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Resistance and Recognition  
at Kitigan Zibi

Algonquin Politics and Culture  
in the Twentieth Century



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# 1

## Race, Land Loss, and Economic Marginalization

**FROM THE MID-NINETEENTH** century to the present day, the Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi have experienced a significant loss of their reserve lands, a development that arose from the policies of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) and the dubious – and often illegal – actions of the Indian agents on the reserve. These policies and actions were informed by racist thinking, as officials in Ottawa and at Kitigan Zibi viewed Native people as wards who were in need of oversight. More specifically, they intended to assimilate the Algonquin, transforming them into farmers.

Off-reserve land loss can be attributed to two intertwined processes. First, the proliferation of sports tourism clubs at the turn of the twentieth century severely curtailed Algonquin access to traditional lands. Sports tourist advertisements portrayed the area as a pristine locale that offered an escape from the pressures of urban living and as a space of racial fantasy, where white men could relive the frontier experience. Second, as a result of the growth in tourism, the Quebec government instituted a number of conservation programs that disrupted Algonquin subsistence and market activities. The associated harassment, fines, confiscation of hunting equipment, and incarceration resulted in the economic marginalization of the Algonquin.

Expanding agricultural and industrial activity, Victorian culture, and social Darwinist thought characterized the period.<sup>1</sup> All of these trends were generally captured under the banner of “progress” – the watchword of the nineteenth century. The term also cast a clear racial overtone that is evident in ideas about Indigenous peoples. White Canadian politicians, writers, and

intellectuals generally viewed non-white labourers as charges or wards who required supervision and even coercion to fulfill the national purpose.

According to Aboriginal scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson the period witnessed the “universalizing of whiteness,” a process in which whiteness was conflated with humanity, leadership, and progress, even as it attached attributes such as laziness, drunkenness, and backwardness to non-white peoples.<sup>2</sup> For instance, one Canadian writer and educator stated in 1892 that “a special capacity for political organization may, without race vanity, be fairly claimed for the Anglo-Saxon people.”<sup>3</sup>

Increased immigration of non-white people to Canada during the late nineteenth century reinforced a racial white Canadian exceptionalism. From the 1890s to the 1920s, a growing number of Eastern European Jews, Chinese, and Sikhs from the Punjab immigrated to Canada.<sup>4</sup> As a result, the national population increased by 35 percent during the first twelve years of the twentieth century, and that of Ontario and Quebec grew by roughly 20 percent. This rapid rise in population put more pressure on the available land base.<sup>5</sup> As Canada became increasingly non-white, white Canadian Firsters found cause for concern.<sup>6</sup>

They worried that they were losing their country in terms of social composition, access to land, and political power. The fear of a rising tide of colour is evident in the remarks of British historian and journalist Goldwin Smith, who rhetorically asked, “Is Quashee to vote on [Canadian] imperial policy?”<sup>7</sup> It is also evident in one Montreal newspaper’s description of “Pagan Asiatics, Brahmins, Buddhists, Musselmen, fire-worshippers, in a word by people vomited by Satan upon the Earth” arriving to Canada; the writer suggested “we would like better still to become Americans” than to live among them.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, the calls for assimilating Canada’s Indigenous peoples intensified during the early twentieth century. The federal government continued to debate the “Indian question,” as it had before the inception of the Indian Act in 1876, but it viewed the management and assimilation of Native peoples with increased urgency. If white Canadians could not succeed in assimilating Indigenous peoples (as Canada’s first non-white group), how could they possibly assimilate other non-whites into society?

Conservative Senator Fowler, for example, remarked during a Senate debate in 1922 that “the Indian question is becoming somewhat acute. We have troubles enough about our immigration without having contention with our aboriginal inhabitants. It seems to me that the Indian Depart-

ment has not handled these people with sufficient firmness.”<sup>9</sup> Civilizing or assimilating Indians increasingly became part and parcel of Canada’s imperial and racial burden during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

DIA officials largely mirrored these pervasive racial sentiments. They viewed Native hunting and fishing (which held subsistence, market, and cultural values) as a primitive or ancient custom that needed to be eradicated to make room for more civilized occupational endeavours, such as farming and other agricultural work.<sup>10</sup> DIA reports from the turn of the century make this clear. The report of 1905, for example, equated farming with civilization. As DIA superintendent general Frank Oliver wrote, “Viewed in relation to, the Indians, agriculture may be regarded in two aspects, first as a direct means of maintenance, second as a medium for civilizing and creating habits of industry which may later on be diverted into other channels.”<sup>11</sup> Two years later, Oliver made the same point while also asserting that hunting and fishing were “nomadic habits which are fatal to the acquisition of even elementary civilization.”<sup>12</sup> He dismissed hunting and trapping as the baser emotional activities of an earlier generation, commenting that “the natural craving of the excitement of the chase” was rapidly being extinguished due to “lapse of time and contact with civilization.”<sup>13</sup>

The annual reports submitted by W.J. McCaffrey, who was Kitigan Zibi’s Indian agent from 1897 to 1913, confirm that he shared DIA views of the Algonquin.<sup>14</sup> His reports are also noteworthy because they reveal an underlying tension that lasted throughout his tenure. On the one hand, he obviously felt the bureaucratic impulse to write in a manner that his superiors would have found intelligible and goal-directed. On the other hand, he felt the need to accurately report local economic conditions that highlighted the market savviness of Algonquin hunters. Failing in this respect would have imperilled his own credibility and position as a civil servant.<sup>15</sup>

In his 1899 report, McCaffrey remarked that “the chief occupations of these Indians are shantying, stream-driving and hunting. The older members of this band still adhere to their ancient custom of hunting, but the younger men have given up hunting, and have turned their attention to other industries for a livelihood.”<sup>16</sup> He pointed to John Whiteduck and his sons as exemplars of the transition from the hunting and trapping of the older generation to the agriculturalism of the younger one, which had ostensibly embraced the DIA program: “Of the thirty acres broken last fall, nearly one-half was broken by John White Duck’s boys which speaks well for them,

as their father has always been a hunter and was never included among the farming Indians of Maniwaki.”

McCaffrey concluded that “considerable progress” had been made in farming during the year by noting that 13 new acres had been cleared for cultivation.<sup>17</sup> This remark is revealing. The records show that 866 acres of the reserve were under cultivation by 1910, which means that the 13 acres represented only about a 1.5 percent increase. It is difficult to square this number with “considerable progress.” Economic data indicate a slow increase of land under cultivation through the early twentieth century (see [Table 1.1](#)). In writing and reporting on the Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi, McCaffrey was engaged in a delicate balancing act. The following year, he again stated that “considerable progress” had been made in clearing new land for farming – this time citing 16 acres.<sup>18</sup>

In his 1903 report, McCaffrey predicted that hunting among the Algonquin would soon be an activity of the past: “The chief occupations of the Algonquins are farming, hunting and working in the woods for the lumber companies; the latter industry furnishes an ample supply of remunerative labour. There are some of the Indians who still follow hunting, but this number is growing smaller every year.”<sup>19</sup> His 1904 report recorded, “There has been very little progress in farming among the Indians during the past year, money being too easily earned at other occupations.”<sup>20</sup> McCaffrey also equated market access to clothing with whiteness and civilization. For him, blood quantum, sartorial choice, and language were markers of “progress” or transitions away from Indianness and toward whiteness.

McCaffrey observed that “several members of this band are half-breeds and would not be known from white people in dress and living. They are very much improved, and are highly civilized. They speak French, English and Indian fluently, and in manner and bearing compare favourably with their neighbours of the white race.”<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, his 1907 report seems to contradict his earlier statements that hunting and trapping were steadily diminishing every year:

There are about twenty-six families who do a little farming, but do not farm sufficiently to maintain their families. A large number of them still adhere to the old system of hunting, at which industry they make money very fast, owing to the high price of fur during the past season. Those who work in the lumber woods obtain very high wages.<sup>22</sup>

**TABLE 1.1** Demographic and economic data for Kitigan Zibi, 1910–39

Year	Population	Acreage cultivated	\$			
			Value of farm products	Wages	Hunting	Total
1910	414	866	6,865	21,000	6,000	42,300
1911	421	873	7,123	22,000	6,000	43,223
1912	422	902	7,691	33,000	6,200	58,070
1913	436	925	8,285	34,215	6,200	59,502
1914	434	720	4,701	14,973	8,693	31,905
1915	443	649	4,930	15,811	8,822	36,417
1916	444	850	5,667	13,393	12,106	36,134
1917	446	1,026	8,559	30,362	6,565	50,095
1918		1,249	7,850	32,110	6,787	55,608
1919		1,250	6,847	32,258	12,332	65,221
1920		1,269	9,674	32,015	46,171	99,358
1921		1,349	10,920	38,483	26,605	91,933
1922		1,420	8,830	34,070	31,615	84,146
1923		1,428	8,406	33,962	33,345	84,158
1924	469	1,447	8,366	34,047	32,980	81,798
1925		1,457	7,430	34,259	32,805	82,716
1926		1,465	8,292	33,004	31,190	83,163
1927		1,480	8,666	31,133	30,285	80,440
1928		1,484	7,881	31,860	29,565	77,789
1929	502	1,496	7,671	33,802	27,880	80,843
1930		1,516	8,344	37,760	21,080	76,669
1931		1,508	8,329	38,210	5,400	61,687
1932		1,504	6,996	22,086	10,025	49,392
1933			3,650	8,000	4,800	25,286
1934	534		4,549	10,010	7,000	30,559
1935			5,000	9,500	5,500	25,724
1936			4,800	14,000	4,800	38,014
1937						
1938			5,456	30,200	3,000	44,644
1939	558		3,752	28,000	2,900	40,968

Source: Joan Holmes, *Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Global Research Project* (Kitigan Zibi: Kitigan Zibi Band Office, 1999), 139–40; Indian agent reports for Maniwaki.

