BABAAMIINWAJIMOJIG (PEOPLE WHO GO AROUND TELLING THE GOOD NEWS): TRACING THE TEXT OF OJIBWA HYMN NO. 35 FROM 1910 TO 2010

By

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ABSTRACT

BABAAMIINWAJIMOJIG (PEOPLE WHO GO AROUND TELLING THE GOOD NEWS): TRACING THE TEXT OF OJIBWA HYMN NO. 35 FROM 1910 TO 2010

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My dissertation is based on a question: Why do Ojibwa people continue to sing Ojibwa hymns in Ojibwa even though many of the singers no longer understand the words they are singing?

To find answers, qualitative methods were used. I found 22 people to participate in interviews that took place around the Great Lakes in both the United States and Canada. The people interviewed are known as the *Anishinaabeg* (Ojibwa People), although one person interviewed is not indigenous, but has worked with indigenous students teaching Ojibwa language and hymns for over half a century.

As an Ojibwa woman, I felt it was important to consider primary-source oral history of current-day Ojibwa people, and to include secondary sources of information, such as CDs, phonograph records, books, articles and Internet websites in my research.

Five themes emerged from analysis of the interview transcripts. These are (1) language translation issues, (2) the importance of the Thunderbird as a cultural icon, (3) spirituality, (4) community and individual identity, and (5) continuity of culture. Within these categories is evidence that the continued use of hymn no. 35 in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* (Kah-O-Sed 1910:35) demonstrates both continuity and change in the Anishinaabeg western Great Lakes Diaspora. This includes how the hymn fits into oral tradition, how it was produced and continues to be reproduced as a literary textual cultural icon, how it is used by community members, and how it is understood to impact perceptions of identity.

I think the most significant findings of the research are the following: I propose that the Anishinaabeg took ownership of Ojibwa hymns as a unique but distinct aspect of Ojibwa culture, adapting *Midewiwin* (Grand Medicine Society) ceremonial singing practices to Ojibwa hymn-singing practices that have carried forward to the current day, and that today's Midewiwin ceremonial singing and Ojibwa hymn-singing purposes are very similar. The Anishinaabeg did this to establish and maintain a sense of continuity of culture that exists today, despite variances in spiritual beliefs and differing levels of fluency in *Anishinaabemowin* (Indian language, especially Ojibwa) among local and wide spread geographical expanses around the Great Lakes. The hymns in some cases are being used to learn the Ojibwa language.

There is a deeper meaning to the continuous use of Ojibwa hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* and it is this: that spirituality of Ojibwa people is much more complicated than previous researchers and ethnographers have indicated. It is a tangled picture and complicated by the conversions, first, from Midewiwin to Christianity, and, more recently, from Christianity back to Midewiwin. There has been a shift in spirituality during the last 100 years that is continuing today. The Anishinaabeg community is bound by cultural markers, such as the Thunderbird icon and the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910,* that have become cultural icons that which each generation passes down to succeeding generations. For the Anishinaabeg of the Great Lakes region, the practice of singing the century-old Ojibwa hymn no. 35 is one way for *babaamiinwajimojig* (people who go around telling the good news) to continue. (Alphonse Pitawanakwat, in discussion with the author December 9, 2010)

This work is dedicated to my family, to indigenous peoples and those who wish to gain a better understanding of indigenous people, to our ancestors, and to future generations.

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PREFACE

This dissertation explores how hymn no. 35 in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* demonstrates both continuity and change in the Anishinaabeg western Great Lakes Diaspora, including how the hymn fits into oral traditions, how it was produced and continues to be reproduced as a literary artifact, how it is used by community members, and how it is understood to impact perceptions of identity.

The Anishinaabeg are an adaptable, resilient, flexible people with a love of song and culture. They also have a strong spirit and will to survive. Even through colonization, they took ownership of one form of conversion, the use of Ojibwa hymn no. 35 from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. Through established Anishinaabeg cultural norms, they converted the use of that hymn to a recognizable, cultural pattern of symbolic rhythm. That rhythm hails back to cultural symbolic rhythm used by the Midewiwin.

During the 100-year-period since the hymnal has been in use, many fluent elders have passed to the spirit world. Often when fluent elders die, there is no one left to replace them to carry on the language at the same fluency level. Although second-language-learners are studying the language and have joined in with the few remaining fluent elders to create written language forms, there are several challenges and issues with language translation.

First, Anishinaabemowin is changing. Some of the changes are that words have been lost and new words have been created, spelling conventions are different, and the written form of Anishinaabemowin is moving toward a uniform orthography, the Fiero system. After 100 years of continuous use of the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*, which adapted Midewiwin rhythms and practices to Christian hymn-singing practices, the ostensible split between the members of the Midewiwin

and the members who identify as Christians obliterates the similarities in practices for these groups. The one thing both groups share is the ideal of retaining and maintaining the Anishinaabe language.

Although there is a need for translations and re-translations of Ojibwa hymns written over 100 years ago, several of the people interviewed said it would be difficult and time consuming to translate from the Anishinaabe language back into English. The structure of the English language, noun-based, is different from the structure of the Anishinaabe language, verb-based. Anishinaabemowin is dependent on the creation of a visualization of what is happening at the time, and translators today would not be in the same situation or setting as the translators from 100 years ago.

The *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* is being used by the communities in northern Minnesota as a method of preserving individual and community identity through the practice of singing songs in the Anishinaabe language and for the purpose of providing comfort to others in the community in times of sickness or bereavement. These reasons are the same as the reasons members of the Midewiwin sing their songs: a preservation of identity and a healing device for those who are ill or grieving.

It does not matter when Anishinaabeg move from their home areas to other areas, on or off the reservations in the United States or the First Nation reserves in Canada; they retain and cherish their identity as community members in their respective homelands.

