



DECOLONIZING DIET: SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS  
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY

WIISINDAA (LET'S EAT):  
ANISHINAABEK FOOD SOVEREIGNTY  
AND RESILIENCE IN MICHIGAN'S  
STRAITS OF MACKINAC

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# Why the Straits are the heart of this region



## CREATION

Mackinac is the word for turtle. The belief in this region is this is the heart of the creation story of the Anishabe. This is the Turtle Island on which we came to be.

## CUTLURAL CENTER: SOCIAL-CULTURAL & TRADE

As the spiritual & cultural space of origin, the region has been occupied since the first story of arriving here (or as we say in Western knowledge systems, since the last glaciation). The shorelines are well traveled. The journey to the 5th Stopping Place in the Midewin Migration story has the Mide traveling along George Bay to Baaweting on the St. Mary's (1 hours drive north of the Straits)

## GEOGRAPHIC & GEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

the escarpment, the wetlands, the Lakes



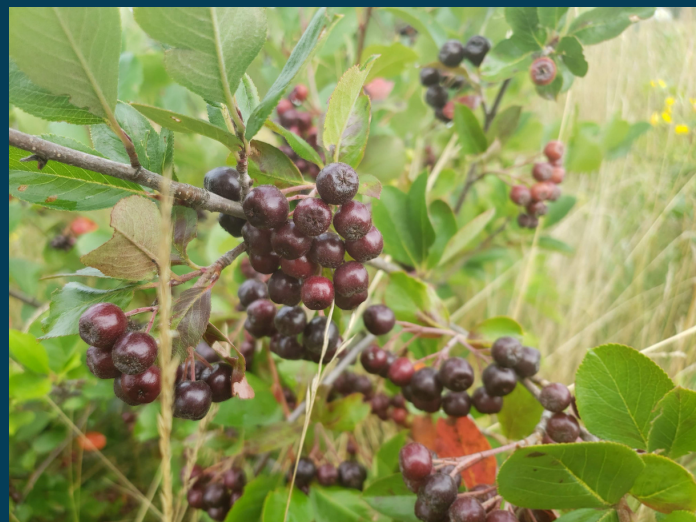
# Gete- Anishinaabe

## OUR ANCESTRAL FOODWAYS AND ANISHINAABE RESILIENCE UNDER SETTLER COLONIAL RESTRICTIONS

The Anishinaabe have been here since time immemorial. We have Nanaboozhoo stories about the great flood and interpreted by many in the community to be the story of the last glacial melt. In archaeology, we ascribe names to communities based on features of a cultural period with materials that are easy to categorize by typologies, but in reality we do not know what those communities named themselves. But for the community, they are Gete-Anishinaabe.

The Anishinaabe Midewin Society migration story is important to our identity and cultural rights to the Great Lakes. They left their villages at the mouth of the St. Lawrence in a journey westward to where "food grows on water."

The Woodland Period helps us to understand the ethnogenesis of Anishinaabe before colonization. Which helps us better understand the way culture has informed our resiliency during colonial assimilation. It also provides a vital link for our dietary practices as we decolonize our diets and decolonize our landscapes for food sovereignty.



# Role of Archaeology in Anishinnabe food ways & decolonization

**1**

STORYWORK

**3**

ARCHIVAL & PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

**2**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

**4**

DECOLONIZING DIET

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO DECOLONIZING DIET AND ARCHAEOLOGY'S ROLE IN THE STRAITS

The Straits of Mackinac is recognized as a Traditional Cultural Property by federally recognized tribes of the region.

The Consent Decree with the 1836 tribes regulates treaty rights on harvesting in the region, especially regulating the fisheries.

The economic and socio-cultural value of the fisheries to Anishinnaabe communities is documented but **other resources tend to remain in the background.**

Recent efforts of Great Lakes tribal communities and governments to decolonize diets for improved wellbeing measured by health physically and mentally. Economic development of Anishinaabe based farming--we've consciously grown food stuffs for centuries. Subsistence economies necessary for food sovereignty benefits such as food security and culturally based choice.



# Durman (2009, 2014)

## LAND STEWARDSHIP

Shifts in resource extraction

indications of plant selection

stewardship & relationship of Gete-Anishinaabe to the landscape

## SUBSITENCE PRACTICES

Starches/carbohydrates

Acorns

Mandaaman

Manoomin

## SETTLEMENT

focus often on shoreline occupation (and fisheries)

other types of habitat characteristics for settlements





# Kooiman (2019)

## STRATEGY SHIFTS

MWoodland characteristics

LWoodland characteristics

## DIETARY STAPLES

low to no fat content foods

carbohydrates of manoomin & maandaman

small game

fish

## IDENTITY VIA FOOD

an emerging food identity

questions about what distinguishes an ethnic cuisine when the same

resources are being used

tying in ethnohistory & ethnographic understanding

(why soups and not stews for the Anishinaabe?)