Note: Not all sources of income have been included in this table. For a complete listing, see annual Indian agent reports.



His comment underscores his balancing act in characterizing hunting and trapping as the “old system” while simultaneously noting the lucrative-ness of furs, which favourably highlighted both local economic realities and the market savviness of Algonquin hunters.

Two years later, in his 1909 report, McCaffrey reverted to a racial analysis of Algonquin labour practices: “These sons of the forest, accustomed as they have been for generations to pass the summer months as a holiday season, find it hard to give up old habits and customs.” He continued, “They find it pleasanter to rest in the shade or roam around in groups than to engage in any kind of laborious work.”<sup>23</sup> His final report, of 1913, demonstrates that he could swing from accurate local assessment to the trope of racialism within the space of a few paragraphs. As he wrote, “Lumbering, river-driving and hunting furnish employment to those who are not engaged in farming. The Indians are always in demand by tourists to act as guides, and are also proficient as bush and fire rangers.” A few paragraphs later, he added, “Although there are quite a few of the Indians who are improvident and shiftless, their number has been rapidly decreasing and the majority are thrifty and self-supporting. There are quite a number who have taken to farming and are making steady progress, each year marking new improvements.”<sup>24</sup>

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Indian agents at Kitigan Zibi continued to espouse racist beliefs after the departure of McCaffrey. For example, E.S. Gauthier, who was its agent from 1913 to 1939, wrote to an American tourist hunter from Kentucky in 1933 asking for leniency for some Algonquin who were caught trapping on his leased area. He wrote in a paternalistic tone to the Kentuckian: “I may assure you as Indian Agent, I have kept warning the Indians against illegal hunting and especially to keep away from leased territories, but as you know most of them are overgrown children.”<sup>25</sup>

Whereas DIA officials in Ottawa and Kitigan Zibi were largely unsuccessful in convincing the Algonquin to devote themselves to farming, they were more successful in siphoning off reserve lands. Since its inception in 1876, the Indian Act had functioned as the primary mechanism in aid of this process. However, the period from the 1870s to the 1920s witnessed the greatest pressure on reserve lands by the department.

An 1887 amendment to the Indian Act allowed for the expropriation of reserve lands for the purpose of adding railroad crossings.<sup>26</sup> Also, an 1894 amendment authorized the DIA superintendent general to lease reserve land if the owner were physically disabled or unable to cultivate it. The

following year, this amendment was expanded to cover any individual who submitted an application without the approval of the Chief and council.<sup>27</sup> According to the scholar E. Brian Titley, this “represented the thin end of the wedge of confiscation.”<sup>28</sup> Likewise, a 1906 amendment increased band revenues from 10 to 50 percent on any surrendered land sales as an incentive to push communities to sell off their reserve land base.<sup>29</sup> Reflecting this assimilationist push, in that same year, DIA deputy superintendent general Frank Pedley asked Frank Oliver, the minister of the interior, “whether or not the time has arrived for leaving ... [the Indians] to the operation of the natural law which tends towards survival of the fittest.”<sup>30</sup> In 1911, amendments to the Indian Act authorized the expropriation of reserve lands for rights-of-way by private companies and municipal authorities. An amendment of the same year provided discretionary powers to the federal government for the expropriation of entire reserves near towns of greater than eight thousand inhabitants.<sup>31</sup>

The advent of the Great War witnessed increased DIA pressure on First Nations lands. As part of the Canadian Greater Production Campaign, a 1918 amendment to the Indian Act authorized the superintendent general to lease any and all uncultivated reserve lands without band authorization. In 1920, when a Special Parliamentary Committee of the House of Commons deliberated on further amendments to the act, DIA deputy superintendent general Duncan Campbell Scott testified before it, As he explained,

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. That is my whole point. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department and that is the whole object of this bill.<sup>32</sup>

Scott’s testimony underscores the primary purpose of the many revisions of the Indian Act during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the assimilation of Native peoples and the incorporation of their lands.

Loss of reserve lands had been a reality for the Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi since 1853, when their reserve was created. They had already sustained heavy land loss between 1849 and 1851. The legislation of 1849 that established

the setting aside of reserve lands, on the recommendation of the assistant commissioner of Crown lands, had ordered that a 60,000-acre reserve be established for them.<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, in 1850 a survey map was drawn up that comprised the 60,000 acres. However, legislation passed by the British Parliament in 1851 authorized a reduction of the area to roughly 46,400 acres. This represented a loss of about 13,600 acres within the short space of two years.<sup>34</sup>

Concerned about the prospects of additional land loss, the Algonquin made their intentions plain during a special band meeting of 1874. The band members present unanimously declared that they would never consent to “sell one perch of their reserve under any circumstances whatever, but that they will be willing at any time to allow by their surrender land to be set at a reasonable rent for a definite term.”<sup>35</sup>

The DIA continued its attempts to sell off reserve Algonquin lands. In pursuit of this, Deputy Superintendent General Lawrence Vankoughnet advised his superior in 1882 that the Kitigan Zibi Algonquin had more land than they needed and suggested obtaining a surrender for half the reserve.<sup>36</sup> Charles Logue, who had been the Kitigan Zibi Indian agent from 1879 to 1885, made this point in an 1891 letter to the DIA minister:

When speaking to Mr. Vankoughnet on the subject I understood him to say that he had no objection to leasing but that he was opposed to selling. I had always understood, and I write with some knowledge on the subject – that it was the policy of the Government to induce the Indians of the Maniwaki Reserve to surrender as much of their land as possible. The proceeds to be applied to their benefit. This policy was to my mind an excellent one, as there is no good reason why over 40,000 acres of land should be left idle, when it might be yielding a handsome revenue to its owners ... They [the Chief and council] have always refused; even contrary to the wishes of the Government to sell any considerable portion of their lands.<sup>37</sup>

It is unclear why Vankoughnet pushed for a surrender of half the reserve in 1882 but reversed course in 1891. Nonetheless, seventeen surrenders for lease or sale of reserve lands were taken by Kitigan Zibi Indian agents between 1873 and the beginning of McCaffrey's tenure in 1897.<sup>38</sup> These surrenders totalled 1,316 acres. Thirteen additional surrenders were taken from

1897 to 1917 during the tenures of McCaffrey and Gauthier. They amounted to 2,368 acres, almost twice the previous amount. In addition, Gauthier authorized three right-of-way surrenders between 1918 and 1926.<sup>39</sup> One right-of-way, sought by the Board of Railway Commissioners in 1925, was authorized under the provisions of the 1911 Indian Act for the purposes of expanding the railway.<sup>40</sup>

A number of these surrenders involved dubious, and even illegal, practices. First, local agents often erroneously wrote them up as sales rather than leases. Algonquin political leaders and Elders, including Chief William Commanda, as well as former long-time Chief Jean-Guy Whiteduck, argued that the Algonquin understood the surrenders to be for lease, not sale.<sup>41</sup> As one Elder noted, they “never wanted to sell their land. They just loaned, leased the land.”<sup>42</sup> Second, some agents forged the signatures on surrender documents. For example, fifteen signatures on an 1873 surrender were all written by the same person, in the same hand that appears throughout the text of the document itself.<sup>43</sup> The writer was likely Indian Agent John White. In another example, an 1893 surrender taken by Agent James Martin revealed that the same individual provided signatures for both Simon Otjick and Bazil Otjick. Also, the signatures for both John McDougall and Peter Tenesco differ on other documents that relate to the surrender.<sup>44</sup>

Lastly, instead of adhering to the protocols laid out in the Indian Act, the agent conducted many surrenders in a haphazard manner. For instance, the act outlined that proposals for surrenders must be made during special meetings, probably to augment community input on such important matters as land alienation. However, five surrenders were proposed at regular band meetings.<sup>45</sup> The Indian Act also stipulated that a majority of male band members over age twenty-one had to consent to surrenders. Nonetheless, the 1905 surrender of a ten-acre strip was signed by only twelve, thus making it invalid.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, only thirty-four votes approved a 1917 surrender of almost fifteen hundred acres under Agent Gauthier, who informed his superiors that the voter list consisted of forty-five names in total. However, the annual report for the previous year listed 122 male members of the band.<sup>47</sup>

The Algonquin were also deprived of rent monies from squatters and leased lands. Deputy Superintendent General Vankoughnet wrote to his superior in 1876 that no leases had been issued to squatters who had occupied parts of the reserve since the 1850s.<sup>48</sup> An 1885 memo from W. Plummer

of the DIA to Vankoughnet outlined a number of irregularities concerning rents. One tenant had occupied a tract of 310 acres for which he paid a nominal fee of eight dollars a year. In addition, the three large companies of G.B. Hall, Hamilton Brothers, and Gilmour paid no rent on the lands they occupied.<sup>49</sup>