Ojibwa people remember the past and recall the old ways of the people through their actions and through their oral history. I submit that one factor of oral history is the use of the Ojibwa hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. The use of these hymns has been constant among the Ojibwa Hymn Singers. Their spirituality is not hindered by boundaries. Finding several other

hymnals around communities of the Great Lakes in the U.S. and Canada that are still in use but come from the missionary era illustrates that the Anishinaabeg have taken ownership of the hymns. Missionaries are no longer the driving force behind the singing of the Ojibwa gospel hymns. Now it is the Ojibwa people themselves who continue to use the Ojibwa hymns in a manner that is closely related to the Midewiwin system that the translated hymns were intended to replace. There are many references to the Ojibwa people's love of music and dance, and I explored references to their spirituality and spiritual beliefs, both in personal interview primary sources and in secondary sources. Data used includes information found in archives, digital media, interviews, questionnaires, and site-of-inquiry fieldwork.

In traveling around the Great Lakes and into Canada, other Ojibwa (Anishinaabemowin) hymnals were gathered from five communities to broaden the understanding of Ojibwa people in other geographical locations. The four contributed hymn books are: (1) *Walpole Island United Church, Ojibway Hymn Book* compiled by Wm. Soney no date given, (2) *Walpole Island United Church – In Memory of Simon Peters and Frank Shipman* December 7, 2003, (3) *Missionary at Garden River, Ontario Canada, The Ojibway Church Hymn Book* 1937 reprinted 2005, and (4) *Holy Cross Mission Hymn Book*, Wikwemikong, Ontario. All of these hymnals are in current use, and only the *Walpole Island United Church Ojibway Hymn Book*, compiled by Wm. Soney of old hymns long out of print, contains a version of hymn no. 35 titled "Go Preach My Gospel, Said the Lord." For comparison purposes, see Table 7 in chapter 1, pages 55-56, which shows hymn no. 35, in column 1 as it appears in *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* with the Soney edition words shown in Column 2.

Since the out-of-print Soney version of the hymn originated from Walpole Island, it is quite likely that this version was translated by the same person, Kah-O-Sed, who later prepared

the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* version for the hymnal now in use on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. In this context, it is clear that spirituality and continuity of culture are connected and that the dissemination of hymns across the expanse of the Great Lakes Region utilized a literary vehicle to facilitate the shared hymn.

It is also clear that both community and individual identity are tied together, as Anishinaabe people rely on symbols of identity both as members of their communities and as individuals. Anishinaabemowin, the language of the Anishinaabe, is still acknowledged as an important part of cultural identity, and whether individuals identify as Midewiwin, Christian, neither, or both, they value the language to the point of singing songs by rote to keep the sound of the language alive. If they are fluent, they teach the language. If they are learning, they acknowledge the difficulty of learning as adults but still keep trying to learn. Within the community, however, are individual Anishinaabe whose viewpoints and experiences are as varied as those of the individuals of any other culture. There are differences, to be sure, but the commonalities outweigh those differences overall, in the sense that the Anishinaabeg are culturally aware of their need to survive as a people and pass cultural information to the next generation.

Michael D. McNally stated that Larry Cloud Morgan is respectful of "the irreducible mystery of the divine" (McNally 2000:153) and that Josephine Degroat's "spirituality observes few political boundaries." Josephine uses holy water and bundles of sage and honors the Pope and Indian leaders, and for Josephine, both Christian and Ojibwa traditions can be put together for good use. (McNally 2000:148) Possibly it is this basic Anishinaabe spirituality and appreciation of the divine mystery that work together to transform Christian hymns to a sustainable form of *nagamowin* (singing, song) within Ojibwa culture. "As one singer puts it,

'we sing in order to survive'." (McNally 2000:20) The irony of singing at wakes and funerals in order to survive is not mentioned by the singers. Survival in the face of death involves the basic power of *nagamowin* and its long history of healing in Midewiwin practices. McNally also finds it ironic translated hymns, designed by evangelical missionaries to convert Ojibwa people to evangelical beliefs, values, and behaviors, instead indicate a deeper meaning to the hymn singing and how it is used by the Ojibwa. (McNally 2000:15) In his overview of the history of hymn singing, McNally "*found, more in the area of practice than text, the beginnings of a native inflection of hymn singing that could be sustained within Ojibwe culture*" (emphasis mine). (Daily, accessed December 7, 2010)

The area of practice, the "native inflection of hymn singing," which refers to the slow cadence hymn singers purposefully impose on the rhythm of English gospel hymns, may be examined more in depth by referring to one of the hymns the Ojibwa Hymn Singers sing at funerals. In reading the words of Ojibwa hymn no. 35 (Kah-O-Sed 1910:35) and listening to the CD version of that hymn performed by the Ojibwa Singers (Ojibwa Singers n.d.:CD), it becomes apparent that the words shown on the page of the hymnal do not correspond to the vocal performance given by the Ojibwa Hymn Singers or to the English cadence of "Go Preach My Gospel" heard on "The Gospel Soul" CD by Marion Williams. (Marion Williams 1975:CD) On the "Ojibwa Hymns" CD, the songs are sung without musical accompaniment, and one of the men announces each song by number, not by name, before the group begins to sing. It is soothing to hear the long, drawn-out cadence as hymn no. 35 progresses very, very slowly throughout the singing. The song is routinely performed at funerals and sounds extremely mournful and somber but at the same time is deeply comforting.

The resources are available, yet there remains a gap in historical information that is disseminated to citizens of the United States. The information has not been addressed in history textbooks, and a disturbing pattern of legislation by the United States and Canadian governments has had a devastating effect on tribal communities. Yet these same tribal communities, though fragmented and geographically separated, have managed to maintain a distinct set of qualities that unite them as one large community made up of several pockets of smaller communities. These smaller communities share certain characteristics, as discovered through common answers I collected from them during a two-month journey around the Great Lakes in the summer of 2011. The five common themes in these geographically separate localities link them together to such an extent that one tribal member visiting another community can find common bonds of identity that in turn create a larger community called the Anishinaabeg.

I found answers to the question of why Ojibwa people continue to sing Ojibwa hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*, even though, in many cases, the singers do not understand the words to the songs. Despite the fact that there is a wide geographical distance between the members of the communities I visited to get the interviews, there is a gratifyingly consistent worldview among the indigenous community members interviewed and a reassuring sense of commitment to indigenous children in all cases, including the one non-native person interviewed.

