

RESEARCH REPORT:

**HISTORIC MÉTIS IN ONTARIO:  
WAWA and ENVIRONS**

FOR

THE MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

NATIVE AFFAIRS UNIT  
300 Water Street  
P.O. Box 7000  
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 8M5

August 12, 1999

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WAWA and ENVIRONS**

Submitted to:

Valerie J. Stankiewicz  
Policy Officer, Historical Research  
NATIVE AFFAIRS UNIT  
ONTARIO MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
300 Water Street  
P.O. Box 7000  
Peterborough ON K9J 8M5

Submitted by:

Gwen Reimer, Ph.D. & Jean-Philippe Chartrand, M.A.  
**PRAXIS Research Associates**  
6352 St. Louis Drive, Orleans ON K1C 2Y1

August 12, 1999

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents data and interpretations pertaining to the historical formation and development of a métis population in the vicinity of Wawa, Ontario. The central findings are:

- Historical data and ethnohistorical interpretations indicate that from early contact in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the eastern shore of Lake Superior was inhabited continuously by Ojibwa; a neighbouring group called *Gens des Terres* temporarily resided at Michipicoten in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.
- There is no evidence indicating that ancestors of present-day Algonquins harvested resources along the eastern shore of Lake Superior between the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; Jesuit references to ‘Algonkins’ relocating there involve a very different meaning of that word, comparable to the contemporary term ‘Algonquian’ used to denote a large family of Aboriginal languages.
- Arguments concerning the genesis of a population of mixed European and Aboriginal descent on the eastern shore of Lake Superior in the 17<sup>th</sup> century are plausible but completely speculative as no data exist to support or contradict the hypothesis.
- Indirect data exist for the 18<sup>th</sup> century suggesting that such a population lived and travelled through (as *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*) the Upper Great Lakes region. Population terms are ambiguous, either classifying the population occupationally, or by general birth place such as with the 18<sup>th</sup> century term ‘Canadian’:
  - ▶ A small but permanent presence of Europeans on the eastern shore of Lake Superior dates to the establishment of the Michipicoten fur trade post in 1714; this post would pass through French, independent, NWC, and HBC hands until its eventual closure in 1904;
  - ▶ Descriptions of dress of some 18<sup>th</sup> century Canadians partly match known articles of historic métis dress;
  - ▶ Some Canadians are frequently described as having very close relationships with Indians, suggesting that many were more than political or military allies against the English.
- Direct data demonstrating the presence of métis along the eastern shore of Lake Superior date to the late 1810s and early 1820s. HBC post journal for Michipicoten demonstrate that métis worked and lived at Michipicoten throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century:
  - ▶ These métis likely have their origin in 18<sup>th</sup> century *coureurs de bois* and in a class of

early 19<sup>th</sup> century fur hunters called ‘winterers’;

- ▶ Some European HBC employees also took Indian wives and established families at the Michipicoten post.
- HBC post journals for the 19<sup>th</sup> century demonstrate that the material life of métis differed significantly from that of Indians. These sources, however, present little data concerning métis culture (values, beliefs, customs):
  - ▶ As opposed to Indians, métis worked for wages as HBC employees and lived in log houses at the post;
  - ▶ Male métis employees were heavily involved in conducting post-operated resource harvesting activities, although some worked at specialized occupations, such as Indian interpreters and skilled tradesmen; métis families regularly helped with agricultural work at the post.
  - ▶ One métis (John Swanston) was promoted to Chief Factor at Michipicoten in the 1840s, and later acted as interpreter in the Robinson-Superior Treaty negotiations.
- Métis participated in the negotiations of the Robinson Treaties of 1850 in several capacities. The negotiations for both treaties involved métis interpreters, and three signatories (John Bell, and Chiefs Michel Dokis and Nebenaigooching) were of mixed descent, although William Robinson may not have been aware of this fact.
- Robinson’s treaty negotiations report also indicates that a contingent of métis attempted to negotiate with him directly to have rights recognized in the treaties. Robinson’s instructions did not allow him to do this and he rejected their demand, although he subsequently allowed métis to become treaty beneficiaries at the discretion of Indian Chiefs:
  - ▶ Métis had previously been involved in protests and in one violent confrontation at Mica Bay over mineral exploration and development that led to the Treaties’ negotiation; some evidence suggests the métis involved in these activities were from the Michigan side of Sault Ste. Marie;
  - ▶ Garden River Chief Shingwakonce had also attempted to recruit local métis into his Band’s membership in order to strengthen his negotiation position.
- Two documents related to the negotiations of the Treaties suggest that métis possessed a sense of community and saw themselves as having legitimate rights as a distinct Aboriginal people; however, the lack of additional data prevents a more conclusive or definitive interpretation of these issues:
  - ▶ One document is a letter written by John Swanston at Michipicoten two weeks prior to the negotiations;

- ▶ The other is an oral historical account of the overwhelming rejection by métis of Chief Shingwakonce's attempted recruitment.
- By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century some métis families still resided at Michipicoten and at the newly established 'City' of Wawa:
  - ▶ Wawa was created as the result of a boom in gold exploration and mining in 1898, leading to a significant permanent settlement of non-Aboriginal families;
  - ▶ A large gap of information exists concerning métis at Wawa between 1910 and 1980; exploratory interviews conducted with contemporary métis in Wawa suggest that their parents and grandparents concealed their métis identity during much of this time period in order to avoid discrimination;
  - ▶ Métis members of the Wawa Native Network also indicated that they do not trace their ancestry to the fur trade, but instead to the mining booms of the early 1900s; the fate of 19<sup>th</sup> century fur trade métis at Michipicoten is not known, although it appears likely that some were transferred to other posts in the declining years of operations at Michipicoten;
  - ▶ Only additional oral historical interviews with métis at Wawa is likely to help fill gaps in information and permit more definitive assessments of their ancestry.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

*PRAXIS* Research Associates is pleased to submit a research report presenting data and social scientific interpretations concerning the historic formation and development of a métis population in the Wawa region in northern Ontario. This introductory chapter outlines the background and research requirements of this assignment.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (hereafter ‘the Ministry’) is faced with a growing number of cases involving groups claiming to be “historic métis communities”. In each case, the Ministry requires historical information to determine whether or not the community meets the known criteria that are necessary to qualify it as an “historic métis community” with potential rights as such. The focus of this research assignment is the development of a “mixed” community around the town of Wawa, situated near the historic Michipicoten fur trade post, located at the mouth of the Michipicoten River on Lake Superior.

## 1.2 RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS: WAWA AND ENVIRONS

The present assignment pertains to a case in which a defendant, who lives in the town of Wawa, claims an aboriginal connection through his mother, who is claimed to be an Algonquin from Quebec or the Ottawa Valley. The assignment requires historical research to attempt to answer the following questions:

1. When did Europeans first arrive in the Wawa area?
2. When did Europeans first establish a semi-permanent or permanent presence in the Wawa area?
3. What, if any, Aboriginal group inhabited or made regular use of the Wawa area at the times mentioned in (1) and (2) above?
4. What, if any, were the harvesting practices of these aboriginal groups at the times referred to above?
5. What was the relative significance to these aboriginal groups of any harvesting / hunting practices at the times referred to above?



6. Did a local, identifiable population of mixed European / Aboriginal ancestry arise from European contact with these local Aboriginal groups?
  7. If a local population of mixed ancestry did develop:
    - a. When did it do so?
    - b. What was the relationship / interaction between this population and the local Aboriginal and European populations?
    - c. Did the local “mixed” population come to be seen as having some form of distinctive communal identity or existence?
    - d. Did the local population of mixed ancestry develop any distinctive traditions, customs, and practices, and if so, what were these?
    - e. What, if any, were the harvesting / hunting practices of these people?
    - f. What was the relative significance of their harvesting / hunting practices over time?
    - g. Did their harvesting / hunting practices originate in pre-contact practices of the Aboriginal groups that occupied the area at the time of European contact and early settlement?
  8. If there was a local population of mixed ancestry, and this population did have some form of recognizable communal identity, how did the community respond to persons of mixed ancestry from outside the Wawa area and vicinity who came and settled in the Wawa area?
  9. What, if any, was the role of the “mixed” population and aboriginal populations in the creation of the Robinson-Huron and Robinson-Superior Treaties, or any other treaties?
  10. When did “significant” European settlement occur in the Wawa area?
  11. What impact did “significant” European settlement in the Wawa area have upon the local population of mixed ancestry, and any communal identity, distinctive way of life or harvesting and hunting practices that may be attributed to this population?
  12. What has transpired with the local population of mixed ancestry in more recent years, particularly in respect to any communal identity distinctive way of life or harvesting / hunting practices that may be attributed to this population?
  13. What “métis” organizations have been active in the Wawa area in recent years? What role have any such organizations played locally, and how have any such organizations related to one another and the broader local population of mixed ancestry?
  14. Did the Algonquins of Western Quebec area hunt big game, including moose in the Wawa area?
  15. Were the Algonquins of Western Quebec party to any treaties that may apply to the Wawa area?
- The following chapter presents the methodological approach implemented in the assignment,

as well as a discussion of methodological issues and problems pertaining to ethnohistorical research on ancestors of Algonquin people and métis groups in Ontario.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The first section of this chapter outlines the methodological approach designed and implemented in order to answer the specific research questions identified by the Ministry and reproduced in Section 1.2 above. The second section presents ethnohistorical issues and problems pertaining to the identification and geographical location of ancestors of present-day Algonquin bands settled in western Quebec and the Ottawa Valley. In the third section the discussion shifts to historical and ethnohistorical issues and problems pertaining to the identification of persons of mixed European and Aboriginal descent in Ontario. This section contains a critical examination comparing the criteria by which the social and cultural identity, and legal status of this population have been defined.

### 2.1 APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

*PRAXIS* Research Associates implemented three distinct types of ethnohistorical / social scientific data collection and analysis for this assignment:

- ▶ Secondary (literature) research;
- ▶ Primary (archival) research, and;
- ▶ Consultation with local métis representatives.

Secondary and primary documentation research involved the following tasks:

- ▶ Collection and review of the relevant literature supplied by the Ministry;
- ▶ Search for and collection of additional area / community-specific secondary and primary sources, including published sources and archival documents;
- ▶ Analysis of all primary and secondary data supplied and collected.

The field-research component of data collection involved first-hand consultation with representatives of métis groups in Thunder Bay and Wawa in order to gain a local perspective on questions related to their history and identity as métis, to métis involvement the Robinson-Superior Treaty, and to the development of present-day métis organisations. Details on each of the three methods of data collection are provided in separate sections, below.

### **2.1.1 Secondary Source Search and Review**

A thorough review of publications related to the study of métis people generally was conducted as a preliminary step to the community-specific literature and archival document search. This review enabled a gleaning of methodological information concerning modes of inquiry and sources of data used by scholars in historical case-studies of métis communities, which provided important “cues” for the community-specific research assignment. These publications included: Brown (1987), Burley et al. (1992), Gorham (1987), Judd (1983), McNab (1983), Peterson (1985), and Van Kirk (1980).

A review of publications and reports relevant to the history of European contact for Algonquin and Ojibwa peoples was conducted in order to glean substantive information on the establishment and development of a European presence in the western Quebec / Ottawa Valley area and upper Great Lakes region. This information provided background data to the analysis and determination of the formation of a métis population and / or community in Wawa and environs.

Both of these reviews involved examination of documents provided by the Ministry as well as additional comprehensive searches for area / community specific information. The searches were conducted at the following institutions:

- ▶ The National Library of Canada (NLC);
- ▶ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Departmental Library;
- ▶ Carleton University (MacOdrum Library);
- ▶ University of Ottawa (Morisset Library).

The secondary source search was conducted through an on-line computer based system (CUBE) with access to the main holdings (books and government documents) and current contents (recent periodicals) of MacOdrum and Morisset Libraries. A search for older academic journal holdings was implemented on site at both Libraries. Holdings at the National Library of Canada were searched through its internet search engine (resAnet) as well as on-site. The INAC Departmental Library holdings involved an on-site search.

### **2.1.2 Primary Document Search and Review**

Following the secondary document searches and reviews, a search for relevant primary documents pertaining to Algonquins of western Quebec / Ottawa Valley and to a mixed Aboriginal and European population in the Wawa region, was conducted at the following institutions:

- ▶ Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (HBCA) Microfilm Collection held at the National Archives of Canada (NAC) in Ottawa, supplemented by a search of documents at the HBC Archives in Winnipeg;

- ▶ Champlain Society Papers (including surviving correspondence and post records from the Northwest Company post at Michipicoten), Ottawa;
- ▶ Government Document Record Groups, NAC, Ottawa;
- ▶ Claims and Historical Research Centre, INAC, Ottawa;
- ▶ Fur Trade Papers, Crown Land Agency and Mining Lands Branch records, and Irving Papers at Archives of Ontario (AO) in Toronto;
- ▶ Missionary Journals (*Jesuit Relations*) and the Anglican Church General Synod Archives (Ottawa, Toronto).

The study of métis population and/or community development in the Wawa region, and the examination of possible economic and treaty involvement by métis and by Algonquins of western Quebec / Ottawa Valley in the region along the northeastern shore of Lake Superior, required a review and analysis of fur trade records and of Robinson-Superior Treaty documentation. The key fur trade posts in the Wawa region, as determined by their proximity to Wawa and by their dates of establishment, include, in the Robinson-Superior Treaty area: Michipicoten (est. 1714), which throughout its history passed through French, independent, and HBC ownership<sup>1</sup>; Pic (est. 1779), and Batchewana Bay / Mamainse (est. 1814). In the Treaty 9 region to the north and northeast of Wawa are: Flying Post (est. 1800); Missinaibi House (est. 1777); Micabanish / New Brunswick House (est. 1778), and; Mattagami (est. 1794).

A review of publications on the development of a métis population in the Great Lakes region provided indicators by which to identify métis in archival records. Following is a list of indicators (with examples) used to guide the search for métis presence and activity recorded in fur trade records:

- ▶ Terms used to refer directly to métis individuals or groups (eg., *halfbreed*; *bois brûlé*; *country-born*);
- ▶ Ambiguous terms which may refer indirectly to métis, depending on the context in which the term is used (eg., *canadien*; *woodrunner*; *coureurs de bois* as “*half-French*”);
- ▶ References by post employees to native/métis partners and children (eg., *my woman*; *his girl*; *mother of my children*; references to marriage as *à la façon du pays*; *daughter/son of an Englishman or trader by name*);

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<sup>1</sup> During the latter 18<sup>th</sup> century there were two distinct posts operating on opposite shores of the Michipicoten River, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

- ▶ Occupations commonly held by métis (eg., *interpreter; winterer; voyageur; guide*)
- ▶ References to métis settlement (eg., *traders' families living near posts in "cabins"; log houses; log cabins*).

Examination of HBCA post journal records focused principally on the Michipicoten post, due to its proximity to Wawa, its length of operation and strategic importance to the HBC during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (this point is discussed in some detail in Chapter 3). However, in addition to journals and records of the posts identified above, a search of selected posts established in western Quebec and the Ottawa Valley was conducted in order to glean references to Algonquin population movements and trade or kinship relationships to population groups (European, Aboriginal or métis) in the Wawa (Algoma District) region. These posts included Sturgeon River House (est. 1800); Fort Temiscamingue (est. 1679); La Ronde / Nipissing (est. 1800); Mattawa House (est. 1828) and Fort Coulonge (est. 1680).

In addition to searching HBCA documents, the surviving manuscript collections of fur traders who worked for the Northwest Company (pre-1821 HBC amalgamation) for Pic and Temiscamingue, held at the Archives of Ontario, were examined for relevant information. Mining Lands Branch records also at Archives of Ontario were searched for documentation from the period surrounding 1850 for references to Aboriginal and métis involvement in the creation of the Robinson Treaties of 1850.

The 1901 Census records (NAC) for Algoma (District No.44) were also examined for quantitative data on the métis population in the Michipicoten / Wawa area at the turn of the century. This particular set of census records is a potentially rich source of data because enumerators were instructed to identify individuals by both colour and racial or tribal origin. The code "W" (White) indicated persons of European descent; the code "R" (Red) indicated persons of Aboriginal descent. A separate code for persons of mixed "white and red blood" or "Breeds" ("B") was further categorized to differentiate between French ("f.b."), English ("e.b."), Scotch ("s.b."), and Irish ("i.b.") descent (Canada 1902:xviii). Although enumerators were also instructed to indicate the tribal origin of a Breed's Indian descent – for example "Cree f.b." – such codes were not used in the returns studied for this assignment.

Unfortunately, the 1901 Census database also has several serious methodological limitations. The first limitation relates to the absence of a census map by which researchers may identify the geographic location of towns and villages visited by enumerators (Hillman 1992:x). Many locations cannot be identified on present-day maps. A thorough search for historic maps around the 1901 time period did not produce a map on which many of the place-names could be geographically located. This prevented any certain assessment of the métis population within a general geographic region. Furthermore, special enumerators were also employed to collect records for "sparsely inhabited regions" which was termed "unorganized territory" and included "mining camps, fishing grounds, trading posts [and] mission stations" (Canada 1902, Vol.1:xi, xiii). Again, no indication is given as to the geographic locations represented in this category.

The second limitation of the 1901 Census records relates to the sometimes large geographic area assigned to each enumerator which needed to be covered in a relatively short period of time. Enumerators were instructed to visit a settlement once and to record information only for those who were at home at the time. While “inquiries in special form” were apparently used to obtain “the record of persons temporarily absent”, there is no indication of what these consisted, or of their results (*ibid.*:x). It is possible that population figures are not accurate, and in some cases may be seriously underestimated, especially for populations who maintained a lifestyle in “the bush.” The final limitation relates to the time of year at which the Census was taken. Enumerators visited settlements from the end of March to the beginning of May, when it is not impossible that some Indian and métis families were away at sugar bushes or spring fishing camps.

Finally, government documents relevant to determining Algonquin involvement in the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850, and in Treaty 9 (1906), include Treaty Reports filed by Commissioners (Robinson, Scott, Stewart and MacMartin) and diaries of the Treaty 9 Commissioners written during the 1906 Treaty expedition. These documents were already held on file by *PRAXIS* Research Associates as the result of previous and currently ongoing research projects conducted for the Ministry (*PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998b, 1999). While some annuity pay lists were also reviewed, this source of data could be pursued in a more thorough and systematic manner in future research, especially in connection with genealogical research.

### **2.1.3 Consultation with Local Métis Representatives**

A preliminary review of the literature revealed that a relatively scant amount of information exists about métis in Ontario in comparison to, for example, the Red River métis. Furthermore, it was evident that a gap exists in the ethnographic literature concerning métis in Ontario from approximately 1900 to the present. This led *PRAXIS* to recommend to the Ministry that sufficient rapport be established with local métis organizations, métis research materials and perspectives would add important substance and balance to the study. To this end, *PRAXIS* travelled to Thunder Bay and Wawa in order to consult with local métis representatives (Red Sky Métis Independent Nation and Wawa Native Network, respectively) who were willing to share information about their history within the Robinson-Superior Treaty area.

Letters of introduction sent prior to the meetings between *PRAXIS* and métis groups included the following list of general topics for discussion during the consultations:

- ▶ The local history of the origins of métis and the establishment of a métis community;
- ▶ The significance of resource harvesting by métis in the area, both past and present;
- ▶ The criteria used to determine who is métis and who is not; that is, local criteria of métis identity;
- ▶ The formation of local métis organizations in the area.

Overall, the consultations were successful in that most representatives were receptive to the questions posed by *PRAXIS*, and were willing to share concerns, issues and ideas which had not emerged from the literature reviews conducted prior to field research. However, it should be noted that this research was exploratory in nature, and the results of the consultations are neither definitive nor representative.

Methodologically, there was general consensus among all métis representatives consulted of a need for a collaborative effort to conduct systematic oral history interviews among métis elders. In particular this was viewed as one important way by which to begin filling the information gap about Ontario métis in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Genealogical and demographic research – as recommended by Moss in 1979 – is also lacking, but since Moss’ recommendation, these types of data are being collected by some métis organizations themselves. Greater detail about the data and analysis which resulted from the consultations between *PRAXIS* and métis representatives are presented in Chapter 5 and are also referred to throughout the report in the context of substantive issues which were discussed in the course of consultation.

## **2.2 ETHNOHISTORICAL RESEARCH ON ALGONQUINS: ISSUES AND PROBLEMS**

A definitive reconstruction of the pre-contact and early-contact ancestors of the present-day Algonquin Nation has yet to be published. Similarly, there is no complete consensus among ethnohistorians as to the precise geographical extent of the pre-contact and early-contact harvesting territory of the ancestors of the present-day Algonquin Nation. Several factors are responsible for differences of opinion and disagreements on the identity of ancestors of Algonquins and the location of their territorial boundaries. The main reasons for these disagreements include:

- ▶ The existence of gaps in historical data on authentic Algonquin group (band) names, resulting in speculative etymological reconstruction and analysis;
- ▶ The use of different types of terms by European (French) explorers and missionaries to identify Aboriginal groups living between the northeastern shore of Lake Superior and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and;
- ▶ The fact that many, and for some time perhaps all ancestors of present-day Algonquins experienced forced removal and migration during the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the context of the fur trade or ‘beaver’ wars with Iroquois;
- ▶ The specific word ‘algonquin’ changes in meaning over time in the writing of European observers, the term becoming increasingly restrictive by the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Each of these four problems is subject to detailed description and analysis in separate subsections below.



### 2.2.1 Etymological Issues and Gaps in Information on Band Names

The French explorer Samuel de Champlain was the first European to make reference to Algonquins in written historical records by identifying a group of Indians arriving at Tadoussac<sup>2</sup> in 1603 with the term ‘Algooumequins’ (Champlain 1922-1936, 1:96ff.). According to Day and Trigger (1978:792), Champlain derived this term from a Maliseet<sup>3</sup> word, *elakómkwik*, considered to mean “they are our relatives (or allies)”. A second etymological reconstruction suggests Champlain derived the term from either of two Micmac words, *algoomeaking* or *aloomaking*, supposedly meaning “at the place of spearing fish and eels [from the bow of a canoe]” (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:13). Either reconstruction<sup>4</sup> indicates that the original meaning of the term ‘algonquin’ was generic and neither band-specific nor nation-specific, and furthermore was not an authentic term of self-designation by ‘algonquin’ groups.

By the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Champlain had identified and briefly described five specific Algooumequins ‘nations’ (i.e., bands) living along and in the vicinity of what he termed the Riviere des Algooumequins (Ottawa River): The *Weskarini* (north of the Ottawa), the *Kichesipirini* (on Morrison’s Island on the Ottawa and also living to the north (west of the *Weskarini*); the *Kinouchipirini* on the southern shore of the Ottawa adjacent to Morrison’s Island; the *Matouweskarini* along the Madawaska, and; the *Otaguottouemins* further upstream of the *Kichesipirini* on the Ottawa (Ratelle 1996:55). A sixth ‘nation’ or band, however, has only been recorded and identified by its **Iroquoian name**: the *Onontchataronon*, living along the South Nation River inland from the southern shore of the Ottawa, to an undetermined extent possibly reaching to the Trent River near present-day Peterborough (*ibid*; Day and Trigger 1978:793).

Contemporary ethnohistorians agree that these six ‘nations’ or bands are direct ancestors to contemporary Algonquins. As with other bands of Aboriginal peoples belonging to the Algonquian language family, at contact these bands would have formed economically self-sufficient and

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<sup>2</sup> Tadoussac became perhaps the single largest and most important fur trade post in North America during the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and was established at the juncture of the Saguenay and St. Lawrence Rivers in 1599-1600 (Trigger 1985:172; Ray 1988:339). Extensive and regular trade between different Aboriginal nations, including Algonquins, and the French had taken place at that location throughout the latter part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Trigger 1985:139-140).

<sup>3</sup> The Maliseet (alternatively spelled Malecite) were neighbouring peoples to the Micmac and lived between the southern shore of the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic coast along the present State of Maine (Brown and Wilson 1995:145).

<sup>4</sup> Day and Trigger’s reconstruction appears the more plausible of the two given that sporadic warfare between the five Nations Iroquois and various Algonquian-speaking nations over the control of fur trade routes (including the St. Lawrence) had been ongoing since the latter part of the sixteenth century. The people Champlain labelled as ‘algonquin’ had entered into military alliances with Montagnais, Etchemins, and Maliseet in the first phase of these fur trade or ‘beaver’ wars.

autonomous political units although different band members would have been socially and culturally linked by ties of kinship (marriage and descent).

However, ethnohistorians offer diverging opinions as to whether other peoples identified as ‘nations’ in the early to mid 17<sup>th</sup> century French historical record, living peripherally to these six bands identified above, may also be classified as Algonquin. For example, the *Handbook of Indians of Canada* classifies the *Abitibi* (an Aboriginal term reportedly meaning ‘intermediate’ or ‘middle’) as “a little known Algonkin band whose habitat has been the shores of Abitibi Lake” (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:1), and further reports that one historical source (Chauvergnie in 1736) “seems to connect this tribe, estimated at 140 warriors, with the *Têtes de Boule*” (*ibid*). Day and Trigger (1978:792) present a more qualified interpretation:

*It is unclear how far north the Algonquins extended, or whether, at the time of contact, the various bands living in the Lake Timiskaming and Abitibi region should be classified as Algonquin, Cree, or Montagnais.*

Ratelle (1996:44), for his part, classifies the *Temiskaming*, *Abitibi*, *Nipissing*, and *Attikamègue*, all of whom are found living peripherally to the six Algonquin groups listed above, as distinct and independent ‘nations’ or groups. Day (1978:787-788) presents a more ambiguous interpretation of the historical relationship between *Nipissing* and Algonquins and of a possible ‘Algonquin’ classification of the *Nipissing* (historically termed ‘*Nipissiriniens*’ in 17<sup>th</sup> century *Jesuit Relations* documents):

*Nipissing speech had an obvious relationship with Algonquin, Ottawa, and the Ojibwa dialects...The distinguishing characteristics of the Algonquin dialects and of Nipissing remain to be worked out...The precise limits of Nipissing territory are not known. They seem to have had for neighbors the Temiskaming and Temagami on the north; the Ottawa, Bonnechere, and Kipawa Algonquin bands on the east; the Hurons on the south; and the Amikwa and Achiligouan Ojibwa bands on the west...deducing aboriginal [Nipissing] traits from the study of modern descendants is not possible, since apparently no ethnographic work has been done among unmixed Nipissing descendants, if indeed such exist. There is some Nipissing ancestry for the Algonquins at Maniwaki and Golden Lake and perhaps elsewhere and perhaps for the Ojibwa at Lake Nipissing, but Nipissing traits cannot be isolated from Algonquin ones... (insert added)*

Trigger and Day (1978:792) limit the composition of the early-contact Algonquin population to the *Weskarini*, *Kichesipirini*, *Kinouchipirini* (written as *Keinouche*), *Otaguottouemins*, *Matouweskarini*, and *Onontchataronon*:

*From south to north, the bands that are clearly attested as having inhabited the Ottawa valley are the following (with the spelling of the early sources): the Weskarini (Weskarini) or Petite Nation, who lived in the vicinity of the Rouge, Petite-Nation, and Lievre rivers; the Matouweskarini in the Madawaska River valley; the*

*Keinouche (Pike), who may be the same as the Quenonbegin, or Champlain's People of the Nibachis in the Muskrat Lake region; the Kichesipirini (Big River People), whose main encampment was on Morrison's Island; and the Otaguottouemins (Kotakoutouemi) who lived in the upper part of the valley...Another Algonquin group was the Onontchataronon, or People of Iroquet, who seem to have lived in the valley of the South Nation River in eastern Ontario, and who may or may not have been part of the Weskarini. This band, who are known only by their Iroquoian name, were reported to have incorporated some of the people of Hochelaga<sup>5</sup> when the latter were dispersed from the Saint Lawrence valley.*

However, Ratelle (1996:44) considers that three additional 'nations' should be included as part of the early-contact Algonquins. Drawing on early records from the *Jesuit Relations* where authors label additional 'nations' as *Algommequin* (including other variant orthographies), and on a statement presented in the *Handbook of Indians of Canada* (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:13), Ratelle includes the *Sagaiguninini*, and the *Sagnitaouigama* and describes them as living north and northeast of the Huron on Georgian Bay. He further includes another group lacking an Aboriginal-derived name identified only as *Batiscan country* people living northeast of the *Weskarini*, in the vicinity of the headwaters of the St. Maurice River (see Map A.1).

Virtually nothing is known of these three additional 'nations', including the origin of the evidently aboriginal derivation of the *Sagaiguninini* and *Sagnitaouigama* names. References to the latter in the *Jesuit Relations* are scant and of brief duration: they disappear from the written historical by the mid-1600s. The *Jesuit Relations* also contain a detailed list of Aboriginal 'nations' inhabiting the shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron dated to 1640, obtained from explorer Jean Nicolle during a 1634 voyage to the Winnebago, that identifies a 'nation' called *Ouasouarini* as the direct northern neighbours of the Huron along the Georgian Bay coast (Thwaites 1959[18]:229-231). The lengthy enumeration of different 'nations' and the description of their locations along the shores of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay in the 1640 *Jesuit Relations* document lacks any reference to *Sagaiguninini* and *Sagnitaouigama* at Georgian Bay proper (cf. PRAXIS Research Associates 1998a:19). Examination of the 1640 Relation indicates that these two groups appear located inland, between the Huron and known Algonquin groups south of Morrison's Island (Thwaites 1959[18]:229).

### **2.2.2 Semantic Differences in Identification Terms**

Ratelle's (1996:44) reference to a group known simply as *Batiscan country* reflects a characteristic of the early historical record as it pertains to the identification of various Aboriginal 'nations', bands, or tribes encountered or known by French explorers, traders and missionaries: not all groups or bands are identified according to the aboriginal names they have for themselves. Some

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<sup>5</sup> These people would have formed part of the St. Lawrence Iroquoian population encountered by Cartier in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, who had mysteriously disappeared by the time of Champlain's explorations in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Becker 1995:325).

groups of people are not even identified by names derived from other Aboriginal nations or groups. In several cases Aboriginal peoples, whether ‘nations’, bands, or other types of social units, are identified only by purely French terms or expressions that seem devoid of any ‘aboriginal’ social or cultural significance.

The early-contact historical record, particularly the documents contained in the *Jesuit Relations* from the mid-to-late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Thwaites 1959[18]:229-231; [54]:133-135), provides sufficiently detailed and reliable data to permit an ethnohistorical reconstruction of the social composition and approximate territorial limit of proto-Ojibwa society (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998a:17-30). However, peoples living inland to the north and northeast of the northernmost proto-Ojibwa group (the *Marameg*, who are situated along the eastern shore of Lake Superior) are identified in late 17<sup>th</sup> century and early to mid-18<sup>th</sup> century records only by the French term *Gens des Terres* (meaning “Inland People(s)”).

The first mention of these people in the *Jesuit Relations* is found in a 1670 document describing them as Indian groups living in a general and undefined area north of Lake Superior, seemingly between the *Marameg* and the *Kilistinons* (Cree) living near the North Sea, i.e., James Bay (Thwaites 1959[55]:98). Beginning in 1684 the *Gens des Terres* are identified through two apparently equivalent and Aboriginal-derived terms, *Opemens d’Acheliny* (by French authors) and the later *O’pimittish Ininiwac* (by English authors, e.g., Henry 1966:60). Both of these terms are likely derived from the Ojibwa language (McNulty and Gilbert 1981:211, 215).

The *Gens des Terres* are written about and identified in historical records as being a people or group of peoples distinct from the (then) emerging Ojibwa, as well as from the Cree. The explorer and Northwest Company trader Alexander Henry (the elder), during a voyage along the northeastern shore of Lake Superior in 1762, reported finding a few of these people at Sault Ste. Marie and provided a few details on their social identity and habitual geographical location:

*At the south [of the Sault] are also seen a few of the wandering O’pimittish Ininiwac, literally, Men of the Woods, and otherwise called Wood-Indians, and Gens des Terres - a peaceable and inoffensive race, but less conversant with some of the arts of first necessity than any of their neighbours. They have no villages; and their lodges are so rudely fashioned, as to afford them but very inadequate protection against inclement skies. The greater part of their year is spent in travelling from place to place, in search of food. The animal, on which they chiefly depend, is the hare. This they take in springes. Of the skin, they make coverings, with much ingenuity, cutting it into narrow strips, and weaving these into a cloth, of the shape of a blanket, and of a quality very warm and agreeable. (Henry 1966:60; emphasis original)*

By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the *Gens des Terres* sometimes become associated with another group, that may perhaps comprise a sub-population, termed the *Têtes de Boule* or ‘Round Heads’ (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:452; McNulty and Gilbert 1981:209). By 1767, during another voyage along the eastern and northern shore of Lake Superior, Alexander Henry wrote the following about the

Indians found upon his arrival at the Northwest Company post at Michipicoten:

*On reaching the trading-post, which was an old one of French establishment, I found ten lodges of Indians. These were **Gens de Terres**, or **O’pimittish Ininiwac**, of which nation I have already had occasion to speak\*. It is scattered all over the country between the Gulf of Saint-Lawrence and Lake Arabuthcow<sup>6</sup>, and between Lake Superior and Hudson’s Bay. Its language is a mixture of those of its neighbours, the Chipeways and Cristinaux...Such is the inhospitality of the country over which they wander, that only a single family can live together in the winter season; and this sometimes seeks subsistence in vain, on an area of five hundred square miles. They can stay in one place only till they have destroyed all its hares; and when these fail, they have no resource but in the leaves and shoots of treas, or in defect of these, in cannibalism. (Henry 1966:214-215; emphasis and asterisk original<sup>7</sup>).*

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century references to *Gens des Terres* disappear from historical records describing groups living between Lake Superior and James Bay and become replaced with references to Ojibwa and Cree. This has led at least one ethnohistorian to argue that the *Gens des Terres* migrated eastward into what is now Quebec, in order to fill a territory left vacant by the apparent disappearance of another group in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the *Attikamègues*, who neighboured known Algonquin groups in the Upper Saint-Maurice River region (McNulty and Gilbert 1981:208-209). However, the majority of references to northern neighbours of Algonquins in the Upper Saint-Maurice area during the 18<sup>th</sup> century use the term *Têtes de Boule*, and these people are considered to have spoken a dialect of Cree (*ibid*:208).