The collection of rents was an ongoing issue throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1939, Agent Gauthier noted that, from 1919 to 1925, a farmer named Michael Brady had not paid rent on approximately one hundred acres. Gauthier recommended to his superiors that Brady pay nominal back rents and renew his lease for ten additional years. However, two years later, in 1941, Inspector of Indian Agencies Jude Thibault remarked that Brady still owed two thousand dollars in back rents and asked him to vacate. The farmer was still occupying the property in February 1943, despite yet another order to leave.<sup>50</sup>

In 1942, the Quebec government dealt a further blow to the leased lands of the Algonquin. It had decided to act on the 1920 *Star Chrome Mining* decision, which held that Indians possessed only usufructuary rights to reserve lands and that upon surrender, the property reverted back to the Province of Quebec. This meant that Quebec could now claim leased reserve land. Thus, the government notified the Maniwaki agency (Kitigan Zibi) that all leases issued by the DIA were invalid and that the lands reverted to Quebec, which subsequently issued provincial patents of ownership. The thrust of this sweep meant that the Algonquin could no longer collect rents on leased lands and, furthermore, that the property was patented by the Province, thereby permanently removing it from reserve status. As a result, the government sold the land without the authorization of the Algonquin.<sup>51</sup>

The example of the farmer Michael Brady is illustrative of the process of dispossession. In 1943, the Brady farm reverted to the Province because Brady had not paid his taxes, even though it was leased Algonquin land. That year, Eugene Langevin of the village of Maniwaki bought the farm for \$545 for tax arrears. However, the band passed a band council resolution in October 1945 to pay Langevin for the property. The Algonquin lost thousands of dollars in rent from Brady and later Langevin. In addition, they were unable to use the land themselves. Lastly, they had to pay monies out of the band account to reacquire what was their own property.<sup>52</sup>

They also encountered significant land loss off the reserve, in their traditional hunting territories. The proliferation of sports tourist clubs beginning

around the turn of the twentieth century contributed to this trend.<sup>53</sup> Three hunting and fishing clubs were created in the Maniwaki area in 1899. *Forest and Stream* magazine wrote in 1914 that “one district which is coming into popularity is the Gatineau country beyond the river terminus at Maniwaki – several American clubs have invaded this region and have leased clubs to the Northwest and Northeast of Maniwaki.”<sup>54</sup> By 1915, twenty more sports tourist clubs had sprouted up.<sup>55</sup> Daniel Whiteduck recalled that many American sports tourists visited the area during the early twentieth century: “That time there was a lot of American outfitters. All the big lakes around here were leased to Americans.”<sup>56</sup>

White sports tourists, primarily from the United States, were drawn to the region as a respite from city life. Quebec’s Triton Club, which counted Teddy Roosevelt among its members, promulgated sports tourism as a revitalization activity and wilderness spaces as a counterbalance to the deleterious effects of urban living.<sup>57</sup> A gun manufacturer in Ontario wooed potential customers with an ad titled “You Haven’t Forgotten the Stone Age.” It suggested that their sense of restlessness during the spring and fall, which made them “look up through the city’s smoke and wonder if the ducks are flying,” was “your Stone Age inheritance surging in your blood.”<sup>58</sup>

Tourist advertising and periodicals from the early to mid-twentieth century promoted both the therapeutic and the racial aspects of sports tourism in the Maniwaki area. This reflected and reinforced existing racist views in Quebec and the larger cross-border region. A number of tourist stories/ads highlight the area as providing an escape from the pressures of modern urban living. A 1906 *Forest and Stream* writer, for example, reported on his “expedition” through the “unknown interior of the northern parts of Ottawa” and added that some sportsmen “prize the opportunity of getting as far as possible from civilization.”<sup>59</sup> He assured readers that the farther north they went, the farther they would penetrate into a pristine past. As he explained, “from Maniwaki we had to drive to the Baskatong Bridge ... the last frontier post.”<sup>60</sup> A 1936 *New York Times* article pointed to the salutary health and emotional benefits of the tourist wilderness experience: “It is not alone the thrill of stalking big game, the exhilaration and physical well-being that comes with roughing it in the vast silences, that induces men to pack into the woods.”<sup>61</sup> Likewise, a 1951 *Maclean’s* article described the Maniwaki area as “fabled” and as one of Canada’s last remaining “unspoiled wilderness frontiers.”<sup>62</sup> The author framed it as the nineteenth-century frontier pushing up against modernity. This stark contrast between the frontier

and modernity contributed to its quaint character: “Just eighty miles north of the end of the steel [railroad] lies the lusty little frontier town of Maniwaki, populated by two-fisted loggers, reservation Indians, half-breed trappers and fur traders and a river of tourists driving everything from fishtail Cadillacs to croaking jalopies.”<sup>63</sup> As late as 1958, the *New York Times* described the Maniwaki region as the “perfect vacation to get as far from civilization as possible.”<sup>64</sup>

Some advertisements offered a more racial pull, portraying Native men and women as disappearing Indians or picturesque props. A 1917 *Forest and Stream* article, for example, suggested that “the romance of the bark canoe will not d[r]own ... [but] will no doubt survive long after the last one shall have gone to the Happy Grounds with the race that stood as its type and sponsor.”<sup>65</sup> It stated that canoes were the “only tangible primeval relic left” of Native culture and life.<sup>66</sup> A 1951 *Maclean’s* article mentioned the presence of the “dwindling band of Algonquin who reigned supreme as lords and masters of this entire forest domain.”<sup>67</sup> It celebrated white masculinity through the exploits of the lumberjack Jack Lannigan. “Famous for having wrestled a black bear and strangled it to death with his bare hands,” he had also “disarmed a dangerous Indian named Wabi ... who had run amuck in a labor camp.”<sup>68</sup> As an exemplar of white masculinity, Lannigan conquered both the wild animals and the unruly Indians of the bush. In this frontier fantasy and recapitulation of the conquest, the author has Lannigan make wilderness spaces safe for white men, noting that “another legend was born among the rolling hills of the Gatineau.”<sup>69</sup> Even as late as 1962, the *New York Times* explained that “before the road ... was built, this territory was virtually unknown to white men. Only a few Algonquin Indians inhabited it.”<sup>70</sup>

During the 1890s, the Quebec government began to institute conservation policies that increased the popularity of sports tourism in the region but that also contributed to the economic marginalization of the Algonquin. In 1895, the government passed a number of game laws that set open and closed seasons for moose and deer hunting, and it put a four-year moratorium on the killing of beaver.<sup>71</sup> This early conservation law is noteworthy. The law sparked a discussion among government officials on the probable impact of the new policies on the Native peoples of Quebec, including the Algonquin. These included loss of monies derived from hunting and even starvation.

In 1896, seeking clarification, DIA deputy superintendent general Hayter Reed wrote to the assistant commissioner of Crown lands, asking if Native

people were exempt from the policies for the purposes of subsistence. As he explained, “if they be prohibited from taking beaver until 1900 great destitution will be entailed.”<sup>72</sup> In the following year, the DIA had prepared a memorandum for a parliamentary committee on the application of provincial game laws to the Native peoples of Quebec. The document drew from the Bagot Report of 1845, arguing for a conquest doctrine that cited Christianity, civilization, and European settlement as reasons for land confiscation. The DIA had redeployed the conquest doctrine to continue justifying the dispossession of Indigenous hunting and trapping territories.<sup>73</sup> The assistant commissioner of Crown lands was inclined to reject the suggestion of allowing a concession for Indians to hunt and trap for subsistence purposes.

An 1897 Privy Council order acknowledged the growing number of tourist hunters by noting that “the real cause of destruction, where such had occurred has seen indiscriminate trapping by others than Indians.”<sup>74</sup> It also recommended concessions for Native hunting and trapping concerning “the nomadic Indians between the Saint Maurice and Gatineau Rivers [Maniwaki],” who depended on beaver for food and pelts to pay for clothing, ammunition, and the “necessaries of life.” The Privy Council warned of the effects of the provincial regulations: “The Minister further observes that the application to these Indians of the legislation referred to cannot fail to result in much suffering, and it is by no means impossible that there may be actual loss of life from starvation.”<sup>75</sup> Also in that year, Ottawa passed an order-in-council approved by the lieutenant governor requesting that the Quebec government exempt Indians from the provincial game laws.<sup>76</sup> Despite the remonstrance of both Ottawa and the Privy Council, the Quebec government was successful in asserting its prerogative over Native hunters, declaring its authority over Algonquin traditional lands.