It is important to find a unifying device to inspire people to realize how important retention of native language is as a factor of retaining cultural identity and cultural survival. Witness the swift and global unity generated by the Idle No More movement (Tristin Hopper, accessed December 8, 2014), where singing, drumming and dancing became a continental and global phenomenon in support of Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike over Prime Minister Stephen Harper's stand on legislation that adversely affects indigenous nations in Canada. The rapid and

visible response of people all over the world is evidence of the power of the Internet as an information tool. This is a tool that can be utilized to benefit the push to preserve indigenous language. Whether Anishinaabeg will decide to learn Anishinaabemowin or let the language fall into extinction remains to be seen. Singers who learn the hymns phonetically are essentially functionally illiterate in Ojibwa, for they cannot read, write, or understand the Ojibwa language, even though they parrot Ojibwa syllables when they are singing. The argument that Ojibwa has always been an oral language is no longer true, as attested to by the numerous dictionaries and books that have been written in the language. While many of these resources are available to the public, the expense of obtaining them is sometimes prohibitive to willing learners.

The advent of the Internet provides yet another example of the evolution of Ojibwa in print media, for language activists have realized the financial constraint of some students and have started using websites to create written and audio files that students may access for free! While much has been gained by interviewing and analyzing the 22 interviews collected in 2011, as the older generation walks on, which means they die, and the generation of speakers who are second language learners takes on the task of language continuation, they will need every tool and resource available to them to keep the language going.

One project that remains to be completed is the translation of the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* songs, so singers can not only sing the words but will have the advantage of knowing what they are singing. Another project that will only grow as technology becomes available and inexpensive to use is the need for DVD language discs that can keep up with changes in the language as they occur. While it may not be possible or advisable to record the currently active Ojibwa Hymn Singers when they are performing at a community event, especially at wakes and funerals, it may be possible to gather the singers together for the sole purpose of making more

recordings of the songs from the hymnal. Since it is one of the stated purposes on the CD previously produced that the purposes of recording the songs are to preserve the tradition of singing the Ojibwa hymns and help people learn the songs, the mission of the current group of singers most likely remains the same. For that reason, I am including partial text from the back cover on the CD case for those who wish to have that information. (See Appendix A.)

Although the results of the interviews yielded many thoughtful comments revolving around the five themes that developed, there was a realization that the hymns may be better preserved and serve the learning community if they are made available in digital format. There has been one recording (Ojibwa Singers n.d.:CD) of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers that includes 14 of the 68 songs in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* compiled by Rev. Edward C. Kah-O-Sed, but there are 54 remaining hymns that are not recorded. This means that anyone unfamiliar with the hymns will not know what they sound like, since there is no musical score in the hymnal and the words are not translated into English. In terms of what remains to be done to preserve the hymns, one of the main efforts needs to be directed at recording the remaining hymns as sung by the Ojibwa Hymn Singers. In this regard, language preservation grants may be the best resource to fund the project. For the first and only known CD, three sponsoring agencies are listed on the back cover. Unfortunately, there is no contact address or telephone number to get more information on the CD cover. However, in 2013, I was given a name and contact information for one of the singers who sang with the group when the CD was recorded. He reported that he could not commit to recording another CD and referred me to the current contact person for the singers in Cass Lake, MN.

It also remains for other scholars to translate the balance of the Ojibwa hymns back into English so the Ojibwa terminology and viewpoint may be analyzed and compared with the

English gospel lyrics. Michael D. McNally sent me several Ojibwa Hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal1910*, translated by Larry Cloud Morgan, a fluent White Earth Reservation tribal member. Cloud Morgan translated 22 hymns. These 22 translations do not include the melody of the hymn, only the English words. These hymns are also identified by number. The hymn numbers are: 1, 4, 7, 16, 18, 20, 20A, 22, 24, 25, 37, 37A, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 53, 54, 62, 63, and 67. However, the hymns translated by Larry Cloud Morgan include two alternate translations, 20A and 37A. This means that of the 68 hymns in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*, 47 hymns have not been translated.

Given that fluent speakers find difficulty in verbatim translations of the hymns due to the splitting up of words to fit the melody of the song, one of the things that still needs to be done is a re-translation of the hymns so there is an English equivalent translation for them. This task of translating the hymns, it appears, would best be done by a committee, as recommended by George Roy, whose statements regarding situational analysis indicate it would take some time for a group of speakers to reach consensus on the meanings of the words used over one hundred years ago. (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011)

There is also the admonition from Medora Hicks, who currently teaches the hymns to other fluent singers, that some of the singers think it would not work to translate the hymns. I asked the question, "What do you think about providing English translations with Ojibwa hymns?" Hicks said that she has mixed feelings about it because her group tried some translations over the winter of 2010-2011 and encountered problems with fitting the Anishinaabemowin words back into English to fit the melody of the songs. Her singers complained that they could not sing the words the way they are written in English. "One word in our language [Anishinaabemowin] can say quite an awful lot, where you have to write it out in

English, and when you try to put that melody into this, [you have] got too many words and it just doesn't fit." (Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011) Thus, translation efforts are likely to pose continued challenges in the effort to preserve the hymns. Once the words are translated, there remains still the task of finding the melody for each hymn. Among the active Ojibwa Hymn Singers, there are only who know some of the old hymns and can sing them. All of these singers are over age 55, so there is a sense of urgency to translate and record the songs before it is too late, before the singers die.

In my opinion, the effort to record the singing of the hymns is a worthwhile and urgent endeavor so the sound of the Ojibwa hymns will be preserved.

