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A Dish with One Spoon Reconsidered

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Résumé de l'article

Bkejwanong – l'endroit où les eaux se séparent (les îles dans le delta du lac Sainte-Claire) – fut appelé « l'esprit » du territoire Anishinabé. Bien avant l'arrivée des Européens, les Anishinabés occupaient un territoire qui comprenait certaines régions de l'Ontario, du Michigan et de l'Ohio d'aujourd'hui. Les ressources qui s'y trouvaient faisaient partie intégrante de leur mode de vie et de leur identité. Les Anishinabés défendaient ce territoire contre les guerriers haudenosaunee au XVII^{ème} siècle, et son intégrité était au coeur du traité de paix qu'ils ont conclu à Montréal en 1701, dont un élément clé était le Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan, ou « bol à une seule cuillère ». Ce bol représentait le territoire et la cuillère symbolisait le fait que d'autres peuples pourraient manger ensemble tout en préservant la paix. Récemment, cependant, la notion du bol à une seule cuillère a été popularisée comme un accord de protection de l'environnement. Le traité originel a été incorporé dans les « formules de reconnaissance » qui brouillent les droits territoriaux des Premières nations. Cette transformation nuit au Premières nations qui cherchent à protéger leurs territoires et leurs ressources. La Première nation Walpole Island (le Conseil des Trois Feux) tente de récupérer son Bol.

Naaġan ġe bezhiġ emkwaan

A Dish with One Spoon Reconsidered

by Dean M. Jacobs and Victor P. Lytwyn

Anishinaabe-Haudenosaunee Conflicts

In February 1793, Upper Canada's first Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe made a journey from the seat of government in Navy Hall (Niagara) to Detroit. His Secretary, Major E.B. Littlehales, kept a diary in which he recorded the people and places they met during the tour. On 18 February 1793, they visited the mouth of the Thames River near Lake St. Clair and saw the remains of a "considerable town" that had once been occupied by the "Chippewas." Their Indigenous guides told them that the town had been attacked by the "Senecas" but the "Chippewas" had "totally vanquished" the intruders. Littlehales observed that many bones were scattered in the vicinity and added: "the Indians have a variety of traditions relative to this transaction."[1] This site was included in Provincial Land Surveyor Patrick McNiff's 1795 map of the area. McNiff depicted the location of an abandoned "large Indian Village" and "burying place" on the south side near the mouth of the Thames River (Riviere a la Tranche). He also drew a picture of a mound on the other side of the river and explained: "In the side of this knoll great quantities of human bones are seen, near it a battle is said to have been fought between the Chippewas & the Senakees [Senecas] contending for the dominion of this country, the latter with great slaughter was put to flight and drove across the river at Niagara."[2] The location of the battle site and burial ground is shown on the portion of the map below.

[1] E.B. Littlehales, "Journal of Major E.B. Littlehales," copy in: *The Simcoe Papers*. Vol. 1: 1789-1793, E.A. Cruikshank, ed., (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1923), 288-93.

[2] Patrick McNiff, "A Plan of Part of the District of Hesse commencing near Point Pele in the North Shore of Lake Erie and extending from thence along the waters edge to the Entrance of River la Tranche on the East Shore of Lake St. Clair and from the entrance of the said River up to the 2nd Fork of the same delineated from actual survey made in the years of 1789 and 1790, by Patrick McNiff, Deputy Surveyor, January 1791," Archives of Ontario, F 47-5-1-0-5.5. Sheet Five.

Abstract

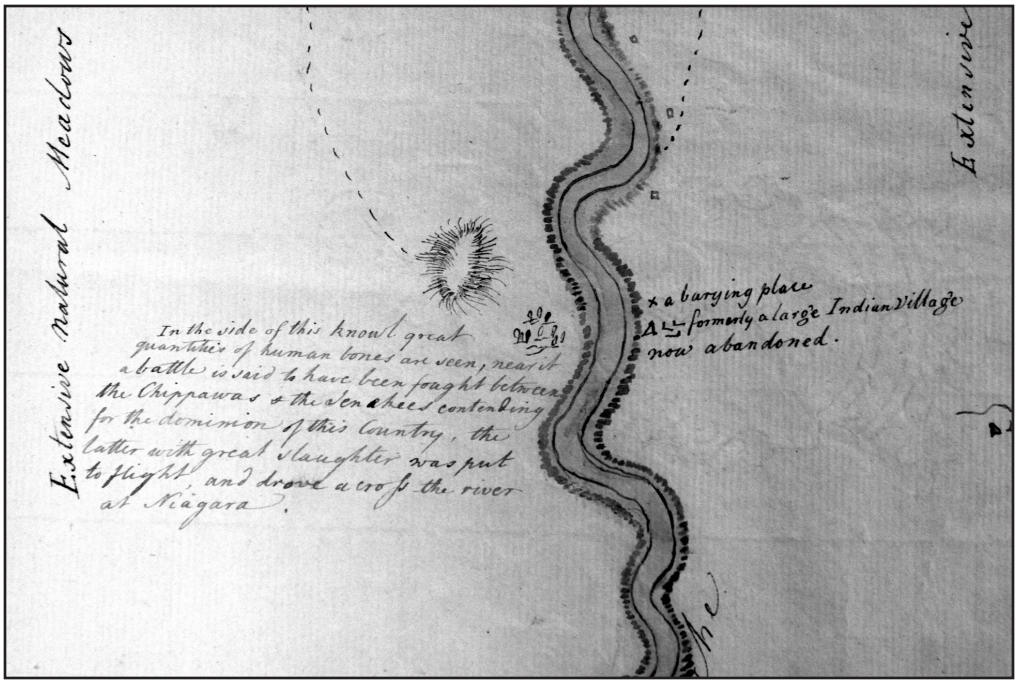
Bkejwanong—the place where the waters divide (the delta islands of Lake St. Clair)—has been called the "soul" of Anishinaabe territory.[1] Long before Europeans arrived, the Anishinaabe occupied territory which includes parts of present-day Ontario, Michigan and Ohio. The resources found there are integral to their way of life and identity. The Anishinaabe defended this territory against Haudenosaunee warriors in the seenteenth century and its integrity was at the core of the peace they concluded in Montreal in 1701, a key element of which was the Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan,[2] or Dish with One Spoon. The dish represented the territory and the single spoon symbolized that people from other territories would be able to eat together while peace was maintained. Recently, however, the Dish with One Spoon has been popularized as an agreement to protect the environment. The original treaty has been incorporated into "land recognition statements" that blur the territorial rights of individual First Nations. This transformation is damaging to First Nations who seek to protect their territories and resources. Walpole Island First Nation (the Council of Three Fires) is working to reclaim their Dish.