In March 1908, Chief John Tennesco wrote to the DIA, asking for guidance on the Quebec game laws.<sup>77</sup> Could Indians be fined if they took animals for their own use? Assistant Deputy Secretary J.D. McLean answered that he had “not the slightest doubt” that Chief Tennesco would be fined for hunting “without a license.”<sup>78</sup> In 1914, the Algonquin petitioned the DIA to clarify the rules for hunting and trapping on privately leased lands. Chief Mitchell Commandant inquired, “I want to know if an Indian is forbidden to hunt in parks where some of the clubs have bought. We just want to get enough to eat we don’t expect riches from those parks.”<sup>79</sup> McLean again responded that licences were granted to clubs by the provincial government



and that “it is understood that the members of the club have the sole right to hunt over the district covered by the license.”<sup>80</sup>

Game wardens contributed to the economic marginalization of the Algonquin through confiscating pelts, assessing fines, and incarcerating hunters. During a two-day period in 1912, two game wardens seized nine hundred dollars’ worth of furs that were shipped from Maniwaki to Montreal.<sup>81</sup> In 1914, Pierre Daney was sentenced to two months in jail and fined fifty dollars for shooting three deer out of season.<sup>82</sup>

In August 1923, Chief John Chabot and Councillor Michel Cote gave an interview to the *Ottawa Journal*, during which they protested the provincial game laws and the invasion of white hunters. The paper duly published an article, provocatively titled “River Desert Indians Want Their Freedom – Algonquins Preparing Formal Demands for Permission to Leave British Empire.” It relayed the complaints of the two Algonquin (delivered in what it termed “surprisingly good English”): “They claim that their treaty rights to hunt and fish unhampered have been, and continue to be, flagrantly violated.”<sup>83</sup> Chief Chabot also mentioned the increasing number of trespassers: “The chiefs allege that net fishing is being carried on by white men and lakes on the reserves are being depleted ... that traps have been raided and many encroachments on traplines reported.”<sup>84</sup>

A number of incarcerations appear in the DIA files from 1928. Albert Jabot was “condemned” to one month in jail for illegally killing a deer.<sup>85</sup> Frank Macconnonie (Beaverman) was also arrested for illegal hunting at about the same time.<sup>86</sup> The local game warden confiscated two guns and twelve traps belonging to Philippe McDougal, who stated, “Where I was hunting it was listed by the white people sports but that place has been our hunting grounds for generations.”<sup>87</sup> The following year, Joseph Commandant was fined \$105 for killing a moose out of season.<sup>88</sup>

In 1931, Chief Moises Odjick explained to the *Niagara Falls Gazette* how sports tourist clubs and provincial conservation policies were affecting the Algonquin. “We are having a hard time to live Hunting is about done,” he stated. “Our lakes are almost all leased and the game warden is putting our people in jail for hunting.”<sup>89</sup> In the same year, the Algonquin forwarded a petition to the DIA. Its author, who wrote on behalf of the “Indians of the Maniwaki Reserve,” related that “nowadays we have no more permitted to hunt or fishing – the Game Warden seized our nets ... and many other times he put the Indians in jail for hunting.”<sup>90</sup> Also in 1931, the inspector of Indian Affairs notified Deputy Superintendent General Duncan Campbell Scott

that “there is considerable unrest at Maniwaki and not altogether without cause.”<sup>91</sup> In 1933, Mrs. Joseph Dumont had five skins seized because she did not possess the necessary provincial licence. “I earn most of my living,” she told Agent Gauthier, “by making and selling deer skins mitts and moccasins.”<sup>92</sup> The following year, the widow Mrs. Perrault also had her skins seized by local game wardens.<sup>93</sup>

Oral histories offer an additional window into the interactions between the Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi and game wardens. One informant stated that wardens had destroyed her hunting site: “This shack was destroyed because they [game hunters] wanted Native trappers and hunters out of the area.”<sup>94</sup> Another hunter recalled that “game wardens threw kids from sled to search for pelts. Jean-Baptiste Jr. was thrown off sled to search for pelts [his] father was charged, spent 2 nights in jail and charged 300 dollars.”<sup>95</sup> Elders remembered that wardens often entered Algonquin homes without permission to search for unauthorized game. Former Chief Gilbert Whiteduck recalled stories shared during band meetings in which Elders referred to wardens who went into the homes of community members to seize deer and moose from their iceboxes.<sup>96</sup> Stan Dumont Whiteduck recalled similar stories.<sup>97</sup> A 1941 letter, written by John Commanda to the DIA, confirms this:

I beg to ask your help in regards to the game wardens in our vicinity if he has the power also to search and investigate in each house and surroundings he is around quite frequently and search around, and also the police they seem to have a look around more so on the Indian settlement more than the white people.<sup>98</sup>

Throughout the 1940s, additional pressures were placed on Algonquin hunting territories. Short month-long open seasons for Native beaver trapping provided a truncated space in which Algonquin hunters could operate legally. Provincial conservation legislation from 1941 set the open season on beaver from November 15 to December 20. In addition, a maximum quota of ten beaver skins was set for the season.<sup>99</sup>

The following year, the Chief and council passed a band council resolution that requested DIA permission to trap ten additional beavers per family during the spring, as “their territory has been diminished by leases to clubs, that these Indian trappers cannot make a living with their legal catch.”<sup>100</sup> Although Indian Agent J.E. Gendron endorsed this resolution,

the provincial Department of Fish and Game denied the request, citing an insufficient increase in beaver.<sup>101</sup> The Quebec government renewed the same restrictive measures in 1943.<sup>102</sup>

At the same time, Quebec instituted mandatory licences for Native hunters, which were intended to produce bureaucratic knowledge and control of Native hunting territories. A 1942 memorandum from the Department of Mines and Resources reveals the justification for requiring Native hunters to hold provincial licences to hunt and trap. Superintendent D.J. Allan noted, "From the viewpoint of departmental administration to license all Indians in the Province of Quebec would have certain definite advantages, we would know exactly the number and location of every Indian in the province." He also suggested that the implementation of licences "might impress upon the mind of the Indian trapper that the right to hunt in the province was a privilege ... that he would lose if he did not properly conduct himself and abide by the laws of the province."<sup>103</sup> The provincial Department of Fish and Game agreed, pointing out that such licences would help the Province better control the fur trade.<sup>104</sup>

Likewise, in 1945, Hugh R. Conn of the Department of Mines and Resources suggested implementing a trapline system in Quebec, as Manitoba had done four years earlier, citing the "excellent" effects there.<sup>105</sup> Conn recommended that only licence holders should be granted traplines and that if they failed to comply with all provincial regulations, they would lose their trapline lease. That same year, the provincial Department of Fish and Game required holders of traplines to draw a detailed map of their leased territory and to identify the location and number of beaver cabins in it.<sup>106</sup> In taking this step, the government set in motion the bureaucratic machinery to expropriate the local knowledge of Native hunters and to interpolate them as licence holders with privileges in increasingly monitored and regulated spaces. Thus, it continued to arrogate to itself the authority to grant as well as revoke the ability to hunt and trap throughout the province. Harassment by game wardens and the imposition of registered traplines caused many Algonquin to stop hunting on their traditional lands during the 1940s.<sup>107</sup>

The pattern of harassment, fines, and confiscations persisted during the post-Second World War period. In 1956, game wardens confiscated a shotgun belonging to Mary Commanda (wife of Chief William Commanda) because she was driving outside of the reserve with the firearm in her possession.<sup>108</sup> The following year, wardens fined Rene, Paddy, and Peter

Commanda and James Tenesco for hunting moose in closed season and for carrying two rifles.<sup>109</sup> Joseph Groulx was fined two hundred dollars and court costs, in 1960, for hunting moose during closed season.<sup>110</sup> Also in that year, game wardens seized the traps, rifles, and equipment of John Twenish and Delphis Tolley because they did not possess a licence.<sup>111</sup>

It is important to note that the above does not provide a complete catalogue of arrests, confiscations, and fines for the post–Second World War period. The files at Library and Archives Canada are partial and fragmentary, and though Crown-Indigenous Relations holds records from 1975 to the present, I have not succeeded in gaining access to them.<sup>112</sup> As a result, the conclusions offered here are tentative and conditional upon the availability and examination of additional government records. However, documents obtained from Quebec’s Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs reveal that, between 2011 and 2017, wardens continued to charge and fine the Algonquin for hunting out of season, for not possessing provincial permits, and for firearms violations.<sup>113</sup>

Additional restrictions on provincial traplines after the Second World War continued to negatively affect the Algonquin. Daniel “Pinock” Smith noted that white hunters usually obtained the best traplines, whereas those given to the Algonquin were typically in the backwoods, where accessibility was poor because roads were few.<sup>114</sup> Another Elder agreed with Smith’s assessment in what he called the problem of “weekend trappers,” white individuals who received preferential treatment “and easier access whereas old trappers are pushed, too hard to reach traplines.”<sup>115</sup> During the 1970s, the provincial authorities set quotas on registered traplines. One band member said that Native hunters were required to sign nine-year agreements with the province to abide by provincial regulations. Conservation officials conducted airborne surveys to determine how many active beaver cabins existed, using this information to set quotas. A trapline could be revoked if its registered leaseholder did not comply with the quota, and provincial authorities were also empowered to reduce its size. A number of band members interviewed during the 1990s remarked that the traplines were too small to provide a living.<sup>116</sup> In 1992, the Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi occupied no more than 20 percent of the registered traplines in the area.<sup>117</sup>

Bureaucratically managed traplines do not take into account wildlife movement across arbitrary boundaries. This creates an incentive to kill immature animals. Stan Dumont Whiteduck related that prior to the implementation of traplines, Algonquin hunters engaged in long-term planning.

