is defined as "a race or clan, embracing several families united together by a common name and by certain religious rites." Nations, in the plural, was often used by the French in sacred or religious texts to refer to infidels or idolatrous peoples, as opposed to Christians. The earliest noted example of this in French is the fourth edition of the *Dictionnarie de l'Académie française*, published in 1762, but Roman scholars first made this plural association. Champlain and the early missionaries saw the Wendat (Huron) confederacy comprised of four (and later, five) distinct nations, as the villages belonging to each nation separately occupied a bounded geographic location on the Penetanguishene peninsula. When Champlain and early missionaries came across large summer gatherings of Anishinaabe peoples, each of these locations would have fit the French understanding of a distinct nation as well. Annual gatherings at significant sites such as Tadoussac, Trois-Rivières, and the Lachine rapids saw populations of one to two thousand, though these aggregations did not include every member. At any given time, yet especially during the summer months, there would have been parties of mostly men (and some women) away on trading and military missions. Champlain's estimate of the Nipissing population at seven hundred, for example, likely did not take these travelers into account. Though women accompanied men on long voyages (men rarely traveled alone), women with small children and the elderly were more stationary during the summer months, occupying themselves with gardening and fish drying. What the French saw as nations were, in fact, extended family groups of Anishinaabe people. Though the French were hardly aware of it, what they were labeling nation was the *nindoodem* identity.[14]

It is tempting to equate *nindoodem* identity expressed in these examples with a village, place, or people as a simple mark of distinction. Yet given the complex spiritual world in which Anishinaabe peoples lived, and their origin stories that lack Western notions of a human-animal divide, the concept of *nindoodem* transcends physical realms. The Great Lakes region is a political space that accommodated and still accommodates a more inclusive category of personhood. Here there can be otter

[14] See Jean Niçot, ed., *Thresor de la langue françoyse, tant ancienne que moderne* (1606), available via the Project for American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language (ARTFL Project) at http://humanities.uchicago.edu/orgs/ARTFL (*Dictionnaire de L'Académie Françoise* [1762], 2: 197, s.v. "nation"; also available at http://humanities.uchicago. edu/orgs/ARTFL). The Latin definition of *gens* is from Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, Eng., 1879). I used the online version at Tufts University: www.perseus.tufts.edu. For the best discussion of Wendat sociopolitical organization, see Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic*.

people in the form of otters and otter people in the form of humans. Reincarnation, dreams, and metamorphoses provide for the movement of ensouled beings between different physical forms and different real and imagined landscapes. Thus, in Perrot's origin story, there are beavers or beaver souls in human and animal form. As Anishinaabe legal scholar Darlene Johnston describes it, the *Amikwa* (or Beaver people) "draw their being, the 'soul of their Nation' and the name of their Nation" from the "Body-Soul" of the Great or First Beaver. In the Great Lakes region, it is souls, not shared blood, that create the ties that bind. The *aadizookaanag* (sacred stories) teach that Anishinaabe political geography cannot be separated from the spiritual landscape of the region. These stories ground firmly in the physical realm what Westerners would perceive as belonging to the spiritual and imagined realms. The earliest seventeenth-century texts of the encounter between Champlain and the Anishinaabe include references to the sacredness of particular sites and the practice of making offerings of tobacco to local *manitouk* (ensouled, other-than-human beings). Later Perrot was told that the tomb of the Great Beaver was on the French River. He noted that when the *Amikwa* "pass by that place, they invoke him and blow [tobacco] smoke into the air in order to honor his memory, and to entreat him to be favorable to them in the journey that they have to make."[15] The *aadizookaanag* are the key to understanding the spiritual significance of landscape. Only through immersion in the culture and the stories of Anishinaabe peoples could the ensouled landscape be manifest.

Within this spiritually charged geography, Anishinaabe peoples moved annually in patterns of aggregation and dispersal that thoroughly unsettled even the earliest European notions of civilized society. Jesuit Charles Lalemant described in 1626 how two or three families, consisting of anywhere from ten to twenty people, wandered for six months of winter, "erecting their cabins together in one place." Twenty or thirty families then came together at specific locations on the Saint Lawrence in summer to fish and socialize.[16] In 1640 Lalemant's brother, Jerôme,

[15] Noted anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell articulated the notion of "other-than-human 'persons'" and explored how Anishinaabe peoples conceptualized metamorphosis (see Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View," in *Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin*, ed. Stanley Diamond [New York, 1960], 21–52 [quotation, 23]). Darlene Johnston is an assistant professor of law at the University of Toronto. She spent ten years in land claims research for her community, the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation. During that period she struggled to reconcile histories told by elders with the documentary record of Europeans. See Johnston, "Litigating Identity: The Challenge of Aboriginality" (master's thesis, University of Toronto, 2003), 74. For references to the spiritual observations of those who have the beaver as their *nindoodem*, see Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 1: 63.