While the references to *Têtes de Boule* in historical documents usually do not specify their Aboriginal (band or ‘nation’) identity, there is at least one historical source, Champigny, who in 1692 describes a group he calls the ‘*Algonquins à Têtes de Boule*’, i.e., ‘the Algonquins with Round Heads’ or the ‘Round Head Algonquins’ (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:452). Other historical documents referring to *Têtes de Boule* typically distinguish them from Algonquins and other Aboriginal bands or nations or implicitly treat them as a distinct group. McNulty and Gilbert (1981:209) quote one historical source as an example:

*In 1753 Franquet (1889:23-24) summed up the hinterland situation: “Apart from the Algonquin Indians there are also Têtes de Boule and Montagnais. The former are so named because of their round heads. They have no villages, are quite numerous, and generally inhabit the area between the north shore of the [St. Lawrence] river and*

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<sup>6</sup> According to McNulty and Gilbert (1981:215) this would be Lake Athabaska.

<sup>7</sup> The asterisk in the original text refers to a footnote on page 214 of the 1969 edition, which states: “See Part I. Chapter 6” - which contains the description by Henry presented in the quote on page 13 above of this report. Added to the reference is the assertion “They are also called *Têtes de Boule*”.

*Labrador... The latter, called Montagnais, are likewise nomadic having no fixed abode and occupy the area between the river and Hudson's Bay. These Indians and the Tête de Boule as well are usually referred to as Gens de Terre”.*

This source, apart from containing an error in which the relative geographical placement of the *Têtes de Boule* and *Montagnais* are reversed, generally supports the description of way of life and interpretation presented by Alexander Henry concerning the association, if not equation of the people or peoples labelled *Gens des Terres* and *Têtes de Boule*.

In assessing the overall quality of historical information on these people, McNulty and Gilbert (*ibid*:212) conclude that:

*Historical information on the Tête de Boule over [a] 140 year period is so scanty that one can hardly say anything certain about them except that they hunted, trapped, traded, and moved about between the Upper Great Lakes and Trois-Rivieres. Their family and larger social organization, religion, and linguistic traits are undocumented for this period.*

McNulty and Gilbert's analysis of the available historical information on *Têtes de Boule* and *Gens des Terres* leads them to conclude that:

*...the records of the ranges of the Attikamègue and the Gens des Terres in the seventeenth century tend to imply the lack of a sharp distinction between them...the term Gens des Terres was a popular all-embracing expression that referred to all those wandering Algonquian bands, including groups known as Têtes de Boule, who exploited the territories adjacent to the headwaters of the Gatineau, Lièvre, Dumoine, and Saint-Maurice rivers, and areas beyond. (Ibid:209-210)*

McNulty and Gilbert consequently establish the following interpretation of the social and cultural meaning of the terms as applied to Aboriginal groups:

*Peoples known in the seventeenth century as the Tête de Boule and the Attikamègue exploited the area between James Bay and the Saint Lawrence River, including the Lake Kesagami region. Those known to Europeans as Têtes de Boule descended the rivers south to trade at Sault Ste. Marie and at the mouths of the Dumoine, Gatineau, and Lièvre rivers, whereas the Attikamègue's contacts were farther to the east and southeast at Lake Saint John and Trois Rivieres. But they were essentially the same linguistic and cultural group known and reported under two different names according to their points of trade. The term Gens des Terres encompassed these two groups and many others and seems to have had much more broad geographical significance for the writers of that period than a specific tribal or linguistic reference. (Ibid:210)*

According to these authors, the *Têtes de Boule* living in the Upper Saint-Maurice area during

the 20th century decided to adopt the term *Attikameks* as part of a cultural revival movement in 1972, although “Nobody seems to know exactly when and how the old name *Attikamek* came to be revived or who instigated its reincarnation (*ibid*:213). Genealogical research on present-day *Têtes de Boule - Attikamek* show descent from:

*...seventeenth century Attikamègue, from the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Tête de Boule, and probably from Ojibwa groups located farther west in the eighteenth century. In addition, modern genealogies show links with the eastern Montagnais, the northern Waswanipi Cree, the Algonquins of Rapid Lake, and the Mistassini Cree. (Ibid:212).*

In sum, these genealogical data, taken together with historical data and interpretations on *Têtes de Boule* and *Gens des Terres* could, methodologically, allow the creation of a historical link between part of the present-day Algonquin nation and the northeastern shore of Lake Superior, and even specifically the Michipicoten post and environs.

The reasoning in such a linkage involves establishing the following equations: since part of the present-day Algonquin bands have *Têtes de Boule* as ancestors, and that the *Têtes de Boule* formed part of the population called *Gens des Terres*, and given that the latter were observed to occupy the northeastern shore of Lake Superior in the early- to-mid eighteenth century, it follows that some of the ancestors of present-day Algonquins may have habitually lived along the northeastern shore of Lake Superior.

While this linkage is theoretically possible, the paucity of the historical information detailing Algonquin ancestry, and detailing the extent of these ancestors’ harvesting territory, together with the fact that neither the terms *Têtes de Boule* nor *Gens des Terres* have any specific social and cultural significance in Aboriginal society, make the connection so indirect and vague as to preclude any attribution of social scientific validity.

### **2.2.3 Algonquin Migrations in the Fur Trade Wars**

Sporadic warfare over control of trade routes and beaver hunting grounds, between the Iroquois and Algonquin bands is considered by some ethnohistorians to have begun as early as 1570 (Trigger 1985), and endured throughout the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Day and Trigger 1978:793-794). Following the destruction of Huronia in 1649, the Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy intensified raiding activities against the Algonquian nations living in the Lake Huron region, and against Algonquins living in the area north of Lake Ontario including the Ottawa Valley. The mid-17<sup>th</sup> century was a time of large-scale migrations for several Algonquian nations and groups, including in the Lake Huron and Georgian Bay region the Ottawa, Nipissing, and some proto-Ojibwa groups, and further east, the different bands comprising the Algonquin Nation.

The frequency of movement and need for stealth in these forced relocations are responsible for having created important gaps in information in the early historical record on Algonquin groups, particularly between 1650 and 1675 in which almost no information exists (Day and Trigger

1978:794). Recorded information on migrations and settlements of Algonquin groups after this period include the following:

*Some of the Algonquins retired to the Lake Saint John region and were still there in 1710...Others joined the mission at Sillery and were mostly destroyed by an epidemic by 1676. Still others, encouraged by the French, remained at Trois Rivières; and their settlement at nearby Pointe-du-Lac remained until about 1830, when the last 14 families, numbering about 50, moved to Oka. The Sulpician Mission of the Mountain was founded at Montreal in 1677, and some Algonquins settled there together with Iroquois converts. In 1704 a separate Algonquin mission was founded at Sainte-Anne- du-bout-de-l'île under Francois-Saturnin Lascaris d'Urfé; and in 1721 a new mission was formed at Lake of Two Mountains, where the Algonquins were brought together with Iroquois and Nipissing. Additional Algonquins joined this mission in 1742. (Ibid)*

It appears that the vast majority of documented migrations and relocations of people clearly identified as ancestors of contemporary Algonquins took place in what is now the Province of Quebec. However, some historical documents, for example from the *Jesuit Relations*, refer to migrations of 'Algonquins' to the eastern and northeastern shore of Lake Superior in the context of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Fur Trade Wars. As the discussion in the next subsection will show, there are semantic grounds on which to question whether these 'Algonquins' are ancestors to the present-day Algonquin Nation.

## **2.2.4 Semantic Changes in the Use of the Word 'Algonquin'**

Ethnohistorical references to 'algonkins', 'algonquins', and numerous orthographic variants<sup>8</sup>, cannot be considered at face value to provide valid data on the ancestors of the present-day Algonquin Nation. Numerous spelling variations in historical documents from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are common to references to Aboriginal peoples generally and are attributable to several factors, including differences in European observers' facility with Aboriginal languages and pronunciations, and the lack of any standard orthography for Aboriginal terms at a time in which social sciences, notably linguistics and anthropology, did not yet exist.

As linguistics and anthropology emerged as social science disciplines in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century, scholars attempted to develop standard orthographies for Aboriginal groups, nations, languages, and families of related languages. The orthographic variant 'algonkin' (present in some historical documents) represented such an attempt at social science standardization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to denote the group of related bands known to have inhabited the region demarcated by the Ottawa valley, western Quebec and the inland area north of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers up to the St. Maurice river during the early European contact period. The *Handbook of Indians of Canada*, published in 1913 by the Geographic Board of Canada, exclusively uses this spelling to

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<sup>8</sup> See Geographic Board of Canada (1913:13-14).



refer to these people. The 1913 *Handbook* adopts the variant ‘Algonquian’ to denote the family of Aboriginal languages that includes (in what is now Canada): the Abenaki, Delaware, Potawatomi, Malecite, Micmac, Cree, Montagnais-Naskapi, Ojibwa, and Blackfoot languages (Wilson and Urion 1995:29).

Despite attempts at standardizing orthographies, inconsistencies in spelling and meaning continued to pervade both scientific and popular writings in the 20th century. The spelling ‘algonkian’ in the early social science literature sometimes referred to to **geological** phenomena with reference to neither Aboriginal people nor to an Aboriginal language or family of languages (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:13). In the *Dictionary of Anthropology* first published in 1958, Winick (1970:15) presents both ‘algonkian’ and ‘algonquin’ variants to refer to the ‘algonquian’ language family. Inconsistencies are evident even in the latest edition of *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience* (Morrison and Wilson 1995): while the different chapter authors consistently use the spelling ‘algonquian’ to denote the language family, the variants ‘algonkian’ and ‘algonkin’ are used in texts and maps to refer to the historic group of related bands forming the ‘Algonquin Nation’ (*ibid.*:29, 145, 318). Meanwhile the Handbook of North American Indians adopted the spelling ‘algonquin’ (Day and Trigger 1978).

Early-contact historical documents written by the French include both variants ‘algonkin’ and ‘algonquin’, along with many spellings (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:14). As with the social science literature, different authors use either spelling inconsistently. In some cases, either variant may refer strictly to the historic group of related bands. In other cases the word may refer to a member of a band or ‘nation’ whose distinct language appeared similar to (and perhaps considered related to?) the language of the group of people living at contact in what is now the Ottawa valley. Close textual analysis comparing a variant to its linguistic context is the only method by which it is possible to determine which meaning is intended by a given author using any of the variants.

The above discussion clearly indicates that mere reference to ‘algonkins’ or ‘algonquins’ in historical documents, even when the latter consist of social scientific publications, cannot be assumed to refer strictly to ancestors of the contemporary Algonquin Nation. An example of a case in which a seventeenth century author **does intend** to use a strict meaning is found in the memoirs of the French explorer Nicholas Perrot who, in describing the original territory of the Iroquois wrote:

*The country of the Irroquois was formerly the district of Montreal and Three Rivers; they had as neighbors the Algonkins, who lived along the river of the Outaoïas, at Nepissing, on the French River, and between this and Taronto[sic].* (Blair 1911:43)

Emma Blair, the editor of the volume in which Perrot’s memoirs are published, comments on the semantics of the word ‘algonkins’ in a footnote on the page from which the quote above was taken. She remarks that both variants ‘algonkins’ and ‘algonquins’ are:

*...a name originally applied to a small tribe living on the Gatineau River, east of Ottawa, Que.[sic]; but later it was extended to various other tribes of the same stock, living on the upper Ottawa River and the shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron,*

*as far as Sault Ste. Marie. Some of the people were driven by Iroquois incursions to Mackinaw and westward, and became consolidated into the tribe now known as the Ottawa. From the name Algonkin is derived “Algonquian”, the appellation of the ethnic stock and linguistic family most widely diffused in North America. (Ibid)*

While Blair does not provide an approximate date at which the meaning of the terms were changed to refer to much more inclusive groups (of distinct nations or speakers of related languages), examination of the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Jesuit Relations* indicates that such an inclusive denotation existed by the mid-1600s.

The relation detailing events from 1659 and 1660 by Father Lalemant (Kenton 1954; Thwaites 1959[45]:217-239) makes reference to a forced migration of ‘algonkins’ to the eastern shore of Lake Superior in those years. The introductory paragraph to the relation, written by the volume editor (Edna Kenton), states:

*[A chapter is devoted to an account of the Algonkin tribes, who have fled westward from the Iroquois. This is taken from a narrative by one of the Fathers (probably Druillettes), who had recently met, far up the Saguenay, a converted Indian, who has spent the last two years in wandering through the region of Lake Superior and Hudson Bay, and describes to the Father what he has seen there. The Algonkins have fled to those shores for refuge. (Kenton 1954:301)*

In itself this passage could be interpreted to make strict reference to ancestors of the present-day Algonquin Nation. However, examination of the chapter in question, titled “Of the Condition of the Algonkin Country, and of Some New Discoveries” (*ibid*:305-313), reveals that the author is intending to “describe the condition of the Nations of the Algonkin tongue” (*ibid*:305). These Nations:

*...are very widely extended over five or six hundred leagues of forest, facing toward the East, those dwelling in the uttermost parts of the West, and those of the North, lying between the two others. (Ibid.)*

Although this geographic description is admittedly vague, it is nevertheless clear that the author (Father Lalemant) is referring to a vast territory by the rubric ‘algonkin country’: considering that a league is equivalent to approximately three miles, the ‘algonkin country’ would measure between 1,500 and 1,800 miles in length. Specific events described by Lalemant cover an area ranging from Tadoussac (in the East) to the north shore of Lake Huron and from there to the eastern shore of Lake Superior (in the West), and finally to Hudson Bay (in the North).

A key reference to Lake Superior states:

*This lake, which is more than eighty leagues long by forty wide in certain places, is studded with Islands picturesquely distributed along its shores. The whole length of its coast is lined with Algonkin Nations, fear of the Iroquois having forced them to*

*seek there an asylum.* (Kenton 1954:306)

That Father Lalemant is using the word ‘Algonkin’ in its more inclusive sense seems likely from a later passage in which he describes the travels of an Indian religious convert named Awatanik<sup>9</sup> from Lake Superior to Hudson Bay:

*Advancing by short stages because of his family, who accompanied him, after covering about a hundred leagues’ distance [from Lake Superior], he arrived at the great bay of the North, along which he found various Algonkin Nations who have settled on the shores of the sea. This is Hudson Bay, of which we have just been speaking. (Ibid:308; insert added)*

The ancestors of the present-day Algonquin Nation could not have been so numerous as to occupy the Ottawa valley and western Quebec area, originate also in part from a bay either in Lake Huron or possibly in Lake Michigan, and through relocations simultaneously fill the shoreline of Lake Superior, and leave a surplus of “several Nations” to settle at Hudson Bay. It is important to note that these descriptions of ‘Algonkins’ exclude additional groups documented to have settled between the St. Maurice River and Tadoussac in Quebec in the mid-late 1600s.

Chapter 10 of an earlier relation (1647-1648), titled “Of the Algonquin Missions” provides further evidence that the Jesuits used the word ‘algonquin’ to denote a much broader Aboriginal population than the six Algonquin Nation bands known to have lived in the Ottawa valley and Province of Quebec regions. A description of Aboriginal groups living along the shores of Lake Huron taken from this document reads:

*The Eastern and Northern shores of this Lake are inhabited by various Algonquin Tribes, - Outaouakamigouek, Sakahiganiriouik, Aouasanik, Atchougue, Amikouek, Achirigouans, Nikikouek, Michisaguek, Paouitagoung, - with all of which we have a considerable acquaintance.*

*The last named are those whom we call the Nation of the Sault, who are distant from us a little over one hundred leagues, by means of whom we would have to obtain a passage, if we wished to go further and communicate with numerous other Algonquin Tribes, still further away, who dwell on the shores of another lake larger than the fresh water sea, into which it discharges by a very large and very rapid river...This superior Lake extends toward the Northwest, - that is between the West and the*

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<sup>9</sup> Awatanik is himself identified by the author as being ‘Algonkin’ (Kenton 1954:311), originating from “the lake of the Ouinipegouek, which is strictly only a large bay in Lake Huron” (*ibid*:305). With the Indian word Ouinipegouek, meaning “lake of the stinkards”, the author may actually have misunderstood Awatanik’s place of origin - most ethnohistorians consider that the bay or lake of “stinkards” described in early documents is Green Bay in Lake Michigan, where explorer Jean Nicolle found the Winnebago in a 1630s expedition (cf. Thwaites 1959[18]:229-231).

*North.* (Thwaites 1959[33]:149)

Five groups identified in this quote, although labelled ‘algonquin’ by its author, are considered by ethnohistorians as Ojibwa, or proto-Ojibwa bands or clans (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998a:17-30): the Amikouek (Amikouai), the Achirigouans (Atchiligouan), the Nikikouek (Nouquet or Roquai), the Michisagek (Mississauga), and the Paouitagoung (Pahouitingwach Irini or Saulteurs).

In the introduction to her collection of documents from the *Jesuit Relations*, Kenton (1954:xxvi-xxvii) provides the following editorial comment on the Jesuits’ use of the term ‘Algonkin’ that confirms an inclusive meaning:

*The Algonkins were the most numerous, holding the greater portion of the country from the unoccupied “debatable land” of Kentucky northward to the Mississippi. Among their tribes were the Micmacs of Acadia, the Penobscots of Maine, the Montagnais of the St. Lawrence, the ill-defined tribes of the country around Lake St. John, and the Ottawas, Chippewas, Mascoutens, Sacs, Foxes, Pottawatomies, and Illinois of the Upper Lakes...In the heart of this Algonkin land was planted the ethnic group called the Iroquois...*

In brief, when the term ‘algonkin’ was used by Jesuits in its more inclusive sense, it referred more closely to the contemporary term ‘algonquian’ denoting a ‘language family’ that subsumes over a dozen distinct peoples and nations spread throughout the eastern half of Canada and a substantial portion of the eastern United States.

### **2.3 ISSUES AND INDICATORS OF MÉTIS IDENTITY**

An overview by *PRAXIS* of the literature relevant to métis in Ontario and to issues of métis identity generally reveals that criteria of métis ethnicity are multi-faceted and somewhat ambiguous, especially when considering the development of a distinct métis population in the Great Lakes region. No consensus exists concerning which criteria should be used in measuring métis identity, as an ethnic entity distinct from their heritage in either European or Aboriginal parentage. It is important to note that within the context of this academic debate, scholars such as Jennifer Brown (1987) have posed a distinction between small “m” métis” – connoting mixed parentage but no ethnic identity – and capital “M” “Métis” – the name of an identifiable ethnic group. Because the latter spelling has potential political and legal implications, *PRAXIS* uses the more neutral spelling “métis” throughout the present report (except when spelled otherwise in direct quotations from other sources).

Consistent with an ethnohistorical and social scientific approach, the present report is restricted to the analysis of data related to historical, social and cultural criteria of métis identity. This section of the report focuses on issues and indicators of métis identity as relevant to historic populations. Issues relevant to métis identity in the contemporary context will be briefly addressed later in the report, in the context of data gathered through the community consultation process.

Finally, previous research by *PRAXIS* into sociological and anthropological definitions of community (*PRAXIS* Research Associates 1997) also informs these analyses.

Various criteria have been used by historians, sociologists and anthropologists to draw conclusions about whether historical populations of métis could be considered an ethnic group. Three main categories of criteria have been applied to métis identity:

- ▶ **Ascription:** self-ascription and other-ascription;
- ▶ **Cultural Integrity:** marriage patterns, material culture, language, and geographic domain;
- ▶ **Social Relations:** socio-economic relations, and political relations.

These categories are discussed separately in the sections below focusing primarily on the history of a mixed-blood population in the Great Lakes region, as relevant to the present study of an “historic métis community” in the Wawa area.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.3.1 Ascription

Ascription refers to ways in which métis perceived themselves and were perceived by others as belonging to a people distinct from European and Aboriginal peoples. Ascription – as a category of criteria – has two elements: **self-ascription**, or indicators of mixed-blood individuals identifying themselves as distinct, and; **other-ascription**, or indicators of outsiders labelling mixed-blood individuals as culturally or racially distinct.

Much has been written and said about historical self-ascription by métis, and today métis groups continue to consider self-ascription as an important criterion of membership. From an historical perspective, academics continue to debate about exactly when métis perceived themselves as métis (Burley et al. 1992:15). Sprague & Frye (1983:12) describe the emergence of a “breed” of people in the Great Lakes area, distinguishable from the true native, in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, Gorham (1987:38) states that throughout the period of their dependence on the fur trade (ca. 1680-1830), mixed-blood people in the Great Lakes region appear to have functioned more as a disparate collection of individuals rather than as a cohesive group. As individuals, mixed-blood people demonstrated a greater awareness of the uniqueness of their way of life as fur traders in the Great Lakes region, than to any clear sense of distinctiveness created by their mixed ancestry:

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<sup>10</sup> The application of theories and analyses of contemporary métis ethnicity, such as those consulted in publications by Sawchuk (1978), Lussier (1978), Sealey (1979) and Peters et al. (1991), are beyond the scope of this present assignment. However, the historical perspective on métis identity presented in this report may reflect on criteria and issues raised by such scholars.

*The mixed-bloods of the Great lakes seemingly lacked one of the more significant characteristics of an ethnic group: self-ascription on the part of the individuals to a larger group. Rather than protect the ancestral and cultural integrity of their own group, they seem of have been very open to contact with representatives from other racial or cultural groups, favouring exogamous mating and marriage patterns... beneficial to mixed-blood trading families; the absence of self-proclaimed “distinctive” ethnic identity enabled interested individuals to mix more freely with both their “client” and “patron” groups. The presence of a small group of people within the mixed blood population who were able to function as a moving bridge between the two larger societies, unencumbered by rigid ethnic identities, may have been crucial to successful transactions between Indian and White interest groups. (Ibid.:39).*

Gorham cites several ethnohistorical case studies of mixed-blood individuals for whom the vagueness of their ethnic identity during the fur trade period before 1820 permitted them to adopt different ethnic identities over time or to selectively communicate elements of their ethnic background as the social situation demanded (*ibid.*:41). The case study of Billy Caldwell (Clifton 1978) is one example of such a situational ethnicity. Peterson’s (1981:158) account of the prominent Great Lakes métis figure, Charles Langlade (1729-c.1800), indicates that he chose to identify his interests with neither the British, French nor Ottawa, preferring rather to take an “intermediary stance.” In Peterson’s opinion, the métis intermediary stance vis a vis Indian and EuroAmerican societies is the “core denominator” of the Great Lakes métis identity.

Based on HBC data from the period ca. 1810, Brown’s (1987:139) study of the “natives of the Hudson’s Bay” shows that biological mixing in itself was insufficient to “occasion the rise to recognition and self-consciousness.” Although Brown concludes that the HBC offspring lacked the distinct community and economic base upon which to build a separate identity, she qualifies this statement by adding that in the Great Lakes Region, the British conquest of New France in 1763 may have heightened a sense of separateness among métis of French descent (*ibid.*). In addition, Van Kirk (1980:237) differentiates between the French NWC métis who felt more of an affinity with the hunting and trapping life of their mother’s Indian ancestry, in contrast to the common English (HBC) mixed-blood trait by which individuals obscured their Indian ancestry, preferring to associate themselves with their British patrimony.

With regard to other-ascription, most scholars agree that by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century, outsiders were ascribing a separate identity to métis. Giraud’s seminal work on the Canadian métis (1986 [original 1945]) claims that it is only through vague references in HBC documents – eg., “woodrunners”, “French Indians” and *coureurs de bois* as “half-French” – that one can envisage the first appearance of métis as an identifiable ‘other’. The fact that as early as 1682 the Committee in London had thought it necessary to reprimand the heads of its posts for allowing and maintain large numbers of Indian women in their establishments, it can be assumed that country marriages were occurring. Giraud also assumes that it was for this reason that no reference to country-born children and mixed-blood individuals are found in post records (*ibid.*:319-320). Gorham’s (1987:40) survey of journals and papers of travellers, fur traders, military and administrative personnel, and

missionaries who worked in the Great Lakes region, ca. 1750-1800, revealed almost no use of any special terms or expressions (i.e. ethnic references) that might have been used to distinguish persons of mixed Indian-White ancestry from other residents native to the area.

Peterson (1985:39) asserts that the distinctiveness of métis in Great Lakes area was fully apparent to outsiders by the early decades of the 1800s when racial terms began to be used in classifying Indians from half-breeds or métis. Van Kirk (1980:95-6) reports that ca. 1800, a NWC policy of supporting servants' families coupled with the emergence of a body of "freemen", resulted in the progeny of Nor'Westers being recognized at an early stage as a group distinct from the Indians. They were known as "métis" or "bois brulés" and by far the largest number of them were descendants of the French-Canadian engagés and their Indian wives. According to Gorham (*ibid.*:40-41), it was not until the 1820s that a few scattered references to half-breeds began to appear in the writings of Catholic missionaries – one of whom writes of marriages of "Canadians or halfbreeds to full blooded Indian women." While indicating the existence of a separate ethnic category for mixed bloods, this quote also raises the issue of the ambiguous use of the word "Canadian" to refer to métis, a methodological problem raised also by Giraud (1986). Giraud emphasizes that the context in which the word is used in historical documents from this time period is key to determining to whom the name 'Canadian' or *canadien* is referring. In many cases the name is applied to employees of the North West Company. Giraud's "Canadian Métis" refers to NWC mixed-blood individuals and families, in contrast to those attached to the Hudsons Bay Company whom he labels "Scottish half-breeds (*ibid.*:346-347).

Brown's (1980:159) studies of the histories of HBC offspring suggest that an important shift away from the simple dichotomy of choice between English and Indian identity began to occur as early as the 1780s and 1790s. A class of company sons of mixed descent emerged who were described neither as English nor as Home Indians, but instead as "natives of Hudson's Bay." By the first decade of 1800, NWC 'Canadians' recognized mixed-bloods as members of a distinct social and racial category and it was in the NWC context that the term "halfbreed" was first used.

According to Brown, the increasing use of "halfbreed" along with older French Canadian terms, *métis* and *brulé*, to refer to the NWC offspring as a group, corresponds temporally with some early efforts by members of this group to assert themselves socially and politically, particularly in the Red River area where they were beginning to settle as semi-independent buffalo-hunters and suppliers of the fur trade, as well as intermittent NWC employees (*ibid.*:172). This is an important point, as the literature is divided between scholars who argue that métis ethnicity (*ethnogenesis*) began long before Louis Riel (eg., Peterson 1978, 1985), and those who contend that it was the politicized events at Red River out of which capital "M" Métis emerged (eg., Brown 1980; Burley et al. 1992). Brown adds however, that the demands made by the métis at Red River ca. 1814-1816, made clear that the Red River métis already identified themselves with a distinctive lifestyle and with both their maternal (Aboriginal) and paternal (European) heritage (1980:173). In sum, there is general consensus that some degree of cultural identity shared by mixed-blood people preceded – and indeed was necessary for – the crystallization of métis ethnicity at Red River.

### 2.3.2 Cultural Integrity

The second category of ethnic criteria includes indicators such as marriage patterns, language, material culture, geographic domain, and customs, all of which combine to describe a particular cultural integrity. What is unique about this cultural integrity is its hybrid nature, the result of a selective adoption of Aboriginal and European traits and practices which most benefitted the fur trade métis families, while at the same time rejecting those aspects of either parent culture which were seen as detrimental to their success in the fur trade. Historians of the early Great Lakes métis agree that any “ethnogenesis” which occurred was intimately tied to the fur trade, as evident in the following discussion of specific indicators.

As indicated above, **métis marriage and mating patterns** favoured alliances with other racial or cultural groups viewed as beneficial to the strength of their trading families. In anthropological terms, this marriage pattern is exogamous in which a mate is found from outside ones’ group. Success in the fur trade demanded an ever-enlarging sphere of contacts. During the French period (ca. 1690-1765), marriage between métis and between métis and Indian were apparently insignificant. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, a host of métis marriages linked the dominant lineages of the Great Lakes trade communities and intermarriage with distant hunting bands also saw the establishment and expansion of new trading hamlets (Peterson 1985:63). Gorham’s examination of baptismal and marriage records from the 1700-1800s, reveals that despite a significant mixed-blood population able to serve as prospective marital partners by the mid-1700s, the Great Lakes mixed-bloods generally preferred exogamy:

*This preference was largely the result of their specialization in the fur trade and occupations associated with the Indian department. Country marriages removed the institutional barriers to cross cultural relations and led to a heightened level of contact with, and understanding of, both their parent groups. Intermarriage renewed social and economic ties, providing individuals with greater stability in a society built around the fur trade and increased their suitability for roles and occupations as “go-betweens.” (Gorham 1987:47)*

Peterson (1981:158) provides examples of what she typifies as three patterns of marriage among Great Lakes métis trade families: 1) a son first entered into a short-term “country” marriage with a native woman to ensure the trust of her band; 2) this was usually followed by a permanent second marriage to a prominent métis or French-Canadian creole woman of another trading family, and; 3) métis daughters generally married other métis or if members of the elite, to incoming Europeans. Such patterns resulted in what Peterson calls “trading dynasties” in which:

*Every Métis community of any size had several such lineages, all of which by 1820 has so entangled themselves through marital and commercial alliances that fur trade society had become a Métis society, its members linked by kin ties as well as a common interest in the Indian trade. (Ibid.:160)*

Brown (1980:70) labels this pattern of intermarriage among trader families as “fur trade



endogamy”, which she identifies as the major phenomenon to change the character of Hudsons Bay Company social life. Brown also indicates that prior to ca. 1830, a female Indian mate was generally referred to as a “woman of the country” (*ibid.*:54). Mixed blood children may have been referred to as “the daughter of an Englishman” or “the son of” a named HBC officer. Occasionally, both their English and Indian names are recorded. From ca. 1800 onward, a native or mixed-blood fur trade mate was more likely to be described as a “wife” or as “Mrs.”, rather than by older terms such as “my woman”, “mother of my children”, or “helpmate” (*ibid.*:78). Throughout this period of the HBC, it was common for Company servants who were transferred to distant posts or who retired home to Britain, to leave their native families. Records indicate that such servants often made arrangements to send regular payments to the post for the support of their country-born families.

Gorham (1987:49) concludes that occupational and class factors were more significant in the regulation of marital choices than were issues of ethnicity. Inter-ethnic contact was channelled along class lines and the mixed-blood trading population formed more of an occupational class than it did an ethnic group. This stands in contrast to the métis at Red River where Gorham suggests that endogamy among métis was of greater importance. However, by 1815 residents of Great Lakes métis villages were the offspring of Canadian trade company employees and Indian women, as well as of marriages between the adult métis offspring themselves (Peterson 1985:41).

Van Kirk (1980:108-9) describes the social significance of the difference between Hudsons Bay Company and North West Company policies regarding marriage between servants and natives. The HBC policy forbidding unions between their employees and native women was only partially successful in restricting country marriages to the upper ranks. Initially (ca. late 1700s), most of the marriageable mixed-blood girls were the daughters of officers. Incoming junior officers were seen as the most promising husbands and this pattern of intermarriage was repeated many times over in the HBC. The Northwest Company, in 1806, ruled against marriage with pure-blooded Indian women, in an attempt to ensure that the large number of marriageable mixed-blood girls would find husbands within the fur trade to support them. Unlike the HBC, most mixed blood daughters were of voyageurs and freemen, not the bourgeois. Hence, in the NWC a pattern of marriage across race and class developed, perhaps fostering the feeling of Company solidarity and engendering a sense of “North West spirit” which transcended distinctions of rank. According to Van Kirk, a considerable number of NWC bourgeois who entered into the HBC in 1821 had country wives of French-Indian descent.

In searching the fur trade records prior to the HBC and NWC merger in 1821, it can be assumed that references to a trader’s wife indicates an Indian or mixed-blood woman. It was not until the 1820s after the establishment of the Red River Colony in Manitoba that traders began occasionally to find white wives among the settlers’ families. It was not until 1830 that HBC Governor Simpson and a few colleagues of high position in the Company first brought brides over from Britain, heralding a “new era in which native-born women, who for decades had been the customary marital choices of traders, would be rejected as unsuitable mates for officers and gentlemen” (Brown 1980:xv). However, even in the 1840s and 1850s, many Company employees (including Governor Simpson) remained more favourably inclined toward native-born wives and families as the best adapted to domestic life and work associated with the fur trade. However, by this

time, few if any Indian wives were taken; wives of mixed descent, particularly métis daughters with some “civilizing influence” were the vogue (*ibid.*:xvi).

There exists only scant evidence of a **material culture** distinct to métis. The most common reference is to métis housing construction consisting of log and bark cabins. According to Peterson (1981:172; 1985:45) métis communities were thus distinguishable for a continuous period from the 1700s through to the first three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Early housing resembled the portable dome-shaped cabins of the Montagnais and other Algonkians, a housing type employed by most of the Great Lakes tribes, or a version of the Huron longhouse adapted to spring or summer use (Peterson 1981:160, 167-177). Giraud (1986:241) provides a description of métis houses as typically:

*...rough structures of logs, the gaps between them filled with mud, and with a roof of earth held together by the grass that quickly took root there [i.e. sod], and no better windows than the undressed skins of deer or moose merely, stripped of their hair! (Source: Minn. Hist. Soc., “Journal of Rev. W.T. Boutwell, July 1833”)*

Judd’s (1983) case study of housing for HBC servants and their native-born families at Moose Factory also describes log cabins situated outside the post. In addition to housing, métis clothing styles (eg., sash) and art (eg., floral beadwork), fiddles, festivals and food, were also distinctive and best described as a “syncretic” blend of Indian and European elements (Peterson 1981:182).

An important métis “invention” was the **language of trade** (*Français sauvage*) which Peterson (1981:176-179) demonstrates was in use in the lower St Lawrence as early as 1632. Further north, an English equivalent of trade communication known as “Home Guard” Ojibwa developed, but it was the French derivative that pervaded and eventually evolved into the vernacular of Canadians and métis at Red River by the 1830s. This new language now known as *Michif* is a combination of French and Ojibwa and “most certainly transported from the Great Lakes region as the trade shifted westward” (*ibid.*:179).

With regard to a **geographic domain** distinct to métis, Peterson (1985:39) argues that labels by outsiders point to the general area of the southern Great Lakes as the place associated with métis settlement. By the 1820s, a distinctive residential imprint on the Great Lakes region was established in the form of a network of corporate towns and trading villages linked economically and socially to the commercial emporia of Michilimackinac and Detroit. The residents were not transients, although the requirements of their occupation led them on an annual round from town to winter hunting ground and to the warehouses in Mackinac and Detroit. Both trade and subsistence activities required a degree of mobility, in which individuals would be away for months at a time, but returning to the métis village as home base. Peterson (*ibid.*:63) suggests that a commitment to place can be seen in the persistence of métis family names over several generations in the same location.