***Résumé:** . Bkejwanong – l'endroit où les eaux se séparent (les îles dans le delta du lac Sainte-Claire) – fut appelé « l'esprit » du territoire Anishinabé. Bien avant l'arrivée des Européens, les Anishinabés occupaient un territoire qui comprenait certaines régions de l'Ontario, du Michigan et de l'Ohio d'aujourd'hui. Les ressources qui s'y trouvaient faisaient partie intégrante de leur mode de vie et de leur identité. Les Anishinabés défendaient ce territoire contre les guerriers haudenosaunee au XVII^{ème} siècle, et son intégrité était au cœur du traité de paix qu'ils ont conclu à Montréal en 1701, dont un élément clé était le Naagan ge bezhig emkwaan, ou « bol à une seule cuillère ». Ce bol représentait le territoire et la cuillère symbolisait le fait que d'autres peuples pourraient manger ensemble tout en préservant la paix. Récemment, cependant, la notion du bol à une seule cuillère a été popularisée comme un accord de protection de l'environnement. Le traité originel a été incorporé dans les « formules de reconnaissance » qui brouillent les droits territoriaux des Premières nations. Cette transformation nuit au Premières nations qui cherchent à protéger leurs territoires et leurs ressources. La Première nation Walpole Island (le Conseil des Trois Feux) tente de récupérer son Bol.*

[3] Terminology in this paper reflects names in common usage at Walpole Island First Nation.

[4] This translation of Dish with One Spoon into Anishinaabemowin was provided to the authors by Anishinaabe elder Reta Sands. Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Simpson uses the term Gdoo-naaganinaa for "Our Dish." Leanne Simpson, "Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 23; 2 (Fall, 2008), 29-42.

The great delta of Lake St. Clair, or Bkejwanong—the place where the waters divide—is the home of Walpole Island First Nation (WIFN). It has been the homeland of Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Bkejwanong is occupied by the Ojibwa, Potawatomi, and Ottawa, as represented by the WIFN—"The Council of Three Fires." Walpole Island and surrounding territory is one of the most diverse ecosystems in the entire Great Lakes basin. Image 2 (p. 194)



Patrick McNiff's 1791 map showomg the battlefield and burial ground. AO, F 47-5-1-0-5.5. Sheet Five.

shows Bkejwanong and surrounding territory.[5]

The "traditions" of battles and the places where the bones of fallen warriors were buried were told by generations of people on Walpole Island. Andrew Medler told one such story to visiting anthropologist Leonard Bloomfield in 1938. Medler was born in Saginaw, Michigan, but grew up on Walpole Island. Linguist Rand Valentine, who published Medler's stories in 1998, explained: "He had a knowledge of traditional subjects and traditional tales, and in this collection details the sweat lodge, the vision fast, the use of love medicines, traditional enmities between the Iroquois and the Anishinaabeg, and the exploits of the trickster Nenabush." Medler told a story of an attack by Haudenosaunee warriors who came during the spring sugar-making season. Mounds located at High Banks on Walpole Island were said to be places where the bones of slain enemy warriors were buried.[6]

1701 Montreal Treaty and the Dish with One Spoon

The Haudenosaunee raids into the Walpole Island territory in the sev-

[5] Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_St._Clair>

[6] Rand Valentine (ed.), *Weshki-Bmaadzijig Ji-Noondmowaad: That the Young Might Hear - The Stories of Andrew Medler as Recorded by Leonard Bloomfield* (London, Ontario, University of Western Ontario, 1998).

Image 2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_St._Clair>.

enteenth century were part of a larger war waged throughout the lower Great Lakes region. In the summer of 1701, a Great Peace Treaty Council was held in Montreal to negotiate an end to the incessant warfare. Delegates came from a wide geographic territory and meetings took place over nearly two weeks. The resulting Treaty included promises to protect people who travelled through other nations' territories. Odawa Chief Hassaki said: "remember when we will meet them [Haudenosaunee] in the hunting grounds, that we regard them as our brothers and as our own children. We have a life-long obligation to them to be henceforth of the same kettle." Other Chiefs invoked similar references to a common kettle, bowl or dish.[7] The Treaty was memorialized in a wampum belt that depicted a single dish in the middle of the belt.[8] The Dish with One Spoon Treaty was not new, but the ratification in 1701 put an end to a long period of conflict between

[7] M. De Bacqueville de la Potherie, *Histoire de L'Amerique Septentrionale. M. De Bacqueville de la Potherie*, vol. 1, Paris, 1703.