[16] Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 4: 203.

observed the same pattern among the people who gathered on the shore of Lake Nipissing:

> They seem to have as many abodes as the year has seasons, —in the Spring a part of them remain for fishing, where they consider it the best; a part go away to trade with the tribes which gather on the shore of the North or icy sea [James Bay], upon which they voyage ten days, after having spent thirty days upon the rivers, in order to reach it. In summer, they all gather together, on the road of the Hurons [Wendat] to the French [the Ottawa River], on the border of a large lake which bears their name . . . About the middle of Autumn, they begin to approach our Hurons, upon whose lands they generally spend the winter.[17]

It is this mobility that complicates the mapping of political geography and the writing of political history. For not even one half of the year would it have been accurate to locate the Nipissing near the lake that now bears their name. And even during their time of residence, parties of Nipissing Anishinaabe people were engaged in long-distance trade missions. People participated in widespread but seasonally expected, politically negotiated movements. This preference for movement and relocation continued among the Anishinaabe peoples into the twentieth century.[18]

Evidence from source documents reveals that these relocations were planned, negotiated, and preferred before and after 1650. The act of relocation served a wide range of social and political functions; it was a deeply embedded cultural practice that would be changed only with great reluctance. Dispersals protected against overhunting of large game animals during the winter season. Aggregations served important social functions, allowing young people to meet marriage partners from new communities in the summer season and then to be assured, after marriage, of having the opportunity to see birth family relatives on a regular basis. Today Anishinaabe elders also explain relocation as a way to rest the land by living lightly on it through frequent movement. Yet these cycles also met Anishinaabe gender identity needs; being a hunter was inextricably bound with conceptions of acceptable masculinity. Household and horticultural tasks such as cultivating the soil and chopping wood belonged to the women's sphere.[19] These seasonal patterns of

[17] Ibid., 21: 259.

[18] See, for example, the efforts of the Grassy Narrows people to continue the practice of relocating for winter hunting post-World War II (Anastasia M. Shkilnyk, "The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community: Relations with the Outside Society," in *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, ed. Ken S. Coates and Robin Fisher, 2d ed. [Toronto, Ontario, 1996], 223–44).

[19] Anthropologists have made sophisticated studies of the practices of people who relocated seasonally to hunt, fish, and gather. See Eleanor Leacock and Richard

summer aggregation and winter dispersal do not tell the entire story. Lalemant's description suggests four abodes for four seasons, yet the fuller picture is far more complex. The term aggregation implies stability and stationary location. Though people gathered together in summer, they could do so in multiple instances with different groups. Furthermore widespread travel for trade, visits, and war meant, if anything, that summer could be a time of dispersal for those who had just spent the winter together. And winter dispersals were less isolating than one might think. Depending on weather conditions, feasting and visiting occurred wherever possible as people made and broke camp. People began to head out in wintering groups at any time from the middle of October to the start of December. Gender and kinship shaped the formation of these groups as households generally consisted of brothers, their spouses, and children, but the system was flexible enough to provide for groups of fathers and sons-in-law. This annual pattern was not interrupted or fundamentally altered in the seventeenth century, though the geographic locales in which they occurred changed for some groups.

In the first half of the seventeenth century, Anishinaabe sociopolitical organization was characterized by groups, or bands, that represented dynamic localized expressions of common *nindoodemag*. Yet Anishinaabe peoples also shared the southeastern portion of this region with Iroquoian-speaking horticulturalists such as the Wendat, Erie, Neutral, and the Haudenosaunee. Some of these Anishinaabe bands also formed

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Lee, eds., *Politics and History in Band Societies* (Cambridge, 1982); Richard B. Lee, personal communication (December 2002). See also Richard B. Lee, "What Hunters Do for a Living, or How to Make Out on Scarce Resources," in *Man the Hunter*, ed. Lee and Irven De Vore (Chicago, 1968), 30–48, and the articles in Lee and Richard Daly, eds., *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers* (Cambridge, 1999). Anishinaabe elders who today have responsibility for the petroglyphs near Peterborough, Ontario, explained the importance of the rock art and broader aspects of their cultural traditions in a 1987 documentary (*Kinomaagewaapkong: The Teaching Rocks*, 1987, Television Ontario [TVO], 20 minutes). The Jesuits noted the strict gender division of labor in Anishinaabe and Montagnais households. Paul Le Jeune credited the strict division with the "peace in their households" (Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 5: 133). Perrot described this division of labor in detail in his chapter on marriage. Men specifically were responsible for delivering venison to the door of the cabin, whereas fish were left in the canoe. After that point the food became the responsibility and the property of the women (Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 1: 64–78). The significance of the male hunter role persisted through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries (see Shkilnyk, "Destruction of an Ojibwa Community"). Of the 3,818 individuals enumerated in the heads-of-household online index to the Federal Census of 1871 (Ontario Index) as "Indian," 612 gave their occupation as hunter, hunter/farmer, or hunter/fisherman. A few of the men were over eighty years old. Most were listed as converts to Christianity, though some still identified as pagan (see http://www.collections canada.ca/archivianet/020108_e.html).