In cultural terms, Brown (1987:138) argues, métis communities in the Great Lakes region achieved a moral and social order of their own. Both French Catholicism (attenuated by isolation) and Indian cultural constraints set moral limits. Unions with Indian women involved commitments to and reciprocities with Indian kin and neighbours, earning the descriptive term *à la façon du pays*

(according to the custom of the country). European fathers often lived out their lives with their native families, either as full-time employees at forts, or as freemen who provisioned posts and served intermittently as guides, interpreters, or voyageurs. However, Gorham (1987:48) points to a major weakness with regard to the cultural integrity of Great lakes métis: their preference for exogamy suggests that close contact with the ethnic groups around them was a high priority, and that the preservation of an established ancestral or cultural group was of secondary importance. The exposure of so many individuals to inter-ethnic contact and marriage may have hindered the group's ability to communicate a cohesive concept of a common ethnic identity from one to another or to transmit their common culture to succeeding generations. Because endogamy is regarded as an important feature of most ethnic groups, Gorham questions how a mixed-blood group such as this could evolve and pass on a common set of traditions which could firmly establish a shared culture and ethnic identity. Gorham concludes that, "The Great Lakes mixed-bloods might be better described as an economic class, with subdivisions into traders and *voyageurs*, rather than as an ethnic group" (*ibid.*:51).

### 2.3.3 Social Relations

As mentioned above, it was the fur trade that most significantly influenced the métis way of life. This was true also in social, economic and political relations among themselves and with others.

**Socio-economically**, métis relations were characterized primarily in occupational terms (Peterson 1985:39). By 1815 métis villages around the Great Lakes were distinct in that they were occupationally monolithic or homogeneous, focused solely on the fur trade and subsistence. Most of the residents of the Great Lakes trading communities were employed in the middle-rung and lower-rung positions, i.e. as clerks, *hivernants* (winterers) and voyageurs (Peterson 1981:145). The "intra regional mobility" required by the trade seems to have fostered, by the early decades of the 19th century, "a personal and group identity which was less place specific than regionally and occupationally defined" (*ibid.*:63). According to Peterson (*ibid.*:185), "the core denominator of Métis identity was not participation in the trading network, per se, but the Métis intermediary stance vis a vis Indian and Euro-American societies."

However, Brown's (1980:68) account of métis community development indicates that for HBC traders' native families, relations were also post-specific. A trader's country-wife and country-born children maintained special relations with his post even after the trader left the company and returned to England. This was especially true in cases where traders sent monetary support to the post for their native families. Brown (*ibid.*:69) indicates that it was evident in the late 1700s that the native-born children of HBC traders were likely to maintain supplementary identities and affiliations distinctive from their mothers and other Indians.

Nevertheless, social and economic relations among HBC families remained occupationally defined by the fur trade. Career patterns followed by native-born sons from the late 1700s onward is a reflection of a recognition of the collective presence of native-born children in the early 1800s which led to a cluster of new policies and practices by the HBC with the goal of making them more consistently loyal and useful to the posts. The traders' native-born daughters became increasingly

conspicuous in the social order of the fur trade, and by 1800 they were generally preferred over Indian women. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the London Committee finally lost hope of trying to suppress its' servants' marriages, and began to confront issues related to the growing number of native families around the posts, supported by traders who were increasingly concerned about the fate of their native dependants. The institutionalization of "the custom of the country" at HBC posts was significant to the ordering of social relations in the years leading up to 1821. These communities acquired distinct populations of company servants and native families, increasingly sensitive to British culture and values especially in light of new schooling opportunities at some posts and proposals for colonization at Red River (*ibid.*:80).

In describing métis **political relations**, Giraud (1986:355) remained unconvinced that métis during the late 1700s to early 1800s shared any sense of national identity:

*The ethnic diversity of the Métis race... did not in the beginning diminish the good relations and sense of fellowship that resulted from similar ways of living and similar affinities. But this emergent fellowship was far from leading to real cohesion, and even less did it result in the formation of a sentiment of nationality common to the group as a whole. Their dispersion was too widespread, their ambitions too limited to immediate realities, their material life as yet too peaceful and too little threatened for them to become conscious of the strength they could represent or to experience the feeling that, between the whites and the Indians, they formed a distinct "nation", called on to defend its own interests and to play in the history of the West a special role, in conformity with the destinies its dual ancestry might assign to it.*

In Giraud's opinion, it was "with the appearance of sedentary colonization in the western plains that the Métis group which had to history during the eighteenth century, stepped on to the stage and rapidly acquired the national consciousness which it had hitherto lacked" (*ibid.*:356). Brown (1987:140) generally agrees with this opinion, indicating that the factors leading to a distinct Métis identity in the Red River region were related to political events beginning in 1814 (Pemmican War), the killing of the Governor and several colonists at Seven Oaks in 1816 and the merger of HBC and NWC in 1821, which together served to solidify the concept of a "Métis Nation." This opinion is voiced in various ways by other scholars including Van Kirk (1980:238-9), Gorham (1987:50), and Burley et al. (1992:17-20).

### **3. DEVELOPMENT OF A MIXED POPULATION: EASTERN LAKE SUPERIOR, 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

This chapter presents historical data and ethnohistorical analyses pertaining to the historical development of a population of mixed European and Aboriginal ancestry along the eastern shore of Lake Superior, with an emphasis of the Michipicoten area. The data and interpretations in this chapter are pertinent to all research questions outlined in Section 1.2 , with the exception of those dealing with Treaty participation. The ambiguous nature of 18<sup>th</sup> century population terms, and the lack of data pertaining to social interactions between persons of possible mixed descent, prevent a determination of the extent to which this population acted as a community.

#### **3.1 LAKE SUPERIOR IN THE EARLY-CONTACT PERIOD (1630-1700)**

Examination of primary and secondary sources cited and consulted for this assignment indicates that European contact with Aboriginal groups living along and inland from the eastern and northeastern shores of Lake Superior occurred sporadically during the latter half of 17<sup>th</sup> century. The French explorer Etienne Brulé (1592-1632) is generally credited as the first European likely to have travelled past the rapids at Sault Ste. Marie and perhaps into Lake Superior during his explorations of Lake Huron in the early 1620s (Grolier 1996).

##### **3.1.1 Explorations and Descriptions of Inhabitants, Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century**

European (i.e., French) knowledge of Lake Superior, even of the certainty of its existence, remained very limited and tentative during much of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For example, a description of the northwestern portion of Lake Huron (often referred to as ‘the fresh water sea’ owing to its relative size) from a 1640 *Jesuit Relations* document asserts that only one other ‘fresh water sea’ lies beyond the rapids of Sault Ste. Marie. The limited geographic description of this second large Lake, and of the Aboriginal peoples described as living along its shores, implicitly suggests that French knowledge of Upper Great Lakes beyond Lake Huron, even by the late 1630s, was limited to Lake Michigan. Pertinent excerpts provide the following descriptions, beginning with that of Lake Huron:

*Let us return now to the fresh-water sea. This sea is nothing but a large Lake which, becoming narrower in the West, or the West Northwest, forms another smaller Lake, which then begins to enlarge into another great Lake or second fresh-water sea. Such are the nations that border these great Lakes or seas of the North.*

*I have said that at the entrance to the first of these Lakes we find the*

*Hurons<sup>11</sup>[...]proceeding to Baouichtigouian, - that is to say, to the nation of the people of the Sault, for there is a Rapid, which rushes at this point into the fresh water sea. Beyond this rapid we find the little lake, upon the shores of which, to the North, are the Roquai. To the North of these are the Mantoue, people who navigate very little, living upon the fruits of the earth. Passing this smaller lake, we enter the second fresh-water sea, upon the shores of which are the Maroumine; and still farther, upon the same banks, dwell the Ouinipigou, a sedentary people, who are very numerous; some of the French call them the “Nation of the Stinkards” because the Algonquin word “ouinipeg” signifies “bad-smelling water”...In the neighborhood of this nation are the Naduesiu, the Assinipour, the Erinoui, the Rasaouakoueton, and the Pououtouatami. These are the names of a part of the nations which are beyond the shores of the great lakes of the Hurons...(Thwaites 1959[18]:229-233)*

The identification of the Winnebago (as *Ouinipigou*), Sioux (as *Naduesiu*), Assiniboine (as *Assinipour*) and Potawatomi (as *Pououtouatami*) as peoples living along the shores of this lake means that this second ‘fresh water sea’ can only be Lake Michigan. During the early-contact era, the Winnebago, Sioux, and Assiniboine are documented to have occupied territories partly adjacent to each other inland from the western shores of that Lake, while the Pottawatomi are considered to have inhabited an area between the southeastern shore of Lake Michigan and the western shore of Lake Huron (Cleland 1992).

By the late 1640s scant references to yet another large lake beyond Lake Huron begin to appear in the *Jesuit Relations*; however, the identity of the Aboriginal peoples inhabiting its shores is simply reported as ‘Algonquin’, which, following the discussion in Chapter 2, precludes determining the specific identity of the groups. Although Sault Ste. Marie was by then well known to the Jesuits, their closest Mission to the rapids at the Sault was, in the 1647-48 *Relation*, described as “one hundred leagues” away (Thwaites 1959[33]:149). The description of Lake Superior and its inhabitants is limited to the following statements:

*The last named are...the Nation of the Sault...by means of whom we would have to obtain a passage, if we wished to go further and communicate with numerous other Algonquin Tribes, still further away, who dwell on the shores of another lake larger than the fresh-water sea, into which it discharges by a very large and very rapid river; the latter, before mingling its waters with those of our fresh-water sea, rolls over a fall that gives its name to these peoples, who come there during the fishing season. This superior Lake extends toward the Northwest, - that is, between the West and the North. (Ibid)*

A *Relation* published 10 years later describing different water routes by which Indians travel from

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<sup>11</sup> The author then provides a lengthy enumeration of the different ‘nations’ found along the shore of Georgian and the northern shore of Lake Huron. These groups are considered to have been either bands or clans forming proto-Ottawa and proto-Ojibwa ‘tribes’ (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998a:17-30).

the St. Lawrence River and Upper Great Lakes to the ‘North Sea’ (i.e., James Bay) is indicative of a growing French interest in, and knowledge of, the interior and boreal forest region by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Four of the six routes described involve travel from or in the vicinity of Lakes Huron and Superior:

*Third route. The Nipissiriniens, starting from their lake, - which is called Nipisin, and whence they take their name of Nipissiriniens, - reach the North sea in fifteen days; that is, their lake is distant therefrom perhaps a hundred and fifty leagues.*

*Fourth route. The Achirigouans<sup>12</sup>, who live on a river emptying into the Fresh-water Sea of the Hurons, go in a few days to trade with the Ataouabouskatouk Kilistinons, who are on the sea shore...*

*Fifth route. The upper Algonquins reach the sea in seven days, going in three days to the lake called Alimibeg<sup>13</sup>, and thence descending in four more days to the Bay of the Kilistinons, which is on the coast.*

*There is a new way still, from the country of the Hurons to Three Rivers, starting from the lake called Temagami, - that is, ‘deep water’, - which I think is the Fresh-water sea of the Hurons<sup>14</sup>, and the source of the great St. Lawrence river...By this route, about two years ago, twenty-five Nipissiriniens canoes arrived, laden with men, women, children, and furs. They told us that they had everywhere found moose, or beavers, or fish, which had furnished them with food; and assured us it would be easy for our Frenchmen, starting from Three Rivers, to reach the Fresh-water sea of the Hurons in a month. The above routes are more difficult to travel than the high road from Paris to Orleans. (Thwaites 1959[44]:243-245)*

In addition to showing that some Jesuits had a sense of humour, the lack of mention of specific river and lake names involved in these routes, and the erroneous assumption that ‘Temagami’ was another ‘Algonquin’ term for Lake Huron, demonstrate that French knowledge of the interior north and northeast region of the Upper Great Lakes was at best only cursory in the mid-1600s.

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<sup>12</sup> Also spelled *Achiligouians* in other French documents, these people are considered as one of the proto-Ojibwa bands or clans living on the northern shore of Lake Huron.

<sup>13</sup> This is probably Lake Nipigon, which was also referred to by the name ‘Alemipigon’ in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the route likely implies travelling down the Albany river to the James Bay coast.

<sup>14</sup> The author correctly reported the Aboriginal meaning of Temagami as ‘deep water’ but failed to understand that this was a lake in its own right.

### 3.1.2 Descriptions of Inhabitants, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries

By the late 1650s Lake Superior is referred to by that name in French documents. A *Relation* for 1659-1660 reports that the whole length of its coast is “lined with Algonquin Nations” that have relocated there from fear of Iroquois raids, as discussed in Section 2.4 above (Thwaites 1959[45]:219). The specific identity of the ‘algonquins’ is not provided by the author of the *Relation*. However, the document reveals that the French had by then become aware, through Indian informants, that the shores of Lake Superior contained potentially valuable minerals:

*[Lake Superior] is also enriched in its entire circumference with mines of lead in nearly pure state; with copper of such excellence that pieces as large as one’s fist are found, all refined; and with great rocks, having whole veins of turquoise. The people even strive to make us believe that its waters are swollen by various streams which roll along with the sand grains of gold in abundance - the refuse, so to speak, of neighboring mines. (Ibid:219-221)*

The same document later describes a travel route from Lake Superior to Hudson Bay:

*Moreover, from this same lake Superior, following a River toward the North, we arrive, after eight or ten days’ journey, at Hudson bay, in fifty-five degrees of latitude. (Ibid:223)*

However, as with several descriptions of geography and of Aboriginal groups obtained from second-hand sources, this statement is either based on incorrect or at least incomplete information since no single river from Lake Superior reaches Hudson Bay at that latitude.

Following the establishment of a mission at Sault Ste Marie the Jesuits began to obtain first hand information on the Aboriginal groups living along the southern and eastern shores of Lake Superior. A 1670 *Relation* written by Father Dablon identifies the immediate neighbours of the *Pahouitingwach Irini* or *Saulteurs* (as commonly named by the French):

*The principal inhabitants of this district are those who call themselves Pahouitingwach Irini, and whom the French call Saulteurs, because it is they who live at the Sault as their own Country, the others being there only as borrowers. They comprise only a hundred and fifty souls, but have united themselves with three other Nations which number more than five hundred and fifty persons, to whom they have, as it were, made a cession of the rights of their native Country; and so these live here permanently, except the time when they are out hunting: Next come those who are called the Nouquet, who extend toward the South of Lake Superior, whence they take their origin; and the Outchibous, together with the Marameg, toward the North of the same Lake, which region they regard as their own proper Country. (Thwaites 1959[54]:133-135)*

This quote has been presented in several earlier reports submitted to the Ministry in discussions



concerning the genesis and territorial expansion of the historic Ojibwa in the context of the fur trade (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998a, 1998b). For the purposes of this assignment, the passage quoted above describes, at minimum, a political unification of four groups: the Saulteurs or original inhabitants of the Sault Ste. Marie area, and three of their neighbours, the *Nouquet* living along the southern shore of Lake Superior near the Sault, and the *Outchibous* and *Marameg*, considered to live along the eastern shore of Lake Superior north of the Sault. The respective territories of the *Outchibous* and *Marameg* are usually considered to end at or near Michipicoten (cf. Bishop and Smith 1975; Cleland 1992).

As discussed in an earlier report (*PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998b:63), the majority of published ethnohistorical interpretations of this *Jesuit Relations* document position the *Outchibous* and *Marameg* along the eastern shore of Lake Superior with the *Marameg* territory encompassing the Michipicoten Bay area (cf. Bishop 1974; Bishop and Smith 1975; Cleland 1992 – see Map A.2). The approximate location of the northern boundary of the *Marameg* territory in the vicinity of Michipicoten is not based on direct historical evidence, but rests on ecological and demographic assumptions<sup>15</sup>. A dissenting interpretation by Greenberg and Morrison (1982:87), who argue that the *Jesuit Relations* present no evidence preventing the placement of the *Outchibous* and *Marameg* on the northern shore of Lake Superior, appears to be based on an incorrectly paraphrased version of the original *Jesuit Relations* text (*PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998b:63).

Although the 1670 *Relation* refers to the existence of yet more ‘Nations’ beyond the *Marameg*, Father Dablon fails to identify them specifically by name:

*Two other Nations, to the number of five hundred souls, - entirely nomadic, and with no fixed abode, - go toward the land of the North to hunt during Winter, and return hither to fish in the Summer.*

*There remain six other Nations, who are either people from the North Sea, as the Guilistinous and the Ouenibigonc, or wanderers in the regions around that same North Sea, - the greater part of them having been driven out of the Country by famine, and repairing hither from time to time to enjoy the abundance of fish here.* (Thwaites 1959[54]:135).

The reference to *Guilistinous*, an orthographic variant of *Kilistinons*, suggests that the northern neighbours of the *Marameg* may be Cree although this interpretation is not definitively supported by Father Dablon’s wording. In fact, Father Dablon’s statement may be interpreted as distinguishing the “six other Nations” from Cree peoples. However, a *Relation* written the following year (1671) presents a clear statement supporting a Cree occupation of the area north of Lake Superior:

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<sup>15</sup> The northern shore of Michipicoten Bay forms an ecological boundary between the northern boreal forest and the southern Great Lakes - St. Lawrence forest regions (Wright 1994:23 – see Map A.3). It is therefore assumed that people sharing close social and cultural bonds would habitually live in close geographic proximity, within a region sharing common ecological characteristics. Assuming Father Dablon’s population total is approximately correct, the northern boundary of the *Marameg* territory would be placed in the general vicinity of Michipicoten Bay.

*Finally, the Kilistinons are dispersed through the whole Region to the North of this Lake Superior, -possessing neither corn, nor fields, nor any fixed abode; but forever wandering through those vast Forests, and seeking a livelihood there by hunting.* (Thwaites 1959[55]:99)

The explorer Nicholas Perrot, writing in the mid-to-late 17<sup>th</sup> century, also reported that a people named *Kiristinons* were known to frequent the regions along the north shores of Lake Superior at that time (Blair 1911:107-108).

However, the 1671 *Relation* makes reference to yet other ‘Nations’ in the region north of Superior, who are considered as being distinct from the *Kilistinons* but are un-named. Immediately following the description of the *Kilistinons*’ way of life (quote above), the *Relation* states:

*There are also other Nations in those districts, for that reason called “the peoples of the Interior”, or of the North Sea.* (Thwaites 1959[55]:99).

The French version of this text refers to these peoples as the “*gens des Terres, ou de la Mer du Nord*” (*ibid*:98 – see Map A.4).

The historical record pertaining to these *Gens des Terres*, as discussed in Chapter 2, prevents a definitive determination of their Aboriginal identity. While Greenberg and Morrison (1982) have argued that they should be regarded as Ojibwa, this interpretation contradicts the writings of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century authors who consistently refer to *Gens des Terres* (aka *Opemens d’Acheliny* or *O’pimittish Ininiwac*) as a people or group of peoples distinct from Ojibwa and Cree. A classic example is found in a letter by Greyselou Du Lhut dated September 10, 1684, where Du Lhut (a French military officer) discusses strategies for preventing Indians north of Superior from travelling to the Hudson and James Bay coasts to trade with the English:

*...all the Savages of the North trust me very much, and on this basis I can promise you that not one of the Savages will be going down to trade with the English on Hudson Bay in the next two years. They all promised me this and are bound to their promise by the presents I gave them. The Kilistinos, the Assinipoualacs, the Peoples of the Fir Trees, the Opemens d’Acheliny, the Outouloubys and the Tabitibis, who comprise all of the nations to the west of the North Sea, have promised me that they will come next spring to the fort I had built at the River Manne, at the end of Lake Alemipigon, and next summer I will have another built in the country of the Kilistinos, which will block their way entirely. Finally, Sir, I will wish to die if I fail to completely prevent the Savages from travelling to the English.* (In Margry 1888[6]:51; translated from original French - Aboriginal names original)

Du Lhut’s letter also testifies to the growing strategic importance of the Lake Superior region, in military and economic (fur trade) terms after the establishment of the HBC in 1670. This issue will be covered in some detail in Section 3.2 below.

The historical and ethnohistorical data presented in this section indicate that the most likely Aboriginal inhabitants of the Wawa / Michipicoten Bay area at contact (i.e, the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century) were a people known as the *Marameg*. While a debate exists in the ethnohistorical literature concerning whether the *Marameg*, along with several other groups described as ‘Nations’ by the French, should be considered as a band or as a clan, ethnohistorians are in general agreement that the *Marameg* formed part of the Ojibwa, or at least proto-Ojibwa groups whose territory covered, at minimum, the eastern shore of Lake Superior, the northeastern portion of the Michigan peninsula, and the northern shore of Lake Huron.

As stated above, the ethnohistorical placement of the *Marameg* in the Michipicoten Bay region (Bishop 1974, Bishop and Smith 1975, Cleland 1992) rests partly on ecological and demographic assumptions, and also on an interpretation of Father Dablon’s admittedly vague geographical description of the territories occupied by the northern neighbours of the Saulteurs. His statement that the *Outchibous* and *Marameg* live “towards” the North of Lake Superior implies that their territories do not actually reach the northern shore of the Lake, but instead cover an area between Sault Ste Marie and that shore. The lack of any data describing the *Outchibous* and *Marameg* as living or even frequenting that shore, and the existence of other 17<sup>th</sup> century references describing the *Kilistinons* as occupying or frequenting the northern shore of Lake Superior, are consistent with and support that interpretation.

The *Marameg* disappear from the historical records by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:274). This suggests that their political union with the *Outchibous*, *Nouquet*, and Saulteurs described by Dablon in 1670, involved a process of social fusion in which they lost their formerly distinct identity, as they became incorporated within the emerging historic Ojibwa (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998a:17-30). A similar process takes place with other proto-Ojibwa ‘Nations’ throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century; only the *Mississauga*, or at least their name, remained distinct to the present. The precise territorial boundaries of the *Marameg*, and of the early-contact Ojibwa or proto-Ojibwa are not known and are likely unknowable (cf. Bishop 1981:158). Available historical data suggest that their most probable neighbours were the *Kilistinons* to the north and northwest, and the *Gens des Terres* to the northeast (*ibid*:159, see Appendix ‘A’).

As reported in Chapter 2, *Gens des Terres* are observed by Alexander Henry (the elder) to be living in the vicinity of the Michipicoten post in the 1760s (Henry 1966:214-215). The fact that *Gens des Terres* are occupying part of the territory of an early-contact Ojibwa or proto-Ojibwa group constitutes an interesting ethnohistorical phenomenon. The majority of ethnohistorians, following Hickerson (1970) and Bishop (1974, 1976) believe that the historic Ojibwa population experienced, through band and/or clan fusion and fission, a dramatic territorial expansion from its early-contact

‘homeland’ over the 1650-1850 period<sup>16</sup>. According to Bishop (1974, 1976), this process of territorial expansion, considered to have begun in the late 1600s, in some regions involving warfare with non-Ojibwa peoples<sup>17</sup>, was nearly complete by the 1760s. All ethnohistorical publications focusing on the history of Ojibwa agree that by the mid-18th century, the Michipicoten Bay area is clearly near the centre of the Ojibwa territory. Bluntly put, by what process have the *Gens des Terres*, considered by most ethnohistorians as non-Ojibwa<sup>18</sup>, come to reside in the heartland of the Ojibwa territory?

Alexander Henry’s brief descriptions of these people at Michipicoten provides sufficient data to present a hypothesis concerning their identity, which can also account for their disappearance from historical records by the end of the century. According to Henry the *O’pimittish Ininiwac* were peaceable but lived a ‘crude’ way of life, involving shelter in simple lodges and a subsistence reliance on small game, principally hare, requiring them to move about the land very frequently (Henry 1966:60). Henry’s description of their way of life is consistent with descriptions of the *Kilistinons* - as pure nomads - from the 1670 and 1671 *Jesuit Relations* documents quoted above (Thwaites 1959[54]:135, [55]:99). It is interesting to note that Henry’s (1966:215) comment regarding the “inhospitality of their (*Gens des Terres*) country” is reminiscent of Father Dablon’s 1670 statement concerning the unidentified six “other Nations” relocated to Sault Ste. Marie - specifically, that have been driven out of their own countries due to famine (Thwaites 1959[54]:135).

Although Henry (1966) considers the *Gens des Terres* as distinct from Ojibwa and Cree, he describes their language as a mixture of ‘Chippeway’ and ‘Cristinaux’ (*ibid*:214-215). In modern linguistics terminology, the *Gens des Terres* at Michipicoten speak a dialect (a variant language form) belonging to a continuum of dialects (language variants) separating the Ojibwa language from the Cree language (cf. Chambers and Trudgill 1980:6-10). The dialect continuum within which the *Gens des Terres* are placed is likely both **a geographical continuum** (stretching from the northern shore of Lake Huron to James Bay), **and a social continuum**, serving as a marker to socially and culturally distinguish ‘Ojibwa’ people from ‘Cree’ people and from groups considered different from both peoples (*ibid*).

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<sup>16</sup> Greenberg and Morrison (1982) have published the strongest attempted repudiation of this view. A critical examination of their data and interpretations, as well as those of Charles Bishop - the leading proponent of the hypothesis that Ojibwa migrated into the boreal forest region in the context of the fur trade - concluded that Bishop’s ‘migration hypothesis’, although theoretically incomplete, presented a greater degree of social scientific validity than Greenberg and Morrison’s counter-argument - that northern Ojibwa had resided in the boreal forest region since before contact (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998b:49-69).

<sup>17</sup> The western expansion of Ojibwa to the Lake of the Woods region and beyond involved warfare with Sioux in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Ritzenthaler 1978), and the expansion of Ojibwa into southern Ontario involved warfare with the Five Nations Iroquois (Schmalz 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Again, Greenberg and Morrison (1982) present the strongest dissenting view on this issue. Arguing that the apparent growth in Ojibwa territory is illusory and based simply on a broadening of the label ‘Ojibwa’ by Europeans to peoples who consistently maintained traditional locations and territories, these authors consider that the *Gens des Terres* were always part of the Aboriginal population in the boreal forest that became known as ‘northern Ojibwa’.

This situation is consistent with interpretations of the historic emergence of Ojibwa, in the context of the fur trade, as involving processes of band or clan fission (splitting) involving migration, and fusion (joining together) with other, formerly distinct and politically independent bands. In this process the non-Ojibwa, even the majority of formerly distinct proto-Ojibwa groups, lose their original social identities through assimilation into a demographically growing and territorially expanding Ojibwa society (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates, 1998a, 1998b). The *Gens des Terres*, at least those living near the Marameg in the late 1600s, and those found by Henry at Michipicoten in the mid-1700s, may have consisted of politically autonomous groups or bands that, despite geographical proximity to Ojibwa, and the likely existence of ties of kinship with them, had managed to maintain a distinct or independent social identity. According to this hypothesis, their disappearance from historical records pertaining to the Lake Superior region by the late 1700s most likely would have resulted from their integration or absorption into Ojibwa bands by intermarriage, and also perhaps to a lesser extent from intermarriage with European traders.

### 3.1.3 The Development of the Fur Trade on Eastern Lake Superior

Prior to the creation of the HBC in 1670, the French presence on Lake Superior appears to have been limited mainly to explorers and after 1650, to explorers and Jesuits, the latter concentrating their activities on the southern shore. The forced migrations of the Ottawa, and of some Nipissing from the Lake Huron area at the hands of Iroquois in the late 1650s resulted the establishment of some Ottawa villages south of Lake Superior, while some of the Nipissing temporarily relocated near Lake Nipigon. The Ottawa and Nipissing had been in regular contact with Jesuits for years, and the refugee groups included a number of religious converts (Kenton 1954).

It is in this context that a Jesuit interest in the peoples living to the west of Lake Huron and south of Lake Superior developed in the 1660s. Father Claude Alloüez explored the southern shoreline of Lake Superior in 1665, establishing a mission at Chequamegon after finding refugees Huron and Ottawa encamped in the vicinity of that Bay (*ibid.*:xliv). He later played an instrumental role in the establishment of other Upper Great Lakes missions at Green Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and two others in the Lake Michigan region (*ibid.*).

During this time period Jesuit interest with the eastern and northern shores of Lake Superior was largely limited to the collection of information about the area and the peoples from Aboriginal informants visiting or living near established missions. The *Relation* of 1670, in addition to identified the ‘Nations’ along the eastern shore and to the north of Lake Superior, also contains one of the earliest mentions of Michipicoten. A description of the location of copper deposits along the lake shore includes the following information, obtained second-hand from Aboriginal sources:

*Upon entering it by its mouth, where it empties into the Sault, the first place met where Copper is found in abundance, is an Island, distant forty or fifty leagues and situated toward the North, opposite a spot called Missipicouatong [Michipicoten]<sup>19</sup>.*

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<sup>19</sup> The contemporary spelling is likely inserted by Reuben G. Thwaites, who edited the collection of documents cited here.

*The Savages say it is a floating Island, which is sometimes far off, sometimes near, according to the winds that push it and drive it in all directions. They add, that a long time ago four Savages came thither by chance, having lost their way in the fog by which that Island is almost always surrounded. It was in the times before they had yet had any commerce with the French, and when they did not use kettles or hatchets... (Thwaites 1959[54]:153-155; insert original).*

The rest of this document provides additional geographic descriptions of portions of Lake Superior, also intermingled with Aboriginal mythology and allegories.

The creation of the HBC in 1670 and subsequent establishment of several trade posts along the shores of Hudson Bay and James Bay were responsible for radically changing the French perception of Lake Superior. From a region first considered to have economic ‘potential’ due to its mineral deposits, Lake Superior became perceived as a crucial economic and military gateway to regions further west, and to (unchartered) northern inland regions. The French hoped that the establishment of new trade posts in inland regions north of Lakes Superior and Huron, would prevent the HBC from diverting fur trade routes from their long-established west-east axis (Bishop 1994:282-283; Ray 1998:5).

Prior to 1670, Aboriginal peoples living along and inland from the northern shores of the Upper Great Lakes had taken part in the French fur trade, albeit indirectly, by exchanging furs for European manufactured goods with more easterly Aboriginal groups acting as ‘middlemen’ (Ray 1998). The Algonquins of the Ottawa valley and western Quebec, and until 1649, the Huron, are well documented as having played such roles in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century fur trade (Trigger 1985). The main trade route linking groups in the Upper Great Lakes region to French trade posts along the St. Lawrence followed the northern shorelines of Lakes Superior and Huron to the French River and Lake Nipissing, then following the Mattawa and Ottawa rivers to the St. Lawrence (Trigger and Day 1994:67).

The competition from HBC posts established along the shores of Hudson and James Bay threatened this well-established route by diverting the flow of furs from the Upper Great Lakes region to a new south-north axis (Ray 1998:5). It is in this context that Du Lhut expressed a sense of urgency in acquiring the trust and alliance of Indians north of Superior, and in building trade posts to prevent them from travelling to the Hudson and James Bay coasts, as attested in the portion of his 1684 letter quoted in Section 3.1.2 above.

Beginning in the 1670s, a series of trade posts were built by the French in order to cut off the fur trade with the HBC. For example, posts were built at Timmins (1673), near present day Thunder Bay (Camanistogoyan, 1678), Lake Temiscamingue (1679), La Maune (Lake Nipigon, 1684), and Fort de Francais (at the Albany and Kenogami rivers, 1685). The French then attacked and captured three HBC James Bay posts (Rupert House, Moose Factory, and Fort Albany) in 1686 (Bishop 1994:282-283). While regaining these in 1693, the English lost York Factory the following year, which remained in French hands until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 (*ibid*:283).

According to Ray (1988:338-339), the French built a post at Michipicoten in 1714. The choice of its location appears to have rested on two factors. First, the location could be used as a transportation relay between the Thunder Bay post and Michilimackinac, situated at the intersection of Lakes Michigan and Huron. Established in 1712, Michilimackinac's strategic location quickly made it the "centre for most French activity" in the Upper Great Lakes (Stone and Chaput 1978:604). A second reason for establishing a post at Michipicoten was to take advantage of a natural water travel route connecting Lake Superior to James Bay. Although requiring portages inland to Missinaibi Lake, the Michipicoten River allowed travel from Lake Superior inland to the Missinaibi and Moose Rivers (Mitchell 1977:23; Voorhis 1930:113). A post established at the mouth of the Michipicoten River on Lake Superior could also help 'block' or at least discourage Indian travels inland to Moose Factory (Lytwyn 1986:5; Jaenen 1996 – see Map A.5).

The establishment of the Michipicoten post in the second decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century marks the beginning of a permanent European presence in the general vicinity of what, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was to become the town of Wawa. Created in the context of competition between France and England for control of the fur trade, the post would remain in French hands until the 1760s when it would become part of the operations of the Northwest Company (NWC). The HBC established a competing post there by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and by absorbing the NWC in 1821, gained near monopoly control of the fur trade at Michipicoten during the majority of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The following section examines the likely development of a population of mixed European and Aboriginal descent at Michipicoten in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.2 ABORIGINAL - EUROPEAN RELATIONS IN THE 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

As discussed in Section 2.3, the history of the eastern shore of Lake Superior (excluding the Sault Ste. Marie area), including the documentation of relations between Europeans and Aboriginal peoples has not been subject to detailed research and publication. Within the list of sources cited and consulted in this assignment, only one unpublished report (Harrington 1981) presents a systematic examination of the formation of a population of "half-breeds" north of Sault Ste. Marie in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Harrington's analysis and arguments are plausible and are certainly consistent with documented historical records and publications pertaining to the formation of populations of mixed European and Aboriginal descent south of the Upper Great Lakes (e.g., Peterson 1985), in the Sault Ste. Marie area (e.g., Jones 1998), and with general academic studies on the historic formation of métis populations (e.g., Brown 1980). Since Harrington's report presents the only analysis of the development of a mixed population along the eastern shore of Lake Superior in the 1700s her main arguments are presented in condensed form below. As per the discussion in Section 2.3, it is important to acknowledge that her analysis is essentially **speculative**. She acknowledges this point in an introductory paragraph to Chapter 1 of her report:

*It is difficult to follow the beginnings of a half-breed population in the upper country of the Great Lakes. The first verified birth of a half-breed is that of Charles Langlade*

*at Mackinac in 1724; therefore for a century between Indian contact with the French in 1622<sup>20</sup> and 1724 the existence of this population must be assumed rather than factual. (Harrington 1981:1)*

No data from the period of French operation of the Michipicoten post have survived in known archival collections, and NWC records, providing only a handful of general documents on the post, make virtually no mention of persons of mixed European and Aboriginal ancestry near Michipicoten.