[8] Victor P. Lytwyn, "A Dish with One Spoon: The Shared Hunting Grounds Agreement in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Valley Region," pp. 210-27, in *Papers of the Twenty-Eighth Algonquian Conference*., David H. Pentland, ed. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1997).

the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee.[9]

Three nations, Ojibwa, Odawa and Potawatomi, formed a powerful military alliance known as the Three Fires Confederacy. The 1701 Montreal Treaty paved the way for the French to build a small fort at Detroit and for settlers to occupy farms nearby. The Three Fires Anishinaabe allowed the settlers into their territory and many obtained "deeds" from local Chiefs.[10] The Anishinaabe lived throughout the territory and had seasonal villages at strategic places such as Walpole Island. In 1718, Jacques-Charles Sabrevois De Bleury described it as a "beautiful island" with agricultural clearings and a lake abounding with fish. He called the people living there "Missiaguez;" others would use terms such as Chippewa or Ojibwa. Across from the French fort on the Detroit River there was a village and cultivated fields occupied by the "Outaouac" (Ottawa, or Odawa). Situated beside the French fort was a village of "Poutouatamis" (Potawatomi).[11]

About the same time that the 1701 Montreal Treaty was being made, a group of Wyandot (also known as Huron/Wendat)[12] refugees were seeking asylum in Anishinaabe territory. The Wyandots had been driven out of their homelands south of Georgian Bay by Haudenosaunee warriors during the same period of conflict with the Anishinaabe. The Wyandots were given a temporary "resting place" and allowed to access resources in Walpole Island Anishinaabe territory.[13] In 1801, Captain Thomas McKee who was in charge of Indian Affairs at Amherstburg explained: "altho the Hurons reside upon the Land the other nations are the original proprietors of the Soil, and the Hurons originally settled therein by the permission of these nations when arrived from the Lake above [Lake Huron]."[14] The Wyandot settlement in Anishinaabe territory was an example of

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[9] In 1757, Haudenosaunee Chiefs reminded Sir William Johnson about the 1701 Montreal Treaty. They said: "You formerly said take this bowl and this meat with this Spoon let us Eat allways frindly [sic] together out the one Dish," William Johnson, 1921-65. *The papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. by James Sullivan et al. 15 v. (Albany: University of the State of New York, vol. 2), 705.

[10] Victor P. Lytwyn and Dean M. Jacobs, "'For Good Will and Affection': The Detroit Indian Deeds and British Land Policy, 1760-1827," *Ontario History*, 92:1 (Spring 2000), 9-30.

[11] Jacques Charles Sabrevois de Bleury, "Memoir on the Savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, describing Their Customs and Trade," *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, vol. 16, 1902), 363-76.

[12] In the seventeenth century, the territory of the Huron/Wendat Nations was the area between Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe. The Petun were the westernmost of the Huron/Wendat Nation. They were located south of Georgian Bay near the Nottawasaga River (close to the town of Collingwood, Ontario). Charles Garrad, *Petun to Wyandot: The Ontario Petun from the Sixteenth Century*, Jean-Luc Pilon and Willam Fox, eds. (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of History, Mercury Series, Archaeology Paper, 2014), 174.

[13] William McCormick, *A Sketch of the Western District of Upper Canada, being the Southern extremity of that interesting Province, 1824*, published by R. Alan Douglas ed. (Windsor: Essex Historical Association and University of Windsor Press, Occasional Paper No. 1, 1980).

[14] Letter from Thomas McKee, Amherstburg, to Major Green, Military Secretary, 1801, Library and Archives Canada, RG 10, Indian Affairs, vol. 1: 275-277.

how the Dish with One Spoon operated. The Wyandots were permitted to live in the territory (the Dish) and share in the resources (using the Spoon) but were not given "ownership" of the land.

Walpole Island Anishinaabe leaders allowed other outsiders to live in their territory. In the eighteenth century, French traders and missionaries were given permission to build trading posts and churches. When the British defeated the French in 1760 and came to Walpole Island territory to occupy the small fort at Detroit, Anishinaabe leaders met the incoming British and allowed them to stay.[15] A few years later, the Anishinaabe led by Odawa War Chief Pontiac laid siege to the British fort at Detroit after it was found that they had violated the principles of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty. When peace was made in 1764 at Niagara and Detroit, British and Anishinaabe leaders pledged to maintain peaceful relations.[16] The British formalized their policy in a Royal Proclamation signed by King George III in 1763.[17] That proclamation recognized the territories of First Nations and established a procedure by which land could be acquired by the British Crown.

In 1790, Colonel Alexander McKee, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs, invited Anishinaabe leaders to a Treaty Council at Detroit and asked them to give a large tract of land to King George III. Chief Egoucheway, who spoke for the Chippewa, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations, agreed to give land to King George III, saying: "Is there a Man amongst us who will refuse this request? What man can refuse what is asked by a Father so good and so generous, that he had never yet refused us anything? What Nation? None Father!"[18] The speech rationalized the gift of land in terms of the King's generosity and the expectation of future generous treatment from the British Crown. However, when British settlers fenced large tracts and prohibited Anishinaabe from using the land and harvesting resources, Chief Egoucheway complained. In 1794, Chief Egoucheway met Lieutenant Governor Simcoe and stated: "The Men with Hats who have come to reside there, always asked for leave to build a House and for a little piece of ground for a garden—But Father, after they had got up their house, they took and fenced in large tracts of Lands, contrary to our wishes and intentions."[19]

Although the Dish with One Spoon was not specifically mentioned in the text of the 1790 Treaty, Chief Egoucheway's

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[15] Ernest J. Lajeunesse, ed., "Extract from the Journal of Major Robert Rogers," *The Windsor Border Region*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for The Champlain Society, 1960), 89-90.