often long-standing alliances with their culturally and politically distinct neighbors. These alliances were negotiated and maintained at local levels. Champlain first encountered these alliances in action in 1609 when meeting "two or three hundred" indigenous peoples "encamped near a small island called St. Eloi [at the mouth of the Batiscan River, between Trois-Rivières and Quebec]." He and his party approached to investigate and found there were nations of Indians called Ochateguins [Wendat] and Algonquins [Ottawa River area Anishinaabe], "who were on their way to Quebec to help us to explore the country of the Iroquois, with whom they are in mortal conflict." Champlain landed and asked to be taken to their leader. He was expecting a single point of authority but, to his surprise, he discovered there was no such hierarchy in place. Each nation had its own leader; Champlain was taken in turn to each one, Iroquet and Ochateguin. Champlain was expected to negotiate separately with each chief, who in turn explained the proposed plan for a joint war expedition each to his own people. Here again Champlain was surprised that the leaders lacked the authority to compel their warriors. In the end each was able to persuade only one-third of their people to participate with Champlain. Each chief led his own people. Bruce G. Trigger identified and described this relationship between Iroquet's people (who were Anishinaabeg, but called Onontchataronon by the Wendat) and Ochateguin's people, who belonged to a particular nation of Wendat, the Arendarhonon (the most easterly and second largest of five distinct Wendat nations). Trigger suggests that it is quite possibly a very old relationship, dating from the time when the Arendarhonon were likely living in the Trent River Valley. These Onontchataronon wintered close to the Wendat, sometimes dwelling less than one-eighth of a league (or five hundred meters) outside their villages. There were other examples. People who would later be identified as the *Kiskakon* Ottawa had a close alliance with the Tionontate (Petun) and also wintered among them.[20]

The relationships between Anishinaabe and Iroquoian-speaking peoples were generally of mutual benefit. Anishinaabe peoples acquired corn from the Wendat and Tionontate while these horticulturalists appreciated additional sources of meat and fish. These trade and alliance relationships were maintained throughout the region wherever possible. Champlain noted that the Wendat obtained much of their clothing and skins in trade "for their Indian corn, meal, wampum and fish nets, with the Algonquins, Piserenis, and other tribes who are hunters and have no fixed abodes." The relationships, however, went beyond economics. Anishinaabe and Wendat peoples invited each other to significant

[20] Champlain, *Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 2: 67–68, 3: 94, 96–97.

ceremonial events such as Feasts of the Dead. These events also included Anishinaabe peoples from as far away as Sault Sainte Marie. They also formed long-standing military alliances and preferred to maintain their reciprocal relationships even if they relocated, as was clearly the case in the relationship between certain Ottawa Anishinaabe and Tionontate (Petun) families. Yet these relationships could also be a source of tension and conflict. Champlain attempted to mediate in one such incident in 1615, when a dispute over prisoners taken in war resulted in murder. And the enmity between the eastern Anishinaabe peoples (whom Champlain called Algonquins) and the Iroquois apparently had its roots in one of these cross-cultural alliances gone sour, according to the testimony of one elder to Perrot. The elder told of a joint winter hunting expedition between these formerly allied peoples that was the source of the conflict. An unidentified Anishinaabe group invited their Iroquoian horticulturalist allies to join them for a winter hunt. They sent out a joint party of young men, who were unsuccessful in finding game. After some time the two groups of young men parted company to try their luck separately. To the shock of the Anishinaabe, the Iroquois party managed to shoot some game. The young Anishinaabe men were so jealous of this accomplishment by men they considered inferior hunters to themselves that they murdered the young Iroquois men, and returned to camp with the game, claiming it as their own. In the spring the bodies were discovered and the alliance broke down when the Anishinaabe refused to offer presents to cover the dead.[21]

These alliances and networks offer important insights into the relationship between geographic space and collective identity; these insights can be understood by observing how people made use of and traveled through the land. The Wendat did not own the Ottawa River or Lake Huron; various Anishinaabe peoples claimed sections as their particular territory. The Nipissing home was on the shores of Lake Nipissing; the *Kitchisipirini* returned annually to their location on Allumette Island, where their ancestors were buried. The political history of this region, however, cannot be reduced to a discussion of which people owned which land at what time. In the eastern Great Lakes region, the question of who had access to which land and to which resources, who could pass freely through a given space, and who was subject to taxes or tolls was answered by a complex nexus of kinship connections and alliances. People respected ownership or proprietorship rights of other groups.