Of course, written references to the language are useful, and re-translations will update a resource like the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*, but due to the structure of the language, a written resource is not enough. There is a recognized need for an oral and auditory component of Anishinaabemowin transmission, and efforts are already underway to meet that need. For instance, one such site, *Noongwa e-Anishinaabemjig* (people who speak Anishinaabemowin today) (University of Michigan Ann Arbor, accessed August 2, 2014), is extremely popular and populated by the work of fluent speakers, students, community members, and language instructors. The content of that site is currently available online at Ojibwe.net. A similar website can be found at http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/, an online Ojibwa language learning resource hosted by the University of Minnesota. (University of Minnesota-Minneapolis, accessed August 2, 2014) The University of Minnesota site is described by *Anishinaabemodaa*.com (let's all speak Ojibwa) White Earth hosted website as follows:

> The Ojibwe People's Dictionary is a searchable, talking Ojibwe-English dictionary that features the voices of Ojibwa speakers. It is a gateway into the Ojibwa collections at the Minnesota Historical Society. Along with detailed Ojibwa language entries and voices, you will find beautiful

> cultural items, photographs, and excerpts from relevant historical documents. Whenever possible, examples of documents in the Ojibwa language are included. [White Earth Nation, accessed October 2, 2013]
>
> The Ojibwe People's Dictionary was conceived in 2010 by the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis. The site gives us the following summary of how the dictionary was developed: In September 2010, students and faculty from the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota met with staff from the Minnesota Historical Society and University of Minnesota Libraries to begin planning the components of an online, multimedia, bilingual talking dictionary. An advisory council of Ojibwa speakers was convened to provide input and approval for language and cultural content. The result of their combined efforts is the Ojibwe People's Dictionary. [University of Minnesota-Minneapolis, accessed August 2, 2014]

Social media sites such as Facebook are also being used to publicize language learning sites that are readily accessible to teachers and students to share information and ask questions as they learn. Several independent language sites exist, with various learning tools employed within each site. One such site is the previously mentioned White Earth Nation website at http://*Anishinaabemodaa*.com/lessons?lesson_id=30. It is simply called "Anishinaabemowin" and is a site that uses mainly Minnesota dialect speakers. This site has lessons that include recordings of fluent elders speaking. Sites such as these are examples of uses of digital media to create accessible, high-quality forms of language preservation. Other sites use an immersion-type, visual role-playing that acts out the words being used, all in Anishinaabemowin, so the people who are listening to and viewing the videos will be able to understand what is being said by watching the speaker perform as she speaks. An excellent example of one such performer can be found by visiting barbaranolan.com; the site has several videos of such performances. This is Barbara Nolan's profile:

> Barbara Nolan is a first-speaker of Anishinaabemowin who has spent several decades working with a variety of organizations to revitalize the Anishinaabe language. Most recently, her dream of passing her language on has come true: Barbara has successfully passed her language on to John Paul Montano. This website is one part of their continuing efforts to help other Anishinaabe people acquire the language.
>
> John Paul Montano has spent most of the last 11 years acquiring our Nishnaabe language from his mentor, Barbara Nolan. Together, they have successfully transferred the language forward, across one generation – from Barbara to John Paul. He is profoundly grateful to be a speaker of Nishnaabemwin. [Nolan , accessed December 9, 2014]

With the advent of the Internet, the process for transforming print media in Ojibwa hymnals to accessible forms of language learning and preservation is not only available but clearly desirable as a way to provide global availability of the songs in Ojibwa. The implicit cultural survival factors indicated by the persistence of Ojibwa hymn singing among the Ojibwa people represents an opportunity to transform the songs into an understandable translated version of recorded Anishinaabemowin. This includes an English translation of Anishinaabemowin lyrics taken from the Ojibwa hymnals in use by the three Minnesota communities and making them available in digital format as a learning tool everywhere for students, community members, scholars, and other interested audiences.

Another challenge that will require ongoing efforts is the community healing that must take place to overcome historical and generational trauma that was mentioned by more than one person interviewed. For instance, Benjamin Bonga (Benjamin Bonga, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011) certainly has captured many aspects of historical and generational trauma that influence community trust and community sharing, as scholars have discussed. Repairing the distrust and disappointment of indigenous communities has no easy solution, but awareness of the feelings is a step toward remedies. The remedies will have to come from the indigenous

people themselves, in my opinion. One of the remedies may be and appears to be the use of Ojibwa hymns. The value of indigenous culture is evident in McNally's examples of the importance of hymn singing among the Ojibwa and the frequency and occasions for gatherings where hymn singing took place historically, and from my own observations and research as an Ojibwa woman. As Ojibwa history evolved, people who have identified themselves as non-indigenous researchers, such as Michael D. McNally, and indigenous scholars such as Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, have documented the significance of their observations. I agree with the conclusion drawn by Cook-Lynn when she makes the following observation:

> I have come to the conclusion that it is not my overriding business to create new ways of looking at the world in order to come up with smart and effective solutions in every case. It is my business to remember the past and recall the old ways of the people." [Cook-Lynn 2008:345]

In my study, finding widespread communities that treasure common themes of existence as Ojibwa people indicates that, despite continuous attempts by governments in both the United States and Canada, assimilation of the Anishinaabeg has not been accomplished. If my research reveals one important piece of information, it is this: the culture survives and adapts as needed to ensure survival. Cultural practices continue, including the Midewiwin value placed on elder teachings and the seasonal rounds such as winter trapping; spring gathering maple sap to make maple syrup and maple sugar; summer fishing, berry-picking, and harvesting wild rice; and fall hunting In addition, efforts are increasing to preserve the Ojibwa language to describe all of this activity, for the language contains the worldview of the way of life and beliefs of the Anishinaabeg.

Comparing the interviews with archival research revealed an active decision of indigenous people to retain and preserve their heritage for themselves and posterity. All of the people I interviewed had stories to tell, and some of those stories appear in this dissertation. They

made a difference in my life, as I hope they do in yours. As Thomas King said at the end of every story in *The Truth about Stories,* "Just don't say in the years to come that you would have lived *your* life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now." (King 2003:29) Likewise, if you have read these pages, you have heard stories from indigenous people living in 2011, contemporaries across several indigenous areas, that indicate common values, hopes, and dreams. Using as a springboard for discussion the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* that has been in continuous use for over 100 years, my interviewees and I talked about Ojibwa songs and Ojibwa hymns, which reminded them of other stories. Their stories relate what has been accomplished by use of the Anishinaabe language and reliance on such practices and characteristics as recognizing symbols used in the Anishinaabe culture, a strong individual identity, a love of community, a consciousness of spirituality, and a need for continuity of culture.