### **3.2.1 The Probable Genesis of a Mixed Population Near Michipicoten**

It is possible that the first person(s) of mixed European and Aboriginal (Proto-Ojibwa) blood to live along the eastern shore of Lake Superior were born as early as 1623 – the year following Etienne Brulé’s exploratory voyage to (and perhaps beyond) the Sault Ste. Marie area (Harrington 1981:9). Among other perceived faults, including deceit and ‘treason’, Brulé was considered by Champlain of “being abandoned toward women” (*ibid.*), and likely to take advantage of offers of sexual intimacy with Aboriginal women during his expeditions. Further explorations and travels by the French in the 17th century:

*...did not result in settlement, but brief liaisons with the resident Indian population who initially gave up their daughters with pride, may have introduced a half-breed population to the region. There is no record of a half-breed population here in the century that followed so that it is likely that half-breed children were for the most part absorbed into the multi-ethnic [Aboriginal] population of the region. (Ibid:10; insert added)*

Early French records for the Upper Great Lakes do not explicitly describe cases of Indian daughters being ‘given’ or ‘given up’ to explorers<sup>21</sup> and it is likely that Harrington assumes the practice as having taken place based on documented cases of the phenomenon with HBC factors and employees in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, the assumption that any children of mixed European and Aboriginal descent would be ‘absorbed’ within existing Aboriginal groups is highly plausible. Until the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the French presence in the Upper Great Lakes was limited to a small number of transient and (excluding missionaries) highly mobile males. In this context, children of mixed descent would most likely remain with their Aboriginal mothers and be raised within existing bands or villages. No written information exists from the period documenting the social

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<sup>20</sup> Harrington (1981:9) assumes Etienne Brulé reached the mouth of Lake Superior at this date.

<sup>21</sup> The second group comprising the French presence in the Upper Great Lakes during most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Jesuit missionaries, are generally assumed not to have taken part in such practices.



identity of these offspring<sup>22</sup>.

It is only following the establishment of trading posts in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, involving a substantial increase in itinerant trappers and traders known as *coureurs des bois*, that persons of mixed French and Aboriginal ancestry became a “noticeable segment of the population” around the Upper Great Lakes (ibid:21; Bishop 1972:64). More specifically:

*...from 1680 there were more coureurs de bois living with the Indians, settling on the land, making their home in the interior country and taking Indians and half-breeds as wives. From the coureurs de bois came sons who worked the land, lived off the bush or entered the fur trade as boatmen or coureurs de bois. (Ibid:22)*

Harrington (ibid:35-36) speculates that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the population of mixed ancestry, although ‘noticeable’ demographically, remained racially undistinguished (and undocumented) as individuals in frontier regions were socially differentiated by lifestyle, as opposed to criteria such as descent or physical appearance:

*...prior to 1720 French-Indian half-breeds were not greatly differentiated in the population of the upper lakes country. There were too many differing tribal groups, each contact point bringing Ottawa-Saulteur, or Huron-Nipissing et cetera, for French or French-Indian children to occasion great racial differentiation.*

*Differentiation of the population, including half-breeds, was based more on lifestyle; i.e., there were those who lived as French (garrisons, some traders) in permanent locations, in log houses, dressing as and speaking French, those who lived as coureurs de bois and those who lived as Indians.*

*There were half-breeds who adopted the “French” lifestyle of the population of the upper country, many who adopted the coureur de bois and many who adopted the Indian.(Emphasis original)*

Originally, the *coureurs des bois* shared more similarities in lifestyle with Aboriginal groups, stemming from their social and economic interdependency. Gradually, the *coureurs de bois* way of life became distinguished as a ‘half-breed’ lifestyle as those with mixed ancestry became more numerous and reduced their social and economic dependency on Aboriginal society:

*In lifestyle, the early coureurs de bois were very similar to the Indians of the upper*

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<sup>22</sup> There are plausible reasons for considering that some French observers of Aboriginal peoples and customs, such as the Jesuits, would deliberately omit any mention of sexual encounters between French explorers and military officers and Aboriginal women. Revealing in official Church correspondence and documents that ‘civilized’ and Catholic representatives of the King were engaging in sexual relations with ‘savage’ and ‘heathen’ women would likely entice scandal. Mere mention of the existence of ‘half-breed’ children within Aboriginal groups would implicitly acknowledge such relations.

*country. Many...were illiterate, and most lost their skills acquired in the French education system through disuse. To survive in the fur trade, coureur de bois and Indian (dependence on guns, cloth and kettles was soon acquired) became interdependent; the Indians depended on French material goods and the coureur de bois on Indian know-how in the bush.*

*As the number of coureur de bois increased and they acquired skills in the bush, they became less dependent on Indian society for companionship, wives, and know-how...*

*It is the melded French-Indian plus indigenous lifestyle of the coureur de bois that has come to be identified as "half-breed". Into the "French" stratum went the large scale white immigration through the years. The "Indian" was separated by government imposed definition...Only the coureurs de bois remained with a noticeable half-breed population. Strata of one population [of half-breeds], based on lifestyles, therefore have become defined in history as three racial groups. (Ibid:36-37)*

The following subsection describes the respective harvesting practices of Aboriginal groups and the *coureurs de bois* along the eastern shore of Lake Superior in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### **3.2.2 Harvesting Practices: Aboriginal Groups and Coureurs de Bois**

The Ojibwa living along the eastern shore of Lake Superior followed a yearly seasonal cycle of subsistence resource harvesting based on a semi-nomadic way of life (Bishop 1994; Rogers and Taylor 1981; Rogers 1983). Semi-nomadism denotes a lifestyle in which a group establishes relatively sedentary camps during part of a cycle (typically a season) and then shifts to nomadic forms of movement during the remainder of that cycle (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998b:5-10).

For the Ojibwa near the Upper Great Lakes, the yearly cycle involved living in relatively large villages during late spring to early fall with populations typically totalling over 100 persons (and up to several hundred in some cases). These 'summer villages' were situated at river mouths or near the shore of Lake Superior since fishing constituted the principal resource harvesting practice during these months. Fishing was supplemented by collecting wild foods (eggs, roots, plants) and limited horticulture (a simple and small scale form of agriculture by which women tended domesticated plants and vegetables in gardens). The early-contact historical evidence suggests that the importance of fishing to the Ojibwa during summer months can hardly be overstated: the rapids at Sault Ste. Marie provided such a rich fishery that they attracted gatherings of up to two-thousand persons as documented in the *Jesuit Relations* of 1640 and 1670 (Thwaites 1959[18], [55]). The relatively sedentary fishing camps of the large summer bands allowed the Ojibwa to develop relatively complex social institutions (clan-based social organization) and practise rich cultural and ritual ceremonies (e.g, the Midewiwin).

By late fall the large summer bands would break up into smaller winter bands, numbering between 40-80 persons which would relocate to distinct, habitual hunting grounds inland. Hunting

both large migratory game, combined with snaring small animals, formed the chief basis of subsistence during winter months (Rogers 1983; Rogers and Taylor 1981). The reliance on hunting required that the smaller bands practise a relatively high degree of nomadism, in order to harvest migratory game, and also to prevent depleting local, non-migratory animals (Winterhalder 1983). As Ojibwa migrated into the boreal forest region during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Bishop 1974) bands adapted to more difficult ecological conditions by reducing their size, in winter months to about 30 persons (Harrington 1981:53; Bishop 1974, 1976).

In contrast to the Ojibwa, the *Gens des Terres* living in the northeast and reported in the vicinity of Michipicoten in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century appear to have lived a way of life more closely resembling that of the fully nomadic Cree. Henry (1966:214-215) reports that they relied principally on snaring hare for food, supplementing their diet by collecting roots and ‘leaves’. Although not reported, it seems certain that the *Gens des Terres* also would have practised fishing, particularly in summer months. Their relatively difficult life in the boreal forest and uncertainties associated with less reliable subsistence resources forced them to live in single (and perhaps extended) family bands moving over relatively large territories (i.e., the *Gens des Terres* had a significantly lower population density than the Ojibwa).

Both Ojibwa and *Gens des Terres* likely participated indirectly in the early-to-mid 17<sup>th</sup> century fur trade by trading with Aboriginal middlemen. The establishment of HBC posts after 1670, initiating a phase of intense competition between French and English that lasted up to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, created disruptions to the seasonal harvesting cycles of Aboriginal peoples in the boreal forest as bands attempted to incorporate ‘trapping’ (hunting for furs) into their cycles and modify their nomadic movements to include yearly trade expeditions (Ray 1998:3-27).

It was precisely in order to prevent long-distance yearly travels to HBC posts by Aboriginal trading parties that the French, in addition to building posts around the Upper Great Lakes, developed a unique system of trade relying on *coureurs de bois* who journeyed between Montreal and Indian villages in the Great Lakes region. The nomadic movements of Ojibwa groups, excepting trade expeditions to coastal HBC posts, involved regular travel to habitual hunting or fishing grounds that were normally confined to known (although probably not exclusive) band territories. Although the *coureurs de bois* adopted resource harvesting and survival skills from Indians, their lifestyle and work requirements will have prevented them from limiting their movements to habitual resource harvesting grounds.

By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the French modified their trade strategy in the Upper Great Lakes by developing a more formal system of itinerant peddling termed *en dérrouine* trade. In this system, itinerant peddlers called *commis* essentially replaced the *coureurs de bois* in the region<sup>23</sup>. The *en dérrouine* trade system was developed to counter the HBC’s economic strategy which, up to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century involved attracting Aboriginal trading parties from distant locales by building large, permanent trade posts along the coasts of Hudson’s and James Bay. The French strategy, by contrast,

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The *coureurs de bois* continued to exist but moved into more remote regions of the trade frontier.

involved sending small trading parties that, like the former *coureurs de bois*, were to meet with bands at their habitual fishing or hunting camps in order to collect furs. This *en dérrouine* trade is described by Foster (1995:418) in the following terms:

*The essential difference between the coastal factory system and the en dérrouine fur trade saw Euro-Canadians replace Indian traders in the task of trading furs from the hunting bands and transporting them to Montreal. From a principal post in the Great Lakes area, such as Michilimackinac, under the command of a military officer appointed by the royal government in France, individual bourgeois (merchants) dispatched small parties of men en dérrouine, to trade with the hunting bands on their home grounds. These trading parties were led by a commis (clerk) whose success as a broker was essential to the success of the en dérrouine trade. Similar to the coureur de bois of a previous era, the commis found it useful to join his Indian suppliers on some of their war junkets, to share his material good fortune with them, and to take up a country wife from among their womenfolk.*

Foster's analysis concerning the emergence of a population of mixed European and Aboriginal ancestry in the Great Lakes region from the *en dérrouine* trade system parallels Harrington's (1981) arguments pertaining to the *coureurs de bois*. The economic role of the *commis*, like that of the *coureurs de bois*, was that of brokers, and as such "they behaved in a manner that would win the approbation of their Indian hosts" (Foster 1995:418). While some *commis* remained socially independent of Aboriginal bands, and others established only temporary relationships with women, still others managed to build more permanent family bonds:

*For those commis who succeeded in establishing enduring households, the country wife could be of critical importance. In addition to supplying the vital social linkages to some of the bands, her economic skills could be essential in maintaining the commis in his broker role. In time, successful commis could emerge as bourgeois. The circumstances of the bourgeois appear to have been characterized by large households that occupied pivotal positions in the networks of extended families found throughout the Great Lakes region. In such extended families many sons functioned much as did Indian hunters and trappers; those sons most talented as commercial brokers, however, succeeded their fathers as commis. Daughters were sometimes given in marriage to bourgeois and commis in order to establish an alliance. The communities of Great Lakes Metis that arose out of this process survived Britain's conquest of New France by extending their kin ties to include British merchants who supplanted French and Canadien bourgeoisie after 1763. (Ibid:419)*

In sum, both Harrington and Foster suggest that from their beginning, persons of mixed Aboriginal and European descent would have occupied a diversity of economic roles, in Aboriginal society, in European society, and as brokers between the two types of society. Those occupying brokerage roles, such as the *coureurs de bois* or later *commis*, typically lived lifestyles requiring high geographic mobility which, as opposed to Aboriginal bands, did not involve harvesting resources according to yearly cycles where harvesting activities were confined to habitual hunting and fishing

grounds. The following section presents indirect data describing a likely presence of a population of mixed descent along the northern shore of Lake Huron, Sault Ste. Marie, and eastern shore of Lake Superior, from the published journals of explorer-trader Alexander Henry the Elder.

### 3.3 EVIDENCE FROM THE MID-TO-LATE 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Since no French records from Michipicoten have survived, any evidence concerning the existence of a population of mixed European and Aboriginal descent in the vicinity of the post during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century consists of speculation and extrapolation of data and interpretations concerning neighbouring portions of the Upper Great Lakes. Following the capitulation of France in 1760, the control and operation of former French trading posts was transferred to individual English merchants under the supervision of the British military. One of these merchants, explorer-trader Alexander Henry (the Elder) was to be granted control of the former French posts around Lake Superior in the 1760s. Extracts from journals written during his travels in the Upper Great Lakes region provide indirect data demonstrating that a population of mixed descent was well-established in that region by the mid-1700s.

En route to Michilimackinac from Montreal in 1761, while on the northern shore of Lake Huron at La Cloche Island, Henry was persuaded by local Indians that the distrust and hatred for the English by Indians at Michilimackinac would likely result in his being murdered by them should they discover his identity (Henry 1966:33)<sup>24</sup>. Realizing that Indians in the Upper Great Lakes were hostile only to the English, Henry attempted avoiding being attacked by disguising himself as a Canadian. His account provides indirect evidence that Canadians consisted at least in part of persons of mixed ancestry:

*The Hostility of the Indians was exclusively against the English. Between them, and my Canadian attendants, there appeared the most cordial good will. This circumstance suggested one means of escape, of which, by the advice of my friend, Campion, I resolved to attempt availing myself; and which was, that of putting on the dress, usually worn by such of the Canadians as pursue the trade into which I was entered, and assimilating myself, as much as I was able, to their appearance and manners. To this end, I laid aside my English clothes, and covered myself only with a cloth, passed about the middle; a shirt, hanging loose; a molton, or blanket coat; and large, red, milled worsted cap. The next thing was to smear my face and hands,*

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<sup>24</sup> Algonquian-speaking Aboriginal groups had sided with and supported France in its war with England. Following the capitulation of France, many Aboriginal groups were prepared and willing to continue to fight the English military. Henry's personal safety was threatened on several occasions in the early 1760s due to his British nationality.

*with dirt and grease<sup>25</sup>; and, this done, I took the place of one of my men, and, when Indians approached, used the paddle, with as much skill as I possessed. I had the satisfaction to find, that my disguise enabled me to pass several canoes, without attracting the smallest notice. (Ibid:34-35)*

No single statement in this passage provides direct data alluding to a métis identity of Henry's Canadians. The Canadian traders may simply have comprised an occupational class of persons of French descent that had been born in Canada. However, taken as whole, the passage implies that these Canadians have a unique social identity, a distinct set of behaviour and dress, and a close relationship to Indians. Henry's description suggests that the Canadians are not necessarily only of French descent.

More specifically, Henry's description of the Canadian traders' distinctive dress style (in 1761) vaguely resembles a description of clothing worn by métis voyageurs in the early 1800s provided by Peterson (1981:182):

*Métis voyageurs were visually identifiable as much by their blue pantaloons, capot and fiddle, as by their leggings, red finger-woven sash, feathers, and tatoos.*

Henry's 'cloth, passed about the middle' and 'blanket coat' could correspond respectively to Peterson's 'red finger-woven sash' and 'capot'. While Henry does not describe the colour of his cloth (sash), he indicates wearing a large red cap (historically, the colour red is symbolic of métis identity).

Henry (1966) makes numerous mention of Canadians in his accounts of travels in the Upper Great Lakes region. However, as discussed in Section 2.3, the term, as applied to individuals in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is inherently ambiguous. Named 'Canadians' in Henry's journals typically have French surnames, for example: John Baptist Bodoine, Campion, M. Langlade and John Cuchoise (*ibid*:3, 50, 93). Several descriptions of incidents featuring 'Canadians' suggest that a close relationship or alliance existed between them and the Indian population. For example, during a visit to Fort Michilimackinac by two hundred Ottawa warriors, who resided in a nearby village of L'arbre Croche, the Ottawa "entered the fort, and billeted themselves in the several houses, among the Canadian inhabitants" (*ibid*:47). That Indians would seek shelter and live among the Canadians suggests that the groups shared social and possibly cultural ties.

The presence of these Ottawa, who had supported France in its war with England, created sufficient tensions at the Fort that the English feared an eruption of violence. Henry describes the reaction of the Canadians following an eventually peaceful departure of the Ottawa warriors:

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<sup>25</sup> Henry's facial disguise, involving darkening his skin with dirt, could be interpreted as an attempt to change the natural appearance of his (pale) skin tone to appear more 'Indian'. An alternative interpretation is that he needed to look appropriately grimy to give the impression that he had been paddling strenuously and portaging the freighter canoes and supplies like the other Canadian voyageurs on the expedition. The grease put on his face and hands was an 18<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of mosquito and black fly repellent.

*By sunrise, not a man of them [the Ottawa] was left in the fort; and, indeed the scene was altogether changed. The inhabitants, who, while the Ottawas were present, had avoided all connection with the English traders, now came with congratulations. They related, that the Ottawas had proposed to them, that if joined by Canadians, they would march, and attack the troops which were known to be advancing on the fort; and they added, that it was their refusal which had determined the Ottawas to depart. (Ibid:51)*

Henry's description indicates that the Canadians and the Ottawa were to some extent in cahoots, in a context in which the Canadians had to negotiate a delicate balance in their relationships with the English and the Indians. Henry's accounts often seem to imply that Canadians are sometimes more than 'Canada-born whites of French origin', having a former political and military alliance with Aboriginal groups.

It is likely that Henry's business ventures on Lake Superior, including trading and mining operations at Michipicoten, involved a partnership with a métis individual named Cadotte. Harrington (1981:81) clearly identifies a J.B. Cadotte as both "known to be half-breed" and "known to be married to an Indian woman" and describes Henry's association with him in the following terms:

*Alexander Henry was given rights to trade from Sault Ste. Marie within the Superior region and joined into a partnership with Jean Baptiste Cadotte. Henry had the supplies and Cadotte the trading skills and contacts. They purchased the Michipicoten post in 1767 to serve more as a base for their Copper explorations than for furs. The post was sold the following year to Nolin (a half-breed trader whose forefathers had been in the region since 1701 and are still here, and in Red River, today) because their mining attempts had failed. (Ibid:71)*

Henry's *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories* (1966) does not directly identify Cadotte (referred to only as 'M. Cadotte', i.e. 'Mister Cadotte' throughout the book) as a person of mixed European and Aboriginal descent, although several passages strongly suggest this as probable.

For example, Henry (1966:58) recounts his first encounter with Cadotte, who worked as an interpreter for the Colonial government at Sault Ste Marie in the following words:

*On the 19th [of May 1762], I reached the Sault...The houses were four in number; of which the first was the governor's, the second the interpreter's, and the other two, which were the smallest, had been used for barracks. The only family was that of M. Cadotte, the interpreter, whose wife was Chippeway. (Insert added)*

After describing the fishery at the Sault, he briefly mentions that the site featured a seasonal village of "Chippeways", and later he provides the strongest evidence in his journal that Cadotte may be partly of Chippeway descent:

*There is at present a village of Chippeways, of fifty warriors, seated at this place; but the inhabitants reside here during the summer only, going westward, in the winter, to hunt. The village was anciently much more populous...*

*The pleasant situation of the fort, and still more the desire to learn the Chippeway language, led me to resolve on wintering in it. In the family of M. Cadotte, no other language than the Chippeway was spoken. (Ibid:60)*

Henry befriended Cadotte and, in recounting events from 1764, revealed that he held great influence over of the Ojibwa of Lake Superior:

*...I requested my friend to carry me to the Sault de Sainte Marie, at which place I knew the Indians to be peaceably inclined, and that M. Cadotte enjoyed a powerful influence over their conduct. They considered M. Cadotte as their chief; and he was not only my friend, but a friend to the English. It was by him that the Chippeways of Lake Superior were prevented from joining Pontiac<sup>26</sup>. (Ibid:157)*

Realizing the value of Cadotte's fluency in Ojibwa and the respect he commanded of Ojibwa bands on Lake Superior, Henry reported taking him "into partnership" in 1765 after being granted "the exclusive trade of Lake Superior...by the commandant at Fort Michilimackinac" (*ibid*:192-193)<sup>27</sup>.

*Travels and Adventures* (1966) generally confirms Harrington's (1981) assessment of the importance of Michipicoten as predominantly a site for Henry and Cadotte's mining operations, as opposed to its function as a fur trade post. The failure of the Michipicoten mining venture by 1774 appears to have ended Henry's involvement with the Michipicoten post and Lake Superior trade, as his interests shifted further westward to Rainy Lake (Henry 1966:234-236). Although he spent two winters at Michipicoten, Henry provides no descriptions of the employees involved either in the fur trade or in the mining operations at that post.

Only scant data have survived documenting the history of Michipicoten during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. As reported by Harrington (1981:71) Henry and Cadotte sold the post to one 'Nolin' who she considers definitively as a "half-breed". The post remained under ownership of independent traders until 1783, the year of the formation of the NWC (Weiler 1980:9). The NWC originated from a coalition of long-established independent traders (officially called a 'General Society') in response to growing fur trade competition by newcomers (Harrington 1981:79). Drawing on a list of names of early General Society members called to testify at an inquiry investigating allegations of wrongdoing by two of its members, Harrington (*ibid*:81) identifies five members as "known to be half-breed" (four of which are reported as married to Indian women) and three others as simply "known to be married to Indian women". The "half-breeds" are identified as: Michael Cadotte, J.B.

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<sup>26</sup> Henry is referring here to Pontiac's rebellion against the English, following the capitulation of France.

<sup>27</sup> Henry obtained this exclusive trade by being furnished with a trade license from the military commander; a licensing system had been in place since the French period (*ibid*:191-192; Harrington 1981).



Cadotte, Joseph Roque, La Framboise (all of whom have Indian wives) and J.B. Chevalier. In addition, Joseph Rainville, Robert Dickson, and Ezekiel Solomon are listed as married to Indian women. Harrington (*ibid*) concludes that:

*The names of those who were called from the General Society membership and employment to testify, show that the Society was heavily dependent on men who were either native to the region or who had been here for years.*

During its four decades of operation (1783-1821), the NWC would provide the main competition to the HBC, forcing the latter to drastically expand its operations by establishing a network of inland posts. Throughout the existence of the NWC, its employees were habitually referred to as ‘Canadians’, which may reflect the fact that a significant proportion of employees were of mixed European and Aboriginal ancestry. However, as indicated in Section 2.3, the term ‘Canadian’ may also have been used to distinguish NWC employees from HBC employees by birthplace, i.e., without necessarily implying a part Aboriginal descent. In this context, NWC employees were ‘Canadians’ in the sense of having been born in Canada or being ‘native’ to Canada, in distinction from HBC employees, who were typically either English or Scots immigrants. The designation likely also served to distinguish the nationality of the companies: the NWC was headquartered at Montreal, while the HBC, a British company, was headquartered in London.

A comprehensive study of the fur trade at Fort Temiscaming by Mitchell (1977) makes several references to the Michipicoten post in the late 1700s and early 1800s, and occasionally mentions the presence of ‘Canadians’ working there (*ibid*:26, 105). Since no further information is provided on these persons, it is impossible to determine whether these ‘Canadians’ included individuals of mixed European and Aboriginal ancestry. Only one passage in Mitchell’s book explicitly mentions that many NWC traders were “half-breeds”, and suggests a possibility that some of them may have been employed at the Michipicoten post in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In a discussion of problems experienced in the Temiscaming District in the 1830s, she states that:

*The second wave of opposition came from Upper Canada. Newmarket, Sandwich, and Penetanguishene merchants, among others, financed traders who ranged from Lake Simcoe to Drummond Island, north as far as Michipicoten, east to the French River and Lake Nipissing, and inland along the rivers flowing into Lake Huron. Many of these traders were North West Company halfbreeds who had grown up in the country, like Edward Sayer and Alexander McKay, who alternated between engaging with the Company for a season or two and then going into opposition. (Ibid:158)*

However, the majority of Mitchell’s references to Michipicoten pertain to competition (followed by negotiations) between the NWC and HBC for control and ownership of the post facilities between 1797 and 1804 (*ibid*:57, 59, 65, 67, 68). This brief competition / negotiation period involved a complex set of events, summarized by Weiler (1980:9) in an introductory paragraph to a published heritage study of the Michipicoten post:

*The Hudson's Bay Company's presence at Michipicoten dates from 1797. At this time, it established a post on the north bank of the Michipicoten River opposite the North West Company site, with the intention of directing the fur trade to Hudson Bay and away from the Northwesters' Montreal route. In 1803, however, the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned its Michipicoten establishment as part of an agreement with the North West Company concerning trading territories in the hinterlands between Hudson Bay and Lake Superior. After the North West Company transgressed this agreement, the Hudson's Bay Company re-established itself on the north bank of the Michipicoten River in 1816. The rival companies then renewed their competition until their coalition in 1821. During the summer of that year, the Hudson's Bay Company moved its operation to the buildings of the former North West Company post on the southwest bank of the Michipicoten River.*

The former NWC post remained active under HBC ownership until the company abandoned its operations at Michipicoten in 1904 (*ibid*).

Mitchell's (1977) references to the HBC-NWC competition presents evidence that both companies viewed the Michipicoten location as strategically important, as a transportation and supply relay in both firms' post networks. The fur trade operations of both the NWC and HBC at Michipicoten in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were by themselves erratic and the posts were in this respect considered unprofitable (incapable of being self-supporting as fur producers). The HBC's interest in the Michipicoten locale derived from its potential transportation linkage to Moose Factory on James Bay via the Missinaibi River:

*Canadian pressure from the south by the Ottawa route bore most directly on the Moose trade but both factories [Moose and Albany] were subject to the opposition of Canadian traders on Lake Superior, who approached the headwaters of the Moose and Albany rivers from Michipicoten. During the summers of 1775 and 1776 Edward Jarvis investigated the route from Albany to Michipicoten by the Missinaibi River, the great west branch of the Moose, and visited the Canadian post there...*

*During that same summer of 1777 Thomas repeated Jarvis' feat by reaching Michipicoten from moose, but he decided against settling on Lake Superior because of the shallows and rapids of the Michipicoten River. Instead he built a house on Missinaibi Lake... (Ibid:23-24; insert added)*

Only one year after erecting an HBC post at Michipicoten in 1797 to compete directly with the long-established NWC post, Thomas indicated in a letter to an HBC committee that:

*He could see no objection...to giving up Michipicoten, since he doubted whether it was of any real advantage to the Company. Furthermore, because of the small number of Michipicoten Indians, the trade there, at best, could never be anything but trifling and inadequate to the expense...*

*In 1803 Thomas finally gave up the unprofitable Michipicoten post, having the goods transferred to a lake referred to as Matagami. Since this lake was on the canoe route to Michipicoten, 'about two days' journey' southwest of Missinaibi Lake, it was perhaps modern Whitefish Lake, inland from Wawa, Ontario, a favourite resort of freetraders after 1821...The Nor'Westers, of course, followed the English to the lake and in 1804 the Hudson's Bay summer master there, John Robertson, deserted to them. The next spring Thomas abandoned the post, leaving the Canadians in sole possession. (Ibid:67-68)*

The fate of this second NWC post at 'Matagami' is unknown as no further references to it were found in documents searched for this assignment. It was likely closed by the HBC in 1821 following its absorption of the NWC.

It is only with the permanent establishment of an HBC post at Michipicoten that archival records begin to contain clear and direct references to a population of mixed European / Aboriginal descent in the Wawa region. The analysis of the data pertaining to these 19<sup>th</sup>-century métis is presented in the following chapter.

## 4. THE MÉTIS POPULATION AT MICHIPICOTEN, 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

This chapter presents historical data documenting and describing the population of mixed European / Aboriginal descent living in the vicinity of, and working at, the HBC Michipicoten post during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of data presented in this chapter were collected from HBC post journals and records. Since no secondary sources were found to systematically document and describe a métis presence at Michipicoten, the analysis and interpretations presented below are original. The first section contextualizes the métis data by summarizing the functions and importance of the Michipicoten post to the HBC throughout the 1800s.

### 4.1 ROLE OF THE HBC MICHIPICOTEN POST IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The absorption of the NWC in 1821 allowed the HBC to obtain a near complete monopoly of the fur trade in northern Ontario, a privileged position the company would hold until the 1880s. Since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century the HBC had experienced intense competition at the hands of the French, independent traders and the NWC, forcing its expansion into interior regions of northern Ontario to compete directly with its rivals. During this time the HBC had opened and maintained numerous posts that had been operating at recurring losses, in a simple effort to prevent Aboriginal trappers from trading with the competition. The elimination of its main rival allowed the HBC to implement a large-scale administrative re-organization, involving the closure of unprofitable posts, as part of a strategy to maximize profits.<sup>28</sup>

The HBC organized its administration of posts into distinct Departments, where each Department was in turn divided into several ‘Districts’. The Michipicoten post was part of the Lake Superior District of the Southern Department (Weiler 1980:11). The Departmental headquarters was at Moose Factory, while Fort William originally served as District headquarters. In 1827, the HBC changed the location of the Lake Superior District headquarters to Michipicoten, and the post served in this capacity until 1887, despite a restructuring of the Department in 1863 (*ibid*:12).

For 60 years, though Michipicoten played a central administrative role in a large District, the post itself never employed a large permanent workforce:

*The Lake Superior District...was a strip of territory approximately 300 miles in length and 130 miles in width, bounded by Lake Superior on its southern Border, Moose and Albany Districts to the north, Sault Ste. Marie and Lake Huron District to the east, and the Rainy Lake District to the west. Among other posts in the district,*

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<sup>28</sup> In addition to administrative re-structuring, the HBC developed and implemented a comprehensive set of new policies designed to optimize Aboriginal trapping, and regulate trading activities (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998b).

*besides Michipicoten, were: the Pic, Long Lake, Red Rock, Lake Nipigon, and Fort William. Temporary outposts were often operated from the Lake Superior District's permanent establishments. Michipicoten operated outposts intermittently at Batchawana Bay and Agawa Bay.*

*Michipicoten Post was maintained and operated, throughout the nineteenth century, by less than a dozen company employees. These usually included no more than two or three permanent company officers and a small, variable number of temporary contracted labourers. (Ibid:11)*

As headquarters of the Lake Superior District, Michipicoten served as a supply and fur collection centre for the other posts in the District. The post was strategically located as a mid-point between Fort William and Sault St. Marie, and, via the Missinaibi River, between Fort William and Moose Factory on James Bay:

*Following the coalition of 1821, fur returns of the Lake Superior District, as well as those of the Lake Huron District, were collected annually at Michipicoten, shipped north to Moose Factory and then on to England via Hudson Bay. This fur shipping system was maintained until 1863 when Michipicoten and the Lake Superior District were transferred from the Southern to the Montreal Department. After this change in administration, fur returns of the Lake Superior District were collected at Michipicoten and shipped to Montreal via Sault Ste. Marie. A decade later this procedure was still in practice. It is assumed that Michipicoten continued to function as the fur shipping centre of the Lake Superior District until its demise as district headquarters in 1887. From 1821 to 1863 Michipicoten functioned as an entrepot for provisions and trade supplies...not only for the Lake Superior District but also for the Lake Huron District. (Ibid:19)*

While Michipicoten **processed** a large volume of furs, according to Weiler the post itself was not a major fur **producer** during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Lake Superior District as a whole also appears to have produced fewer furs than more northerly Districts in that period, particularly in the second half of the century:

*Though the Lake Superior District was definitely not one of the more lucrative of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, there is no evidence, before 1840, that the company was disappointed with the district's fur returns. After mid-century, diminishing fur resources, competition, and decreasing market demands caused a gradual decline in the Lake Superior trade<sup>29</sup> ...*

*Among the Lake Superior District establishments, Michipicoten was not particularly outstanding in fur production. Although no figures are available, it is relatively clear*

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<sup>29</sup> The author qualifies this assessment as qualitative, and that a more definitive evaluation of economic output would require extensive statistical analysis of HBC records (*ibid.*:24).

*from the Lake Superior District annual reports to 1837 that Michipicoten was not given special significance with regard to productive potential. At best, Michipicoten probably matched the individual outputs of the district's major posts. There is considerable evidence, however, that by the late 1850s Michipicoten's own fur returns were beginning to slip behind those of other establishments. (Ibid.:24-25)*

This assessment is consistent with earlier data from Henry (1966) in the mid-18th century and from Mitchell (1977) concerning the 1797-1804 period.