[21] Ibid., 3: 131, 94 (for mention of Anishinaabe trading relationships). For details of a 1642 Anishinaabe Feast of the Dead ceremony, see Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 23: 209–23. For an Anishinaabe explanation of the origin of war with the Iroquois, see the observations of Perrot in Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi,* 1: 42–47.

Flotillas of numerically superior Wendat still paid a toll to the *Kitchisipirini* on the Ottawa River. If they wished to avoid the toll, they went overland or via the less secure Trent River. But they did not use force of arms to move past the toll.[22]

Study of Anishinaabe *aadizookaanag* and the cultural traditions embedded within them reveals a pattern of relationships to land and resources that were fundamentally different from those of Europeans. In the seventeenth century, European empires were engaged in global struggles to claim territories over which they could exercise sovereignty and express sole proprietorship. Though Anishinaabe peoples recognized and respected the rights of specific groups to particular places and resources, degrees of access and claims to those places and resources were mediated through kinship networks and alliances. Furthermore collective identities were grounded not in continuous possession, occupation, and defense of a tightly bounded geographic space, but in shared descent from other-than-human progenitors, in spiritual practices, and in origin stories. It is in this context, then, that historians must evaluate White's characterization of Anishinaabeg relocations as a refugee experience. Refugees typically are displaced people who, in escaping persecution, relocate to places that are often far from the familiar. In exile they are dependent on the kindness of strangers to survive. Yet prior to 1650, Anishinaabe peoples were already engaged in long-distance travel throughout the region as part of their annual cycles of aggregations and dispersals because of widespread kinship connections and alliances that assured them access to resources as they moved throughout the region. When faced with a crisis or catastrophe, Anishinaabe peoples did not find, as White suggests, a world of "danger, strangeness, and horror." They knew, from well-established patterns, where to move and with whom to stay. How, then, could people be refugees when they were surrounded by family? The long-distance migration of the Tionontate and Ottawa to Chequamequon Bay on Lake Superior was the exception, not the norm, of the broader Anishinaabe historical experience in this period.[23]

Nindoodemag were the family networks that enabled Anishinaabe peoples to survive midcentury epidemics and Iroquois attacks. The *amikwa*, or beaver people, supplies a concrete example of the manner in which Anishinaabe peoples relied on their own cultural traditions and institutions. White suggests that the *amikwa* became amalgamated into other groups after 1650, yet by using *nindoodem* as a category of analysis

[22] Champlain observed the *Kichesipirini* cemetery firsthand (Champlain, *Works of Samuel de Champlain*, 2: 279). Bruce Trigger discusses the operation of tolls on the Ottawa River prior to 1650 (Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic*, 268, 341).

[23] White, *Middle Ground*, 2; William Newbigging, "The History of the French-Ottawa Alliance 1613–1763" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1995), 125.

their distinct identity remains visible. The shared identity of the Beaver people created ties through time and across the Great Lakes region. The Beaver people knew of their ancestors' role in the creation of land; the beaver was the first to attempt the dive for a piece of earth. When, in the second phase of the creation story, the first beings moved to the places most suitable for obtaining their pasture or prey, the Great Beaver chose the lands east of Georgian Bay to Lake Nipissing. This region is home to many small lakes and rivers connected by low-lying marsh lands. Even today the area is full of beaver dams and beaver lodges. On pre-1650 maps and documents, the beaver people are shown as residing in this area, either on the northeast or north coast of Georgian Bay. In this spiritually charged landscape, beaver people could point to a mountain in the shape of a beaver and know that it was his tomb. Beaver people could be distinguished at a glance by their custom of piercing their noses; some of the early records also refer to them as the "Nez percez."[24]