I must say that my personal learning experience from conducting interviews and finding patterns or themes in the responses yielded much more than I anticipated finding from the research. As stated in the abstract, one strong conclusion can be drawn from this study. There is a deeper meaning to the continuous use of Ojibwa hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* and it is this: that the spirituality of Ojibwa people is much more complicated than previous researchers and ethnographers have indicated. It is a tangled picture and complicated by the conversions, first, from Midewiwin to Christianity, and, more recently, from Christianity back to Midewiwin. There has been a shift in spirituality during the last 100 years that is continuing today. In order to explore these changes further, continued studies will need to be conceptualized and pursued with the goal of determining whether the shift in spirituality is limited to the Ojibwa people or whether the shift encompasses other indigenous groups as well. The work we do is for us and it is for our children and future generations.

In my dissertation, I used the Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) language in many discussions. You will find the Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) words translated immediately following the first use of the word in parentheses. In some instances, you will find differences in spelling. For example "Ojibwa" has many different spellings that were left intact to capture the various spelling conventions that appeared in textual format during the 100-year period of this study. Some represent the phonetic spelling prevalent at the time of writing; others represent the changes in spelling conventions during the move toward developing a standard orthography. Other variant spellings of Anishinaabe words may be found in the language translation glossary labeled Appendix B. Other terms, such as ceded and unceded territories, cultural practices, and practices may be found in the glossary labeled Appendix C.

The term Ojibwa is used interchangeably with Ojibwe, American Indian, Native American, Indigenous, First Nation, Anishinaabe, and Anishinaabeg to refer to the indigenous people of the Great Lakes area known as the Anishinaabeg.

I have used full, direct quotes when possible to remain consistent with the interviewees' or authors' meanings; I paraphrased when possible where paraphrased quotes would not lose the intent of these sources.

This paper will also refer to geographical locations of places visited during fieldwork in terms of current geographical reference. For example, "Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve" is referred to in many cases as "Wikwemikong."

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INTRODUCTION

Orientation to Research Area

In an effort to include oral history of the Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) people regarding their own hymn-singing practices and memories of days gone by in their own families and communities, I decided to meet with as many of my fellow Anishinaabeg as possible to gather information about the hymns that are not translated from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. In the process of analyzing hymn no. 35, the older singing practices associated with the Midewiwin (Grand Medicine Society) came under review, owing to certain funeral-singing rites that yielded similar reasons for performing certain rituals. Others have written about Ojibwa Hymn Singers and also about the songs of the Midewiwin; several often-cited texts have been produced by early scholars. Rather than relying on these early accounts prepared by anthropologists, historians, and scholars, and because the practice of singing Ojibwa hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* continues today, it seemed the right time to include contemporary, indigenous perspectives to find answers to the following questions: Why do Ojibwa people continue to sing Ojibwa hymns in Ojibwa even though many of the singers no longer understand the words they are singing? How does hymn no. 35 in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* demonstrate both continuity and change in the Anishinaabeg western Great Lakes Diaspora, including how the hymn fits into oral traditions, how it was produced and continues to be reproduced as a literary artifact, how it is used by community members, and how it is understood to impact perceptions of identity?

I propose that the Anishinaabeg took ownership of Ojibwa hymns as a unique but distinct aspect of Ojibwa culture, adapting Midewiwin ceremonial singing practices to Ojibwa hymn-singing practices that have carried forward to the current day. I also propose that today's Midewiwin ceremonial singing and Ojibwa hymn-singing purposes are very similar; the Anishinaabeg did this to establish and maintain a sense of continuity of culture that exists today.

This is despite variances in spiritual beliefs, and differing levels of fluency in Anishinaabemowin, between local and wide spread geographical expanses around the Great Lakes.

The topics of Christianity, Midewiwin and language loss, language changes, and cultural identity are relevant to my topic. It is an important goal of my research to recognize the work of other indigenous scholars as a valid component of reclaiming common indigenous cultural concerns through examining those concerns and indigenous findings through an indigenous lens. Equally important is examining the work of earlier published scholars and applying an indigenous lens to their work in an effort to bridge gaps of understanding by clarifying information with current-day indigenous ways of knowing where possible. That is, much of the earlier scholarship in American Studies centers on American Indian Anishinaabe culture is often seen through interested scholars who are not necessarily familiar with indigenous culture. My research focuses on American Indian Anishinaabe culture from a Native American worldview by Native American scholars. Rather than relying on traditional Western methodologies such as the anthropologist/informant model, this research centers on indigenous "ways of knowing" and certain indigenous perspectives on Native American culture.

My fieldwork and analysis yielded five areas that will be discussed in this paper. These areas indicate that there have been several changes in the cultural practice of singing among the Anishinaabeg over the course of a hundred years. Among these changes are the transition of singing sets of songs in the Midewiwin lodge following Midewiwin lodge practices to singing sets of songs according to the tenets of Christian rites and holidays. But as odd as it may seem, the practice of singing among some of the Anishinaabeg hymn-singers has retained certain elements of earlier Midewiwin practices and rites that even some hymn-singers do not realize

exist. The common factors that the singers are aware of is the importance of the use of Anishinaabemowin, the Ojibwa language, and that the times and places of song performances constitute a recognition of Anishinaabeg culture and identity. The responses of the people I talked with over the course of a two-month series of interviews yielded five common themes. These are:

(1) Language Translation Issues

(2) The Importance of the Thunderbird Icon

(3) Spirituality

(4) Community and Individual Identity

(5) Continuity of Culture

These five patterns will be examined in this dissertation using other scholarly studies and my culture-based indigenous oral history data. Accordingly, chapter 1 will focus on Language Translation Issues, chapter 2 will discuss the Importance of the Thunderbird Icon, chapter 3 will explore Spirituality, chapter 4 will examine Community and Individual Identity both within and between the members of tribal groups interviewed and represented in the respective areas visited, chapter 5 will discuss Continuity of Culture, and chapter 6 is the Conclusion.