Although data presented later in this chapter clearly demonstrate that the post employed métis, and that a significant métis population resided in its vicinity in the 1800s, Weiler does not describe métis as involved in the specific task of fur production at Michipicoten:

*The fur trading practices of Michipicoten Post were representative of the Hudson's Bay Company generally. Fur hunting was undertaken by the native Ojibwa peoples. Each August the company supplied provisions on credit to the hunters who travelled to their respective hunting grounds for the winter months and returned in spring with their fur returns. Hunters' returns were supposed to balance with the value of provisions credited them...by the latter part of the century, the Michipicoten Indian Debt Books indicate that the native hunters were often in arrears to the company. This was a reflection of gradually declining trade in the Lake Superior District. (Weiler 1980:25)*

The fur species brought to the post were comparable to those of the Lake Superior District generally:

*The fur species produced by the Lake Superior District remained relatively constant throughout the nineteenth century. Bear, beaver, otter, mink, muskrat, fisher, lynx, and marten were the major furs listed in the records of district returns. The most abundant species were muskrat and marten. Michipicoten followed the district's general pattern almost exactly. (Ibid.)*

While Michipicoten was likely never a great fur producer, as with other Great Lakes posts it developed several 'subsidiary functions' to the HBC's fur trade operations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the most important consisting of subsistence and commercial fishing, and boat manufacture and repair. Weiler considers that fishing and fish processing:

*...were the most important support and subsidiary functions of the Michipicoten fur trade establishment. The fisheries produce was not only vital to Michipicoten's food supply, it was also an important item supplied by Michipicoten to other Lake Superior District posts, and for nearly two decades, an important commercial enterprise...*

*Michipicoten's fisheries were conducted from early spring to late fall. The major species caught was whitefish, with trout being a close second. A great number of the*

*fish caught were netted during their migratory season at the mouth of the Michipicoten River. From September to late October, fisheries for Michipicoten were conducted along the shores of Lake Superior at Gros Cap, Gargantua Bay, and off Michipicoten Island.*

*Fish processing was an important activity at Michipicoten Post. Most of the fisheries production was salted and barrelled for future use. A separate area of the post site was reserved for dressing and packing fish as well as for storing and repairing nets. Besides supplying its own needs, Michipicoten often furnished salt fish to other Lake Superior posts. Michipicoten was not, however, the exclusive producer of this commodity. The other district posts located on Lake Superior - Fort William in particular - also engaged in fishing. (Ibid:27)*

Michipicoten's involvement in exporting fish for sale to markets at Sault Ste. Marie and in the United States developed in response to a perceived threat to its fur trade operations following the establishment of a commercial fishery by the American Fur Company in 1835 at the Montreal River (*ibid*:29). The commercial fishing operations of the post lasted from 1839 into the 1860s. Finally, the boat manufacture and repair operations conducted at the post during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were linked to its administrative, transportation and supply roles in the Lake Superior District's fur trade (*ibid*:30).

## **4.2 SEASONAL SETTLEMENT OF 'WINTERERS', 1800-1848**

A detailed examination of HBC post journals and records at Michipicoten throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century conclusively demonstrates that local persons of mixed European and Aboriginal descent were established along the eastern shore of Lake Superior near the beginning of the century. The data from the records and journals also indicate that persons of mixed descent likely experienced a shift in settlement patterns between the early and mid-1800s, from a pattern of seasonal migration to winter hunting grounds, to one of permanent (sedentary) settlement near the post. The shift in settlement patterns likely resulted from changes in that population's economic activities, namely occupational diversification away from fur hunting, and integration into the wage-labour economy.

### **4.2.1. Identification of 'Winterers' as Métis**

HBC Michipicoten post journals in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rarely refer directly to persons of mixed descent in racial terms such as 'mixed bloods' or 'half-breeds'. In keeping with 18<sup>th</sup> century practice individuals are usually identified by 'lifestyle' terminology. Michipicoten Post and Lake Superior District records dated from 1800 to 1848 contain references to a group of individuals labelled as 'winterers'. As opposed to ambiguous 18<sup>th</sup> century terms such as 'Canadians', the 'winterer' designation is historically more restrictive as it was used to refer to a specific occupational 'class' of fur hunters and trappers comprised largely of French Canadians and likely including some persons of mixed European and Aboriginal descent.

As discussed by Peterson (1981:145), the term is a direct translation of the French word ‘*hivernants*’ used to describe an occupational class of voyageurs who made a living in winter months from fur hunting and trapping with Indians:

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*Hivernants* (literally, “winterers”, meaning experienced voyageurs handling the bow and stern of the canoe who were sufficiently familiar with Indians and their languages as to follow hunters to their winter camps, i.e., run “*deroine*”) (emphasis original)

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the term ‘winterers’ was commonly used in reference to the practise by Plains métis of ‘wintering over’ in hunting and fur trapping camps in the course of annual migrations to summer buffalo hunting grounds:

*With such distance to travel, many families began to “winter over” on the plains in the parkland fringe. Previously, a few small family groups had moved from the Red River Colony during the winter months to follow a hunting and gathering subsistence pattern, but these had been individual endeavors. The winter rovers, or hivernants, integrated a much larger congregation.* (Burley et al. 1992:22)

As the HBC data presented below indicate the ‘winterers’ in the vicinity of Michipicoten were persons belonging to the occupational class of fur trappers and hunters defined in Peterson above.

#### **4.2.2 Descriptions of Winterers in Michipicoten Records**

The first mention of winterers in the HBC Michipicoten post journals<sup>30</sup> dates to May 13, 1801, stating that:

*...two Canadians who wintered on Missinaibi Lake came past, we saw them put their Bundles of Furrs ashore at their house, a family of Indians accompanied them.* (Doc.#1, fo.14)

Entries in records written prior to 1804 likely describe activities of competing NWC employees. The Canadians at Michipicoten had several wintering grounds in the Missinaibi Lake area, given an entry dated August 5, 1801:

*5 Canadians & one Indian in two large Canoes well loaded sett off to settle for the Winter at Missinaibi, and Meashequagimy[?] lakes, the former halfway between this place to NB<sup>31</sup> the latter a little to the E. Ward of Missinaibi Lake.* (Doc.#2, fo.1d)

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<sup>30</sup> Since all journal and record descriptions from this point are from Hudson’s Bay Company Michipicoten post, they will be identified only as ‘journal’ or ‘post record’ entries in the remainder of this chapter.

<sup>31</sup> This is likely New Brunswick House, a nearby HBC post.



On May 22, 1801, a reference to a Mr. Chenier, a ‘Canadian’ post employee, states that he and:

*...two men and three Indians, went past in a large canoe to their House, from his wintering grounds near NB, we saw them take nine stout bundles of Furrs ashore at their house, an Indian who followed the Canadians down brought about 20 Br. To pay his Debt. (Doc.#1, fo.15)*

An earlier entry (August 5, 1800) indicates that Mr. Chenier had a wife who resided with him near the post (Doc.#1, fo.3).

By August 2, 1802, the journal refers to a HBC employee leaving the post to “Winter” with unidentified other men, and taking provisions:

*...about noon a Clerk & 4 men in a large Canoe set off from their house to Winter near Micabanish<sup>32</sup>...saw them put in their Canoe 2 Babs[?], 2 shot Bags - a parcel of Guns 13 Kegs 8 bags of Flour, 20 of Indian Corn & a [unreadable]. (Doc.#3, fo.2)*

No further mention of winterers in post records was found until August 12, 1833 when Chief Factor George Keith writes:

*Busily occupied in supplying the Servants with Flour, Pork, etc. etc. preparatory to their departure for Winter Quarters. (Doc.#14, fo.5d)*

However, miscellaneous accounts from the HBCA indicate that ‘Winterers’ were regularly supplied with provisions at Michipicoten between 1828 and 1858 (Doc.#12).

Readable names appearing in accounts lists include, for 1828: Joseph Brunelle, Baptiste Cartier, George Dupré, Baptiste La Pierre, Louis Provost (Doc.#12, fo.2); and for 1829, Jean Manor, Charles Chais, Charles Kawinior, Charles Arahota (Doc.#12, fo.3). A document titled *List of Advances to Men Voyaging between Montreal and the Northern Department for 1831* identifies as Winterers: Michel Meeatarondu, Joseph Beaudoin, Joseph Borgne, Alxies [sic] Contois, Charles Contois, Antoine Corbain, Jean Delisle, Nazan Dupré, Pierre Jollifoux, François Laframboise, Louis La Haie, Pierre La Tendre, Edward Monk, Louis Morrin, Laliberte Nicolin, Paul Calouoogayou, Joseph Plouff, François Pressé, Jacque Taondu, Michel Tourgon (Doc.#12, fo.4a).

In 1837, the Lake Superior District paid advances to Culbert Robilliard, André Samartin, Sauveur Samartin, Toussaint Seerais, Charles Tooshtoshrotous, and François Vaudreau as ‘Winterers’ (Doc.#12, fo.5). These names re-appear the following year as Winterers paid at Michipicoten post with the addition of: Louis Lucier, Samuel McKenzie, and William Sabiston (Doc.#12, fo.9). By 1847, this list includes: Charles Bayfield, François Guillemette, William Lane,

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<sup>32</sup>

This would be Micabanish House, a.k.a New Brunswick House (Ray 1988:338).

Alexander Latreille, Roderick McKenzie and James Richards (Doc.#12, fo.22). Lists of Winterers for 1853 and 1858 feature 37 additional new names (Doc.#12, fos.31, 36).

Interpreting the significance of these lists, in terms of determining a local population of winterers is problematic. Given Michipicoten's status as Lake Superior District Headquarters, account lists produced at Michipicoten in some cases include payments to winterers working throughout the District. Even the lists identifying persons paid at the post do not necessarily identify persons living permanently within the vicinity of the post. Yet it is clear from the 1801 and 1833 journal entries that some of the post employees lived as winterers.

Neither the journal entries nor the accounts lists specifically identify the winterers as métis. The clear majority of names listed above are of French origin, and very few English names appear prior to 1840s. A handful of names appear to be Aboriginal, or seem derived from Aboriginal names. Only genealogical research would permit extracting a list of definitive métis winterers from these documents. That at least some of the winterers were of mixed descent seems likely, considering that some HBC posts near Michipicoten were identifying some of their employees as being "native of the country" in the 1820s (Doc.#9, fo.6). For example at Mattagami, employees George Moore, Thomas Richards, and George Rivers are identified as "native of the country" in an 1825 journal entry (Doc.#9, fo.6). The "native of the country" designation was distinguished from other expressions denoting place of birth, such as "native of Canada" (Doc.#9, fo.6d) in reference to the Colony (Upper or Lower Canada), or even more specific birth references such as "native of Orkney" (Doc.#9, fo.7) used to identify one European-born employee.

Finally, the fact that no names recur in lists separated in time by more than two years indicates that these winterers were likely highly mobile, geographically, occupationally, or both: no persons seem to have remained employed on a long-term basis in the Lake Superior District.

#### **4.2.3 Existence of Fur Trade Families**

It is very likely that some of the winterers, like some post servants, were not single males. Chénier, for example, is described in 1801 as having a wife. In part, the HBC's policy prohibiting its employees from engaging in sexual relations with Aboriginal women was motivated by economics - the Company did not want to assume any costs or obligations to support families or children resulting from these liaisons. It is clear the policy was sufficiently ignored in practice that the HBC eventually dropped the prohibition. An attempt to determine the number of families in the Lake Superior District in 1828 was made by George Keith, Chief Factor at Michipicoten, who at first held no quantitative information on the subject:

*My limited information respecting the number of women and families connected with the Officers and Servants in the District does not enable me to offer any accurate computation. Possibly before the Document is forwarded to Moose Factory I may be enabled to arrange a List - Meantime it may be proper to state that with few exceptions they are maintained and supported at the expense and cost of individuals.*  
(Doc.#10, fo.2d)

Keith, who himself had a family living at the post, was able to derive at least a preliminary list of District families later that year, which included the following names: Louis Boucher, Pierre Camarere, Thomas Cadrant, Hyacinthe Davilleau, Baptiste Deschamps, Joseph Dubois, Antoine Dutremble, Olivier Desautels, Joseph Fontaine, George Keith, Roderick McKenzie, Donald McIntosh, John McIntosh (clerk), Joseph La Perdrix Blanc, Jean Amable McKay, Jean Baptiste LaVallé, and John Robertson (Doc.#11, fo.8). A second list of families compiled by Keith in 1830 repeats all these names, and adds “John Swanston” (Doc.#13, fo.5)<sup>33</sup>. By 1833, the list of families in Lake Superior District also identifies the occupations of (male) family heads, named: Thomas McMurray (Chief Trader), Donald McIntosh (ditto), John Swanston (clerk), Louis Denis Lalonde (Post Master), John Robertson (a) (ditto), Jean Amable McKay (guide), William Scheller (tinsmith) and, as labourers, Joseph Boucher, Toussaint Boucher, Thomas Cadrant, Pierre Camarere, Hyacinthe Davilleau, Baptiste Deschamps, Olivier Desautels, Joseph Dubois, Antoine Dutremble, Jacque Fagneaut, Joseph Fontaine, Joseph Jobinville, Joachim Laliberté, Joseph La Perdrix Blanche, Cois [partly unreadable] Mozail<sup>34</sup>, François Rivet, John Robertson (b), James Robertson, Jean Baptiste Vezina (Doc.#15, fo.5d).

As will be seen in section 4.6, several names from this latter list are included in Robinson-Superior Treaty paylists for Michipicoten as ‘half-breeds’: Toussaint Boucher, Joseph Dubois, John Swanston and William Scheller (Gale 1998:23). In addition to these, the family names ‘Deschamps’ and ‘La Perdrix Blanche’ appear on the 1852 Treaty payroll: a Pierre Deschamps and a David La Perdrix Blanche may be relatives of the persons named above. Other families identified in these list almost certainly involve some marriages with Indian or métis wives, since non-Aboriginal women were also prohibited (by HBC policy) from living in this frontier fur trade area in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the likelihood that some of the winterers were of mixed descent, or established families with children of mixed descent, post journals clearly indicate that some métis established a sedentary settlement in the vicinity of Michipicoten at least by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 4.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEDENTARY POPULATION OF MIXED DESCENT

A November 8, 1817 journal entry provides the first indication that a local HBC post servant may have been of mixed descent; at the very least the entry indicates he was involved with an Indian woman. The HBC had only re-established its operations at Michipicoten the preceding year, when post manager Andrew Stewart, describing daily activities, included a reference to:

*...cutting thicks for building a house for McNab's Woman that he has left lives at his maintenance and his expense. (Doc.#4, fo.9a)*

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<sup>33</sup> From 1843 to 1849, John Swanston acted as Post Manager at Michipicoten (HBCA Post History: Michipicoten).

<sup>34</sup> This is likely François Mozail, identified as “a Bois Brulé” in a February 15, 1841 Michipicoten journal entry. The reference to “Bois Brulé” indicates he was métis (Awdrey and Green 1905:15-16).

While McNab's identity, location, and reason for leaving the woman are not specified, it was common for HBC men, when transferred or retired, to leave their native family at the post and to send financial support for them there (see Section 2.3.2). The house being built for this unnamed woman, by November 25, takes on a known métis architectural characteristic:

*...men employed in the forenoon in putting Land and Bark on the old Mens house which is now fitted up for Mr. Budge, in the afternoon, the men were putting Bark on Mrs. McNabs house...(Doc.#4, fo.9b)*

One of the builders of McNab's woman's house, George Budge, is identified as long-time servant living at the post with his own family, who now wished to leave the fur trade frontier and relocate south in the Colony:

*...for about 20 years in his service and for upwards of his ten first years in this capacity as a working man in the Albany Department, these thence last years he has been in [unreadable] River as an officer where trade is to be got. Mr Budge can exert himself with considerable advantage to his employer and believes has done so when in the Albany River - for this sometime back he has however been very dissatisfied with his situation and repeatedly said to me that he was determined never to be of more benefit to the Company, when asked his reasons for such expressions the only answer he would give was he wanted to go to the Colony with his family...on his return from [unreadable] on 3rd April with a Packet addressed to Governor Vincent he told me that he would be D\_\_\_nd if he would have brought his Packet had it not been for the sake of getting back to his children...(Doc.#5, fo.3d)*

As with "McNab's woman", it is likely that George Budge's wife and children were of at least partial Aboriginal descent.

The first definitive reference to a métis servant at Michipicoten also dates to 1817 and names John Robertson, likely the same individual identified in the 1828 list of Lake Superior District employees with families. The journal entry records Robertson's arrival as follows:

*John Brown Clerk passed the summer and till 3rd JanY when he went to Matauggammie to replace John Robertson who came to live here and has since remained here as a resident in [the Canadians'] Watch house which was erected at the time we established this place two years ago, their Watch house is 21 Yds from any of our buildings, - Robertson is a half breed and was brought up in our service he Deserted from Mr. Geo. Gladman when Master at New Brunswick many years ago. (Doc.#5, fo.5d)*

An entry dated June 1818 describes the arrival of a George Morin, who is instructed to remain at Michipicoten to act as Indian interpreter:

*...in the evening of the same day Colin Robertson arrived here in a light Canoe from*

*Montreal this gentleman was also the bearer of letters for Governor Vincent but delivered them to Mr. Murphy at Fort Frances, - Mr. Robertson left a person here named George Morin to act as Indian interpreter and Clerk if required. (Doc.#6, fo.1d)*

Morin may well have been of mixed descent since métis were frequently hired by HBC post managers (and later by Government Treaty negotiators) to act as interpreters in negotiations with Indians (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1999:13-24, 29-42). However, a more detailed account of Morin in a journal entry titled ‘Servants Characters’ does not provide any information on his ethnic or racial background. The document simply reports that he had been cautioned “in very strong terms” by Colin Robertson “not to give himself up to liquor as he had heretofore done”(Doc.#6, fo.4d).

Descriptions of new post employees dated from 1819 and 1820 indicate that other servants were likely married to Aboriginal wives who were living with them at the post. A July 1819 entry mentions one Peter Spence as having obtained permission to take his leave from the post in order to join his family in Canada, indicating that Spence was likely not métis (Doc.#7, fo.1d). However, the man who replaced Spence in August was Edward Taylor who travelled south from New Brunswick House with his wife who likely was Aboriginal or métis:

*...another canoe arrived from New Brunswick in which were the Shipwright Edward Taylor (and Wife) and two assistants. (Doc.#7, fo.1d)*

An 1820 description of ‘Servants Characters’, in reference to a Mr. Jean-Baptiste Perreault, reveals that due to illness, his ‘large family’ had become such a financial burden to the post that a decision was made to dismiss him from employment:

*Clerk and Canoe builder, Sixty one years of Age - This man has for the last year been so much troubled with the [unreadable] and Rheumatism that he could not be employed on any kind of active duty consequently he and his large family contributed in no small degree to this Michipicoten expenditure...J.B. Perrault was discharged from the Service on 28th June. (Doc.#8, fo.2d)*

Servant John Robertson, thus far the only employee identified in HBC journal entries as métis, likely remained at Michipicoten throughout the 1820s. A journal entry from 1833 reveals that his (still unnamed) wife gave birth to a daughter that year (Doc.#14, fo.3d). The next birth described in a known métis family dates to March 28, 1841, when William Schellen’s (also unnamed) wife is mentioned as “safely delivered of a Daughter” (Doc.#18, fo.20d).

#### **4.4 HARVESTING ACTIVITIES, 1833 - 1841**

Michipicoten post journal records provide significant information on harvesting activities of servants during the 1830s and 1840s. Overall, the entries document a growing importance of fishing in a context where hunting success, particularly of large game, is described as erratic and perceived

as increasingly unreliable. In addition to fishing and hunting for food and furs, servants and their families were also involved in horticulture (small scale agriculture), growing food for themselves and to stock supplies for the post, and one servant's family was engaged in sugar bush harvesting.

Entries in the 1833 Journal describe several types of activities as involving Indians and servants' families working together. For example, an entry dated July 3 records "A few Indians and the families of the Post commenced hoeing the Potatoes" (Doc.#14, fo.3). A potato garden was cultivated at post expense, given an entry from July 18, stating that "The Indians & families hoeing potatoes - The former are paid at the rate of 2 pound Flour or ½ pound Lard per diem" (Doc.#14, fo.4). The potato harvest that year yielded 557 bushels (Doc.#14, fo.9).

References to fishing in 1833 clearly outnumber those for any other harvesting activities, suggesting that fishing may have constituted the most important harvesting activity that year. As early as June 3, a Seine at Barriere [?] Rapids is described as "for the first time this year...in five hauls furnished 700 Herring" (Doc.#14, fo.1). On July 22, the post's seine "made a fine haul of Herring and the Nets began to catch some Tikkamegue or white fish at the Gros Cap" (Doc.#14, fo.4). On October 20, 1833, an entry describes what appears to be a post family of Antoine Dutremble [?] living at one of the fishing stations (Doc.#14, fo.9d).

Louis Mousseau, identified as "a free man and an Indian", is described as managing fall fishing activities for the post at the Cormier [?] River station in entries dated September 2 and 25 (Doc.#14, fos.6d and 8). The station is reported as having produced a total 11 Casks of salted Trout that year. Another fishing station operated at "Garantua" [sic], which by November 1 had exceeded the harvesting expectations of Chief Factor George Keith:

*One of the fishers [unreadable] having mustered 12 and J.B. Vezina's 13 Casks Trout - Thus the product of the season is 57 Casks of Salted Trout and 1 Cask of Tikkamegue caught in this River, which some years when the [unreadable] happens to be favourable for the Seine furnishes more than 20 Casks. (Doc.#14, fo.10)*

The success of Michipicoten's fishing operations in 1833 contrast markedly with the scant entries pertaining to hunting. A December 11 note reports that a "skin, and a small portion (a ribb) of the flesh of a Bear" (Doc.#14, fo.12) was brought to the post that day, while four days later:

*J.B. Derouselles (a half breed) & Uskinaway arrived with the Fall Hunt - consisting of 54 Martin, 22 Mink, 12 Otter, and 60 Muskrat - which is not [unreadable]. (Doc.#14, fo.12)*

The métis Derouselle appears to have been the only servant involved in fur hunting, given that the only entry (January 17, 1834) describing this activity identifies him:

*J.B. Derouselle and Wife arrived bringing 24 M. Beaver in different kinds of Furs – another Indian /Wapous/ also came in for some supplies... (Doc.#14, fo.16)*

Finally, only the Vezenas family is described as involved in sugar bush harvesting, in an entry from the spring of 1834 (Doc.#14, fo.19).

The fall fisheries of Great Lakes HBC posts are described in some detail in the Lake Superior District Report for 1833-1834, including methods used to preserve fish for winter provisions:

*At the posts bordering on the Lake the Autumn Fisheries commence about the beginning of September and continue at some stations to the commencement of November, when the spawning season terminates and the finny Tribes [sic] retire to deep Water. At these fisheries it is principally Trout which is caught - with nets for the most part - altho' the Seine, when the bottom is favourable is [unreadable] fully worked. The fish require to be pickled for Winter use. The white fish or Tittamingue also flock [sic] to the mouth of Rivers which they ascend until they reach shallow water in order to deposit their spawn in safety - Some provision is also made of these; particularly at Lake Nipigon and Long Lake Posts; and as they are caught late in the autumn they are usually preserved by being suspended separately in the open air, until the frost sets in, when they are taken down and secured. (Doc.#15, fo.3)*

The District Report for 1835 presents contextual data explaining the minimal references to hunting at Michipicoten in the 1833 journal. Chief Factor Keith describes a general decline in availability of large game, noting in particular a near complete absence of Deer:

*As in the former report the decrease of animals in the district is mentioned. With the exception of the [reindeer?], the Deer species seemed to be extinct. Many of the fur bearing animals were still found but were evidently decreasing. (Doc.#17, fo.2)*

The decline in large game and fur bearing animals generally had caused many of the Indians to have “almost starved during the winter” (Doc.#17, fo.1). A listing of fur bearing animals later in the report states:

*The quadrupeds found here, are the Reindeer, the Deer generally extinct, the Bear, Wolf, Wolverine, Lynx Cat, Fox, Fisher Martin, Rabbitt, Weasel, Porcupine, Ground-Squirrel, Beaver, Otter, Mink, Musqrat and some varieties of water mice. The fur-bearing animals are less numerous than they were. (Doc.#17, fos.4,5)*

Michipicoten journal entries for 1840 and 1841 present resource harvesting data that suggest the post's fur trade is faring better than in the 1833- 1835 seasons. George Keith writes on June 5, 1840:

*...an Ind[ian?] arrived another accompanied by the Wife of another Indian who brought a few furs collectively amounting to 17 Beaver skins, 18 Martins & Otter 1 Fisher 1 Cat & 20 Musqrat. This Indian used to be one of our most successful Hunters but his Wife fell sick in the Winter time and consequently much impeded his hunting excursions. (Doc.#18, fo.1)*

The next day Keith reports that one of their Seines “only caught 6 Herring at the entrance of the [unnamed] River” (Doc.#18, fo.1). By June 9, two Indians and their families brought furs consisting “of 1 Beaver skin, 4 Otters, 6 Martins, 12 Cats, 2 Fishers and 66 Musqrats” (Doc.#18, fo.1d).

By 1840 Michipicoten’s fishing operations include a “small Batteaux” or schooner named *Whitefish*, built and completed at the post June 10, which helped haul, partly for commercial export:

*...18 Barrels Salted fish taken at the Pic where he received 21 more, and we lost no time here in shipping 57 Barrels of which 22 belongs to St. Marys Depot. (Doc.#18, fo.1d)*

By June 12th the Gros Cap Seine took in 100 Herring in one night’s haul (Doc.#18, fo.1d), on the 14th net fishing caught “a fine Herring and 8 Tittamingue and the lines 7 fine Trout” (Doc.#18, fo.4), and on the 15th nets “caught 13 White fish and Trout and lines only 5 Trout” (Doc.#18, fo.4). The journal reports fish catches on nearly a daily basis throughout June.

The beginning of the fall fishing season is announced on September 3, and includes the participation of William Schellen, a known métis servant (mainly employed as tin smith), and Toussaint Boucher (identified as half-breed in an 1852 Treaty payroll; Gale 1998:23):

*Despatched our fishermen early this morning to proceed to their fishing stations and William Shellen to conduct the Seine fishing at Dog River assisted by [unreadable] & Gaulois (an Indian) and the other fishery is established at Cape Echaillon under the management of Touss. Boucher assisted by an Indian [unreadable], and his family they have got 12 nets for this fishery - prepared an outfit for the Outpost of Batchewana Bay - where Post Master Mr. Thomas Taylor is to winter and manage this Frontier station. (Doc.#18, fo.8)*

By October fall hunting is also under way and on the 5th:

*Amable La Garde and his son arrived and brought 6 small Beaver skins, 1 [unreadable] Fox and 20 Musqrats. (Doc.#18, fo.10d)*

Later that same month, Amable La Garde – who is positively identified as métis (Gale 1998:23) – along with his son were “supplied with necessaries for the Winter” and departed the post to their wintering grounds (*ibid*). Meanwhile, by the 17th the fishing operations would result in considerable supplies, partly intended for commercial sale:

*Toussaint Boucher and his wife arrived from his fishing...as he has salted 25 Barrels of Trout - one Barrel and a half more than was caught last year at the same place, thus altogether we have much to be thankful. The dog[?] River station having furnished 21 Barrels Trout Cape Echaillon ditto ditto and the Seine fishing of this River 25 Barrels whitefish. These later I hope to preserve for the Markets. (Doc.#18, fo.11d)*



Entries concerning fur hunting refer only to one William Robertson, who on November 22, 30, and December 1 is described as bringing in a total of three “fine Silver Foxes” from his traps (Doc.#18, fos.13d-14). William Robertson appears as a half-breed in an 1852 Treaty payroll for Michipicoten (Doc.#20, fo.3). The 1841 journal entries describe levels of harvesting similar to those of 1840 (cf. Doc.#18).

#### 4.5 METIS OCCUPATIONS AT THE POST, 1830s-1890s

The data presented in this chapter indicate that several Post servants at Michipicoten in the early 1800s were métis. This suggests that the local métis population was economically more diversified than the local Indian population. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century métis, although in many cases involved in resource harvesting activities, were conducting these activities as part of their employment with the HBC. Métis also seem to have been regularly employed as interpreters in dealings with Indians. One métis, William Schellen, held a specialized position at Michipicoten, working as tin smith. By contrast, the post journals for the early 1800s describe Indians as living on the land, coming to the post only for trade purposes. A few brief references suggest that one or two individual Indians may have found seasonal employment as guides or as assistants to the fishery ‘managers’.

Most entries describing miscellaneous activities around the post do not name individuals or identify their racial origin. The District reports invariably present generic descriptions of seasonal post activities. A typical entry from the 1833 District report reads:

*During the Summer Season most of the Servants are employed in performing the Transport between Michipicoten and Long Portage, during which service they are provided with imported Provisions...(Doc.#15, fo.3)*

The District report for 1834 identifies senior HBC officers by name, but then breaks down the district labour force statistically by type of occupation. However, the document identifies two clerks as outstanding employees:

*William House and John Swanston, are very superior men - I have repeatedly had the pleasure, very favourably, of noticing both in my reports to the District. (Doc.#16, fo.3d)*

Swanston would be promoted to Chief Factor at Michipicoten in the mid-1840s and is identified in an 1852 Treaty payroll for Michipicoten as half-breed (Gale 1998:23). There is further evidence that the HBC did not hesitate to promote métis servants to the responsible position of Post manager, at least temporarily: John Robertson was Post Master in the 1820s, and William Robertson, also métis, was described as Post Master at Batchewana in an 1840 journal entry (Doc.#18, fo.1).

In 1841 mail and supply carriers (runners) travelling to Michipicoten are definitely identified as métis. A comment is made on February 15 to the effect that:

*In the afternoon two Carriers (François Mozail & another Bois Brulé) arrived from St. Marys with a Packet of Letters & more papers for various posts of the Country...(Doc.#18, fo.18d)*

The post journals indicate that while individual servants were assigned specific duties, any able servants could be instructed to work at various chores around the post and be assigned a variety of duties as seasonal activities required. For example, one of the Robertsons is described as sawing wood and helping with the construction of new servants' dwellings, while Scheller works the Seine fishery in 1840 (Doc.#18, fo.4). Later Alex Robertson (William's brother) saws timber while François Mozail hoes potatoes (Doc.#18, fo.5). As described above, William Robertson trapped for the post in addition to acting as post-master.

The diary of Thomas Gummersoll Anderson for September 5, 1849 includes a brief description of Michipicoten and a reference to the métis living at the post. Andersen was Visiting Superintendent of Indian Affairs at the time, and along with Alexander Vidal, travelled through the Lake Superior and Lake Huron regions as part of a government investigation that led to the negotiation of the Robinson Treaties in 1850 (Surtees 1986)<sup>35</sup>. Anderson's diary describes the post as providing comfortable shelter and his men engaged the post métis in a ball game. They were:

*...most kind received by Mr. Swanston, the Agent - no pains were spared by him to make us comfortable - we got beds & everything else we could wish for - this is a large River and the Route to Moose Factory - the houses are built on a very pretty level plain - No. of houses about 12 - the Indians we saw here are desirous a missionary should be sent among them to educate their children - Our men gave a ball to their halfbreed brethren and enjoyed themselves first rate...(Doc.#19, fo.22)*

Following the negotiation and signing of the Robinson Treaties in 1850, the Michipicoten Post becomes an administration centre for distributing Treaty annuities to both Indian and "Half-Breed" beneficiaries. It is from the 1850s that post journal entries begin to use the term "half-breed" commonly in reference to HBC employees.

The 1858 journal shows that Schellen, Boucher, and one of the Robertsons remained employed at the post. An entry for January 4 describes them involved in various tasks:

*Scheller (a) making tin kettles; Cromarty and Souliere boat building; Evanson making [unreadable] frames; LaGarde and Scheller (b) sawing; Boucher, McCormack, Robertson, & Larsen cutting cordwood, McKay cattlekeeper & grinding Indian Corn...(AO MU 1385, Box 1-3<sup>36</sup>).*

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<sup>35</sup> These matters are examined in some detail in section 4.8 below.

<sup>36</sup> Due to the extensive analysis of data from this journal in section 4.6 below the entire journal is referenced in this report as opposed to citing individual document numbers.

From this list of names Cromarty can evidently be considered métis given that six days later an entry reports that:

*Some of the halfbreed servants even fortunate in their hunting operations to day; Boucher having caught a Beaver & a Fisher; Cromarty a Beaver. (Ibid.)*

Other entries for 1858 indicate that Boucher was primarily involved in hunting and fishing, while Scheller, Roberston and Cromarty were often involved with various duties at the post (*ibid*). An entry for January 31 reveals La Garde's status as métis and confirms habitual métis involvement in post hunting:

*As usual our Halfbreed servants went off hunting but returned with little or no success - La Garde being the only lucky one having shot a Mink at the point above the Fort. (Ibid.)*

By May the servants are generally put to work in fishing-related activities, and an entry dated May 3 describes Cromarty as:

*...repairing & [unreadable] & tarring Seine Boat, which when he finished he commanded the Seatings of the new River Boats. (Ibid.)*

One Indian, named Pakuakmeg, was seasonally employed by the post to perform menial chores such as cleaning (May 3), assisting with gardening, by for example, cutting seed potatoes, or washing Fish Barrels (May 10, June 8; *ibid*). The post temporarily employed several Indian women and girls in agricultural work by late summer (e.g., August 20; *ibid*). The métis Boucher, usually described as hunting or fishing, also occasionally acted as Indian interpreter for the post according to a May 25 entry although this task was also performed by other métis, as needed, throughout the year<sup>37</sup>.

HBC journals and records, and personal correspondence demonstrate that Michipicoten post continued to employ some métis as servants throughout the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although references to post activities in these documents clearly describe generally deteriorating economic conditions (Doc.#22, May 1863; Doc.#24, April 1866; Doc.#25, August 1870; Doc. #26, November 1871; Doc.#29, June 1886; Doc.#27, October 1885; Doc.#31, fos. 8,11).

While some métis servants were assigned to specific post occupations on regular, and in a few cases, on permanent bases (e.g, Scheller as tin smith), the journals and records of the 19<sup>th</sup> century indicate that they were mainly involved in seasonal harvesting activities. The journal for 1858, written by Chief Factor James S. Watt, provides an unusually rich amount of information on servants' harvesting activities. The following section presents relevant extracts from that journal describing the yearly harvesting cycle at the post.

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<sup>37</sup> For example, Edward Heron, also on the 1852 Treaty pay list as "halfbreed", performs interpreting work in August (*ibid*).

#### 4.6 SEASONAL HARVESTING ACTIVITIES OF MÉTIS SERVANTS, 1858

The 1858 journal identifies 9 persons by name as involved in resource harvesting throughout the year: Boucher, Soulière, Bélanger, Cromarty, La Garde, Asquaque, Robertson, Scheller, and Dubois (AOMU 1385, Box 1-3). Cross-referencing these names with the 1856 ‘half-breed’ annuity payroll for Michipicoten (Gale 1998:26-27) confirms that 6 of the 9 named individuals were métis: Boucher, Soulière, La Garde, Robertson, Scheller and Dubois. As presented above, an entry in the journal dated January 10 identifies Cromarty as ‘half-breed’<sup>38</sup>, bringing the total confirmed named métis harvesters to 7. ‘Asquaque’ is almost certainly Indian, leaving Bélanger as the only harvester of unknown racial identity mentioned in the journal.