# From Woodland and Contact through Settler Colonial Experience

## SURVEY MAPS & LOGGING

### GLO & SURVEYS

Durnam's work in correlating historical habitat to Woodland site occupation is important for the shift in food sovereignty created by the Treaties. These same maps become a baseline for industrial modifications to the landscape.

### SUGAR BUSH--AN EXAMPLE

Ocasionally the maps included notes about sugar camps T&R for Ishpeming/Tilden Township. Is omission of camps at other maple stands an indication of seasonal observations of the surveyor or an attempted erasure by specific surveyors. Sugaring did not decrease as a practice but intensified with the inclusion of metal pots (many known as treaty pots) and commercial interests. The Mackinaw Agency, DOI/Indian Agency, reported Keweenaw Bay Indian Community produceced and exported over 450k lbs of maple sugar to the east coast in 1865 (Jondreau). Other documented quantities includ \$30k worth in 1842; "enough sugar to feed eight persons for four months--1600 pounds of cake an 36 gallons of syrup" in 1763 (Keller 1989, 123). The band of Ojibwe on Sugar Island at Sault Ste. Marie sold 12k pounds in 1840--four years after the Treaty that would preserve sugar bush rights on Sugar Island while ceding the EUP to the United States. Purchase rates in 1827 were reported by Thomas McKenny to be ten cents per pound.



# From Woodland and Contact through Settler Colonial Experience

## SURVEY MAPS & PATENTS

### BASELINE FOR UNDERSTANDING INDUSTRY ROLE IN LANDSCAPE ALTERATIONS

note 1: baseline of habitats as established and known to Anishinaabe and other tribes of the region

note 2: extraction of the forests for markets in the east and other parts of the midwest eliminated these spaces

note 3: the removal of some species beneficial for increasing certain plants and animals

## PATENTS & ALLOTMENTS

the EUP was not immune to the Land Grab University endowment systems

The 1855 Treaty created reservations and allotments for tribes. After 10 years occupancy the tribal resident would receive the proper paperwork.

The LGU parcels and the majority of 1855 treaties in the EUP are now part of the Hiawatha National Forest (how and why are topics for another time) and property to various federal agencies and the State of Michigan



# Storywork

## AN INDIGENOUS BASED ORAL COLLECTION

Oral history. Ethnographic interviews. At the heart of so many verbal interview strategies is storytelling. We are asking people to share a story of who they are in their local/social/cultural context against a backdrop of historical and present day activities or events.

Archibald

Genuiz





# Storywork

## HOW THIS HELPS OUR ETHNOHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EFFORTS AT INTERPRETATION & COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

Other methods of storying the landscape exist. Basso's work with the Apache in New Mexico covers stories, the cultural mapping of the landscape, and the stories embeded within that space. Wisdom and knowledge do sit in spaces. But those spaces are the wisdom, are the givers of the knowledge. Traditional cultural landscapes are stories and humans merely the story tellers of observations, teachings, and the miutia that marks our existence.

Humans aren't the only ones telling a story. The earth is not only a womb of new life but the home to old ancient life of our stone grandfathers. Those grandfathers tell the story of their lived experiences which we interpret as geological events. The glacial scraping and scaring. LeeAnne Simpsons work in land pedagogy teaches us that the land teaches us--we know nothing about where we are without the other beings of this space.



# Preliminary benefits of Storywork with community members

## AWARENESS

There is concern in this age of upholding Treaty Rights that community members will forget the resiliency and efforts of generations who continued the practices despite legal punishments. The record of clever and creative solutions, the cruel reminder that we have to fight to keep our Treaty rights



## JIBBAY FEAST

The Jibbay Feast was traditionally observed around the full moon is what we know as October. It is a feast to the Ancestors and other such beings who have walked on. Families serve food to their loved ones and also eat together with the living. Because traditional practices were not only taboo but legally prohibited by the state and church, many families moved their Feasts to the Catholic "All Souls Day." A day of prayer for the departed, Anishinaabe feed their Ancestors.

## OTHER WAYS FOOD BECAME PEAK ANISHINAABE-NESS

Maple Sugar--the sheer volume some communities produced & sold  
Fishing  
Moose hunting  
Berry  
Cedar (prime vitamin C!)



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