The Importance of Indigenous Oral History

I reference the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910,* (Kah-O-Sed 1910:1-68) a collection of 68 gospel hymns not translated, as well as several works by indigenous scholars. Chad S. Hamill wrote *Songs of Power and Prayer in the Columbia Plateau: The Jesuit, the Medicine Man, and the Indian Hymn Singer* (Hamill 2012:vii-169) regarding his study of hymns sung in the Salish language, which also stresses the importance of indigenous oral history. Kathleen E. Absolon (*Minogiizhigokwe*) (Good Day Woman) wrote *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know* (Absolon

2011:8-175) which offers extensive commentary from six indigenous scholars and their indigenous methodologies.

The importance of indigenous oral history is illustrated by the simple fact that, beginning with the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910,* the hymns have been carried through the generations by the power of voice and repetition. The guideline for today's hymn singers remains to look at the printed words in the hymnal.However, according to many of the hymn singers who were interviewed, it is now an auditory/oral tradition to learn to sing the songs by hearing and repeating the words rather than by reading the words with any understanding of what they mean.

The next illustration of the value of indigenous oral history is the 2012 book by Chad Hamill that was published a year after I completed my fieldwork travel. His work, *Songs of Power and Prayer in the Columbia Plateau: The Jesuit, the Medicine Man and the Indian Hymn Singer,* is such closely aligned research that it is nearly a parallel study to mine involving the Salish people and their singing practices. Moreover, Hamill, an ethnomusicologist, stated that song is much more than a conduit or catalyst for spiritual power. It is "the singular thread that ties the narrative of *Songs of Power and Prayer in the Columbia Plateau* together." (Hamill 2012:1)

Hamill's methodology for his work was, like mine, based on indigenous oral history. He describes this as follows:

> The basis of the thread is the stories, "the firsthand accounts rooted in indigenous-or more succinctly, Native-ways of knowing. In the end, I hope it might contribute in its own way to the decolonization of Native peoples, largely through the voices of the medicine man and prayer leader and a Jesuit they considered one of their own." [Hamill 2012:7]

Similarly, the stories told by the people I interviewed for my work on Ojibwa hymns, yields who the Anishinaabe are from the inside, as Chad Hamill defined the term indigenous.

The term *indigenous* covers this spectrum, and unlike a myriad of other words applied to cultural others by popular authors, artists, or academics, *indigenous* has been embraced from the inside, a term utilized by First Peoples throughout the world to describe who they are: their identity, their experience, and their collective worldviews. (Hamill 2012:7)

I cannot improve on that definition and it captures the intent of my vision of letting these people, the Anishinaabeg of today, speak for themselves.

The third example of the value of indigenous oral history, particularly as noted by scholars, is revealed in work done by Kathleen E. Absolon, who said, "I want other Indigenous yes peoples to see and know who we are, what we know and where we come from matters" (Absolon 2011:10). She cited dissertation methodologies of indigenous scholars whose work illustrates the importance of indigenous oral history and methodologies. Among those cited is Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald, STO: LO Nation, British Columbia, who places great value on storytelling as an indigenous method. Absolon wrote, "Jo-Ann sets forth methodologies that honor oral traditions and stories." (Kathleen Absolon 2011:37) Finally, the last indigenous reference in connection with indigenous hymns is from Ralph Kotay, a Kiowa hymn-singer who said:

> We have so many songs for so many purposes, songs for all different occasions and for all different types of services that we have. We have many other Kiowa song leaders like me. I'm not the only one. We want the songs to go on. We're trying to get the younger people to understand these things; we don't want this to die out. The words are so precious. The words get you to start thinking about your

own life. That’s the way all these songs are, no matter what tribe you’re from.

[L.E. Lassiter 2002:98,110]

The Kiowa songs being passed from generation to generation are another form of oral history and like the Ojibwa hymns, the songs are a precious part of the indigenous culture.

Methodology, Method, and Position as an Anishinaabe Woman

My methodology to gather contemporary indigenous perspectives was to use contemporary oral history by traveling to Ojibwa cultural gatherings in the Great Lakes area in 2011; my method of collecting information was conducting interviews with 21 indigenous participants. A 22nd interview was collected from one deeply committed non-native who spent 50 years working with native youth in an Indian Mission School. She wanted to help them learn and preserve the Ojibwa language, customs, and culture. My method also included studying each interview and comparing it with the others. In order to keep the voice of each interviewee present, actual dialogue and direct quotes were used whenever possible.

The decision to employ indigenous oral history as part of my methodology to explore the history of the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* was a conscious decision to place great emphasis on indigenous perspective in contemporary culture. My perspective is that culture is a combination of factors that operate simultaneously and often overlap. As one means of decolonization, it would have been my preference to explain the five themes that emerged from my research as blended and interdependent interactions, which is how I view them. However, in the interest of attempting to isolate each theme, the blended and interactive layers were purposely pared away, and each theme is explained as if it were an island unto itself insofar as is possible, with the goal of showcasing each separate theme. As an Ojibwa woman member of the Minnesota Chippewa tribe with a lifelong interest in language, culture, and cultural practices, I may have taken many of these community identifiers for granted, but with maturity came the realization that the practices I remember, as well as the experiences of the people I interviewed for my fieldwork, are unique. They are precious, they are changing, and they deserve to be preserved for the sake of future generations of Anishinaabe people.

These are the reasons I chose to visit Anishinaabe gatherings to interview people about the practice of hymn singing in the indigenous language and to connect that singing to the identity and knowledge bases of language and culture. It did not occur to me to state my position as an indigenous woman, but after reading what another indigenous scholar said about her research, I can agree that it is an important disclosure. Kathleen E. Absolon (*Minogiizhigokwe*) said:

> One day, I realized that Indigenous methodologies are not just about the hows, but also the who! The methodology is just as much about the person doing the searching as it is about the search . . . we are ultimately doing research about ourselves, families, communities, nations, histories, experiences, stories and cultures . . . . Our personal, familial, cultural, traditional and historical connections *are* evident in our searches. Situating ourselves in our search is distinctive. Our re-search is personal. We are subjective and we want to see benefit to our communities, our families and the generations to come. [Absolon 2011:74]

This commentary reflects what Absolon called a big epiphany, but for me, it reflects a grand summary explanation of my approach to and logic for my research. I had read some of the research on the Anishinaabeg by early scholars and felt that some of the information should and could come from current-day Anishinaabeg themselves, instead of or at least in addition to what the earlier researchers said.