By tabulating all 1858 journal entries in which named individuals appear in descriptions of distinct harvesting trips, Boucher and La Garde appear to have acted as the main resource harvesters for the Michipicoten post that year: Boucher is identified in 23 separate entries, while La Garde is identified in 13 (12 of which appear in the month of April). Cromarty is mentioned in 9 harvesting trips, while Bélanger’s name appears 6 times. In addition to named and identifiable métis individuals, the journal contains 6 additional entries generically describing métis harvesting trips, e.g., by using the terms ‘halfbreeds’, ‘half-castes’, or ‘half-breed servants’ (January 10, 31, February 14, April 18, March 16, and December 12). Overall, these data clearly indicate that Michipicoten post relied mainly on métis servants to conduct post-operated resource harvesting activities that year.

Descriptions of harvesting activities document a predominance of hunting over fishing for the year as whole, which contradicts general assessments of the relative importance of these activities for Michipicoten in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hunting, for food and furs was conducted throughout the year, while fishing, not surprisingly, was practised intensely from late May until September. While hunting trips are reported very frequently, descriptions of species harvested clearly show that hunting success was limited almost exclusively to small game and fowl.

January harvesting focused entirely on hunting, producing one Lynx, three deer and thirty-one rabbits (Boucher harvesting all the rabbits by himself). In February two fishing trips (by Boucher), two food hunting trips (one involving most of the half-castes, the other Cromarty and Soulière), and two fur hunting trips (one by Soulière and Bélanger, the other by Ojibwa Chief Tootomenai) are described. Tootomenai, however, is not employed by the post since he is described as leaving for his hunting grounds. One fishing trip (by La Garde) is described in March and one hunting trip (by Boucher), as ‘trapping’ formed the focus of post harvesting, yielding fisher and martin. Boucher’s hunting produced rabbit and otter. Trapping throughout the month appears to have been performed solely by the Indian Asquaque, although the descriptions indicate he was employed by the post and not acting as an independent Indian trader.

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<sup>38</sup> Cromarty’s absence from the 1856 half-breed payroll for Michipicoten may simply be due to the fact that was only assigned as servant there in 1857 or 1858; no list of ‘half-breeds’ is presented for 1858 in Gale’s (1998) report.

Boucher, Cromarty, Scheller, and the ‘halfbreeds’ generally were involved in Sugar-making between March 27 and May 1 (Bélanger is mentioned in only 1 entry pertaining to Sugar bush activities). Fowl hunting (mainly duck, but also a few partridges) was by far the main harvesting activity during April. Fishing becomes the most frequently performed activity beginning May 9, and lasting until the early fall, producing trout but principally herring (1,200 herring are reported caught by Boucher and his crew between June 11 and 12 alone). By late November hunting resumes as the main harvesting activity, predominantly involving Boucher and Cromarty, and producing beaver, fisher, martin and a few fox.

#### 4.7 SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF HBC RECORDS

The data presented in this chapter, particularly from Section 4.3 onwards, demonstrate that a métis population was settled permanently in the Michipicoten area, and more generally the Lake Superior region, since at least the 1820s. Section 4.2 suggests that this permanent presence may have earlier origins in seasonal settlements of ‘winterers’, although descriptions of these individuals generally preclude a definitive identification of métis within that class of fur traders. While proving the existence of a métis population, the HBC records at Michipicoten provide no evidence that this population formed a ‘community’ distinct from non-Aboriginal HBC servants and employees. From HBC records alone, the most that can be said concerning a community status of the métis at Michipicoten is that they clearly formed an integral part of the broader ‘occupational community’ of fur trade post employees in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

HBC journals at Michipicoten present considerable information on the **material** dimension of the métis way of life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The métis were clearly living, in material terms, a day-to-day life that differed significantly from that of Indians. Male métis worked for wages as HBC employees, and their participation in the HBC labour force was definitely **not** limited to lower-ranking positions within the ‘servant’ class. While some métis worked as servants, others were hired and/or promoted to ‘management’ type positions, for example as ‘post-masters’ of Michipicoten’s outposts, as leaders, supervisors or managers of large post fisheries and fishing expeditions, and in one case (John Swanston) rose to the position of Chief Factor having responsibility for the entire Lake Superior District. By contrast, HBC records indicate that only a handful of Indians were employed at Michipicoten, and descriptions of their work activities suggests these persons were casual labourers performing generally menial tasks, although some (e.g., ‘Asquake’) hunted and fished for the post.

While male métis post employees were generally heavily involved with the post’s resource harvesting activities, they and métis families at Michipicoten lived a sedentary life in log houses, while Indians living in the post’s vicinity maintained a semi-nomadic way of life based on seasonal

cycles or resource harvesting. In a lengthy report<sup>39</sup> dated October 27, 1894, E.B. Borron, a provincial magistrate with responsibility for the northern parts of the Province of Ontario, summed up the 19th century material lifestyle of métis as follows:

*Briefly stated, the Half-breeds [ca. 1850] did not dwell in wigwams or huts - like the Indians - but in houses.*

*They did not have hunting-grounds like the Indians - to which they had an exclusive right, and upon which, they and their families resided the greater part of the year. They were not entirely dependent, for food and other necessities of life, on the game, fish and fur-bearing animals in the territory, as the Indians were.*

*The Half-breeds - like their French-Canadian Fathers - many of whom were still living in 1850 - not only resided in houses, but had land cleared and fenced upon which, they grew potatoes, corn and other crops. Some of them even had horses and cattle. Their fathers had been with few exceptions - employes [sic] of the Hudson Bay Company, in the various capacities of voyageurs, boat-builders, canoe-builders, blacksmiths, servants and traders; and their half-breed sons continued, in many instances, to be employed in like manner, by the Hudson's Bay Co. And others, who needed their services...*

*Of course, these Half-breeds fished and hunted, and even trapped occasionally - as white men would do under like circumstances, and said like surroundings...some of them going back several days' journey on snow shoes into the interior for that purpose, and remaining away from their homes for a few days or even weeks. But they rarely...took their families with them. And it was not their sole dependence - as it was in the case of the Indians who lived a normal or tribal life - as a means of obtaining food and other necessities of life.*

*It may be said that all the French Half-breeds in the territory - and a very large majority of the half-breeds are of French-Canadian origin - professed then, as they do now, the Catholic faith; and with comparatively very few exceptions they still bear the surnames of their fathers and grandfathers. This may be seen on reference to Pay-lists particularly those of the Garde River, Batchewana, Fort William and Michipicoten Bands in which large numbers of half-breeds are included...(in Gale 1998:76-77; insert added)*

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<sup>39</sup> Borron's report formed part of the Province on Ontario's legal argument against recognizing métis as having Treaty rights to annuities. This legal argument was part-and-parcel of a long-standing dispute between Ontario and the Dominion (Federal) government concerning the settlement of pre-Confederation debts and liabilities of the Province. This dispute was the subject of arbitration by a Board of Arbitrators created by Order-in-Council (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1996). Borron's argument in this report is that métis lived as whites, not as Indians, a point not fully supported by historical evidence demonstrating that they continued to maintain close ties to Indian groups despite differences in employment and material life.

However, while métis were materially distinguished from Indians in basic aspects of day-to-day life and economically by wage employment, the HBC post journals at Michipicoten indicate that they were predominantly involved in resource harvesting activities. The 1858 journal in fact describes the post as relying almost exclusively on métis for post-operated game and fish provisioning, to be used as food and for commercial export.

Such an extensive involvement in resource harvesting activities suggests that métis maintained part of the knowledge concerning, and orientation towards, resource harvesting derived from their (part) Indian descent. Although the HBC journals do not provide any cultural data *per se* on métis employees (the entries do not describe values, beliefs and attitudes), it is implausible to consider métis as culturally assimilated into non-Aboriginal society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The conduct of Indian chiefs during negotiation of the Robinson Treaties of 1850 show that métis and Indians maintained close social bonds and saw themselves as sharing similar political interests, in the context of a rapidly increasing presence of non-Aboriginal mining developers by the 1840s. The following section examines the nature and extent of métis involvement in the Robinson Treaties.

#### **4.8 MÉTIS PARTICIPATION IN ROBINSON TREATIES (1850)**

The Robinson-Huron and Robinson-Superior Treaties of 1850 contained several innovative features and provisions in contrast to earlier pre-Confederation treaties, some of which would become standard components of the ‘numbered’ post-Confederation treaties negotiated in the 1870s. In most respects, what distinguishes the Robinson Treaties from earlier treaties is that they explicitly state and describe Indian rights and formalize procedures for implementing provisions. However, the Treaties also contain other significant and unprecedented provisions, as follows.

While hunting and fishing rights of Aboriginal signatories had been implied in many earlier pre-Confederation treaties, the Robinson Treaties were the first to acknowledge them explicitly (Surtees 1986:27). The text of both Treaties stated identically that the Indian “Chiefs and their tribes” were to have “the full and free privilege to hunt over the territory now ceded by them and to fish in the waters thereof as they have heretofore been in the habit of doing” (Morris 1991:303, 306). These rights or ‘full and free privileges’ were curtailed only on those tracts of lands acquired for development or settlement purposes (*ibid*). The Treaties also formally allowed individual band Chiefs to select their reserve sites, and provided both a one-time sum as compensation for ceding title to lands as well as the provision of annuities, whose value was linked to both the size of the Aboriginal beneficiary population, and to the market value of land sales (Surtees 1986:27-28). Although métis rights are not specified in the text of the Treaties, one of the unprecedented aspects of the Robinson Treaties negotiations concerned rights of ‘half-breeds’ living in the lands ceded to the Dominion. As will be seen below, both the prelude to the Treaties’ negotiations, and the negotiations themselves, involved the participation of métis.

##### **4.8.1 Impetus for and Prelude to Treaty Negotiations (1845-1849)**

The motivation and rationale of the Robinson-Huron and Robinson-Superior Treaties is

summed up by Morris (1991:16) in the introductory paragraph of his presentation of William Robinson's report:

*In consequence of the discovery of minerals, on the shores of Lakes Huron and Superior, the Government of the late Province of Canada, deemed it desirable, to extinguish the Indian title, and in order to that end, in the year 1850, entrusted the duty to the late Honorable William B. Robinson [who succeeded] in making two treaties, which were the forerunners of the future treaties, and shaped their course.*

Until the 1840s the northern shore of Lake Huron and the eastern and northern shores of Lake Superior, with the exception of Sault Ste. Marie, were 'remote' frontier regions where "the single significant commercial enterprise... had been the fur trade" (Surtees 1986:3). Although the French had known about and described rich mineral deposits along the shores of Lake Superior as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Alexander Henry had attempted to develop a mining operation at Michipicoten in the 1760s, the region's mineral resources had largely been ignored and were perhaps forgotten in the ensuing years. However, in the early 1840s of 'discoveries' by Americans on the southern shore of Lake Superior sparked a sudden and intense surge in exploration and survey activities by non-Aboriginal parties. Upper Canadian business interests started their own exploration and survey activities along the Canadian shores of Lake Superior by the middle of the decade. By 1843-1844, the Provincial Government was dealing with growing land speculators, in the form of:

*...applications for land from Canadians seeing both commercial and agricultural possibilities in the Michigan mining boom...Overt interest in minerals here began only in later 1845...The spring of 1846 witnessed a deluge of new and renewed applications for exploratory licenses. Of these, 33 were for vague locations on Lake Huron and 100 more for ones on Lake Superior, of which 42 provided loose descriptions of tracts between the Sault and the Michipicoten area. (Wightman and Wightman 1991:194-195)*

Within a year land and mineral speculation shifted from individual activity to corporate involvement:

*...the jumble of individually held speculative locations was being replaced by a pattern of much larger holdings by associate groups and formal corporations. These now included the claims of the Lake Superior Company, a consortium of Toronto professionals headed by Allan, Alexander, and Angus MacDonnell; the much larger Montreal Mining Company, for which Forst Sheppard purchased eighteen Huron and Superior locations that summer; as well as the Upper Canadian Mining Company based in Hamilton, which also had locations on both lakes. (Ibid:196)*

All this speculation involved a sudden influx, on a large scale, of non-Aboriginal surveyors and mine developers on lands that until then had been occupied by Aboriginal bands dealing with a few trade posts and occasional visits from missionaries. As Surtees (1986:4) put it:

*Thus, when entrepreneurs began to exploit the mineral deposits...their prospecting,*



*surveying and technical parties were actually moving into lands which the Indians considered to be theirs'. This activity was regarded by the Indians as trespassing.*

Two chiefs, namely Shingwakouse<sup>40</sup> of the Garden River band, and Nebenaigooching of the Batchewana Band on eastern Lake Superior, complained to Alexander Vidal, a Provincial surveyor, during an expedition to the area in 1847. This marked the beginning of a constant protest by Sault Ste. Marie region Indians, including petitions to the Governor General, over these perceived instances of trespassing (Wightman and Wightman 1991:196-198; Surtees 1986:6-7).

While the Provincial Government was largely unreceptive to Indian petitions sent in 1847-1848, local Indian protests at times involved confrontations with surveyors and mining parties, including one incident where Chief Singwakouse directly threatened a government surveyor (Surtees 1986:6). With additional pressure from non-Aboriginal Indian rights supporters, the Government realized that any peaceful mining development in the region would require compensating Indians by negotiating a treaty or treaties. In 1849 the Government, by Order-in-Council sent Alexander Vidal and Thomas Anderson of the Indian Affairs Department to travel through the Lakes Superior and Huron shorelines in order to obtain as much information as possible on the number of Indians living in the region, and on the nature of their concerns, in order to determine the potential for treaty negotiations (Surtees 1986:10; Morrison 1996:48-49).

Reaching Sault Ste. Marie in the fall of 1849, Vidal and Anderson were unexpectedly confronted by an alliance between Shingwakoose and Nebenaigooching and one Allan MacDonnell, a white lawyer and businessman who held some of several competing mineral development licenses near Mica Bay, immediately north of Batchewana Bay on lake Superior (Wightman and Wightman 1991:197; see Map A.6). At this meeting, Vidal and Anderson:

*...had a confrontative session with Allan MacDonnell and his colleagues, the very elderly and highly respected Shinwauk [Shinwakoose] of Garden River and Chief Nebenaigooching of Batchewana. This triumvirate refused to consider a treaty until the details of mineral land purchases in the Superior country were firmly decided...They further jarred the commissioners by announcing that (1) they had resolved to reserve all nineteen locations awarded to the three major mining companies on eastern Lake Superior; (2) that nine of these were already under lease to MacDonnell for nine hundred years but were open to forfeit if not worked within five; (3) that he also held a lease to a railway right of way over the St. Mary's portage in return for a healthy share of future tolls; and (4) that all these arrangements had the formal backing of Peau de Chat, senior Chief among the Indians of the Superior north shore. These government representatives were informed further that MacDonnell was committed to employing members of these local bands in his mining endeavours to provide them with the experience and skill to work their own ten locations later. (Ibid.:199-200)*

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<sup>40</sup> This Chief's name is variously spelled 'Shingwauk', 'Shinwakoose', and 'Shinwakonse' by different authors. His name appears as 'Shinguacouse' in the Robinson-Huron Treaty (Morris 1991:308).

MacDonnell also informed the Commissioners of his legal views on Indian-White land sales, which:

*...questioned the legal morality of the clauses in the Proclamation Act of 1763 banning the sale or lease of Indian property without official sanction. (Ibid:200)*

That MacDonnell's legal opinions on the Royal Proclamation served to promote his business interests is readily apparent in this context.

MacDonnell became one of the main protagonists in what historians have variously termed the "Mica Bay Incident" or the "Mica Bay Affair". Surtees' (1986:8) brief account of the events at Mica Bay in November 1849 states:

*It [the incident] involved a band of Indians and Metis, led by the entrepreneur Allan MacDonnell. The group travelled from Sault Ste. Marie along the shore of Lake Superior for about 200 miles to Mica Bay, and there...attacked the mining installations of the Quebec Mining Company. This attack by an armed force (estimates of the numbers involved vary from 30 to 100) inclined the company agent, John Bonner, to surrender without resistance. The government was sufficiently alarmed to send a force of 100 rifles to suppress this "Indian uprising".*

*The incident itself was easily ended. In December MacDonnell and another white participant, Metcalfe, were arrested, as were two Metis and two Ojibwa Chiefs including Shinguakouse. (Insert added)*

Wightman and Wightman's (1991) journal article, focusing exclusively on the Mica Bay events, provides more detail on the background to the forced takeover, confirming the involvement of métis in the raid.

Following his meeting with Vidal and Anderson, Allan MacDonnell, along with Wharton Metcalfe (a close friend), sold his holdings in the Quebec-Superior Mining Company and applied to the Government to be appointed as Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie (*ibid.*:200):

*When his imaginative offer for this post was refused in October, the story goes that his subsequent plans for even a mild insurrection drew a cool response from most of his Indian followers, other than their chiefs. It also suggests that to complete his planned force of thirty-five to forty men he was compelled to rely on a small contingent of Michigan Métis, who were said to have been bribed with free bags of flour.*

Neither Surtees (1986), nor Wightman and Wightman (1991) name any of the métis involved (and arrested) with MacDonnell at Mica Bay. Wightman and Wightman (*ibid.*:202) identify the arrested persons as:

*...the MacDonnell brothers, as well as Shingwauk and Nebenaigooching with three*

*prominent band members from Garden River.*

Morrison (1996:67) identifies the arrested métis as Pierrot Lesage and Charlot Boyer. While presenting them as “prominent” Sault Ste. Marie métis, Morrison (*ibid.*) does not indicate they were from Garden River nor does he specify whether they were from the Canadian or American side<sup>41</sup> of Sault Ste. Marie.

However, other evidence indicates that Garden River Chief Shingwakonce had attempted to draw on the support of Sault Ste. Marie métis in his organized resistance to mining development. An oral historical account by Joshua Biron originally given in 1893 describes the attempted métis recruitment in the following terms:

*...a few years before the treaty, the chief had called a council at Garden River to which the half-breeds of Sault Ste. Marie were all invited. Shingwakonce told them, that if they would “join his Band and be his men or soldiers”, that they he would work for them, that “some day he might sell his land, and that if so, his claim should be our claim - and that we halfbreeds would have a right to a share of what he, the Chief, might get for it”. Only four of them, however, - Joshua and his brother Alexis Biron, John Bell and Louison Cadotte - agreed to join his band. “All the other half-breeds” Joshua remembered, “said that they were already Indians enough without binding themselves to be under an Indian Chief, and they all left the council room. (Doc.#32, 27/32/09, first page)*

Chief Nebenaigooching of Batchewana Bay, the other leading Indian involved in pre-treaty protests and petitions, apparently made no similar recruitment effort, although he was to fight for recognition of métis rights during the negotiation of the Robinson Treaties. These are reviewed in the next section.

#### **4.8.2 Métis Involvement in the Negotiations of the Robinson Treaties**

Despite the confrontation with MacDonnell, Shingwakonse and Nebenaigooching at Sault Ste. Marie, Vidal and Anderson’s report concluded that Indians were generally supportive of treaty negotiations and that the likelihood of success in such negotiations was very high. William Robinson travelled to Sault Ste Marie in late summer (early September) 1850 to meet with the Chiefs and principal men of bands from Lakes Superior and Huron. Robinson was charged with obtaining a surrender of their title to the lands between the northern shores of the lakes to a height of land forming a watershed between the Great Lakes basin and lands draining into Hudson and James bays.

Robinson’s’ instructions commissioned him “to negotiate **with the tribes of Indians** inhabiting the northern shores of Lakes Huron and Superior” (Morris 1991:17; emphasis added).

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<sup>41</sup> Morrison (1996:70) later presents oral historical testimony from the 1950s of “Garden River elder Joe Lesage - a descendant of the métis Pierre Lesage”. This, however, does not address the question of Pierre Lesage’s nationality.

Prior to arriving at Sault Ste. Marie to negotiate with the chiefs, Robinson had a census taken of the Indian population for each lake:

*When at Sault Ste. Marie last May, I took measures for ascertaining as nearly as possible the number of Indians inhabiting the north shore of the two lakes; and was fortunate enough to get a very correct census, particularly of Lake Superior...The number on that lake, **including eighty-four half-breeds,**<sup>42</sup> is only twelve hundred and forty - and on lake Huron, about fourteen hundred and twenty-two, including probably two-hundred half-breeds. (Morris 1991:19, emphasis added)*

Following the signing of the Treaties and distribution of annuity monies, Robinson asked the recipients if they knew of any other families than those on his list, to which the recipients answered in the negative (*ibid*).

The census indicated that the Indians along both lake shores were principally Ojibwa, and thus the texts of both Treaties respectively name Chiefs and principal men “of the Ojibewa tribe inhabiting the Northern Shore of Lake Superior” and “of the Ojibewa Indians, inhabiting and claiming the eastern and northern shores of Lake Huron” (Morris 1991:302, 305). The 1850 census and ‘tribal’ identification for Lake Superior are in general agreement with an earlier estimate of the number and identity of Indians residing in the HBC Lake Superior District (a smaller region than the Robinson-Superior Treaty area) made in 1830 by then Chief Factor George Keith:

*The Native Population as nearly as my means enable me to estimate amounts to 214 men, 35 youths, 209 women, 22 young women, 148 Boys or Children and 169 Girls or Children, forming a total of seven hundred and ninety-seven.*

*There does not exist a doubt that the majority derive their origin from the Ojibeway or Sauteau tribe, altho’ a number of them are descended from the Maskigon or Swampy Cree Tribe<sup>43</sup>. (Doc.#13, fo.3)*

That Ojibwa remained the principal Aboriginal inhabitants in the Michipicoten area was confirmed in 1886 by Post Manger P.W. Bell:

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<sup>42</sup> It is from this source that the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation (RSMIN) derives its descent and Citizenship: “The people of the Red Sky Independent Nation are the descendants of the 84 indigenous half breeds (Status Métis) who were included in the 1850 Robinson Superior Treaty and were listed as beneficial parties and annuitants pursuant to the Treaty” (RSMIN Resolution 6/94) Red Sky is currently engaged in an enumeration of such descendants (Personal Communication, April 26, 1999).

<sup>43</sup> There may be a link between the Maskegon and the 18<sup>th</sup> century *Gens des Terres*, whose material culture and way of life strongly resembled that of Cree. The Maskegon have been associated with **both** Cree and northern Ojibwa groups, although more so with the former than the latter (Geographic Board of Canada 1913:276). While this analysis is speculative, it is based on what is known of the disappearance of the *Gens des Terres* from Michipicoten by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the early 1830s statement that some of the Michipicoten Ojibwa are partly descended from Maskegon.

*We have only the Ojibway Indians inhabiting our districts. They may be computed in rough numbers as 345: this is of course not the census number of Indians, but comprise only hunters, including women and lads who contribute their quota in swelling our collection. (Doc.#28, fo.4d).*

It is interesting to note that the pre-Treaty census for Lake Superior in 1850 had been compiled by John Swanston, then Chief Factor of the Michipicoten HBC post (Morrison 1996:130). Following the completion of this census, Swanston, himself métis, had communicated his hopes for recognition of métis rights and claims to HBC Governor George Simpson in a letter dated August 21, 1850. In the letter he argues that some of the métis have stronger claims than many of the Indians living in the Lake Superior area, including those of Chiefs Shingwakonce and Nebenaigooching:

*...at present I am not certain whether the Government will acknowledge the rights and claims of the half-breeds, to a share of the payments to be made for the lands about to be ceded by the Indians of Lake Superior, but I would hope they would, as many of them have much juster claims than [sic] the Indians, they having been born and brought up on these lands, which is not the case with many of the Indians, particularly the Sault Chiefs Shin gwa konse and Neh bai ni co ching [sic], whose lands are situated on American territory. (In Gale 1998:8)*

No additional statements clearly and directly attributable to métis were found in this assignment describing their aspirations for inclusion in the Robinson Treaties. Nevertheless it appears reasonable to assume that Swanston's hopes were probably shared by other métis, although the extent to which this may have been the case cannot be estimated. It is also interesting to note that Swanston's low opinion of the legitimacy of Chief Shingwakonce is consistent with his reported rejection as leader by Sault Ste. Marie métis, as reported by Morrison (1996) above.

William Robinson's instructions did not specifically empower him to negotiate with 'halfbreeds', and he explicitly refused to address their concerns directly during negotiations. None of the Lake Superior chiefs and principal men listed as signatories to the Robinson-Superior Treaty are identified as métis in the text of the Treaty report. In order of listing, Joseph Peau de Chat, John Misway, Mishe-Muckqua, Totominai, Jacob Wapela, Ah-Mutchinagalon, Michel Shelageshick, Manitou Shainse, and Chiginans are by default identified as Ojibwa (Morris 1991:304). However, it is interesting to note that the negotiations of the Robinson-Superior Treaty involved the participation John Swanston, who acted **as interpreter** and witnessed the Treaty signing (*ibid.*).

The Robinson-Huron Treaty lists 38 Aboriginal signatories (Morris 1991:308), two of which are known to have been of mixed descent: John Bell, and Dokis. The former was one of the four métis from the Sault Ste. Marie area who agreed to join Shingwakonce's band, as reported by Morrison (1996:129) above. Michel Dokis, Chief of the Nipissing Band, was described by Borron in a memo dated December 31, 1892 as having a white father and an Indian mother (in Gale 1998:56). It is interesting to note that while Borron considered Dokis as "not an Indian but a half-breed" (*ibid.*), Morrison (1996:16) indicates that Dokis considered himself as an Indian:

*...the Lake Nipissing Chief Michel Dokis - a signatory to the Robinson-Huron Treaty - always considered himself anishnabe, even though one of his parents was French-Canadian. (emphasis original)*

Borron suggests that Dokis' identity (like that of John Bell) may have been unknown to Robinson during treaty negotiations, and also provides brief information on Dokis' trading locales:

*There is no proof however that this circumstance was known to the Ho. W.B. Robinson. The probability is, that he (Mr. Robinson) did not know that Dokis was a half breed, as he (Dokis) is said to have come originally from the Ottawa Valley. And although...Mr Robinson was more or less intimately acquainted with the Indians, who inhabited the Northern and Eastern shores of Lake Huron, it is not likely that he knew much, if anything, about the Inland Indians belonging to the French River and Lake Nipissing Bands...*

*I have been informed, that Dokis traded with the Indians in the neighborhood of Lakes Nipissing and Temagaming, and attended the Council at Sault Ste. Marie, at the request of one of the Chiefs. (In Gale 1998:56-57)*

Borron actually identifies three signatories of mixed descent in the Robinson-Huron treaty - the third being Chief Nebenaigooching of the Batchewana Band, located along the eastern shore of Lake Superior (*ibid.*:56). According to Borron:

*...as regards Nebenaigooching, although of mixed blood, he is, I believe, of Indian descent on his father's side, and therefore, as already said, fully entitled to rank as Indian. His father, himself a chief was killed fighting for the British, when Nebenaigooching was quite a boy. And the British Officers with whom he had served, made the lad a Chief on the spot. This position he held long before the treaty was made and still holds, being yet alive, though an old man. Thus, even if he had not been legally entitled to rank as "Indian" which he really was, Nenebenaigoochings' [sic] case is an entirely exceptional one. (Ibid.)*

That Borron would have considered Nebenaigooching as Indian is completely consistent with long established government policy recognizing children fathered by Indians as Indian, and children fathered by non-Indians as non-Indians (regardless of the ethnicity of the mother). The policy was later applied for more than a century to distinguish the legal categories of 'status' and 'non-status' Indians, and was only changed in 1985 under Bill C-31. Morrison (1996:16-19) does not identify Nebenaigooching as métis in his discussion of métis participation and representation in the Robinson Treaties negotiations.

The texts of the Robinson Treaties do not explicitly identify any métis leaders as participants. The negotiations of the Robinson-Huron Treaty involved the participation of Sault Ste. Marie métis Louis Cadotte **acting as interpreter** (Morris 1991:309; Morrison 1996:86). However, Robinson's report describing the negotiations suggests that some métis leaders or representatives not

only attended the negotiations, but engaged Robinson directly in the negotiations in order to have their rights recognized. The relevant paragraph from Robinson's report states:

*As the half-breeds at Sault Ste. Marie and other places may seek to be recognized by the Government in future payments, it may be well that I should state here the answer **that I gave to their demands** on the present occasion. **I told them** I came to treat with the chiefs who were present, that the money would be paid to them - and their receipt was sufficient for me - that when in their possession they might give as much or as little to that class of claimants as they pleased. **This no one, not even their advisers, could object, and I heard no more on the subject.** At the earnest request of the chiefs themselves I undertook the distribution of the money among their respective bands, and all parties expressed themselves perfectly satisfied with my division of their funds. (Morris 1991:20; emphasis added)*

During the latter part of negotiations with Lake Huron area Chiefs on September 9 (a treaty with Lake Superior Chiefs had been signed on September 7), Shingwakonce and Nebenaigooching insisted that the government meet their original demand for annuity monies to be set at ten dollars per head. They also requested that the government grant land to "some sixty half-breeds". Robinson's report indicates:

*I accordingly prepared the treaty and proceeded on the morning of the ninth to the council-room to have it formally executed in the presence of proper witnesses - all the chiefs and others were present. I told them I was then ready to receive their signatures; the two chiefs, Shinguacouse and Nebennigoebing, repeated their demand of ten dollars a head by way of annuity, and also insisted that I should insert in the treaty a condition securing to some sixty half-breeds a free grant of one hundred acres of land each. I told them they already had my answer as to a larger annuity, and that I had no power to give them free grants of land. The other chiefs came forward to sign the treaty and seeing this the two who had resisted up to this time also came to the table and signed first, the rest immediately following. (Morris 1991:18)*

This portion of Robinson's report implicitly suggests that the métis leaders or representatives attending the treaty negotiations, lived geographically in what was to become the Robinson-Huron Treaty area. The likely scenario is that, after Robinson declined to negotiate treaty terms directly with métis representatives, the latter either asked, or at least were certainly dependent upon, representation by Indian Chiefs. That Shingwakonce and Nebenaigooching presented demands for recognition of métis rights is entirely consistent with their involvement with, and earlier attempted recruitment of, Sault Ste. Marie area métis.

As Chief of the Batchewana Band, Nebenaigooching's participation in demands for recognizing métis rights may be subject to two interpretations. One possibility is that, since he was (and had been for some time) allied with Shingwakonce, he may simply have supported his political ally concerning the issue of annuity values, and was not directly representing métis involved with

his Band or living in the Batchewana Bay area. A second possibility is that Nebenaigooching was, in fact, representing métis involved with his Band, or residing in the vicinity of Batchewana Bay. That a significant métis settlement existed at Batchewana Bay is doubtful, considering that the HBC Michipicoten post operated only one of its (seasonal) outposts there and Michipicoten records make no mention of permanent métis persons or families in that outpost's vicinity.

Morrison's (1996:17-19) detailed research into métis participation in the Robinson Treaties indicates that four métis 'communities' (in the sense of demographically significant settlements) had been established on the Canadian side of the Upper Great Lakes by 1850: Penetanguishene, on southeastern Georgian Bay; Killarney, east of Manitoulin along the north channel of Lake Huron; St. Joseph's Island, in the western part of the north channel, and; at Sault Ste. Marie. No communities are identified in his report for the Robinson-Superior Treaty area.

The inclusion of the Batchewana Band in the Robinson-Huron Treaty area and the placement of the northern boundary of that Treaty area at Batchewana Bay, stemmed from the fact that the Band claimed rights to a summer fishing station at Sault Ste. Marie, a claim supported by the Sault Ste. Marie Indian leaders (Morris 1991:306-307)<sup>44</sup>. Taken as a whole, these various factors and interpretations suggest that Nebenaigooching was probably not representing métis from the eastern shore of Lake Superior.

#### **4.9 TREATY AFTERMATH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

In essence, while Robinson declined to negotiate directly with métis and refused to directly include or recognize any métis rights in either Treaty, his decision to defer the issue of inclusion of métis on annuity paylists to Indian Chiefs *de facto* allowed métis to become Treaty beneficiaries (Morrison 1996; Surtees 1986). After 1850, Robinson-Superior Treaty annuities were distributed to beneficiaries from two fur trade posts: Fort William and Michipicoten. As will be discussed in more detail in the following section, paylists from both distribution centres immediately identify métis annuity recipients after 1850 and do so continuously until the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the half-breed and Indian lists are collapsed into a single list of annuitants as the result of an administrative decision (Gale 1998).

Surtees (1986:26-27) suggests that while métis were denied direct recognition of land rights, Robinson's deferment to Indian Chiefs may also have allowed a *de facto* acquisition of land by métis as the result of their joining Indian Band membership lists:

*Another consideration which grew from... these agreements was the issue of the half-breed rights, which was raised by the Indians both with the Vidal-Anderson commission and with Robinson. If the bands were forbidden from selling or leasing their land, could they give it to half breeds by permitting persons of mixed blood to*

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<sup>44</sup> This fact also helps explain Nebenaigooching's strong political association with Garden River Chief Shingwakonce.



*join the band and/or to share in the annuity money? Robinson suggested that this could be done. The matter was resolved by requiring that half-breeds declare themselves as either Indian or non-Indian.*

Surtees adds that this administrative splitting of the métis population likely contributed to preventing métis settlements and local populations from developing as full communities sharing a common sense of identity, and having common political organizations and goals:

*By requiring this choice, the government effectively prevented the development of Metis communities in Ontario similar to those that grew in Western Canada. (Ibid:27)*

As Morrison (1996:16) states:

*The extent to which the great lakes métis formed a self-conscious entity independent of either their aboriginal or European ancestors - like their more famous kin from the Red River and Canadian Northwest - is still a matter of debate.*

Documents and historical reports pertaining to the Robinson Treaties negotiations neither explicitly support nor contradict the possibility that great lakes métis formed a ‘community’ in a sociological or anthropological sense prior to or shortly following 1850 (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1997). One matter not considered by either Surtees (1986) or Morrison (1996) in their discussions of the nature and extent of a sense of community among métis involves oral historical and written opinions by known métis concerning Chief Shingwakonce’s attempted recruitment of half-breeds in the late 1840s.