If the bears in a certain area were unusually small or thin, for example, they refrained from trapping there for a number of years, thus allowing the population to rebound. However, the trapline regime discourages this approach, as hunters have sought to gain maximum advantage over adjoining and competing traplines.<sup>118</sup> In the end, this too contributed to the ongoing marginalization of Algonquin hunters on their traditional territories.

## 2

# Strategies of Economic and Extra-Legal Resistance

**BEFORE THE KITIGAN ZIBI** reserve was created in 1853, the Algonquin regularly devoted the winter months to hunting in their traditional territories and spent the summers at the Lake of Two Mountains mission, also known as Oka (Algonquin for “walleye”), a few kilometres west of Montreal. This rhythm of seasonal activity lasted from the 1720s until the 1850s.<sup>1</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, the Algonquin were participating in complementary economic activities that also relied on their traditional lands. In addition, kinship and cultural ties figured into their decision to visit the Sulpician mission at Oka.

The primary economic activity of the Algonquin at the Lake of Two Mountains was hunting and trapping for the regional market. The Bagot Report of 1845 noted that they hunted in their traditional territories and returned to the mission on the lake during the summer to trade their furs. According to the report, they

depend entirely upon the chase for a livelihood. They wander about from place to place, on their hunting grounds, which are most extensive ... These hunting grounds have been engaged by their ancestors and them from time immemorial ... These tribes [Algonquin] live in huts, or wigwams, ten months out of the twelve, and many of them the whole year through. [Those who return to the] Lake annually (the great majority), where they remain two months, live, while there, in houses.<sup>2</sup>

The Algonquin traded their furs with various merchants outside of Montreal and local petty traders who visited the mission. These economic relationships with French Canadian traders of Montreal and the hinterland stretched back to the early seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Bagot Report stated that the Algonquin “depend entirely upon the chase for a livelihood,” they had clearly developed additional streams of revenue at the Lake of Two Mountains.<sup>4</sup> Petitions from the Algonquin leadership demonstrate that they were also collecting annual rents from leasing their islands on the Ottawa River. One petition noted that “we have been in the habit of receiving certain annual rents, of certain islands on both banks of the River Ottawa ... that they [squatters] agreed to pay us, for the enjoyment of said islands and lots, and for which the squatters have been in the habit of paying us for these many years past.”<sup>5</sup>

In addition to collecting rents, the Algonquin sold wood, as early as 1838, to buyers in Montreal, Vaudreuil, and other nearby locations.<sup>6</sup> Like the Abenaki of the Saint Francis Mission, they probably made baskets, moccasins, and snowshoes for the local market.<sup>7</sup> Some also farmed for subsistence and market purposes. An Algonquin petition from 1845, for example, recorded that they grew corn and made maple syrup on their traditional lands.<sup>8</sup> Kinship networks also informed Algonquin activities at the Sulpician mission. The aged and infirmed remained there year round.<sup>9</sup> The mission acted as a convalescent home for those who were too weak or old to engage in the annual hunt. In addition, the Algonquin participated in religious and social activities during their months at the mission.<sup>10</sup>

From the 1830s to the 1850s, three large, overlapping economic and demographic factors placed increasing pressure on Algonquin labour activities and access to traditional lands, ultimately prompting the decision to leave the Lake of Two Mountains. They were the lumber industry, the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC), and the squatter explosion.<sup>11</sup> The growing lumber industry attracted large numbers of workers and squatters who cleared land and impinged on traditional hunting territories north of the Lake of Two Mountains.<sup>12</sup> An Algonquin petition from 1840 makes this point: “Our beaver and other furs have been destroyed by the constant fires made by the lumberman in our Majestic Forests. Our timber to the amount of hundreds of thousands of pounds is annually taken from those hunting grounds, which by our Great Father reserve for us and us only.”<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, in 1845, the Algonquin complained that they had been “ill-treated by these interlopers who take pleasure in destroying our patches of

Maize which we have here and there in cultivation, and often pillaging and destroying our sugar bushes.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, the Algonquin suffered from the contraction of credit due to the loss of revenues from timber cutting and its deleterious effect on the fur trade. As they explained, our “wives and children are naked Our Traders will give us no more credit ... because we can procure no furs.”<sup>15</sup>

The Bagot Report of 1845 provided a similar assessment of the situation: “A vast extent has been taken possession of, by squatters, and the rest almost entirely ruined by lumbermen, their deer have disappeared, their beaver and other furs annihilated caused by continual and annual fires made in their forests by lumbermen.”<sup>16</sup> In addition, the Sulpicians at the Lake of Two Mountains mission forbade the cutting of wood for the market.<sup>17</sup>

Economic dislocations in the fur trade played an important role in the decision of the Algonquin to leave the Lake of Two Mountains. After it merged with its chief rival the North West Company in 1821, the HBC had incorporated the trading post at the lake.<sup>18</sup> This consolidation led to the closing of the post by 1848.<sup>19</sup> This development not only mirrored the larger troubles faced by the Algonquin but also significantly truncated the market for their furs.

During the 1830s and 1840s, the Algonquin wrote a number of petitions, asking for both the protection of their traditional lands and the creation of a reserve at Maniwaki.<sup>20</sup> Ottawa agreed that they could relocate, but it had its own reasons for supporting the scheme. The contest between the Algonquin and the federal government over the location and purpose of the reserve reveals the central importance of access to traditional lands and hunting.

In 1845, the Bagot Report recommended that the Algonquin and other First Nations should be relocated to Manitoulin Island on Lake Huron, as an instrument to “civilize” or assimilate them (reminiscent of Andrew Jackson’s disastrous removal policy of the 1830s and 1840s).<sup>21</sup> It suggested that their adoption of Euro-Canadian farming practices on the island would aid in the “promotion of civilization.”<sup>22</sup> As a result, the assistant superintendent general of Indian Affairs notified the Algonquin in March 1847 that the governor general had rejected their request to move to Maniwaki and insisted that they relocate to Manitoulin Island.<sup>23</sup> The Algonquin refused, intending to continue hunting in their traditional territories.<sup>24</sup>

Upon reconsidering the Algonquin preference for the Maniwaki region, the federal government concluded that the Algonquin could just as easily



farm in northern Quebec as on Lake Huron. From the government's perspective, they could support the local timber industry with produce. Before the arrival of the railroad, logging companies relied heavily on nearby farms to grow the necessary food for both their employees and their draught animals.<sup>25</sup> The lumber industry was well established in the region by 1853. In 1832, the Crown Timber Office had granted the "Gatineau privilege" to the Wright brothers, authorizing them to log along the Gatineau River.<sup>26</sup> By 1834, Tiberius Wright Jr. had a lumber shanty operating near present-day Maniwaki. A few years later, in 1837, George Hamilton obtained a licence and began operations in the region in 1844.<sup>27</sup> The three firms of Gilmour and Company, James O'Hagan, and George B. Hall were granted timber concessions in 1848 in the township of Maniwaki. By 1853, the growing lumber industry required increasing amounts of produce and foodstuffs to function.

Relocating the Algonquin to Maniwaki seemed a solution to the government's "Indian problem." It would remove the community from the urban environs of Montreal, further the assimilation project by transforming the Algonquin into farmers, and support the logging industry. The intensification of lumber activities, in turn, would contribute to government revenues in the form of tax payments.

The Algonquin, in stark contrast, intended to maintain hunting and trapping as their primary economic activities at Maniwaki, viewing farming and other endeavours as ancillary pursuits. However, to obtain the reserve, they had to convince the federal government that they were ready and eager to take up farming. The critical role played by Chief Luc-Antoine Pakinawatik (whose surname means "Tree Struck by Lightning") in securing the reserve and the question of the significance of farming clearly illustrate this point.

Chief Pakinawatik played on the government's hopes of converting the Algonquin hunters into farmers. By employing what James Scott terms "rhetorical concessions," he inserted himself into the public discourse with government and religious figures for the benefit of the Algonquin.<sup>28</sup> His rhetorical stance captured the attention of the bishop of Bytown, Monseigneur Eugène Guigues, as well as the Governor General of Canada. To obtain the reserve, he presented Ottawa with what it wanted to see – an image of transformed and assimilated Indians engaging in full-scale agriculture. An examination of three petitions signed by Chief Pakinawatik reveals the ways in which he played on government expectations.

The petitions, which date from 1835, 1848, and 1849, reveal the changing tone and thrust of his arguments. The petition of 1835, which Pakinawatik and other Algonquin leaders signed, contains formulaic phrases that commonly appear in Algonquin petitions from the 1820s and onward.<sup>29</sup> One notable feature is its deferential character. It begins, “We, the Indian Chiefs and Warriors who now most respectfully approach your Excellency ... and obediently implore your Excellency as our temporal Father and Protector.” The petitioners often refer to themselves as “your Red Children” and end by stating, “We do by this our Memorial humbly submit to your Excellency our Father the foregoing Representation of the grievances and Deprivations which we your Red Children have endured.”<sup>30</sup> They also referred repeatedly to the military alliances between the Algonquin and the British, specifically during the time of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the American Revolution. Invoking historical treaty alliances between nations while simultaneously using the deferential language of “Fathers” and “Red Children” might seem contradictory, but in fact the two strands weave seamlessly into each other.