My being "part of the culture," as stated by George Roy (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011), and recognized by several of the people I interviewed, allowed me the benefit of easy access to the communities I visited. Not only did I feel welcome, in many cases I felt that I was coming home. Being indigenous and having lived close to the culture all of my life is a definite plus in terms of recognizing aspects of early scholars' work that does not ring true and/or that merits closer inspection. It is also a great comfort to see the work of other indigenous scholars who honor their own culture by remembering what it is to be indigenous and by sharing their work. As Absolon said:

> Indigenous academic searches are distinct because our methodologies contain an awareness of and integration of the ancestors and our families. It's about survival. Survival means bringing our history, traditions, experiences, knowledge and methodologies forward. Survival means that our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will too know who they are and where they come from. [Absolon 2011:78-79]

In a culture that thrives on oral history, listening to indigenous people talk is more than storytelling—it is a bridge from the past and a bridge to the future.

Literature Review Part 1: Secondary Resources

Some scholars generally do not have the advantage of knowing the culture they study before they start their research. Still, one of the greatest strengths of published scholars' recorded information is that it provides a trail for other researchers to follow. It is a starting point to find published misinformation that may not have existed without the earlier researchers efforts. In reviewing secondary sources, work conducted by people who have indicated that they are non-indigenous scholars, such as early non-native researchers Walter James Hoffman (1846-1899), Frances Densmore (1867-1957), and Ruth Landes (1908-1991), emerge as commonly cited authorities on Ojibwa culture, song, and community; they have published accounts of written Midewiwin songs and ceremonies. More recently, two scholars, Michael D. McNally and Theresa Schenck, have published books that contributed greatly to the analysis in this dissertation. The work of these earlier researchers deserves deeper inspection and commentary. These scholars cover the period before, during, and after the 100-year timeline of the period researched for my dissertation. Beginning with the work prepared by Walter James Hoffman, the connections I found most relevant to my research are in Hoffman's work *The Mide'wiwin or Grand Medicine Society*, published in 1891 and covering research gathered in 1885-1886. Hoffman gathered extensive descriptions of Midewiwin ceremonies from Red Lake and White Earth Reservations in Minnesota, and acknowledged that the Mide priests he consulted felt that

many teachings were already lost and would continue to be lost as the Midewiwin was replaced by Christianity. Hoffman said:

> Much of the information has been lost through the death of their aged predecessors, and they feel convinced that ultimately all of the sacred character of the work will be forgotten or lost through the adoption of new religions by the young people and death of the *Mide*' (Grand Medicine Society) priests, who, by the way, decline to accept Christian teachings, and are in consequence termed "pagans." [Hoffman, accessed May 12, 2012]

That statement, published 128 years ago, has not come to pass. The sacred character of the work has not been forgotten or lost, and the Midewiwin is still actively practiced in Minnesota and other locales around the Great Lakes. Why did the *Mide* priests give so much information to Hoffman, a non-indigenous researcher? Hoffman had this explanation:

> According to a treaty now being made between the United States Government and the Ojibwa Indians, the latter are to relinquish the several areas of land at present occupied by them and to remove to portions of the Red Lake and White Earth Reservations and take lands in severalty. By this treaty about 4,000,000 acres of land will be ceded to the Government and the members of the various bands will become citizens of the United States, and thus their tribal ties will be broken and their primitive customs and rites be abandoned.
>
> The chief Mide'priests, being aware of the momentous consequences of such a change in ceremonies of so-called pagan rites became willing to impart them to me, in order that a complete description might be made and preserved for the future information of their descendents.
>
> There is scarcely any doubt that these ceremonies will still be secretly held at irregular intervals; but under the watchful care of the national authorities it is doubtful whether they will be performed with any degree of completeness, and it will be but a comparatively short time before the Mide'wiwin will be only a tradition. [Hoffman, accessed May 12, 2012]

It appears that Hoffman was referring to the Nelson Act of 1899. The full impact of Hoffman's prediction did not take place. Instead, the Nelson Act of 1899 was:

> The Nelson Act of 1899 was the Minnesota application of the federal Dawes Allotment Act of 1883. A commission was to negotiate the relinquishment of all Indian reservations, except White Earth, which would be allotted in severalty to Indian families who moved there. Red Lake refused allotment, and paid a kind of blackmail: selling the north part of its reservation, in order to stay on their land. White Earth ceded 4 northeastern townships (best farmland, town of Mahnomen).[1] [Treaties with Minnesota Indians, accessed August 24, 2014]

The Ojibwa did not become citizens under the Nelson Act of 1889, or lose their tribal ties, or abandon "their primitive customs and rites." Tribal practices simply went underground, as indicated by responses and statements in 2011 from many of the Ojibwa people interviewed 112 years after the Nelson Act was passed. Although citizenship was passed in 1924, tribal ties and the sense of Ojibwa culture remain strongly embedded in Ojibwa communities; some of the strongest indicators of tribal ties and identity are the use of the Ojibwa language, the maintenance of Midewiwin ceremonies, and the adaptation of Ojibwa hymn singing for

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[1] The U.S. Court of Federal Claims awarded and appropriated $20 million to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe in 1999. This settlement appropriation was to compensate the descendants of the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota for the improper valuation of timber and the taking of land under the Nelson Act of 1889. Because of the Indian Judgment Fund Act of 1983, Congress was required to pass legislation detailing how the settlement should be distributed among the six bands that make up the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

Tribal historians said the effort was little more than a technically legal swindle of the Indian bands. In 1999, a federal court agreed, awarding a $20 million Nelson Act settlement to be split between the six Minnesota bands involved. By 2012, the settlement totaled more than $28 million with interest, when a compromise was reached among five of the six bands that allowed part of the money to be divided among individual enrolled members of the five bands -- $300 for each person -- with almost $3 million awarded to each of the six band governments—Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs and White Earth. (Duluth News Tribune. "Six Chippewa bands to split $28 million federal payout," McClatchy-Tribune Information Services via COMTEX). Last modified 2/16/2012, http://technews.tmcnet.com/news/2012/02/16/6125487.htm

traditional functions, such as mournful singing with a cadence drawn from the Midewiwin practices that governmental agents and missionaries sought to erase.