[16] William Johnson, 1921-65. *Papers*, vol. 11, 262-73 and 349-51.

[17] Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, eds. "King George III, Royal Proclamation," Canadian Sessional Papers. no. 18, 1907: 119-23.

[18] Minutes of a Council Meeting at Detroit, 19 May 1790, Library and Archives Canada, RG 10, vol. 13: 287-95.

[19] Speech of Egouchouay, Chief of the Ottawas, to His Excellency Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, 1794, Archives of Ontario, Simcoe Papers, F 47-1-2-20.

words suggest that he had the Dish in his mind when he drew his dodem[20] mark on the parchment.[21] British colonial administrators, on the other hand, viewed the 1790 Detroit Treaty as a land sales contract agreement. They had no intention of sharing control over the land and resources except for a few small reserves that were set apart in the Treaty. The British and later Canadian government officials gradually wrested jurisdiction away from Anishinaabe leaders. They were helped in this process by American territorial aggression that resulted in the loss of many Anishinaabe warriors between 1790 and the War of 1812. To add insult to injury, the British sided with the Wyandots and gave them control over the reserves set apart in the 1790 Treaty. Anishinaabe leaders resisted but to no avail. On 19 May 1844, Anishinaabe Chiefs Nahdee, Frederick Fisher, Meetwaiash and Maipasheawtai signed a petition to Lieutenant Governor Sir Charles Metcalfe, stating:

> In the integrity and good faith of the British government we place all confidence, and that the promises made to her red children by the Great Mother the Queen through her Representatives, will be sacredly performed we have good reason to know yet we would beg of you Father not to open your ears too confidingly to the sentiments of our brethren the Wyandotts who it is well known, do not scruple to pervert truth to attain any object they have in view. We not only assert our claim by virtue of the treaty, but our right to the soil has descended to us from our Forefathers who were from time immemorial the possessors of this portion of country. The Wyandotts or Hurons on the contrary were refugees being driven from their own country below Quebec by the Iroquois and sought our protection.[22]

A daguerreotype of Chief Nahdee, also known as Oshawana, is shown below.[23] Subsequently, many of the Wyandotts

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[20] Dodems, also known as totems, reflected the animal spirit clans of the Anishinaabe. Chief Egoucheway was a member of the Bear dodem.

[21] The Walpole Island Anishinaabe included the Dish with One Spoon in treaties with other First Nations. For example, the treaty was recalled at a Council Meeting in the summer of 1805 that took place in the British garrison at Amherstburg (later known as Fort Malden). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss an invitation from the Sioux (Dakota) Nation to join them in a war to fight against American encroachments into their territory in the west. A Sauk Chief spoke about the message and recited it as follows: "It is a long time since our common Dish and Spoon were made by our forefathers, and now we Nadouessies [Sioux] renew the friendship that subsisted between our ancestors." Proceedings of a Meeting at Amherstburg with the Saakie's, Fox's, Northern Ottawas and Poutawatamies, Library and Archives Canada, 1805, MG 19, F1, Claus Papers, vol. 9: 109-113. In 1922, Truman Michelson was informed that: "the Sioux Chief came over to the Chippewa band & told them they would accept the peace pipe and also told them they could eat out of the same dish." Truman Michelson, "Potawatomi and Ojibwa Notes, 1922," MS 1854, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

[22] George Ironside, "Petition from Ottawa Chiefs Naadie and Frederick Fisher, Chippewa Chief Meetwaiash and Potawatomi Chief Maipasheawtai to the Lieutenant Governor, 1844," Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, George Ironside Papers.

[23] The Daguerreotype was taken in 1856 by order of Lord Herschell [copy in Library and Archives Canada photograph collection, "Chief Oshawana (John Naudee), Tecumseh's chief warrior at the battle of the River Thames," ID number: 3358509].

Chief Nahdee, one of the Anishinaabe chiefs to sign a petition to Lieutenant Governor Sir Charles Metcalfe in 1844.

relocated to Ohio and then Kansas and Oklahoma. A few remained but opted to enfranchise in the late nineteenth century and terminated their status as a First Nation in Canada.[24]

When colonial officials tried to force the people of Walpole Island to move, Chief Beyigishigneshkam pointed to Treaties with the British Crown that assured their territory would always be protected. His speech to Indian Superintendent Samuel P. Jarvis stated:

> When the White Elk [Alexander McKee] finding that our Fathers were growing poor and wretched in the vicinity of the Long Knife brought them up to the Island on which you now find us; he lept from his Canoe with a lighted Brand in his hand and after having kindled the first Council Fire which had ever shone upon it, he gave it to them forever.
>
> 'Remain my children,' said he. 'Do not desert this abode which I have brought you. I never shall let any one molest you. Should any persons come to ask from you a part of these lands, turn from them in distrust and deny them their request. Never for a moment heed their voice and at your dying day instruct your sons to get theirs, teach them as generation succeeds generation to reserve intact their inheritance and poverty shall be unknown to them.'[25]

Other Indigenous peoples have settled and remain in WIFN territory. In 1792, a group from the Munsee-Delaware Nation (also known as Lenni Lenape) were brought to the Thames River by Moravian missionaries fleeing from American persecution. The missionaries applied to colonial government officials for a tract of land on the south side of the river. They received a grant by Order in

[24] Laurie Leclair, "The Huron-Wyandottes of Anderdon Township: A Case Study in Native Adaptation, 1701-1914," Master's Thesis, University of Windsor, Department of History, 1988. See also Kathryn Magee Labelle, *Dispersed But Not Destroyed: A History of the Seventeenth-century Wendat People* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013).