The explanation offered by Sault Ste. Marie métis Joshua Biron in 1893 to account for the overwhelming rejection of métis to join Chief Shingwakonce’s Band, was that the métis considered themselves “Indians enough”, and felt no need for “binding themselves [to be] under an Indian Chief” (Doc.#32, 27/32/09, first page). In more social scientific terms, these métis considered themselves as legitimate and distinct Aboriginal persons in their own right. This sense of legitimacy is also self-evident in John Swanston’s August 21, 1850 letter to HBC Governor Simpson. Swanston clearly believed that many métis living in what was to become the Robinson-Superior Treaty area were more deserving of having rights recognized by the government than some of the Indians living in the same region.

The extent to which the feelings and perceptions of common identity, legal aspirations, and legitimacy as distinct Aboriginal people were also shared by other métis at Michipicoten or along the eastern shore of Lake Superior, is not known since no further data were found relevant to this issue in this research assignment. Community-based interviews aimed at collecting oral historical data from present-day métis could prove useful in providing additional data and a tentative answer to this question. Biron’s and Swanston’s statements suggest the possibility that, if a sense of community was not fully developed among Lake Superior métis, it appears to have been at least incipient. As Surtees (1986) implicitly speculated, the métis may have become Métis in

ethnohistorian Jennifer Brown's sense of the term had they been granted Treaty rights directly in 1850.

The Robinson-Superior Treaty annuity paylists at Michipicoten in the years following 1850 demonstrate a continuous presence of métis in the eastern Lake Superior region until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gale 1998:22-98). Basic demographic data compiled from the lists suggest that the 1850 estimate of 84 'half-breeds' for the entire Lake Superior given to Robinson by Swanston significantly under-estimated the métis population.

The paylists recorded 'half-breeds' by name separately from Indians. Total half-breeds paid from Michipicoten post in 1850 and 1851 included 86 individuals comprising 28 families (*ibid*:22). By 1852, 82 persons were paid annuities, from 27 families (Doc.#20, fo.3). In 1853, 89 half-breeds appear on the list, comprising 34 families (Doc.#20, fos.10d-11). By the next year, the numbers decrease to 77 persons, making up 19 families (Doc.#20, fo.17d). The 1855 data are comparable to the 1854 numbers (80 persons, 20 families), while by 1856, the list includes 107 persons forming 27 families (Doc.#20, fos.22d, 30d-31). By 1876, 68 half-breeds appear in the Michipicoten list, and by 1892 Borron reported 100 half-breeds paid annuities at the post (Gale 1998:32,54).

Gale's (1998) examination of individual and family names from these lists suggests that métis had a significant degree of continuity in regional residence during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the demographic data provided above also shows that significant variation in métis numbers occurred in certain years. For example, while individual and family numbers are stable between 1850 and 1855, a sudden increase of 27 persons, making up 7 additional families takes place between 1855 and 1856. While natural increase and natural decrease (births and deaths) may account for some of the demographic change, the large variation in population and families occasionally taking place one year to the next may also reflect geographic mobility. To the extent that most adult métis males were employed in the fur trade, such geographic mobility is probably attributable to HBC-related policies requiring the periodic rotation of senior post employees, or HBC resource harvesting strategies requiring the relocation, opening, or closing of outposts, etc.

Archival records indicate that a core group of métis individuals and families lived at Michipicoten post for extended periods of time in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both the letters to John Finlayson and the Michipicoten Post records, for example, show that he remained employed by the post from the 1850s through to at least 1885 (Docs.#21-26; Doc.#27, p.52). An original Treaty payroll recorded at the post for 1864 lists several persons known to have been employed there for many years: Toussaint Boucher, Joseph Dubois, William Schillen, William Robertson, Antoine Soulière, James Saunders, and Joseph Morrisseau (Doc.#23). Sansong La Garde, one of main resource harvesters identified in the 1858 post journal, is on this list and he appears again on an 1873 payroll (indicating 9 family members), as does William Schellen and Wife (indicating 4 family members) (Docs.#23 and 30).

Michipicoten post records for the 1890s are for the most part unavailable, and even references to Michipicoten from other posts decline dramatically after 1892. Following nearly a decade of declining production, the post ceased to operate as administrative centre for the Lake

Superior District in 1887. HBC re-structuring in 1892 enlarged the Lake Superior District but relocated headquarters to Red Rock. Between 1892 and 1895 Michipicoten served as little more than an outpost, but its unprofitability even in this capacity led to its closure between 1895 and 1898. The HBC closed the post permanently in 1904 (Weiler 1980:12). The post's last main function appears to have been as centre for the Ontario government's Michipicoten Mining Division, helping to regulate gold mining activities largely responsible for the creation of the modern town of Wawa in 1899-1900 (*ibid*:35; Turcott 1982:51).

## 5. WAWA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

This chapter addresses the establishment of a permanent presence of Euro-Canadian settlement in Wawa and the surrounding region which began at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There exists little to no documentary data concerning a local population of mixed ancestry during the period from 1910 to the 1980s, an information gap confirmed by métis organizations in the area today.

For example, only one published history of Wawa and the Michipicoten area was found which traces at least part of its heritage to a mixed Indian/White population. Turcott's (1982:21) *Land of the Big Goose* devotes several pages to an "interesting facet" of the fur trade posts, "the taking of Indian women and girls as 'wives' by the traders and clerks." Included in Turcott's book is a photograph of Mrs. Ewen Macdonald, "wife of the Hudson's Bay factor at Michipicoten in 1902," her mother described as "a Cree Princess" and her father, "the Factor Alexander Murray from the Peace River area" (*ibid.*). However, although Turcott's history of Wawa includes a fairly lengthy and detailed account of the HBC post at Michipicoten and of the "Indian village across the River", there is no further identification, or even mention of a mixed population.

What follows is an outline of the region's industrial development and consequent growth of a permanent European settler population, along with reflections on this period by individuals of mixed ancestry who now live in or near Wawa. The discussion begins with an overview of the population composition at the turn of the century, as indicated in the 1901 Census.

### 5.1 1901 CENSUS

According to the Fourth Census of Canada 1901 (Canada 1902), Michipicoten River (including Wawa 'City') and Michipicoten Harbour had a combined population of 846 persons belonging to 133 families. Of these, 48 individuals (about 6% of the population) are identified as 'Breeds' (half breeds), the majority of these as "French Breeds" (or "F.B." as coded by enumerators, see Section 2.1.2). Another 44 'Breeds' were enumerated in Chapleau, a town approximately 80 kilometres to the east, and in which members of the Wawa Native Network identified métis relatives (Personal Communication, May 10, 1999).

While the Michipicoten River Village / Wawa 'City' census records are well preserved, half (4 of 8 pages) of the Michipicoten Harbour records are illegible due to fading. However, Table XI which tabulates racial origin totals for each area lists 24 'Breeds' at Michipicoten Harbour (Doc. #36). Of the enumeration pages which are legible, métis were identified as belonging to either the McDonald or Devereaux families (Doc.#34). For the McDonald family, the father is listed as Scotch – a fisherman by trade – and his wife is identified as a French Breed. Their seven children are identified as "O.B." (Other Breed). All members of the Devereaux family – father (a carpenter),

mother and four children – are French Breed. The wife of a Richardson is coded as a G.B. (German Breed).

Several French Breed families stand out in the Michipicoten River/Wawa City list as recognizably métis names from the fur trade period. These include: La Garde, Dubois, and Schelling (Schellin/Scheller) (Doc.#33). A Swanson family is listed at Chapleau; the father (occupation: hunter) is coded as “E.B.” (English Breed) and his children as “O.B.” (Doc.#35). Other métis surnames include Parent, Savoie, Mixcowatch (sp?), Chapies, PerrieMcWalsh, McAulley, Beck and McLeod (Doc.#33 & 35). Of those occupations listed which are legible, métis men were employed as guides and trappers, hunters, a carpenter, a mechanic, and one farmer. One of the Schellings (Henry) is listed as a prospector. Two métis women were married to prospectors, and a third is listed as a “wash woman.”

Only 7 persons are identified as Indian (R) in the Michipicoten River enumerations; the number of Indians at Michipicoten Harbour is not indicated (Doc. #36). While there is a listing in the Michipicoten Harbour census for “Little Gros Cap”, this is not identified as a Reserve or Indian village. The McDonald family is listed among the Little Gros Cap population.

The majority of the population is identified as of Canadian or European origin (W), most of whom listed urban and rural Ontario as their place of birth, followed by several families from rural Quebec, the USA, and a few from overseas (eg., Scotland, England, Ireland, Poland, Austria, Italy South America) (Doc.# 33, 34 & 35). Of those pages where the information is legible, ten (10) individuals from Scotland and England (plus one from Ireland) are listed with immigration dates ca. 1870s-1880s – indicating men who may have come as servants of the HBC. However, for approximately forty (40) other immigrants – particularly those from Ireland and the USA – immigration dates are ca. 1898-1900, and almost all are listed in occupations associated with the mining industry which was booming at the time of enumeration. The Michipicoten Harbour records consist of enumerations of the Helen Mine, Trace Mine, May’s Claim, and Talboth Lake; no métis were enumerated within these mining settlements.

## **5.2 RAILWAYS AND MINING: GROWTH OF EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT**

Following the Robinson Treaties in 1850, and for the remainder of most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Canadian government was preoccupied with constructing the transcontinental railway. In 1883 the Canadian Pacific Railway line north and west across Ontario reached the upper limits of the Missinaibi River, as close as it would get to the Michipicoten River settlement about 70 kilometres to the south (Douglas 1995). During this time and up to 1896, the HBC post at Michipicoten was kept open only for local trade, much of which was associated with the transport of rails and other building materials via Michipicoten Harbour. While there was an increased European presence at Michipicoten, it was temporary and all but disappeared when the harbour was no longer needed for shipping rail supplies. Michipicoten settled into “a sleepy little Mission and Indian village” (Turcott 1982:48). During this time, fur trade posts further north and connected directly with the CPR, at Missanabie for instance, monopolized the fur business in the region. When the post at Michipicoten

was closed at the end of Outfit 1895/96, an Aboriginal couple from the Gros Cap Reserve by the name of “Andre” were hired as building caretakers (*ibid.*:photo caption).<sup>45</sup>

However, two years later the post was re-opened under the management of Jabez Williams (1899-1900) followed by Ewen Macdonald (1900-1904) to capitalize on the influx of prospectors and miners during what is termed the “Wawa Gold Rush” (HBCA, Michipicoten Post History). Gold nuggets were discovered in 1897 on the shores of Wawa Lake by an Ojibway trapper, William Teddy and his wife Louise. News of the strike brought Ontario’s recently created Bureau of Mines into action and by September 1897, its first mining division called “Michipicoten Mining Division” was formed (Turcott 1982:51). By 1898 a stage of permanent white settlement on the southwest shores of the lake was underway. Community leaders optimistic about the continued growth and prosperity of their settlement, officially registered it as “Wawa City” in September 1899. However, by 1906 the gold industry collapsed and the Michipicoten HBC Post – which had discontinued trading in 1904 and was retained as a guard post until 1906 – was finally closed. The property was purchased by the Great lakes Power company which kept a caretaker there until 1941. In 1952 the post buildings were demolished.

During the gold rush, high-quality haematite iron was also discovered on the shores of Boyer Lake a few kilometres from Wawa, and the Helen Iron Mine was developed to include a stretch of railway (Algoma Central) from the mine site to new docks built at Michipicoten Harbour. Eventually, (ca. 1915) the Algoma Central Railway connected the mining communities in and around the Michipicoten district with Sault Ste. Marie to the south, and with the CPR and CNR to the north (Douglas 1995:13, 21). Apparently many of the miners came from Italy as there were few experienced miners in Canada (Turcott 1982:63, photo caption). Notably, members of the Wawa Native Network commented that around the 1950s, individuals would identify themselves as “Italian” as one way of disguising their métis ancestry in order to gain employment (Personal Communication, May 10, 1999).

The end of the initial gold boom in Wawa was followed by a demise of the iron industry around 1920. However, ten years later, new veins of gold were found, the mines were revitalized and modernized, and numerous people – particularly from Sault Ste. Marie – relocated to Wawa. In addition, significant settlements grew up near the Darwin, Minto and Parkhill gold mines. These mines – known collectively as “Gold Park” – continued as the focus of settlement in the region for close to ten years, ca. 1930-1940 (Douglas 1995:25). In addition, the Helen Iron Mine was again brought into production in 1937 as the prospect of war in Europe revived a market for Canadian iron ore. Twenty or so houses built for workers and their families living near the Helen mine crushing plant, were later moved into Wawa (Turcott 1982:92).

Initially the mining population was comprised of few families; the majority of the population was composed of single European immigrant men who lived in bunkhouses. However, after a school

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<sup>45</sup> Two “Andre” families are listed in the 1901 Census for Michipicoten River, identified as “R” (Indian).

was established in 1932, miners began to build small houses and bring in their families. The mining towns offered only the bare necessities, and housing usually did not include indoor plumbing or electricity. Snaring rabbits and hunting moose were a “necessary part of the food for the family” (*ibid.*:27).

In addition to mining, logging and commercial fishing industries added to the prosperity and growing settler population in the region around Michipicoten Harbour during the first decades of the 20th century. In 1952 a Municipal township was formed to organize the growing “hodge-podge” of industry and associated settlement, including that at Wawa, Michipicoten Harbour, Mission and Falls, plus the Helen Mine. It was not until 1959 that Highway 17 was completed between Wawa and Sault Ste. Marie.

A serious gap of information exists about métis during this period of industrial development in the Wawa area. Nothing is known about what happened to the métis fur-trade families associated with the Michipicoten HBC Post. Many employees gradually left Michipicoten in the late 1800s as the post became unprofitable and activities declined. In this context some of the métis were probably transferred to other posts. Alternatively, others may have left the fur trade altogether and moved to other regions in search of different employment.

An attempt to trace surnames of long-established métis families still documented as residing near Michipicoten according to the 1901 census (Schelling/Scheller, La Garde and Dubois) into the 20<sup>th</sup> century failed due to access restrictions placed on 20<sup>th</sup> century archival documents. A search for 20<sup>th</sup> century Robinson-Superior Treaty paylists and Band membership lists for the Michipicoten First Nation at the National Archives of Canada identified seven document sets as potentially relevant: of these only two pertaining to Robinson-Superior annuity payments were accessible (RG10 Vol.10433 Reel T-10079; RG10 Vol.1957 Reel C-11121 File 4659). Both reels contained miscellaneous records and documents, none of which referred to known métis family names at Michipicoten. The remaining five documents could not be examined due to restrictions: RG10 Series C-V-2 Volume 10779, listing annuities at Michipicoten for 1937-1949, RG10 Series C-V-2 Vol.10766 listing a Michipicoten payroll for 1907, and Band Membership lists in RG10 Series C-V-2 Volume 10717 File 484/3-3-9 (Part 1), and RG10 Series B-8-j Vol.11585 Files 26 and 27.

Preliminary findings based on exploratory field research indicate that métis fur trade families may have left the Michipicoten area when the post no longer operated as a fur trade centre. As indicated in the 1901 Census, almost no métis were hired, or alternatively they chose not to work in the mines, or live in the mining settlements.

### **5.3 MÉTIS POPULATION AND IDENTITY IN THE WAWA REGION TODAY**

The only potential source of systematic quantitative data on the métis population in Ontario is the 1985 survey conducted by the Ontario Metis and Non-Status Indian Association (OMNSIA). Published analyses from this data-base are not community-specific, and hence figures on métis in

the Wawa region are not provided (Peters et al. 1991a & b).<sup>46</sup> The following discussion of métis in Wawa today is based on information provided to *PRAXIS* by members of the Wawa Native Network (see Section 2.1.3).<sup>47</sup> It is important to note here that the Wawa Native Network represents various people of Aboriginal descent – that is, not only those defined or self-identified as métis – and that the Network does not claim to represent all métis in the Wawa area. It is equally important to re-state here that the community research component of this assignment was exploratory in nature.

### 5.3.1 The Wawa Native Network Information Centre

Although individuals in the Wawa area began organizing the Native Network in 1985, it was not until 1995 that the group incorporated as an independent information and support centre for local métis, non-status and off-reserve Aboriginal residents. Although not affiliated with either the Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association (OMAA) or the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), the Wawa Native Network is a distribution centre for both OMAA and MNO application forms and information. The Network depends financially on program-specific funding (eg., CAPC, Headstart) as well as contract consulting (eg., needs assessment services).

The Wawa Native Network estimates that they represent and serve approximately 300 métis and non-status individuals in Wawa and surrounding communities. In contrast to OMAA and MNO, the Wawa Native Network is decidedly non-political, its members committed more to strengthening a “community- and family-oriented” organization that encourages the “cultural aspirations” of local persons of Aboriginal ancestry who have either chosen or been forced to a lifestyle off the reserve (Gros Cap). In response to experiences by such individuals who “fell through the cracks” of Aboriginal services, the Network was originally formed to find ways of accessing services for off-reserve persons. The Network also aspires to provide cross-cultural training for mainstream service providers and employers among whom local métis and non-status Aboriginal people have historically experienced discrimination. While the Network does not explicitly espouse political goals, it does provide counselling and direction to individuals who require, for example, legal advice on harvesting rights and related matters.

### 5.3.2 Issues of Métis Identity Expressed by the Wawa Native Network

Three “sources” of métis identity were identified by members of the Wawa Native Network:

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<sup>46</sup> According to Peters et al. (1991b:83, note 4), one copy of the database is deposited at Queen’s University, the only condition of use being that OMNSIA be acknowledged in publications. This may be a source worth investigating for community-specific data in future research.

<sup>47</sup> The following is an interpretation of information and impressions gathered by *PRAXIS* during a 4-hour interview with approximately 8 members of the Wawa Native Network on Monday, May 10, 1999.



- ▶ Descent from the Red River métis is considered by the members as one area of métis ethnicity, but not necessarily as the base of all métis ethnicity;
- ▶ Traceable heritage (genealogical ties) to a family of mixed Aboriginal/European ancestry;
- ▶ Individual self-identification as métis, together with one of the above sources.

Most members interviewed agreed that it is only since the 1980s that individuals have begun to openly identify themselves as métis, a phenomenon which they attribute directly to family tree projects undertaken in the local school. As an increasing amount of genealogical information was gathered by families who “discovered” and/or openly acknowledged their Aboriginal ancestry, the work was continued by the local Historical Society. In several instances, members reported that it was due to the interest of children that parents were prompted to investigate further their cultural roots and mixed heritage. This interest was supported by a political climate in which the growth of Aboriginal organizations in the Province and in Canada, raised not only the awareness but also the acceptance of Aboriginal identity by individuals for whom such ancestry had largely been denied.

Consistent with stories told by members of other métis organizations consulted by *PRAXIS*, the Wawa Native Network spoke of a “silent period” during the early to mid-1900s when parents hid their Aboriginal and métis ancestry from their children in order to protect them from prejudice and discrimination. In practical terms, members reported that from at least the 1930s onward, being labelled as “Indian” meant being “black-listed” from employment. It was during this time that many names were changed, for example the anglicization of ██████████ S. 21(1) ██████████. Consequently, at least one generation of métis were either ignorant of, or refused to openly admit their Aboriginal ancestry. Members also attributed the loss of identity during this period to the high incidence of adoption of Aboriginal and métis babies to non-Aboriginal families during the 1950s and 1960s. Finally, members say métis identity suffered from a tendency – encouraged by the Catholic priests – to marry non-Aboriginal mates in order to “thin the blood line.”

In cultural terms, the Wawa Native Network’s sense of identity seems to stand in stark contrast to, for example, the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation. Red Sky explicitly defines itself as a people with a distinct cultural heritage in the fur trade, subsequently tracing themselves genealogically to the “eighty-four half-breeds” referred to in the census taken prior to the 1850 Robinson-Superior Treaty (Morris 1991:19). By contrast, members of the Wawa Native Network maintain a more inclusive identification. The Network extends their membership to local individuals of Aboriginal descent, in which on-reserve/off-reserve status is clearly a more important criterion than fur trade heritage. As well, members of the Network do not necessarily view a lifestyle associated with resource harvesting as an element of métis identity, although several members referred to regular participation in resource harvesting and associated activities. However, it must be noted that the Network exists as a service provider for a particular segment of Wawa society, and that while a cultural affinity exists among its members, this appears to be secondary to its goal to provide support to individuals of Aboriginal ancestry who live off-reserve.

While members of the Wawa Native Network do not view the fur trade as pivotal to métis cultural identity, several individuals have traced their European ancestry to traders from posts as far away as Moose Factory (where 1905 Treaty No. 9 commissioners dealt with a significant number of métis). In general however, members describe the métis population in Wawa as a “very mixed” group descending from families originating from places such as Manitoulin Island, Hawk Junction, Golden Lake and Curve Lake, and as far as Saskatchewan and the U.S.A. Although members indicated “no métis-specific names”, they list such surnames as S. 21(1) (the latter reportedly being a *coureur de bois* name) as identifiably métis. However, many individuals trace their non-Aboriginal parentage to the railway and mining eras of the 20th century, while their Aboriginal parentage derives from both the Gros Cap Ojibway, as well as the Missanabie Cree. A cursory examination of current telephone directories of Wawa and surrounding towns did not reveal surnames – such as Schellin, La Garde, or Dubois – known from the fur trade period or the 1901 Census.

Indeed, when asked specifically about issues of métis identity, one member of the Network suggested that “métis” is but one more category of Aboriginality being used by governments to further “divide and conquer” the Canadian First Nation population. This sentiment was expressed to some degree by other métis groups with whom *PRAXIS* consulted, a historical phenomenon which one representative termed “Indian sectorialism” (Personal Communication, Wesakwete, May 5, 1999).

In evaluating the specific issues raised and particular types of information provided by the Wawa Native Network, it appears that this group’s representation of métis differs considerably from that generally provided by the other métis representatives consulted in the course of this assignment and in that dealing with the Kenora/Rainy River districts. Below is a list of general themes which emerged from all consultations with métis representatives in Ontario who agreed to participate in the research. Included in this list is an analysis by *PRAXIS* of the similarities and differences of views expressed by representatives in Wawa, when compared with these general themes:

- For the most part, métis representatives agreed that the fur trade was the historic root of métis cultural identity. However, members of the Wawa Native Network did not appear to share this view. In tracing their métis heritage, representatives in Wawa placed greater emphasis on the interaction between European immigrants and Aboriginal persons during the period of white settlement and industrialization in the Wawa region.
- Unlike other métis organizations, the Wawa Native Network does not require individuals to satisfy strict genealogical authentication of aboriginal ancestry in order to gain membership into the Network. However, this does not mean that genealogical research is unimportant to members of the Wawa Native Network. In fact several individuals were actively involved in family tree research at the time interviews were conducted. For the Wawa Native Network, this genealogical research demonstrates a commitment to their cultural heritage of mixed ancestry, a commitment which did not always necessarily extend to the political arena.
- Similar to all métis groups consulted, the Wawa Native Network emphasized the importance

of self-identification as métis as a criterion of group membership.

- With several organizations it was apparent that there exists a sense of shared life-style among self-identifying métis. In some locales this was expressed in the significance of resource harvesting – hunting, fishing, berry picking, guiding, etc. – which most individuals connected to their Aboriginal heritage. While some members of the Wawa Native Network spoke at length about resource harvesting as an extension of their Aboriginal cultural heritage, this activity was not necessarily viewed as an indicator of a lifestyle distinct to métis.
- There was almost unanimous agreement among métis representatives that the concept of geographic territoriality was irrelevant and inappropriate when speaking about métis community. Members of the Wawa Native Network agreed that a high degree of mobility – generally motivated by economic factors – more accurately characterized métis history.
- The Wawa Native Network was relatively forceful in their views of the inadequacy of the present system of categorization of Aboriginal people in the Constitution Act. Similar to members of *Wesakwete* (Wabigoon OMAA), they view the Constitutional category of “métis” as serving to further divide Canadians with Aboriginal ancestry. Members of local MNO groups in Kenora and Dryden and of the Red Sky Métis Independent Nation did not share this view, and these latter groups expressed a stronger sense of métis distinctiveness.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter outlines the general findings established from the historical and ethnohistorical data and interpretations pertaining to the development of a métis population in the vicinity of Wawa. The chapter begins with a brief review of methodological issues and problems concerning the historical identification of Aboriginal peoples in the early-contact period.

### 6.1 IDENTIFICATION OF ABORIGINAL GROUPS

Historical and ethnohistorical research on ancestors of present-day Ojibwa and Algonquin peoples in the early-contact area (17<sup>th</sup> century) is methodologically problematic, although research pertaining to each group is limited by different, in fact opposite, sets of factors. Research aimed at describing the potential development of a population of mixed Aboriginal and European descent along the northern shores of the upper Great lakes in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries must rely on speculative analysis and extrapolation of information pertaining to the southern (now American) shores due to the lack of direct data.

- Previous research undertaken for the Ministry has reconstructed the pre-contact and early-contact social composition and territory of historic Ojibwa (cf. *PRAXIS* Research Associates 1998a). While direct references to Ojibwa appear in historical records only towards the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century despite decades of contact, reconstruction of proto-Ojibwa groups, described as ‘nations’ by the French (and consisting of either clan-villages or bands) is possible from accounts contained in the *Jesuit Relations*.
  - ▶ The 17<sup>th</sup> century historical record identifies several distinct ‘nations’ inhabiting the eastern and northern shore of Lake Superior: the *Pahouitingwach Irini* at Sault Ste. Marie, followed by, respectively, the *Outchibous* and *Marameg* along the eastern shore of Lake Superior. These ‘nations’ unified politically and experienced a process of social fusion by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century resulting in the genesis of the historic Ojibwa Nation;
  - ▶ The *Marameg*, the northernmost of these proto-Ojibwa groups, are considered to have inhabited the Michipicoten Bay region; their territory is generally considered delimited at approximately the northern shore of the Bay on demographic and ecological assumptions;
  - ▶ The northern neighbours of the *Marameg* were: to the west, i.e., the northern shore of Lake Superior, the *Kilistinons*, generally considered as Cree; and inland to the northeast, a people or group of peoples known variously by a French term *Gens des Terres* (People of the Interior), and Ojibwa-derived terms *Opemens d’Acheliny* and

*Oppimittish Ininiwac;*

- ▶ The *Gens des Terres* were likely not a single, distinct ‘nation’ but, like early-contact Ojibwa and Cree, likely consisted of a large grouping of politically autonomous and economically self-sufficient bands, whose individual names were not recorded by Europeans (in distinction from Ojibwa and Cree). While some of the *Gens des Terres* are described as inhabiting the Michipicoten area in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, references to these people(s) disappear from historical records towards the latter 1700s, suggesting that were absorbed (assimilated into) Ojibwa and Cree groups.
- Identification of early-contact ancestors of present-day Algonquin peoples involves a reverse problem to that of Ojibwa. While the earliest references to Algonquins, for example by Champlain, as ‘Algommequins’ in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, appear to be specific to groups inhabiting the Ottawa Valley and western Quebec region, the word ‘algonquin’ quickly becomes generalized by the French to refer to a large number of distinct Aboriginal groups, spread from the Maritimes to southwest of the Great Lakes, and to the Hudson and James Bay coastlines.
  - ▶ The most likely reason for this semantic change is the realization that a large number of non-Iroquois Indian nations spoke mutually intelligible dialects, and distinct languages that nonetheless appeared (and were) related to one another;
  - ▶ In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the term ‘algonquin’ was typically used in a manner comparable to the present social scientific term ‘Algonquian’, which denotes a large family of languages spoken by numerous distinct First Nations in northeastern North America;
  - ▶ As a consequence of this semantic broadening , 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century references to a presence of ‘algonquins’ along the eastern shore of Lake Superior cannot be interpreted as evidence that ancestors of present-day Algonquin Nation members occupied the area or used the area for resource harvesting purposes;
  - ▶ The early-contact (1600-1650) territory occupied by ancestors of present-day Algonquin First Nation is generally limited to the Ottawa Valley region and adjacent areas in western Quebec; however, historical records document a permanent dispersal and relocation of some of these groups into more northerly and northeasterly parts of the Province of Quebec during the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Beaver Wars;
  - ▶ Some historians and ethnohistorians have questioned whether additional groups, such as the *Temiscaming*, *Abitibi*, *Nipissing* and a people or groups of peoples known as *Têtes de Boules*, can be considered as ‘Algonquin’; historical records suggest that ancestors of present-day Algonquin likely inter-married to some extent with all of these groups;

- ▶ Overall, the consensus is that these groups comprised independent and distinct ‘nations’ (with the exception of the *Têtes de Boule*, whose social composition is comparable to that of the *Gens des Terres*, of which they were a part). Despite experiencing geographical relocation and considerable inter-marriage with other Aboriginal peoples, the Nipissing maintained a distinct identity at least until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Research attempting to document and describe a population of mixed European and Aboriginal descent on what is now the Canadian side of the Upper Great Lakes in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is severely impeded by two sets of factors. First, historians and social scientists, including ethnohistorians specializing in métis history and métis issues, have focused their research efforts on western-Canadian regions, creating a dearth of information on the Great Lakes region. Second, research is limited by the exclusive use of non-racial and ethnically ambiguous terms in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century historical documents describing population groups in the Great Lakes area (‘Canadians’, ‘voyageurs’, ‘coureurs de bois’).
  - ▶ Social scientists have long debated which criteria should be used in determining or measuring métis ‘ethnicity’ and identity;
  - ▶ The main criteria involved in these debates concern ascription (by self and others), cultural integrity (marriage patterns, material culture, language and geographic domain), and social relations (economic and political) with Europeans and Indians.

## 6.2 EMERGENCE OF A MIXED POPULATION IN THE 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

- Researchers consider that a population of mixed European and Aboriginal descent along the eastern shore of Lake Superior likely resulted from contact between almost exclusively French explorers, coureurs de bois, and military personnel, and Indian groups, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - ▶ While this consideration is not merely possible but appears plausible, discussions and arguments are purely speculative as 17<sup>th</sup> century historical records contain no data directly or even indirectly supporting (or contradicting) hypotheses;
  - ▶ First contacts between Indian groups and the French along the eastern shore of Lake Superior probably date from the 1620s, and slowly intensify in frequency until the 1680s, when Lake Superior generally, and the Michipicoten area specifically, gain strategic importance (militarily and economically) for the French following the establishment of HBC posts along the Hudson and James Bay coasts.
  - ▶ It is in the context of military and economic competition with the English that a fur trade post is built at Michipicoten in the second decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century;

- ▶ Although passing through French, independent, NWC, and HBC ownership, the Michipicoten post remains active in one capacity or another during almost two hundred years (1714-1904) and forms the basis of a permanent presence of Europeans (although on a small scale demographically) in the vicinity of present-day Wawa.
- Descriptions of European-Aboriginal relations by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, in particular of relations between voyageurs and Canadians and Indian groups in the vicinity of Michilimakinac and Sault Ste. Marie areas provide indirect evidence that a population of mixed descent resided in the Upper Great Lakes area.
  - ▶ Some voyageurs and Canadians are described as wearing distinctive clothing partly matching known items of métis dress;
  - ▶ Some Canadians are described as having very close social and political bonds with Indians suggesting ties of kinship;
  - ▶ Although very little Michipicoten-specific data have survived the 1700s, a Canadian having a later prominent métis name (Cadotte) acting as Indian interpreter at Sault Ste. Marie (a common métis occupation) gained part ownership of the Michipicoten post with Alexander Henry for several years in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century;
  - ▶ While a small number of persons of mixed descent lived with Europeans at trade posts and Forts, often acting as intermediaries with Indians (e.g., interpreters), it is likely that the majority continued to be absorbed in Indian bands;
  - ▶ There is no evidence suggesting that persons of mixed descent formed a self-conscious ‘community’ with shared political goals during this time period.

### **6.3 MÉTIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE MICHIPICOTEN FUR TRADE, 19TH CENTURY**

- It is only with the establishment of the HBC at Michipicoten by the last decade of the 1700s that consistent records describing activities and personnel become available. Beginning in the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, records begin to contain clear and definitive references to persons of mixed descent (as ‘halfbreeds’, and occasionally as ‘bois brulés’) living and working at the post. The HBC Michipicoten records prove a continuous presence of métis throughout the 1800s.
  - ▶ In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the métis at Michipicoten post worked as servants (HBC employees), acting as Indian interpreters, carpenters and house builders, and were involved in conducting and occasionally managing or supervising post-operated

resource harvesting activities;

- ▶ Some of the métis living in the vicinity of the post may have originated from relations or marriage between Indian women and a class of fur hunters known as ‘winterers’ in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
  - ▶ The overwhelming preponderance of named winterers have French surnames, suggesting the likelihood that some may have been métis.
- Michipicoten post was never a major fur producer for the HBC. Instead, the post gained importance due to its strategic location at a cross-roads connecting western posts at Fort William and Lake of the Woods, and northern posts up to Moose Factory on James Bay. The post served as headquarters of the HBC Lake Superior District during most the century, and in addition to this administrative role, the post operated significant fisheries, for food provisioning and commercial purposes.
    - ▶ Journal entries from the 1820s describe several servants as living with wives and families; the wives and families are regularly described as assisting with agricultural production;
    - ▶ It is extremely unlikely that these wives and children were European; despite an official policy to the contrary, HBC servants commonly took Indian wives (to such an extent that the policy was eventually dropped); these wives are never named in journal entries, possibly in order not to draw attention to their Indian identity; journal entries often specify that wives and families are maintained at servants’ expense and do not constitute a financial burden for the Company;
    - ▶ Indians described as residing in the Lake Superior District in the 1830s are identified as almost exclusively Ojibwa, though some trace their descent to the Maskegon (Swampy Cree); no other groups are identified as living in the district, or visiting the District for harvesting purposes;
    - ▶ By the 1840s, a known métis (John Swanston) becomes promoted to Chief Factor; Swanston would later act as interpreter during the negotiation of the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850.
  - Michipicoten journals and Lake Superior District records describe known métis as heavily involved in conducting and supervising post-operated harvesting activities in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. A journal for 1858, allowing the description of a complete yearly cycle of harvesting activities, demonstrates that the post relied almost exclusively on métis in this capacity during the year.
    - ▶ HBC documents provide considerable and detailed data concerning the material aspect of the métis employees’ life at the post;



- ▶ While métis were heavily involved in resource harvesting activities, they were economically distinguished from neighbouring Indians by the fact of their wage employment by the HBC; a few métis worked at specialized trades, such as William Schellen, a tin smith employed at the post for decades;
- ▶ Also as opposed to Indians, métis lived a sedentary life in log houses near the post;
- ▶ The HBC records provide almost no information on the ideational or non-material aspects of métis culture (language, values, beliefs), although sugar-making is identified as an important tradition;
- There is insufficient data to determine whether the métis at Michipicoten formed a ‘community’ onto themselves. They were clearly an integral part of what may be termed a broader occupational community of fur traders and fur trade employees.