According to historian Richard White, Native politicking was often formed in the metaphor of familial relations.<sup>31</sup> In European and white American and Canadian contexts, familial relations were commonly characterized by discipline and obedience. However, in Native contexts they denoted respect and reciprocity. Familial metaphors employed by Native orators and writers, as in the 1835 Algonquin petition, called attention to the close relationship and expectations put upon both parties. From the viewpoint of the Algonquin, if British authorities did not respond to their needs, they risked becoming poor protectors or bad fathers. Such a rupture in political relations as expressed in ethnocentric familial terms undermined the respect and reciprocity expected from the Algonquin.

The Algonquin petitions of 1848 and 1849 took a very different approach, one that was ultimately successful in gaining the reserve, which was founded in 1853. The earlier deference is gone. There are no Fathers and no Red Children. Neither are there any references to the Royal Proclamation, American Revolution, indemnities, or removal of squatters. Instead, the 1848 petition focuses on the adoption of sedentary farming and the necessity of setting aside lands to enable the Algonquin to do so. According to the petitioners, “You have long advised us to cultivate the land ... We want to imitate the whites ... This is why we are asking for land to farm.”<sup>32</sup> They also asserted, “We would like priests to teach us religion and also to help

us with their advice in farming the fields.”<sup>33</sup> Chief Pakinawatik’s words were music to bureaucratic ears. He thickened the syrup and poured it on again in 1849, requesting that a reserve be created “so that we may devote ourselves to agriculture ... We ask you to give us some land to cultivate.” He also suggested that the Algonquin at Maniwaki would become a vanguard in leading other Algonquin bands to transition from hunting to farming: “We are ready to begin farming, we, as well as our brothers at Grand Lac and at Lac a la Truite ... they too desiring to work with us.” Lastly, he presented it as a *fait accompli* by noting that “we cannot leave and renounce the advantages of the clearings that we have already made here where we live.”<sup>34</sup> Chief Pakinawatik was successful this time around. As a result of his petitions, in conjunction with the recommendation of the bishop of Bytown, the government created the Maniwaki reserve in 1853.<sup>35</sup>

Although Pakinawatik’s underlying views, or “hidden transcript,” are not accessible to us, we can deduce from circumstantial and historical evidence that, unlike the federal government, he expected the Algonquin to continue hunting and trapping in their traditional territories as the dominant economic activity and to engage in small-scale farming as an ancillary one. He was a hunter, not a farmer. The Maniwaki area lay within the hunting territories of his family.<sup>36</sup> He noted in his 1848 petition that the Algonquin wanted to farm “near our hunting grounds.”<sup>37</sup> According to recorded oral history from around 1940, the *coureurs de bois* at the local HBC post at Maniwaki had named him *Cechiadawe* (Big Selling Man).<sup>38</sup> This moniker was a testament to both his hunting prowess and his market savviness. The HBC, which had shut its doors at the Lake of Two Mountains, had operated in Maniwaki since 1832.<sup>39</sup> Although the fur trade was on the decline in Montreal, it was vibrant along the Ottawa River during the 1850s. Fur purchases by the HBC at the Ottawa River posts dramatically increased between 1850 and 1860. The production of beaver furs for the market had expanded six-fold and had doubled for most other pelts in what historian C.C.J. Bond calls the “peak of commerce.”<sup>40</sup>

Farming was far less lucrative. The Maniwaki area was not particularly well suited for agriculture. It lies north of the 120 frost-free-day isoline that tracks along the southern portion of the Ottawa River and the Saint Lawrence River.

Due to its northerly location, Maniwaki averages only one hundred frost-free days a year. And though it receives about thirty-four inches of rain every year, only twelve to fifteen inches fall during the growing season.<sup>41</sup> In sum,

it lies within a marginal agricultural region, which Chief Pakinawatik understood.

In addition to the favourable hunting and market conditions, Maniwaki had good timber, and the Algonquin pressed for rights to it. Assistant Commissioner of Land Applications T. Bouthillier recommended that these be granted: “The tract [Maniwaki] may also be in part covered by timber licenses ... The proprietors of such licenses ought to be permitted to continue their operations, the proceeds in that case be appropriated for the use of the Indians.”<sup>42</sup> During their time at the Lake of Two Mountains, the Algonquin had been embroiled in ongoing disputes over wood and woodcutting, but at Maniwaki they managed to secure Ottawa’s assurance that they would derive revenue from the timber on their lands.

They also continued to follow the seasonal round in ways that sustained and complemented their other subsistence and market activities.<sup>43</sup> They boiled maple syrup in the spring, sometimes mixing it with blueberries.<sup>44</sup> Also during that season, they gathered birchbark for canoes, as well as spruce roots and balsam gum for basket making. They supplemented the summer months by hunting moose and bear, and they fished all year round. Catfish and whitefish were available during the summer, and pike, trout, and walleye were caught throughout the year, including under ice during the winter.<sup>45</sup> In the fall, the Algonquin collected nuts and wild fruits such as cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries, which they often preserved and dried for winter. Medicinal plants were picked during the summer and fall. The Algonquin name for the area – Kitigan Zibi – has often been translated as “river of gardens.”<sup>46</sup> However, Chief Whiteduck referred to it as the place where “everything grows,” referring to its abundant foods and medicines.<sup>47</sup> Lastly, the fall was the time for the hunt. The flesh of the beaver, muskrat, and moose was eaten, and the pelts were treated for the market, as well as to make carpets and mattresses. Likewise, moose, deer, and bear hides were used to make mittens, gloves, moccasins, and snowshoes.<sup>48</sup>

For the Algonquin, the most important factor in relocating to Kitigan Zibi was that it lay at the heart of their traditional territory. An anecdote related by lumber baron Philemon Wright in 1823 demonstrates this:

As we commenced cutting and clearing, the chiefs of two tribes that live at the Lake of the Two Mountains [Algonquin and Nipissing], came to us and viewed all of our tools and materials ... They requested him [the interpreter] to demand of me by what authority I was cutting

down their wood and taking possession of their land ... They could hardly suppose that their Great Father, or other person at Quebec, would allow me to cut down their timber, clear their land, and destroy their sugaries and hunting ground without consulting them.<sup>49</sup>

Algonquin oral histories from around 1940 confirm their long-time occupation. Chief Whiteduck noted, “The entire Gatineau Valley [Kitigan Zibi], both the Lower and Upper sections, were known to the Indians as *Tenagadin* or Long River. For unknown years the Indians had roamed in this valley. They would journey from place to place in their large birch bark canoes.”<sup>50</sup>

The Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi engaged in older as well as novel labour and market activities from the 1850s to the 1930s. This allowed them to use their traditional lands, support kinship networks, and practise important cultural values. They began leasing reserve lands during the 1860s.<sup>51</sup> This represented a strand of continuity, as they had leased their islands on the Ottawa River while at the Lake of Two Mountains during the mid-nineteenth century. Leasing land to outsiders brought in new knowledge and expertise that benefited the community. Earl McGregor observed that leases “were to teach farming or administrative how to run a farm ... They were supposed to ... teach farming or demonstrate farming so people could go into farming.”<sup>52</sup> Likewise, Frank Meness Jr. stated that “they were supposed to teach Indians ... That’s the purpose I was told.”<sup>53</sup>

The 1880 report of Indian Agent Charles Logue at Kitigan Zibi stated that some Algonquin had taken up farming. “Several of those who had already settled on the reserve have made considerable ‘clearings’ during the year,” he wrote, “and several, who never before occupied any land, have settled down and made some improvements.”<sup>54</sup>

The 1885 report from Agent James Martin recorded that many Algonquin continued to hunt on their traditional territories and that many who farmed also hunted: “The Algonquin ... of the River Desert number four hundred and ten souls, of whom about one-half cultivate land, the others either trap fur-bearing animals or work for the lumbermen. Many of those who farm join in the hunt in the winter. Some of them have neat houses and barns.”<sup>55</sup>

By the early 1890s, the burgeoning tourism industry had reached Quebec. Increased tourism not only provided opportunities for Algonquin hunting guides to use their traditional territories but also furnished a market

for birchbark canoes, snowshoes, moccasins, mitts, and baskets. Indian agent reports show that the tourism industry had reached the Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi by 1894. As the report for that year related,

Almost all the men of the band, besides being good hunters, are very efficient as explorers, guides, river drivers, & c., and their services are often in demand in these capacities. They are also capable of making bark canoes, snowshoes, paddles, & c., the demand for which equals the supply; whilst the women make deer-skin mitts and moccasins, baskets and other Indian wares.<sup>56</sup>

Agent Martin's report of 1896 mentioned the popularity of Algonquin guides and crafts:

Among other occupations may be mentioned hunting, in which all engage, more or less, the making of bark canoes and snow-shoes, at which the Desert Indians are very proficient. Several members of the band are always in demand as guides for tourists, explorers and others, and are also good river-drivers and workers in the woods ... The women tan moose and deer hides, out of which they make mitts and moccasins. They also make baskets and beaded-work for sale.<sup>57</sup>