[25] "Speech of the Indian Chief Begigishigueshkam to Colonel Jarvis on Walpole Island," Samuel Peters Jarvis Papers, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Room, S 125, B57, July-September 1839, pages 373-83.

Council and eventually a Reserve was set apart for the Munsee-Delawares. They continue to live in the territory on land that was originally gifted to the Crown by the Anishinaabe in 1790.

Another Treaty was made in 1796 by Alexander McKee on behalf of King George III and the Chiefs of the "Chippewa and Ottawa Nations." The Treaty was signed at "Chenail Ecarté" and is commonly known as the Ste. Anne Island Treaty. McKee's speech assured the Chiefs that the British had not forsaken them in the Treaty of Amity (Jay Treaty) with the Americans. McKee said: "all the Indian Nations who by the last Treaty with America, are to be perfectly free and unmolested in their Trade and hunting grounds and to pass and repass freely and undisturbed to trade with whom they please."[26] The 1796 Treaty also set apart two areas as reserves. The first, known as the Chenail Ecarté Tract, was for any Indigenous people who wanted to live near Walpole Island. The second was a tract of land north of the Thames River given to the King for the building of a provincial capitol later named London.

In 1819, Crown officials sought to obtain the rest of the land north of the Thames River to Lake Huron. Unable to get all the Chiefs to agree, Indian Agent John Askin Jr. divided the territory and the Crown obtained two treaties in 1822 and 1827. The first involved a tract north of the Thames River known as the Longwoods Tract. The second included the remaining lands north to Lake Huron and west to the St. Clair River. Walpole Island leaders agreed only to the second Treaty.[27] The fracturing of the lands by these treaties further alienated the Walpole Island Anishinaabe from parts of their territory. The Dish had been broken and foreign officials came to dictate the terms of sharing land and resources.

To the east of Walpole Island territory, Haudenosaunee settlements were made along the Grand River and the Bay of Quite area after the American Revolution. The relationship between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee remained friendly in the nineteenth century. Occasional disagreements were resolved through diplomacy that sometimes invoked the Dish with One Spoon Treaty. This happened in January 1840 at a Credit River Council Meeting between Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee leaders. Chief Joshua Wawanosh, representing the Anishinaabe from the St. Clair River area, explained that one of the purposes of the meeting was to renew the "Treaty of Friendship." Onondaga Chief John Buck brought a Wampum Belt that represented the first Treaty made between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe "many years ago." That Treaty Council was said to have been held at the east end of Lake Ontario and the

[26] Alexander McKee, "Speech made by Alexander McKee to the Chiefs of the Chippewa and Ottawa Nations," Samuel Peters Jarvis Papers, Metropolitan Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Room, Toronto, "Indian Papers, Box 1, B 56-57.

[27] Rhonda Telford, "How the West Was Won: Land Transactions Between the Anishinabe, the Huron and the Crown in Southwestern Ontario," pp. 328-51, in: Papers of the Twenty-Ninth Algonquian Conference, David H. Pentland, ed., (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1998).

wampum belt depicted a dish or bowl in the centre. Chief Buck explained that it meant they were all to eat out of one dish. He added: "That is to have all the game in common. In the centre of the bowl were five white Wampum which denoted a Beaver's tail the favorite dish of the Ojibways." Anishinaabe Chief Yellowhead brought a wampum belt representing a dish with ladles around it. That belt was said to have been made at the Narrows between Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching. One of the ladles was for the Haudenosaunee who promised that the dish or bowl should never be emptied. Mohawk Chief John Smoke agreed that the dish and ladles represented the abundance of game and food in that territory. Chief Yellowhead added that a dish was also placed at the Credit River, and explained that: "the right of hunting on the north side of the Lake [Ontario] was secured to the Ojibways, and that the Six Nations were not to hunt here only when they come to smoke the pipe of peace with their Ojibway brethren."[28] The reading of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty belt by Anishinaabe Chief Yellowhead confirmed that each nation had a clear understanding of their own territory. The Dish represented their territory and the Treaty allowed outsiders in with their permission.[29]

The Dish in Recent Literature

Since the publication in 1997 of "The Dish with One Spoon," other scholars have noted its importance. For example, Historian Gilles Havard wrote about the 1701 Montreal Treaty on its tri-centenary and noted that the French governor and First Nation diplomats used the image of the kettle or the dish during their speeches. Havard explained: "The culinary imagery that was sometimes associated with war (e.g., the kettle was used to cook enemies) has here become symbolic of peace." He noted the speech of Chief Onanguice, who said: "Let us eat from the same kettle when we meet during the hunt."[30] Archaeologist Neal Ferris observed that some of the chiefs in the 1701 Montreal Treaty "spoke of sharing... common hunting grounds." Ferris explained: "The metaphor of eating with many spoons from one bowl is cited as the principle behind this sharing and is reminiscent of the co-use of the frontier between Western Basin and Inter-Lakes archaeological traditions ca. A.D. 1000-1400. This attests to the antiquity of the concept of Aboriginal co-sovereignty, suggesting that, by the end of the seventeenth century, Native-centric practices and perceptions were still shaping the histories of people in the Northeast."[31]

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[28] Council Minutes at the Credit River, 1840, Library and Archives Canada, RG 10, Indian Affairs, vol. 1011: 69-92.