There is no evidence that the Beaver people were directly targeted for attack by the Haudenosaunee, yet because Beaver people were closely allied with other families known collectively as Nipissing, they may very well have been. Following the Haudenosaunee attacks on the Wendat in 1649 and 1650, it appears other eastern Great Lakes people also temporarily pulled back to north and west of Sault Sainte Marie. But they were hardly refugees. Within a short period of time, they were pushing back against the Iroquois. Sometime from 1653 to 1655, a war party of Iroquois was soundly defeated near Sault Sainte Marie. Only one was left alive to tell the tale. And sometime from 1662 to 1665, a major counterattack was launched. Myingeen (whose name means wolf), was chief of the beaver people from the French River area; he led this war party, which was also composed of members of Crane, Eagle (as Thunderbirds), and possibly Otter *nindoodemag*. Myingeen's success has been well preserved in oral tradition. Shingwaukonce, a nineteenth-century chief at Sault Sainte Marie, told the story to Henry Schoolcraft. Shingwaukonce's descendants still know the story, and can recite Myingeen's exploits, which are also recorded in rock images at Agawa canyon on the north shore of Lake Superior near Sault Sainte Marie. Myingeen's people, along with families of other *nindoodemag,* participated in finally routing the Haudenosaunee from the north shores of

[24] Edward Rogers identifies the following variant synonymy for the group known as the *amikwa* (Beaver people): les Amikoüai, Amikouek, Amicois, Amicouës and Amikouest (see E. S. Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa," in Trigger, *Northeast*, 770). For the earliest Jesuit enumeration and description of the locations of Anishinaabe communities, see, for example, Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 18: 230. For some of the practices and customs of the Beaver people, see Perrot in Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 1: 63.

Lakes Ontario and Erie. In nineteenth-century treaty documents, land surrenders, and other colonial records, evidence of the beaver identity persists in images of beavers drawn as signatures.[25] From the seventeenth into the twentieth centuries, the descendants of the Great Beaver retained a strong sense of their identity.

Far from being destabilized by the attacks of the Haudenosaunee, by the 1660s most eastern Ontario Anishinaabe peoples had survived, regrouped, and reestablished themselves on land in which their ancestors had been buried. In the years immediately following Myingeen's victory, a temporary peace was negotiated with the Iroquois, and Parry Sound (on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay) served as a loose boundary marker separating the upper Great Lakes Anishinaabe people from the Haudenosaunee.[26] With that peace eastern Anishinaabe peoples began to move back from their extended sojourn with relatives with the intention of reoccupying the lands that held the bones of their ancestors. By 1670, as Jesuit Father Louys André was visiting Nipissing at Lake Nipissing, there were *Amikwa*, among others, on Georgian Bay, and Ottawas on Manitoulin Island. That summer the *Amikwa* held a massive feast of the dead. Father André estimated that between fifteen and sixteen hundred people assembled for the "games and spectacles" in honor of deceased chief Myingeen (his son assumed his name at this event). Certainly, the pressures of widespread, deadly epidemics and war had a significant effect on the political landscape from 1640 to 1660, yet attention to the period prior to 1650 indicates that the dislocation was not as culturally destructive as historians have thought.

Reconstitution drew most heavily on Anishinaabe cultural and political traditions. Though French officials involved themselves in indigenous politics where they could, these were generally self-interested and at times competing efforts to meet differing French needs for military security, for the expansion of commercial activities, and for programs of missionization. Furthermore scholarly emphasis on the destruction of the Wendat confederacy and the effect of epidemics and wars have become generalized, distorting tropes in the region's historiography. Though the dissolution of Iroquoian-speaking polities such as the

[25] Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa," 760. Thor Conway interviewed elders at Garden River First Nation at Sault Sainte Marie in the 1980s (Conway, *American Indian Rock Art* 15: 11–24). The peace between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee was reaffirmed in an 1840 council at which the wampum belt of the peace was read (Minutes of a General Council held at the River Credit commencing on January 16th, 1840, Paudash Papers, Council Minutes, 1835–1848, RG10, vol. 1011, pt. B, pp. 69–92, Library and Archives Canada). There are beaver *nindoodem* images on treaty and other documents pertaining to communities in southern Ontario dating to 1857 (see Bohaker, "*Nindoodemag*").

[26] See the testimony of Fred Pine Sr. in Conway, *American Indian Rock Art* 15.

Wendat, the Erie, the Neutral, and the Wenro prior to 1650 undeniably had a significant effect (particularly for the members of those communities), these dissolutions are only part of the story. Anishinaabe peoples had different experiences. In the face of new challenges, Anishinaabe peoples continued to construct new alliances through the framework of *nindoodemag*; these networks shaped the temporary relocations of people and the alliances they then constructed for the purposes of war.

In *The Middle Ground*, White worked exclusively with European-written texts and concluded that "tribal identity and the technicalities of kinship reckoning thus did not dictate political behavior in this world of refugees." Evidence presented through Anishinaabe expressive culture indicates nearly the opposite. White interprets widespread intermarriage as a product of the refugee experience. He quotes Perrot's observation of the western Algonquians at Green Bay, that "Thou, Pouteoüatamis, thy tribe is half Sakis; the Sakis are in part Renards [Fox]; thy cousins and thy brothers-in-law are Renards [Fox] and Sakis." These sorts of intermarriages were part and parcel of the Anishinaabeg world long before 1650. As husbands and wives had different *nindoodemag*, every family was by definition intertribal and every gathering of people, even in a winter camp, would have included people belonging to separate *nindoodemag*. Marriage constructed what anthropologist Elizabeth Furniss calls "different, and at times competing, claims to belonging" by cutting across the identity of the local band or group.[27] Kinship networks not only shaped political behavior but also militated against crisis.