At the turn of the century, the Algonquin were still following the seasonal round, leasing property, and trapping, but they had also adopted some novel activities, including farming, gardening, lumberjacking, guiding, and producing handicrafts for sale. During an interview in 1980, Mrs. Philomen Commonda underscored the importance of traditional lands, as well as the kinship aspects of subsistence and market activities:

Several Years ago when the Indians went hunting they usually took their families with them in the fall and spent winter in the bush. They took the necessary supplies that was required for trapping. Whenever they reached their destination, they proceeded to build cabins to live in. They knitted snow shoes and made sleighs. To provide meat for their families, they killed moose, deer, and beaver. The women and children stayed in the cabin while the men were gone. They too set snares for rabbits and caught fish nearby. They also tanned hides and sewed mitts, and made moccasins for their families. Their days

were spent sewing and knitting with wool which was brought up in the fall. Before the spring thaw, the men started preparing for their journey home by making canoes which was their means of travel at the time. Everyone was happy when they got back to their homes, in time for gardening and sewing. Since they had brought down their dried meat, and, harvested vegetables from their gardens, they were well provided for.<sup>58</sup>

Although she stated that hides, mittens, and moccasins were made for family, we know that they were also produced for the market. Louise McDougall recalled in 1980 the importance of hunting and the reliance on traditional hunting territories: “A long time ago when Indians were hunting and trapping wild meat was abundant such as moose, deer, beaver, muskrat, and rabbits. They ate all the animals that were edible. They dried all their meat in the woods and brought it home to use when needed.”<sup>59</sup>

Antoine St-Denis noted in 1980 the importance of fishing and trapping on traditional lands and the role of kinship networks in what he called “the Indian way of life”:

We fished for food and not for recreation. Every part of the fish was useful in some way i.e., food, bait, and also fertilizer ... In the fall, they gathered there to catch their winter supply of fish. They would set nets that were hand-knitted ... Everyone helped with this annual event. Women and children cleaned the fish, salted and stored them in barrels while the men caught them ... Even the insides were dumped at special places to feed the fur bearing animals, so that the fur was thick and shiny for the winter trapping.<sup>60</sup>

During the collapse of the Great Depression, the Algonquin continued their varied and complementary economic activities. In fact, the financial collapse affected them relatively lightly in comparison to other communities throughout the United States and Canada. Examining its impact on the Algonquin enables us to appreciate the ongoing importance of traditional territories, the role of kinship networks, and the cultural values of sharing and gift giving.

By 1933, the Depression was in full swing and the economy was in freefall. Canada’s gross national product declined precipitously from approximately \$6.0 billion to \$3.5 billion. Wages nationwide slumped from

\$2.9 billion to \$1.8 billion. Farm income saw the most dramatic decrease, from \$393 million to a paltry \$66 million in 1933.<sup>61</sup> From 1932 to 1933, wages for the Algonquin at Kitigan Zibi plummeted from \$22,086 to \$8,000, farming revenue dropped from \$6,996 to \$3,650, and income from furs declined by more than half, from \$10,025 to \$4,800 (see Table 1.1).

A number of Algonquin Elders recalled that their families depended upon their hunting territories in ways that mitigated the disastrous effects of the Depression. Hunting and trapping provided meat and material for handicrafts. Agnes Decontie-McDougall, born in 1915, related that her father “seldom hunted, mainly to pass the time I guess. He mostly worked on farming for provisions ... Unlike my father, Grandpa hunted regularly. He brought us fish and other wild game.” Her husband, Johnny McDougall, hunted during the winter months and guided for tourists in the summer.<sup>62</sup> Bertha McGregor-Scott, born in 1920, also stated that she did not feel the weight of the Depression years, as everyone had gardens and wild meats.<sup>63</sup> Dick Tenasco, born in 1918, remembered that his father had hunted a bit to acquire skins. He noted that “it was important to tan the hides because they made gloves and mittens you know ... My parents made money only when they tanned hides.”<sup>64</sup>

Alonzo Raphael Cayer, born in 1916, remembered that his father had trapped and that his mother made moccasins and mittens. His family had never lacked food, as “everyone had root cellars to store vegetables, meats, and preservatives.”<sup>65</sup>

Interviewed in 1980, Archie Jerome emphasized the scarcity of paid employment, as well as the importance of traditional lands and kinship networks, during the Depression. He travelled by canoe to find work at a mill that paid one dollar and fifteen cents a week, but the job lasted only a week. He was then hired by a local farmer who paid him fifteen cents a day, with room and board. While on the farm, Jerome ate mostly carrots, turnips, cabbage, and some salted pork. The hours were arduous – from four in the morning to eight or nine at night. This job too soon ended, so he moved on and found work at another mill, though only for three days. From there, he got a horse ride back to Ottawa and then jumped on the train to Kitigan Zibi. He recalled his arrival: “As I neared the campsite I saw a fire burning. My gosh, it was my father and step-mother who were there. Afterwards I went home with my parents and hunted with my father all that winter for a couple of years later ... I worked in the bush and also did some guiding.”



He added that he regularly visited his brother at Kitigan Zibi and eventually got married and settled there.<sup>66</sup> His story illustrates the vicissitudes of the labour market, as well as the importance of kinship networks and using traditional hunting territories during the Depression.

The Algonquin also maintained their traditional values of sharing and gift giving during the Depression. They shared what they had with each other, as well as with local French- and English-speaking Canadians. “Cooperation was always an inherent characteristic of the Algonquin,” notes local historian Stephen McGregor, “and they shared and bartered with each other to make sure that no one went hungry, especially the children, even the town children.”<sup>67</sup> For instance, some took bags of potatoes and loads of dry meat to the town of Maniwaki for their French Canadian neighbours. René Thibault of Thibault Electric repeatedly expressed his gratitude to the Algonquin for saving his family from starvation during one particularly difficult winter.<sup>68</sup> Marie-Joseth Decontie, known as “Samsonikwe,” or Mrs. Samson Commandant, often gave bread, butter, meat, eggs, and potatoes to an English-speaking girl whose family had been evicted from town. Six decades later, Decontie’s granddaughter Henriette Morin-McGregor recalled the little girl calling out to Decontie for help in an Algonquin accent – “Mrs. Sawn-sew!”<sup>69</sup>

The Algonquin drew their own conclusions from the hard times of the Great Depression. They were aware that reliance on their traditional territories mitigated the effects of the crisis. Patrick Decontie related in 1980,

There is talk about the coming of another depression in the future like the one they had ... when the stock market had fallen right down and there was no work at all. I heard the old Indians talk about it and as I recall, the Indians were trapping and hunting and some were farming so the depression didn’t affect them too much ... We are being warned to go back to the old ways of life such as hunting and fishing, trapping and farming as this is the only way we can survive.<sup>70</sup>

For Patrick Decontie, the significance of the Great Depression was clear. If the Algonquin were to weather future economic crises, they must maintain their territories and a hunting lifestyle in conjunction with other sources of income.

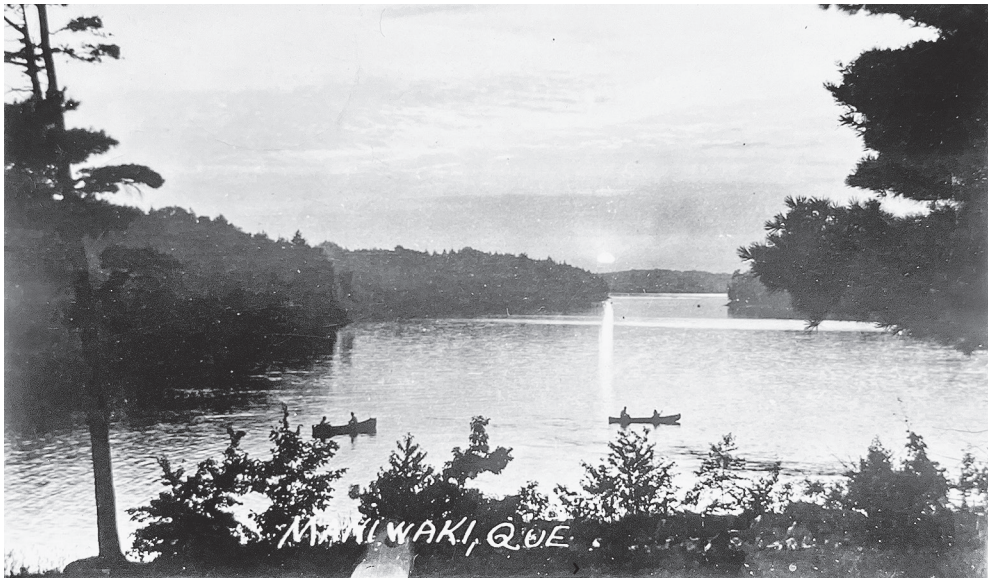
The eventual recovery from the Great Depression was marked by an upswing in tourism. At Kitigan Zibi, the Chief and council supported the

resurgent tourism industry in ways that contributed to the economic activities of hunting, guiding, and craft production, all of which depended on their traditional territory. One episode from 1940 provides insight into this process. During that year, the Algonquin celebrated the opening of a new highway that would inevitably increase the tourist trade. As an *Ottawa Journal* article explained, the new Maniwaki-Senneterre Highway would connect southern Quebec with the mining and hunting areas of the North, and would also link Ottawa with Montreal. It was the “first essential in attraction of tourist traffic ... [that has] opened up 1,000s of square miles of unparalleled hunting and fishing country.”<sup>71</sup> The opening ceremony for the highway was attended by a number of notables, including the mayor, legislators, DIA and provincial officials, and the Quebec premier. The *Journal’s* description of the event would no doubt have elicited interest and wonder from its white readership in Ottawa:

In a ceremony dating back to the discovery of America ... a fire of blazing pine logs burned in the centre of a roped-off enclosure as the Premier and his Minister of Roads were received by Chief Split Cloud, Chief J. Chabot, and Chief Pierre Clement. They stood by a teepee of fir boughs while the ritual was explained, and smiling squaws in buckskin garments stood near the wigwam ... His arms grasped by Indian chiefs in buckskin suits and full tribal regalia, [the premier] was led around the burning brands while Chief Split Cloud chanted the initiation to the accompaniment of a tomtom. A ceremonial head-dress was placed on his head by a sub-chief, to the cheers of the squaws and braves of the Maniwaki reservation and the many guests at the ceremony.<sup>72</sup>

Seven years later, another *Ottawa Journal* article related that Algonquin hunters were the beneficiaries of infrastructure projects such as the Maniwaki-Senneterre Highway. Sixty percent of new hunters in the Maniwaki region were the “rich wartime industrial plant workers.”<sup>73</sup> The author noted, “Besides the hunters, the only persons deriving undisturbed satisfaction out of the situation were the Indian guides from the Algonquin reservation ... At prices of 10 to 15 dollars per day, they had enough cold, hard American cash in their warbags to see them through the winter.”<sup>74</sup>

The Chief and council also promoted handicraft production for tourist consumption. Postcards from the period depict the region as a tourist get-



**2.1** A postcard from Maniwaki, c. 1940. | Author's collection.

**2.2** J.H. Poirier advertised Algonquin birchbark canoes, handicrafts, and guiding services, c. 1940. | Author's collection.



away (see [Figures 2.1](#) and [2.2](#)). In 1949, Chief John Chabot and the councilors requested five hundred dollars “to purchase leather handicrafts from homemakers on this reserve.”<sup>75</sup> An additional five hundred dollars was requested in 1950.<sup>76</sup> A 1964 memo from Jules D’Astous, Chief of the Economic

Development Division of the Department of Mines and Resources, sheds additional light on the cultural activities for which the Chief and council requested funding. “The Indian people of Maniwaki have provided an outline for a very ambitious program ... [including] Indian costume making, handi-craft, and exhibition Indian dancing,” D’Astous wrote, adding that “prefer-ence would be given to an Indian instructor who is familiar with traditional Indian work as opposed to the type of craftwork in institutions.”<sup>77</sup>

Beginning in the 1950s, the Chief and council also promoted local tourist attractions, which later included the annual winter carnivals and powwows. They approved permits throughout the mid-1950s, authorizing a dog derby to run through the reserve to draw in tourists.<sup>78</sup> Carnivals and powwows acted as venues for guiding services and the selling of handicrafts, and were also spaces of cultural patronization. Covering a full week, they featured hockey games, dog derby races, religious services, French Canadian folk songs and dances, and Algonquin presentations (see [Figure 2.3](#)).

The 1965 program included the crowning of Linda Odjick as “Indian Queen” in “traditional Indian Costume” by Chief John Lambert Cayer. Spectators could enjoy “Indian dances, accompanied by drums and chant-ing, and songs” or look on as “Mrs. Frank Meness gave a demonstration

<b>WINTER CARNIVAL 13th YEAR</b>	<b>MANIWAKI</b>		<b>WINTER CARNIVAL 13th YEAR</b>
	<b>MAJOR EVENTS</b>		
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Jan. 30</b>	<b>8.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Crowning of the Queen of Sports at the Community Centre</b>
		<b>9.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Dance in Honor of the Queen of Sports</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Jan. 31</b>	<b>12.30 a.m.</b>	<b>Monster Parade</b>
		<b>2.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Snowshoers and Ski-Doo Races, Tug of War</b>
		<b>6.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Banquet, Presentation to Man of Year</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Feb. 3</b>	<b>8.30 p.m.</b>	<b>Crowning of Carnival Queen and Dance in Arena</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Feb. 4</b>	<b>8.30 p.m.</b>	<b>Indian Folklore Dancing by Algonquin Indians</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Feb. 5</b>	<b>7.30 p.m.</b>	<b>Drawing and Starting Position International Dog Derby</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Feb. 6</b>	<b>1.00 p.m.</b>	<b>International Dog Derby (First Heat)</b>
		<b>2.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Dog Hauling Derby for Young Boys and Girls</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Feb. 7</b>	<b>1.00 p.m.</b>	<b>International Dog Derby (Second Heat)</b>
		<b>1.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Junior Dog Derby</b>
<b>THE MANIWAKI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</b>			

**2.3** Advertisement for the Maniwaki Winter Carnival of 1965, including “Indian Folklore Dancing by Algonquin Indians.” |

“Maniwaki – Winter Carnival 13th Year,” *Ottawa Journal*, January 23, 1965, 41.



of tanning hides.”<sup>79</sup> In 1966, an *Ottawa Journal* article noted the popularity of the carnivals as a tourist destination. It stated that the carnival of that year planned to “see bustling activity in Maniwaki as people gather from Eastern Canada and Northeastern United States to take part and watch the goings on.”<sup>80</sup>

According to the *Ottawa Journal*, opening night at the 1967 carnival offered “native dancing and singing by the Algonquin Indians from the nearby Maniwaki Reserve.”<sup>81</sup> *La Presse* of Montreal noted that it included performances of the Eagle and Sun Dances by Algonquin youth. In addition, Arthur Smith, a well-known guide and canoe-maker, shared “the folklore of the tribe to the accompaniment of the drum.”<sup>82</sup>

In addition to employing strategic labour choices and relying on the support of Chief and council, Algonquin hunters sometimes resorted to various extra-legal strategies to maintain access to and use of their lands. These ranged from stealth and concealment to humour, confrontation, and negotiation. One hunter noted that “club owners hire game wardens to patrol the areas they acquired from the Algonquin. After that the Indian people had to hunt secretly.”<sup>83</sup> Madeline Dube Davis recalled a family episode during the years of the Depression that illustrates the strategy of concealment. As the family made its way home after hunting, her aunt had the clever idea of wrapping the furs in a blanket to give the appearance of a swaddled baby and thus deceiving the game wardens. “Sure enough,” recounted Davis, “the game wardens stopped them and searched their sled for furs. They dug in all the pack sacks but couldn’t find anything. Meanwhile, [aunt] Dilama was standing there holding her baby, saying ‘shh, shh, shh’ ... They went a little ways and they started laughing at how they fooled the game wardens.”<sup>84</sup>

Daniel “Pinock” Smith stated that during the 1950s wild meat was eaten in the bush and that tarps were used to cover and hide meat in the back of pick-up trucks.<sup>85</sup> Chief Jean-Guy Whiteduck confirmed that concealing moose and other game in this way was not uncommon among the Algonquin during the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>86</sup> Stan Dumont Whiteduck recalled one episode in which his father and mother hid under the tarp that concealed a killed moose. Upon being stopped by the wardens, Stan’s father told them that he and his wife were engaging in amorous relations and asked whether they would like to see his “gun.” The wardens declined to investigate further.

The Algonquin also employed humour to keep levity while in the bush. Jeremy Whiteduck recalled a hunting story about his father, Stan Dumont Whiteduck, and his grandfather, Fred Whiteduck. The two were moose hunting with an axe because a rifle shot would have alerted nearby game wardens. Stan buried the axe in the moose's head, but it continued to walk on. When he asked his father what he should do if a warden appeared, Fred replied, "Tell him it's a fucking unicorn."<sup>87</sup>

Some Algonquin engaged in direct confrontation with wardens. On one occasion, around 1970, Fred Whiteduck was stopped by wardens who demanded to inspect the meat in his possession. Attempting to provoke a fist fight, Whiteduck ripped open his shirt and yelled, "You want meat, Maudit Sauvage!"<sup>88</sup> In another example, wardens stopped Stan Whiteduck to examine his cooler for "illegal" meat, and one placed his hand on his pistol to intimidate Stan. As he touched the cooler, Stan produced his band card (demonstrating that he was Algonquin and thus hunting by treaty right), yelled, "Get the fuck away," and slapped the officer's hands off the cooler.<sup>89</sup>

Negotiation characterized other encounters with wardens. In one instance, Fred Whiteduck had killed a moose that had been fitted with a tracking collar. When the game warden arrived at Whiteduck's cabin, he noticed the collar but without the moose attached. Fred negotiated the return of the collar in exchange for four wolf traps.<sup>90</sup> Daniel "Pinock" Smith confirmed that negotiation often typified interaction between wardens and Algonquin hunters, pointing out that during the 1970s a "grey zone" was in play between the two parties.<sup>91</sup> His comments suggest that some wardens did not arrest or incarcerate Algonquin hunters for engaging in subsistence hunting. Smith also noted that many wardens and hunters had come to know each other through repeated contact. Thus, a social space of consensus developed for some wardens and hunters who frequently crossed paths.

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