[29] Shortly after the Credit River Council meeting a group of Oneidas from New York purchased about 5,000 acres south of the Thames River, in the Township of Delaware. This was on land that was gifted to King George III by the Anishinaabe in the 1790 Treaty at Detroit.

[30] Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century* (McGill-Queen's University Press. Translaated by Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott, 2001).

[31] Neal Ferris, "In Their Time: Archaeological Histories of Native-Lived Contacts and Colonialisms,

Historian Lisa Brooks stated that Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant worked to unite First Nations after the American Revolution "as 'one body' and 'one mind' dedicated to sustaining the native space of the Dish with One Spoon."[32] In her book about the "Common Pot," Brooks expanded on this theme. She maintained that First Nations rejected the new American vision that saw "Indians" placed on small reserves and for the vast new territory to be sub-divided and sold to settlers to fill the coffers of the national treasury. Brooks explained that First Nations "sought to bolster a much older vision of the valley." She concluded:

> The land itself was held in common, consisting of a network of shifting riverside villages within a larger shared hunting territory of grasslands and forests, all fed and connected by the Ohio River and its tributaries, enabling an efficient and diplomatic use of resources. The dish with one spoon was a geographic-social configuration and a political concept that solidified in the councils that followed the Revolution. The political vision depended on recognizing equality and building consensus among all nations who ate from the dish, a joining of minds that would enable the political system to mirror the geographic one.[33]

Anishinaabe historian and linguist Alan Corbiere referred to the Dish as "Gidonaaganinaa." He posited: "The historical record also shows that we had inter-tribal (or international if you will) treaties. The Anishnaabeg entered into an intertribal treaty called the 'dish with one spoon.' This treaty is encoded on a wampum belt with a circle in the centre to represent the bowl." Corbiere explained: "The principle of the dish with one spoon is that all Anishnaabeg hold the game in common, the dish is the land, and the game is what is served in the dish."[34]

Anishinaabe historian Leanne Simpson observed: "The dish represented the shared territory, although it is important to remember that sharing territory for hunting did not involve interfering with one another's sovereignty as nations. It represented harmony and interconnection, as both parties were to be responsible for taking care of the dish."[35] Anishinaabe legal historian Wapshkaa Aa'iingan (Aaron Mills) stated: "the Anishinaabek, like other indigenous nations, have strong traditions of sharing, including jurisdiction." He explained: "The most obvious example of this deep tradition is the Dish with One Spoon Treaty between the Anishinaabek and the Haudenosaunee, af-

Southwestern Ontario, A.D. 1400-1900," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Hamilton: McMaster University, 2006.

[32] Lisa Brooks, "Two Paths to Peace: Competing Visions of Native Space in the Old Northwest," pp. 87-117, in: *The Boundaries between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750-1850*, edited by Daniel P. Barr, Kent (Ohio) (The Kent State University Press, 2006).

[33] Lisa, Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[34] Alan Corbiere, "Gidonaaganinaa 'Our Dish': An intertribal treaty encoded in wampum," *Anishinabek News*, November 2007.

[35] Leanne Simpson, "Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 23:2 (Fall, 2008), 29-42.

firmed in June of 1700 and again shortly thereafter as part of the Great Peace of Montreal, in the summer of 1701." According to Wapshkaa Aa'iingan, the Dish with One spoon Treaty "represented an understanding of shared resources within mutually controlled territory."[36] Historian Michelle Hamilton described the Dish with one Spoon Treaty as "treaty of peace and friendship in 1701, which was recorded by a wampum belt." She explained: "This belt was marked with a bowl that symbolized that both groups would eat out of one dish with one spoon—that is, they would be one people who shared the hunting territory and resources over which they had recently fought."[37]

Kayanesenh (Paul Williams) wrote about the Dish with One Spoon in the context of the Kayanerenko:wa," or Great Law of Peace. Trained as a lawyer and adopted into the Haudenosaunee, Kayanesenh explained that the Dish with One Spoon was included in Haudenosaunee accounts of their origins. Dekanawida (The Peacemaker) invoked the concept to end disputes over hunting grounds. He added that in some Haudenosaunee accounts "there is a single wooden spoon in the bowl—again, an implement that will assist in feeding the people, but without sharp edges, so that there will be no risk of bloodshed." Kayanesenh also noted: "The idea spread as an element of the peace. That is, peace depended not only on the original Five Nations refraining from internal wars but also on removing sources of friction with other nations."[38]

The Dish in Contemporary Land Recognition Statements

Beginning in 2013, Alan Corbiere and Haudenausonee scholar Rick Hill made a series of public appearances together to speak about the Dish with One Spoon. Corbiere credited Anishinaabe elders who told him that the Dish with One Spoon was "an international treaty between Aboriginal nations, principally the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg, to share hunting territory." Corbiere explained: "The proverbial 'dish' is the land, and all were allowed to procure their sustenance from the land. Also recounted by modern tradition bearers is that the dish had a spoon, but knives were prohibited in case one accidentally drew blood, thereby starting a conflict."[39]

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[36] Wapshkaa Aa'iingan (Aaron Mills). "Aki, Anishinaabek, kaye tahsh Crown," *Indigenous Law Journal,* 9:1 (2010), 107-166.

[37] Michelle Hamilton, *Collections and Objections: Aboriginal Material Culture in Southern Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

[38] Kayanesenh, (Paul Williams). Kayanerenko:wa: The Great Law of Peace, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2019.