Another test of the connection between collective identity and *nindoodemag* is to observe how identity was asserted by Anishinaabe peoples, particularly given the cultural context in which there was widespread discomfort around individual self-identification. Paul Le Jeune documented this discomfort in 1634: "I have since learned that they do not like to tell their names before others, I know not why. If, however, you ask someone what another's name is, he will tell you very freely, though he will not tell his own." When living in small group or extended family settings, Anishinaabeg referred to each other through their extensive vocabulary of kinship relations. This historic system distinguished between parallel and cross-relations. Parallel relations were established between same-sex siblings and their children, whereas cross-relations were between opposite-sex siblings and their children. Parallel cousins, for example, are the children of a mother's sisters and a father's brothers, whereas cross-cousins are the children of a mother's brothers

[27] White, *Middle Ground,* 18; Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 1: 270; Elizabeth Furniss, "Cycles of History in Plateau Sociopolitical Organization: Reflections on the Nature of Indigenous Band Societies," *Ethnohistory* 51, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 142.

and a father's sisters.[28] This system of kinship terminology has a significant logic in a clan-based descent system. In a patrilineal system, brothers would live together for life, whereas their sisters would generally marry out into other families away from the country of their birth, and to men of a different *nindoodem*. The brothers and their spouses would ideally raise their children together. Because of the extended times spent together during the winter season, those children would regard each other as siblings. Furthermore all the children of these brothers would share the same *nindoodem*.

These kinship concepts are further nuanced by the age of the relation relative to the speaker and by the gender of the speaker. All Anishinaabe kinship terms are grammatically possessive, dependent nouns. Like *nindoodem* these nouns are never expressed without a possessive pronominal prefix. Le Jeune noted that, though Anishinaabe peoples generically referred to the French as their brothers, when speaking among themselves they would use distinct terms for sibling birth order, such as eldest brother (*nichtais*) and youngest brother (*nichim*).[29] In a family context, use of highly nuanced kinship terminology made the need for unique personal names unnecessary. No degree of nuanced kinship terminology, however, would have been sufficient when different families came together for summer fisheries or other purposes, or when people were traveling for trade or to participate in warfare. In these situations people likely articulated their *nindoodem* as their collective and individual identity, as the concept of *nindoodem* embodied family, community, and nation in one.

Given the importance of kin connections among the Anishinaabe peoples, marriage was a crucial institution. Marriage created geographically diverse, widespread kinship networks through lateral alliances made principally by the daughters and sisters. French observers give insight into the role women played in creating these lateral alliances. In 1636 the Anishinaabeg assembled at Trois-Rivières asked for French assistance in an upcoming expedition against the Haudenosaunee. The French declined to give support, citing lack of intermarriage with the French as a reason: "in the first place, you have not allied yourselves up to the present with our French people your daughters have married with all the neighboring Nations, but not with ours. Your children live in the land of the Nipisiriniens [Nipissing], of the Algonquins, of the Attikamegues, of the people of the Sagné, and in all the other Nations." Women made important connections by marrying men who lived in

[28] Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 5: 93; Valentine, *Nishnaabemwin Reference Grammar*, 108–12.

[29] Valentine, *Nishnaabemwin Reference Grammar*, 110; Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 5: 115.

different communities, sometimes quite considerable distances away. Travelers could then rely on the hospitality of kin as they voyaged through the region. War chiefs could also count on the support of in-laws as allies across a large geographic expanse. The decision of the Sinago Ottawa to relocate west of Lake Michigan around 1650 may have been grounded in these sorts of marriage alliances. Chief Sinago's sister was married to the chief of the Sauk living at Green Bay. In 1665 Chief Sinago was able to call on his Sakis relatives and, through his brother-in-law, on the Sakis' allies, the Potawatomi and Fox, for an expedition against the Sioux.[30]