#### **6.4 MÉTIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE ROBINSON TREATIES (1850)**

- No evidence was found suggesting that Algonquins took part in negotiations of the Robinson Treaties, although one of the signatory Chiefs, Michel Dokis, was from the Nipissing Band. The Nipissing appeared to have maintained a distinct identity as an Aboriginal group in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century despite intermarriage with other groups, including Algonquins. The texts of both Treaties describe the Indian participants, signatories and beneficiaries as belonging to the Ojibwa ‘tribe’.
- William Robinson’s report describing treaty negotiations at Sault Ste. Marie indicates that a contingent of métis leaders or representatives and ‘advisers’ attended the negotiations and attempted to negotiate their explicit inclusion in treaty provisions, or at least have some rights recognized by the government. Neither the report nor the texts of the two treaties identify any of these métis. In addition to this group, several other participants, including signatories, were métis, although the majority of these persons were involved specifically with the Robinson-Huron Treaty.
  - ▶ A few métis from the Sault Ste. Marie area - likely from the American side - had been involved with Chiefs Shingwakonce of Garden River, and Nebenaigooching of Batchewana Bay, in protests concerning mining activities on eastern Lake Superior in the late 1840s, including the armed confrontation incident at Mica Bay in 1849;
  - ▶ Shingwakonce had attempted to recruit métis as Band members in order to strengthen his position in treaty negotiations with the government; only four métis accepted his proposal, including John Bell, who would sign the Robinson-Huron Treaty as principal man of the Garden River Band;
  - ▶ Two other Robinson-Huron Treaty signatories were of mixed descent - Chiefs

Nebenaigooching (who was considered Indian since his father was Indian) and Michel Dokis of the Nipissing Band, who nevertheless considered himself Indian (Anishnabe);

- ▶ The interpreters for both treaty negotiations were métis: Louis Cadotte of Sault Ste. Marie for the Robinson-Huron Treaty, had also accepted to join Shingwakonce's Band; and John Swanston for the Robinson-Superior Treaty, the Chief Factor at the Michipicoten post.
- Robinson's instructions prevented him from negotiating directly with métis and he refused to deal directly with métis leaders or representatives. However, his decision to defer to Indian Chiefs with regard to inclusions of métis in annuity distributions allowed métis to become treaty beneficiaries. Treaty Paylists after 1850 regularly contain schedules of annuity payments to métis persons (listed as 'half-breeds').
  - ▶ Two main annuity distribution centres were established for the Robinson-Superior Treaty area, one at Fort William and the other at Michipicoten;
  - ▶ As regional lists, the Michipicoten paylists are more inclusive than post records and indicate that some métis were established outside the post, along the eastern or northeastern part of Lake Superior.
  - ▶ Demographic data compiled from the paylists suggests some continuity in individual and family occupation, although significant demographic variations occasionally occurring from one year to the next also suggests that some métis were geographically mobile, likely as the result of employment with the HBC which periodically rotated senior employees, and re-structured and re-organized its post networks.
- Two documents associated with the Robinson Treaties negotiations provide the strongest evidence that métis may have possessed a sense of community and legitimacy as a distinct Aboriginal group circa 1850. At minimum the documents suggest that such a sense of community was incipient in the métis population.
  - ▶ A letter by John Swanston to HBC Governor Simpson dated two weeks prior to the negotiations presents his hopes for recognition of métis rights and presents métis as more legitimate claimants than some Indians (including specifically Shingwakonce and Nebenaigooching);
  - ▶ An oral historical account by Joshua Biron in 1893 of Shingwakonce's attempted recruitment of Sault Ste. Marie area métis explains their overwhelming rejection of his offer on the grounds that they saw themselves as sufficiently 'Indian' to not need subjecting themselves to an Indian Chief;

- ▶ No further data were found concerning the development a distinct métis identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although some documents such as personal letters indicate individual self-ascription was common, and the prevalence in use of the term ‘half-breed’ demonstrates that others recognized métis as distinct from both Indians and Euro-Canadians.

## 6.5 DEVELOPMENT OF WAWA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

- At the turn of the century, there is still evidence of métis fur trade families at Michipicoten and Wawa “City”. However, as the construction of railways and the mining industry dominated the economy of the region from around 1900 until the incorporation of the Municipal township in 1952, a demographic change also occurred, possibly altering both the number and the character of the métis population in Wawa today.
  - ▶ The 1901 Census for Michipicoten River/Wawa ‘City’ and for Michipicoten Harbour list the Schelling, La Garde, and Dubois families all of whom are identified as “French [Half] Breeds” and all of whom can be positively linked to the fur trade.
  - ▶ Significant European immigration and settlement began with the “Wawa Gold Rush” in 1898, and continued with the development of iron mines until 1920. Despite a lull in mining activity over the next decade, both gold and iron mines were revived in the 1930s, resulting a larger and more permanently established Euro-Canadian community.
  - ▶ A serious gap of information exists about métis during this period of industrial development in the Wawa area. Nothing is known about what happened to the métis fur-trade families associated with the Michipicoten HBC Post. Preliminary findings based on exploratory field research indicate that métis fur trade families may have left the Michipicoten area when the post no longer operated as a fur trade centre.
  - ▶ Métis representatives who participated in the field research do not trace their ancestry to the fur trade, nor do they see the fur trade as pivotal to their identification as métis. Rather, métis present in the Wawa area today appear to trace their mixed ancestry to the mining booms of 1900s and 1930s.

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- B.86/e/1 Rainy Lake Reports: Henley House
- B.124/e/1-4 Rainy Lake Reports: Matawagamingue (Mattagami), 1824-1827
- B.129/e/1-7 Rainy Lake Reports: Michipicoten, 1817-1830
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(Ratelle 1996)
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## APPENDIX B

### INDEX OF PRIMARY DOCUMENTS CITED (Listed in chronological order)

Acronyms: AO Archives of Ontario  
 HBCA Hudson's Bay Company Archives  
 NAC National Archives of Canada  
 NLC National Library of Canada

Doc. #	Date	Description	Source/Reference
1	1800-1801	Michipicoten Post Journal Post Master: St. Germain	HBCA B.129/a/5
2	1801-1802	Michipicoten Post Journal Post Master: Leon Chenier	HBCA B.129/a/6
3	1802-1803	Michipicoten Post Journal Post Master: John Henry Mose	HBCA B.129/a/7
4	1817-1818	Michipicoten Post Journal Post Master: Andrew Stewart	HBCA B.129/a/8
5	1817-1818	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: Andrew Stewart	HBCA B.129/e/1
6	1818-1819	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: Andrew Stewart	HBCA B.129/e/2
7	1819-1820	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: Andrew Stewart	HBCA B.129/e/3
8	1820-1821	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: Andrew Stewart	HBCA B.129/e/4
9	1824-1825	District Report - Matawagamingue Post Master: Alex Christie	HBCA B.124/e/1
10	1828	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/e/5
11	1828-1829	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/e/6
12	1829-1859	Miscellaneous; Men's Accounts - Michipicoten Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/z/1
13	1829-1830	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/e/7

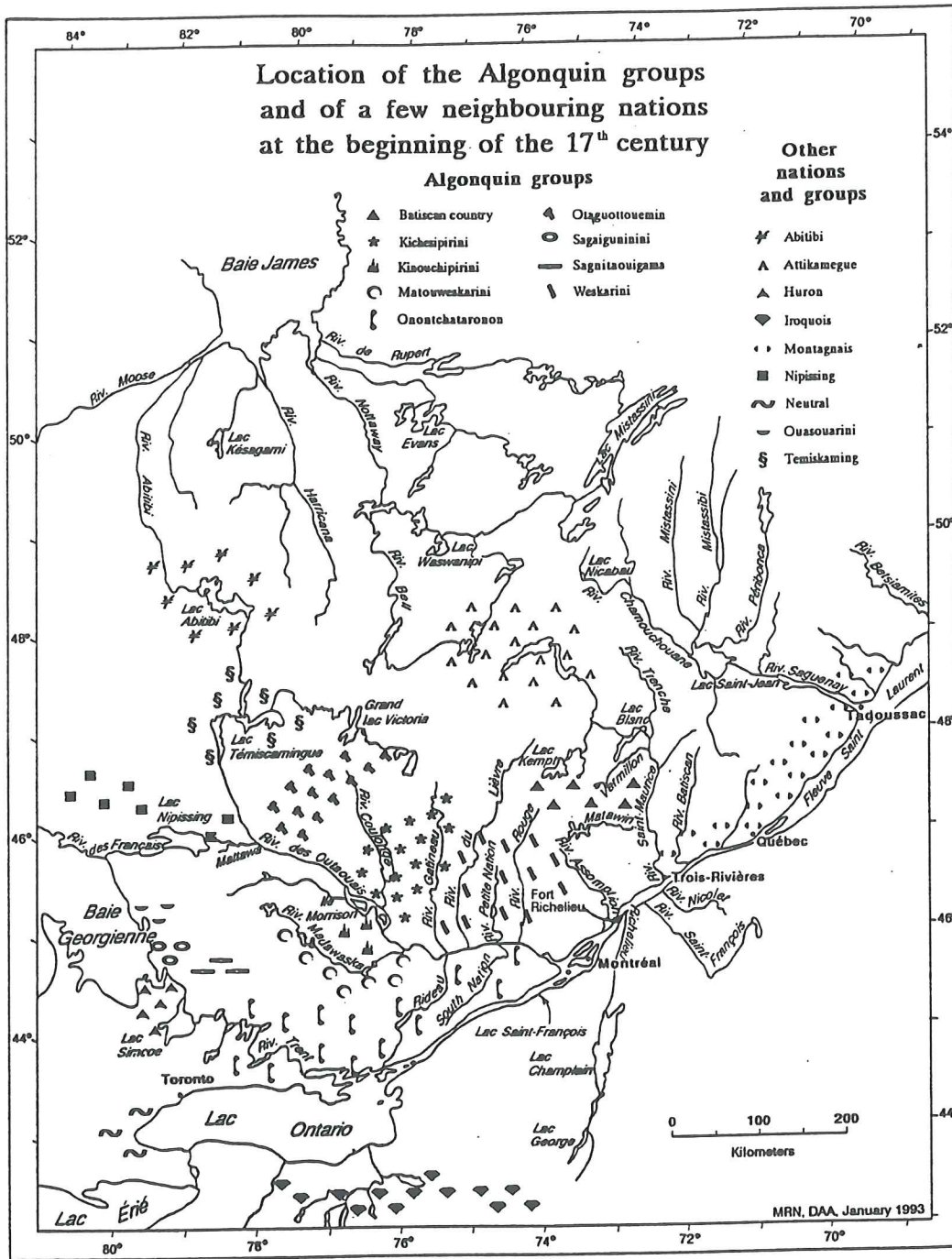
Doc. #	Date	Description	Source/Reference
14	1833-1844	Michipicoten Post Journal Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/a/18
15	1833-1834	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/e/9
16	1834-1835	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/e/10
17	1824-1835	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/e/11
18	1840-1841	Michipicoten Post Journal Post Master: George Keith	HBCA B.129/a/22
19	1849 5 September	Diary of Thomas Gummersell Anderson, Visiting Superintendent of Indian Affairs at (Cobourg)	AO MU 838, I-A-1
20	1851-1857	Michipicoten Accounts	HBCA B.129/d/7
21	1859 17 May	Hudson Bay Company - General Letters of Nicol Finlayson, HBC Trader Letter from Nicol Finlayson to John Finlayson	AO (F471) MU 1385, Box 1, Item 2
22	1863 16 May	Hudson Bay Company - General Letters of Nicol Finlayson, HBC Trader Letter from Nicol Finlayson to John Finlayson	AO (F471) MU 1385, Box 1, Item 2
23	1864	Hudson Bay Company - General Michipicoten Post 1848-1874 Payments to Half-Breeds at Michipicoten	AO (F471) MU 1385, Box 1, Item 3
24	1866 9 April	Hudson Bay Company - General Letters of Nicol Finlayson, HBC Trader Letter from Nicol Finlayson to John Finlayson	AO (F471) MU 1385, Box 1, Item 2
25	1870 22 August	Hudson Bay Company - General Letters of Nicol Finlayson, HBC Trader Letter from Nicol Finlayson to John Finlayson	AO (F471) MU 1385, Box 1, Item 2
26	1871 25 November	Hudson Bay Company - General Letters of Nicol Finlayson, HBC Trader Letter from Nicol Finlayson to John Finlayson	AO (F471) MU 1385, Box 1, Item 2
27	1885 4 October	Hudson Bay Company - General Historical Documents Relating to the Late 19th Century Fur Trade on the Upper Lakes 1885-1906 Letter from E. Carlson to P.W. Bell	AO (F471) MU 1391, Box 7, Item 5, p.52
28	1886 1 April	District Report - Michipicoten Post Master: P.W. Bell	HBCA B.129/e/15

Doc. #	Date	Description	Source/Reference
29	1886 12 June	Hudson Bay Company - General Peter W. Bell Papers, Miscellaneous, 1867-1886 Letter from Gilbert Spence to P.W. Bell	AO MU 1390, Box 6, Item 12
30	1891 November	Irving Papers List of White and Halfbreed Families in the neighbourhood of Sault Ste. Marie around the time of the Robinson Treaties according to Joseph Wilson	AO MS 1780, 27/32/09
31	1892 15 February	Michipicoten Accounts Inspection Report Inspecting Officer: P. McKenzie	HBCA B.129/e/16
32	1893 27 May	Irving Papers Information obtained by John Driver, Interpreter, from Joshua Biron re: the Robinson Treaties made with the Indians in the year 1850	AO MS 1780, 27/32/09
33	1901	1901 Census - Michipicoten River Village District 44 (Algoma); Sub-District "q"	NAC Reel T-6457
34	1901	1901 Census - Michipicoten Harbour District 44 (Algoma), Sub-District "r"	NAC Reel T-6457
35	1901	1901 Census - Chapleau Village District 44 (Algoma); Sub-District "l"	NAC Reel T-6457
36	1902	Fourth Census of Canada, 1901 Volume I: Population Table XI: Origins of the People, pp.312-315	NLC HA 741.5 Vol.I (Reference)

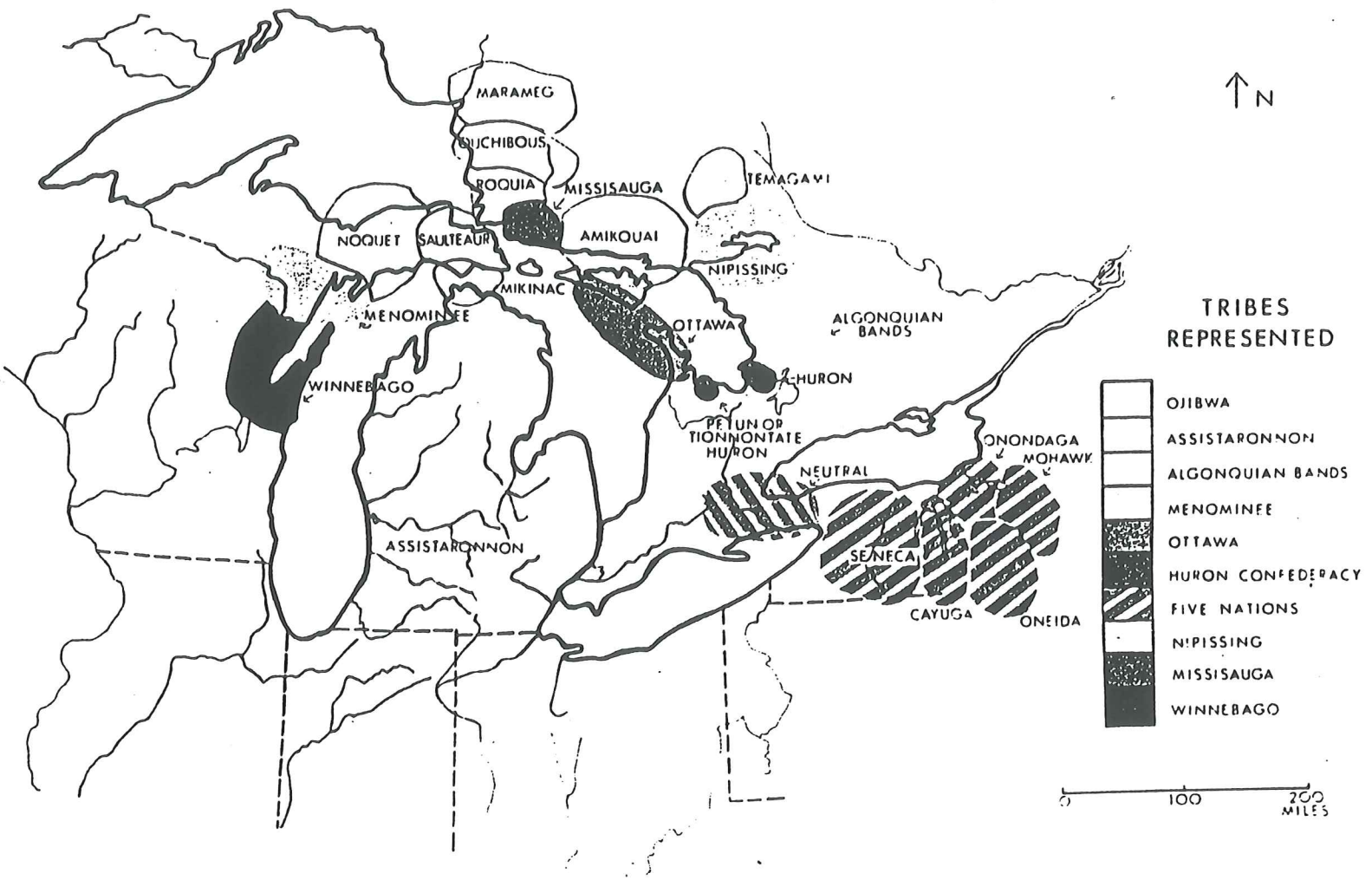
## APPENDIX A

### HISTORICAL MAPS

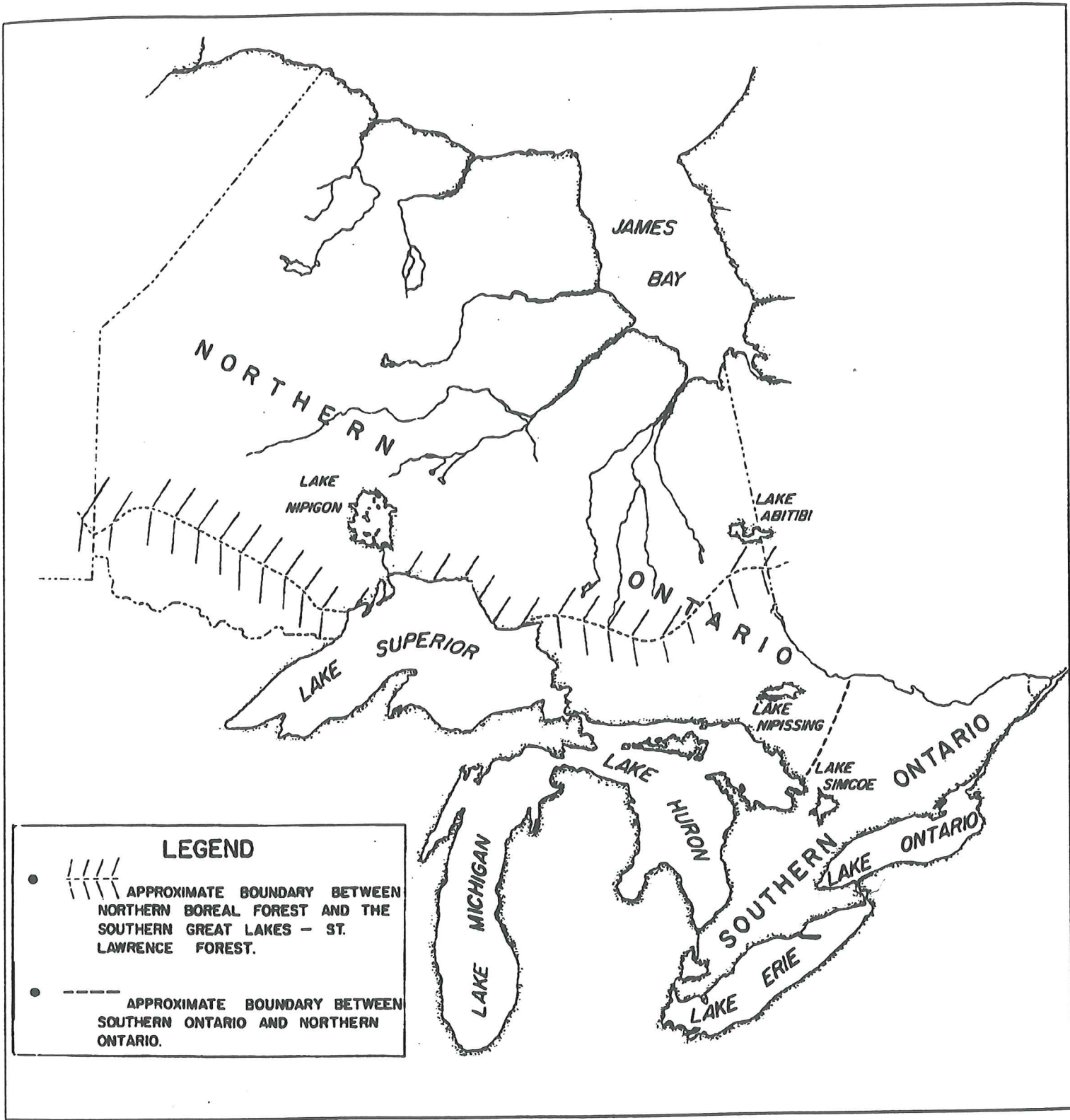
- Map A.1      Algonquin Groups, ca. 1600  
(Ratelle 1996)
- Map A.2      Location of Tribes, 1600-1650  
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- Map A.3      Boundary between Northern Boreal Forest and Southern Great Lakes  
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- Map A.5      18<sup>th</sup> Century Fur Trade Routes  
(Jaenen 1996)
- Map A.6      Registered Mining Locations, Eastern Lake Superior, ca. 1850  
(Wightman & Wightman 1991)



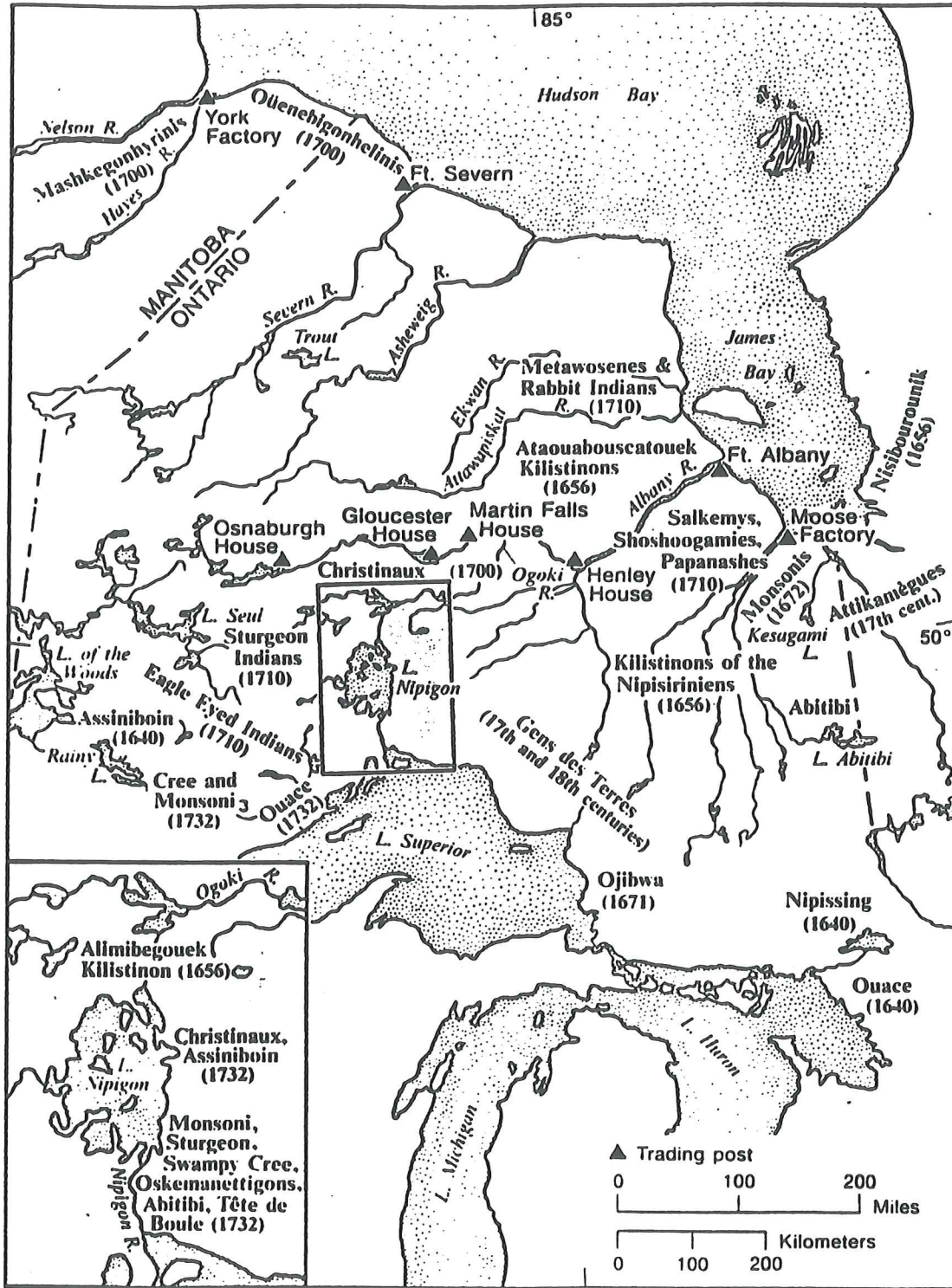
**Map A.1**  
**Algonquin Groups, ca. 1600**  
**(Ratelle 1996)**



**Map A.2**  
**Location of Tribes, 1600-1650**  
 (Cleland 1992)

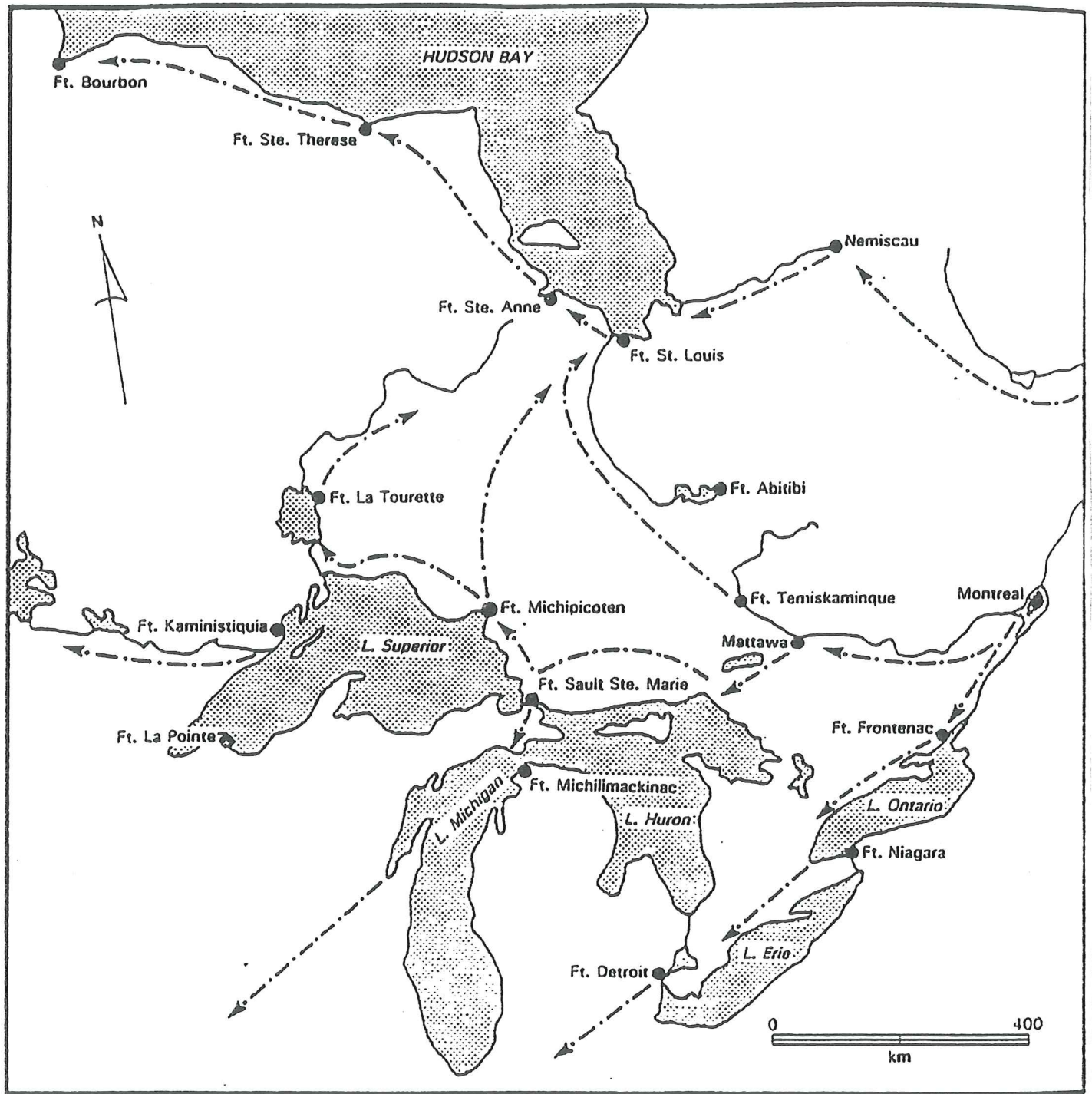


Map A.3  
 Boundary between Northern Boreal Forest and Southern Great Lakes  
 (Wright 1994)

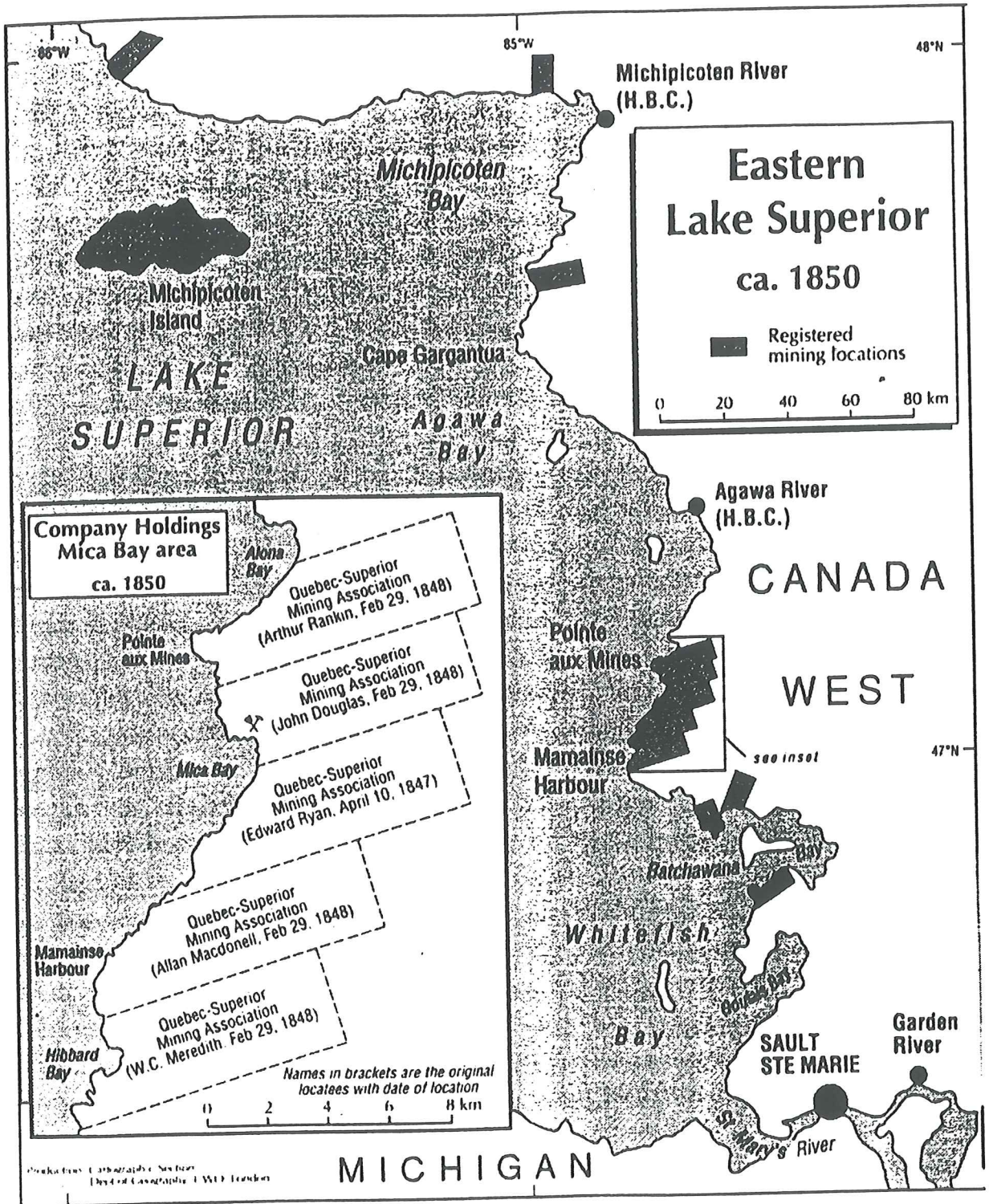


Map A.4  
 Location of Gens des Terres, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
 (Bishop 1981)





Map A.5  
 18<sup>th</sup> Century Fur Trade Routes  
 (Jaenen 1996)



Map A.6  
Registered Mining Locations, Eastern Lake Superior, ca. 1850  
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