[39] Alan Ojiig Corbiere, "'Their own forms of which they take the most notice': Diplomatic metaphors and symbolism on wampum belts," pp. 47-64, in: Anishinaabewin Niiwin: Four Rising Winds, A selection from the proceedings of the 2013 Anishinaabewin Niiwin multidisciplinary culture conference, held in Sudbury, Ontario, Alan Ojiig Corbiere, Mary Ann Naokwegijig Corbiere, Deborah McGregor, and Crystal Migwans, eds., M'Chigeeng, Ontario: Ojibwe Cultural Foundation, 2013.

Hill suggested that it was a "a covenant with nature." He explained: "Nature says, 'Here's the great dish and inside the dish are all the plants, the animals, the birds, the fish, the bushes, the trees, everything you need to be healthy and therefore, happy'." Hill added: "The three basic rules are: only take what you need, second, you always leave something in the dish for everybody else, including the dish, and third, you keep the dish clean... that was the treaty between us and nature, and then the treaty between us and everybody else."[40]

The environmental message espoused by Rick Hill spread quickly through the internet and, by 2014, the Dish with One Spoon began to be adopted by Ontario government agencies in their land recognition statements. Public declarations acknowledging First Nations territories in Canada had already taken hold and apparently originated at the 2010 Vancouver winter Olympics. The intent was to recognize that public events were taking place on lands originally occupied by Indigenous peoples. Most statements relied on Treaties to identify the nation or nations who made specific historic agreements for the lands in question. The incorporation of the Dish with One Spoon blurred the territoriality of the message by suggesting that First Nations had agreed to share the land. In this way the environment took underlying precedence and everyone—even colonial settlers—had a stake in the territory.

In 2014 the City of Toronto council passed a new protocol that following the singing of the national anthem, the Speaker would acknowledge that Toronto is traditional Indigenous territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. Haudenosaunee writer Jamaias DaCosta commented on the protocol and added: "We also have an important peace treaty with the Anishinaabek, known as the One Dish One Spoon Wampum, which is an agreement to peaceably share resources of territories in vast regions of the Great Lakes which were in close proximity to each other."[41]

In 2014, Ryerson University in Toronto created a "Land Acknowledgement Statement" that was to be used before any event on campus. It explained:

> Toronto is in the Dish With One Spoon Territory. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect.[42]

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has recommended territorial acknowledgement statements be made in universities across the country. In the Province of Ontario,

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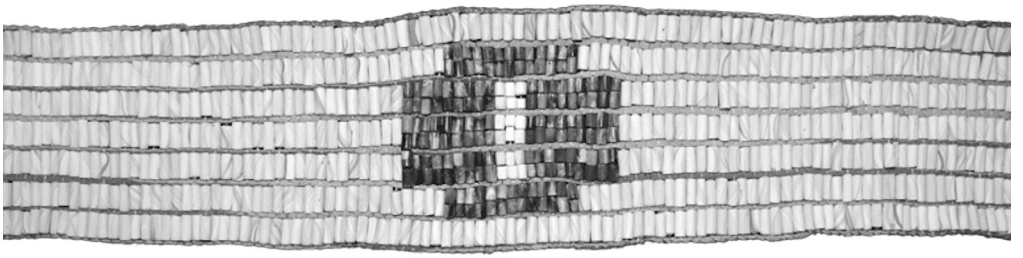
[40] Barb Nahwegahbow, "Wampum holds power of earliest agreements," *Windspeaker*, 32:1 (2014).

[41] Jamaias DaCosta, "Toronto AKA Tkaronto Passes New City Council Protocol," Muskratmagazine.com, 11 April 2014.

[42] Ryerson University, Land Acknowledgement, 2014, https://www.ryerson.ca/aec/land-acknowledgement/



The Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt. <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/settlement-immigration/gakina-gidagwi-igoomin-anishinaabewiyang-we-are-all-treaty-people>.

the following universities included the Dish with One Spoon in in their statements: McMaster University (Hamilton); Mohawk College (Hamilton); Niagara College (Welland); Ryerson University (Toronto); Sheridan College (Brampton, Mississauga and Oakville); University of Guelph; and University of Toronto (Mississauga).[43] Many of the institutional websites included photographic images of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt. An example of such an image is shown above.[44]

Anishinaabe journalist and writer Hayden King was one of the authors of the Ryerson University land acknowledgement statement. However, King soon regretted his participation in the project. He explained: "We wrote it under pressure and not really anticipating the growth of the acknowledgement in Ontario or the politics that would accompany it." King added:

> I think I started to see how the territorial acknowledgement could become very superficial and also how it sort of fetishizes these actual tangible, concrete treaties. They're not metaphors — they're real institutions, and for us to write and recite a territorial acknowledgement that sort of obscures that fact, I think we do a disservice to that treaty and to those nations."[45]

In 2019, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (C.U.P.E.) held a General Membership Meeting in Toronto. The agenda for the meeting included an "Equity Statement." That statement explained:

> The sacred land on which C.U.P.E. 3902 operates is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the

[43] 2019 statistics taken from: <https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory>

[44] The image was downloaded from: <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/settlement-immigration/gakina-gidagwi-igoomin-anishinaabewiyang-we-are-all-treaty-people>

[45] Hayden King, "'I regret it': Hayden King on writing Ryerson University's territorial acknowledgement," transcript of an interview, CBC Radio , 20 January 2019, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/redrawing-the-lines-1.4973363/i-regret-it-hayden-king-on-writing-ryerson-university-s-territorial-acknowledgement-1.4973371.

> meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this territory."[46]

This statement conveys the false impression that the Dish with One Spoon opened First Nation territories to all nations. This is myth-building that has serious consequences for First Nations seeking to protect their territorial rights.