Groups, or bands, of eastern Anishinaabe peoples further ensured their security by their cross-cultural alliances with Iroquoian people. Though intermarriage occurred, it was not the principal means to maintain these relationships. Instead gifts and wampum were exchanged and joint hunting and war parties were organized. It is precisely this established relationship between the Iroquoian-speaking Tionontate (Petun) and the *Kiskakon* Ottawa that explains their decision to relocate together to south of Lake Superior following the events of 1650, and then to move back to southern Ontario around 1701. The cross-cultural alliances that White sees as forming after 1650, even those between linguistically and culturally distinct peoples, were in existence at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The balance of power in some of these relationships and alliances changed over time, yet the relationships themselves continued, having a profound effect on the shape of the political landscape. Kinship networks and cross-cultural alliances worked together to ensure cultural continuity in the face of destabilizing forces. Temporary relocations in a context of long-standing and far-reaching webs of kinship networks and cross-cultural alliances did not result in a permanent or even semipermanent refugee population. Groups did not move randomly; where temporary relocation was necessary for one group, access to territory and resources was granted based on kin and alliance affiliations with another. In this cultural context, tribal identity (specifically, *nindoodem*) and the technicalities of kinship reckoning had everything to do with political behavior.[31] One's *nindoodem* determined access to resources and supplied the mechanisms to negotiate new access. Long-standing cross-cultural alliances served a similar function.

[30] Cory Carole Silverstein (now Cory Willmott) employed this concept of lateral alliances in her doctoral dissertation, "Clothed Encounters: The Power of Dress in Relations Between Anishinaabe and British Peoples in the Great Lakes Region, 1760–2000" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 2000). The Jesuits observed the role women played as alliance makers (Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 9: 219). For the story of Chief Sinago and his alliances through marriage, see Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 1: 188.

[31] White, *Middle Ground*, 18.

Study of the period prior to 1650, from the initial contacts with the French to the defeat of the Wendat, demonstrates that Anishinaabe collective identity was multifaceted. *Nindoodemag* were literally at the heart of the Anishinaabeg sense of nation, yet there were other collective identities, including the smaller bands of related people who wintered together and the larger groups of people who summered together at specific locales. Membership in the Mediwiwin and other societies formed additional intersections. This plurality of social and political identities persisted after 1650 and shaped how Anishinaabe peoples expressed their sense of collective identity in their interactions with the French, which draws into question White's assertion that Anishinaabe peoples forged a new Algonquian collective identity with other aboriginal peoples in the wake of a midcentury crisis. As the century drew to a close, Anishinaabe peoples continued to draw on *nindoodem* identity as they secured their own peace with the Haudenosaunee. In the wampum belt commemorating that peace, images symbolically represented a whitefish on Manitoulin Island, a beaver on Georgian Bay, a caribou at the narrows of Lake Simcoe, and a white-headed eagle on a tall pine tree at the mouth of the Credit River (at what is now the city of Toronto).[32] These references were all to the *nindoodemag* of the parties to that agreement.

At the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal grand council, the speeches and speakers offer additional insight into the complexity of Native American politics at this time. On the treaty itself, the French recognized twenty-four allied nations in addition to the delegates from the Haudenosaunee, but the pictographs do not correspond one to one. Some named nations did not attend. Some pictographs are not associated with any particular named nation. And only nineteen separate individuals rose in council to speak to the peace, indicating that the images did not correspond to the speakers. Even the metaphorical expressions of the father-child relationship were not universal. The orators for the Wendat, Mascouten, Nipissing, and *Amikwa* for example, failed to address the French governor as "my father" or "our father," as the other speakers had done. Though the French clearly had a vested interest in casting themselves as the father of all Great Lakes people, not everyone was interested to the same degree in being Onontio's child. Furthermore expressions of kinship in this sort of formal council were at their most metaphorical from an Anishinaabe perspective, indicating only a desired quality in the proposed relationship. As White himself has noted, ideal Anishinaabe

[32] Ibid., 18–19. Minutes of a General Council held at the River Credit commencing on January 16th, 1840, Paudash Papers, Council Minutes, 1835–1848, Record Group 10, Library and Archives Canada.

fathers never compelled their children to undertake any action and were always generous in the distribution of presents.[33]

If Anishinaabe peoples did not conceive of themselves as Onontio's children in the way the French preferred and imagined, how, then, should scholars portray the important and historically significant alliance between Great Lakes peoples and the French? It is clear that Algonquians did not have a relationship with the French. Instead local leaders constructed alliances between themselves and French individuals, either as cross-cultural alliances at the band level or as marriage alliances between their daughters and French men. The French were successful in making these alliances work for three reasons: first, they recognized the metaphorical importance of kinship to Anishinaabe peoples; second, they adopted Native American diplomatic protocols; third, they understood that alliances had to be made leader to leader, on a local level. As Havard has amply demonstrated, the success of the French in building and maintaining key alliances and, in particular, negotiating the Great Peace of Montreal, depended on the goodwill and hard work of a number of key chiefs. Through these chiefs and their connections, the French were able to include other peoples in the agreement. Had the French not respected aboriginal rules of speaking order and seating protocol, and the need for nineteen different orators to present their opinions on the terms, there simply would have been no peace. Throughout the aboriginal parties asserted their autonomy from the French and from each other. The peace did not create a new collective identity.

With his paradigm of the middle ground, White has taken ethnohistorical scholarship beyond narratives of indigenous annihilation or persistence to a complex story of mutual adaptation and accommodation in the wake of catastrophic events. It is a useful model because it illuminates the interconnectedness of Europeans and Great Lakes peoples in the early modern era. The middle ground as a historical model, however, has an inadvertent side effect. By emphasizing the process of cultural formation, the middle ground disconnects Anishinaabe peoples from their own historical experiences. Conceived in the crucible of widespread regional crisis, the middle ground as cultural space constructs a hybridized cultural and collective identity that was severed from pre-1650 traditions. Without question the year 1650 saw significant change in the sociopolitical order of the eastern Great Lakes. And without question some Anishinaabe communities suffered traumatic and, in some cases, catastrophic losses. But the cultural traditions of Anishinaabe peoples were made of far more resilient material than the shattered glass to

[33] "Ratification de la Paix." For White's discussion of Anishinaabe fathers, see White, *Middle Ground,* 84.

which White compares them. Well before 1650 and long after 1815, grandparents continued to pass to grandchildren carefully bundled stories and traditions of their connections to each other, to place, and to their other-than-human progenitors. Though the middle ground remains a suitable metaphor for explicating narratives of intercultural accommodation, it does not sufficiently explain Anishinaabe cultural continuity and adaptation. To understand that process, scholars must turn to the Anishinaabe category of *nindoodemag* and Anishinaabe expressions of their own collective identity. When faced with crisis and change, Anishinaabe peoples used glue from their own institutions, not French mediators, to regroup in the wake of crisis.

New research in the years since the publication of *The Middle Ground* now supports reconsideration of key elements undergirding White's model, principally his characterization of Anishinaabeg relocations as a refugee experience that sparked a cultural discontinuity and subsequent formation of a new collective identity. This research is informed by a broader ethnohistorical methodology, which reaches beyond anthropology and history to embrace linguistics, art history, literary studies, and material culture studies. If Anishinaabe peoples were ever refugees, they certainly were not for long. Networks of *nindoodemag* and cross-cultural alliances gave temporarily displaced peoples access to land and resources in the same manner that they supported Anishinaabe peoples engaged in long-distance travel. Further the intertribalism and multiethnic communities that White saw as products of midcentury colonization and war were long-standing features of Great Lakes political and social organizations, and they continued to be important features of Anishinaabe social and political life into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But *The Middle Ground* still stands as an important contribution to Great Lakes ethnohistorical scholarship, particularly if one reads beyond the issue of collective identity to what instead is really an outstanding study of how European attitudes toward aboriginal peoples changed from 1650 to 1815: constructing aboriginal people as feared and exotic others, working with them as trading partners, spouses, and allies, and finally dismissing them and their cultural traditions as irrelevant relics of another era.

Though Great Lakes ethnohistory has developed considerably in the past thirty years, propelled in no small way by the influence of White's volume, in many ways this fascinating field is still in its infancy. Much work still remains to be done. Historians can write richer histories by casting wider nets and embracing as potential source material the wide range of media on which Anishinaabe (and other aboriginal peoples) left behind assertions of their collective and individual identities. Yet inclusion of

new sources will not alone create new knowledge. Historians also need to expand understanding of the cultural context in which these messages were generated to decode them properly. Such awareness comes through study of historic and present-day language and cultural traditions and, as other scholars have already discovered, this awareness is best achieved in partnership with aboriginal researchers and elders. Collaboration is a crucial methodology, given the gaps in European-written documents and the considerable interruptions in traditional aboriginal systems of knowledge management, particularly in the past one hundred years. Collaboration seldom supplies immediate answers, but through it new lines of inquiry can often be opened. Such was the case for this study of *nindoodemag*, where inscribed evidence of identity on treaty documents sparked a multidisciplinary research approach. Ultimately, the most significant leads came from conversations with aboriginal colleagues and community members who encouraged an approach to questions from a different point of view, which resulted in new insights into the formation of Anishinaabe collective identity.[34] The importance of the *nindoodem* identity goes beyond its function as a kinship network; the identity itself reflects a dynamic cultural tradition that drew, and continues to draw, its strength from the spiritually charged waterscapes of the Great Lakes themselves.

[34] See, for example, the work of Janet E. Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto, Ontario, 1998), and Nash, "Abiding Frontier," as examples of this collaborative approach with members of First Nations communities.