This is Our Dish: Re-energizing the Treaty at Walpole Island

While land recognition statements are relatively new and the Dish with One Spoon has been added in recent years, WIFN has been issuing territorial statements for a much longer time. In the second half of the twentieth century, WIFN Council of Three Fires ramped up its fight for political and economic self-determination and sovereignty by removing the Indian Agent in 1965.[47] Chief Burton Jacobs often recalled with pride the story of how he kicked out the Indian Agent.

In 1971, WIFN joined the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) a non-profit organization which advocates for political interests of its member First Nations. In 1973, Walpole Island initiated a community driven research project seeking resolution of outstanding land claims while protecting its Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. The Walpole Island community-based research model has been recognized by international scholars as one of the best First Nation community research offices in Canada and as a First Nations effective practice organization for its research approach to solving community issues. In 1987, WIFN's statement on "Philosophy and Principles" read in part:

> We, the First Nations of the Walpole Island Indian Territory have inhabited these lands since the beginning of time.
>
> With this occupation we have developed our own language, heritage and values... in accordance with the Creator, mankind and nature.
>
> Through this relationship we possess the rights and freedom to determine our own path.
>
> We shall carry on these responsibilities as handed down to us by the Creator, our elders, and ensure that future generations shall be entrusted with these sacred obligations...
>
> Whereas the land has always accommodated our way of life; and
>
> Whereas tradition has taught us that the preservation of the land and its resources is essential, it is therefore, our guiding principle and sacred trust.
>
> We, the Walpole Island First Nations people pledge to use these resources to the mutual benefit of all peoples.
>
> As our elders have done we shall maintain the laws that preserve our wildlife, lands and resources.[48]

[46] The statement was downloaded from: https://www.cupe3902.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/GMM_Agenda_package_29_January_2019.pdf

[47] Nin-de-waab-jig, Minishenhying Anishnaabe-aki - Wapole Island: The Soul of Indian Territory. Windsor: Commercial Associates/Ross Roy Ltd., 1987.

[48] Walpole Island First Nation Special Council Meeting, 18 May 1987.

In 1989, WIFN established a heritage centre called Nin.Da.Waab.Jig (NDWJ). The name means "those who seek to find" and the staff of the centre have led the way in reclaiming recognition and respect of the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights held by WIFN Council of Three Fires within North America. Numerous land claims have been submitted for resolution. In other cases, WIFN has defended their territorial rights and interests in environmental hearings and court actions.

NDWJ, through its External Projects Program, has been able to educate the general public, industry, neighbouring communities, universities and other governments including local municipalities about Indigenous Rights and the WIFN Council of Three Fires. This awareness is starting to be absorbed and appreciated by others. For example, on 9 December 2019 the Sarnia city council adopted an acknowledgement statement that reads:

> In the spirit of peace and friendship, we honour the Anishinaabek of the Three Fires Confederacy on whose traditional territory we are gathered. The City of Sarnia has resolved to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[49]

The Township of Pelee in its Official Plan states: "Portions of the Lake Erie lake bed and its islands, including Pelee Island and the Out Islands, are located in the Traditional Territory of the Walpole Island First Nation."[50]

In 2019, the University of Windsor began convocation ceremonies with an acknowledgement statement that in part reads:

> Indigenous Peoples are the original occupants of this Land we call Ontario, and over thousands of years Indigenous Peoples have developed languages, cultures, economies and ways of life. This long history of occupancy means that we are assembled in a sacred place and traditional gathering place for many peoples of Turtle Island. We show respect for this by acknowledging that the land on which we are gathered today is the traditional territory of the Three Fires, made up of the Ojibwa, Odawa and Potawatomi nations.[51]

WIFN has taken an active role in shaping land recognition statements that are being made in their territory such as the University of Windsor's statement. The Dish with One Spoon is not mentioned because it blurs the integrity of the First Nation to decide on how and when it is appropriate to share its territory with others.

Conclusion

Today's rush to reconciliation and attempts at political correctness by opening events and reading a scripted land acknowledgement statement in-

[49] Tyler Kula, "Council Adopts Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement," Sarnia This Week, 19 December 2019.

[50] Township of Pelee, Official Plan, Consolidated with MMAH Modifications, Adopted by By-law No. 2009-06 (27 January 2009), Partial Approval by OMB (20 January 2011) and Approved as Modified, 1 September 2011.

[51] Dean M. Jacobs, "Territorial Acknowledgement," presentation at the University of Windsor Fall Convocation, 19 October 2019.

cluding references to the Dish with One Spoon fall short. Such statements do a disservice to understanding the true meaning and intent of the 1701 Treaty. The rapid spread of misinformation about the Dish with One Spoon is much like the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. We need to contain the spread of this misinformation and flatten the curve to achieve a clear understanding of the historical context of the Dish. The principles of peace and friendship established by the Treaty of 1701 are central to mutual respect of territorial sovereignty between the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee. One of the key elements of the 1701 Treaty is the Dish with One Spoon. The Dish is Bkejwanong territory and the Spoon represents a meal harvested from its abundant natural resources. In order to maintain peace amongst the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee, hunting, fishing and gathering grounds were protected, but shared through inter-tribal diplomacy and permission. Since 1701, inter-tribal warfare has been avoided as a result. Honouring of territorial integrity and the practice of sharing and sheltering of other nations within Bkejwanong Territory has been applied for centuries. The WIFN Council of Three Fires continues to demonstrate and live up to its duty and obligations by faithfully honoring the Dish with One Spoon Treaty.

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