Another major source of information from scholar Frances Densmore regarding Midewiwin practices is found in her book *Chippewa Music*. I found in her book, originally published in 1910, three songs she identified as Midewiwin songs. She provides a description and analysis of the songs, and one of the features she noted was the slow tempo. The three songs each carry a number, a song title, a catalogue identifier, and a narrative analysis of the song. In numerical order, the songs are: no. 154 "The Noise of the Village" (Catalogue no 306, no. 155), *Mide*' Song (Catalogue no. 304), and no 156 "Be Kindly" (Catalogue no. 301). All songs were sung by *Ki'miwun* [It is Raining] of *Waba'cing* [Red Lake], Minnesota. Densmore's description and analysis of the songs, titled "The Noise of the Village" and the "*Mide*' Song," offer early evidence of the songs' use, purpose, and cadence, which existed prior to the shift or adaptation to Ojibwa hymn-singing practices. The first song contains the words *a'nina'nibawiyan'* (whenever I pause), *de'wewe*' (the noise), and *ode'na* (of the village), and Densmore wrote that the song was sung after the death of a member of the Midewiwin "which has for one of its objects the direction of the spirit on its journey." (Densmore 1973:278-280) This concern with the direction of the spirit on its journey connects to statements made in 2011 by two fluent members of the Midewiwin (Leonard and Mary Moose, in discussion with the author, June 23, 2011), whose comments may be found in chapter 3 in the discussion of spirituality.

Densmore's narrative analysis of Midewiwin songs in 1910 offers valuable insight into Midewiwin ceremonial practices around the turn of the century. Here is her verbatim text regarding these songs, quoted in full to illustrate their importance in establishing a sense of continuity to not only Midewiwin practices but of the roots of a singing style that was carried

over into the translated Ojibwa hymns found in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. Both songs Densmore heard and recorded were sung accompanied by the drum. She wrote:

> This and the following song were said to form part of a ceremony which is held soon after the death of a member of the Midewewin (Grand Medicine Society), and which has for one of its objects the direction of the spirit on its journey.
>
> [Densmore's] Analysis: The tempo of this song is very slow, the metric unit being a half note. The rhythmic unit occurs five times, as indicated. The melody comprises the tones of the fourth five-toned scale, yet the progressions are grouped about the minor triad with minor seventh added. (See nos. 133, 147, 151, 152, 153.) The several renditions recorded show the rhythm unchanged but the intonation varying, a glissando being frequently introduced.

The editors of *Chippewa Music* wrote:

> Densmore's Analysis of the second song shows that three renditions of this song were recorded at Waba'cing. A few weeks later the phonograph was played for a member of the Midewiwin on the White Earth Reservation, who said that the melody was correct, but that the words were not. As he was a particularly good authority, the words are omitted in the transcription. The melody is simple, containing only the tonic triad and sixth and moving along harmonic lines. Attention is directed to the slow metric unit of the voice and the rapid unit of the drum. The rhythmic unit is unusually long and its repetitions embrace the entire song. [Densmore 1973:278, introductory note by editors]

Why is it important to include Densmore's entire analysis of both songs? There are a few reasons. First, she tells us that one of the songs was sung ceremonially after the death of a member of the Midewiwin. The song was a part of a funeral ceremony, much as Ojibwa hymn no. 35 is sung today as part of a funeral service practice. The parallel between the Midewiwin practice and the Christian Ojibwa hymn-singing practice is unmistakable.

Even more striking is Densmore's reference to "the slow metric unit of the voice, in the Mide' Song" for which she chose to omit the translated words. "The rhythmic unit is unusually

long and its repetitions embrace the entire song." That statement was published about Ojibwa Midewiwin singing in 1910, the same year the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* was compiled by Kah-O-Sed. The hymnal is a translation of English gospel hymns, which have their own rhythms and choruses. However, in the hymnal, the words are only in Anishinaabemowin and there is no musical score shown. In 2011, 100 years later, one of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers, Nancy White, age 71 in 2011, an Anishinaabe woman from Leech Lake Reservation in Minnesota, was talking about the cadence of the Ojibwa hymns. White unwittingly mentioned a parallel between one type of Ojibwa hymn and Densmore's findings of a slow metric unit and a rhythmic unit that is unusually long with repetitions that embrace the entire song in Midewiwin songs. This type of Ojibwa hymn is very slow and is sung by Ojibwa Episcopal singers at funerals and wakes.

White said, "…a lot of these Ojibwa singers that I've come to know in my group here were raised up singing Ojibwa and they had to stay with their folks and they say that they used to sing all night long at some of these wakes." The second type of Ojibwa hymn, according to White, is fast and lively, sung by Christian singers, and can be sung for revival meetings. (Nancy White, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011) White is an Anishinaabe woman whose comments may be classified as indigenous oral history, as she related actual events that she recalled hearing from fellow singers or experienced herself. Indigenous oral history is a rich, yet fairly untapped, source of cultural information from an insider's perspective. When the information received from these indigenous people is analyzed and compared to statements made by the non-indigenous scholar, validity is established, clarified, or refuted. In this case, White has reinforced Densmore's research findings and established that the Midewiwin practice of a slow cadence and slow metric unit of the voice still exist in song, but in 2011, the song that fits the description is Ojibwa hymn no. 35 sung at funerals or wakes.

Literature Review Part 2: Indigenous Scholars and Indigenous Oral History

There are several indigenous writers whose work has been cited in *Anishinaabe* studies and who are recognized for the insight they provide from an indigenous perspective. Among these are William H. Warren (1825-1853), Peter Jones (1802-1856), and George Copway (1818-1869). Important information from community-based cultural authority Fred K. Blessing Jr. became available with a 1977 posthumous publication of his collected papers in a book titled *The Ojibway Indians Observed*, published by The Minnesota Archaeological Society. Blessing (1915-1971) was described on the dedication page of the book as "a self-taught student of the Ojibway people whose research has left a lasting memorial of these proud Native Americans and his own memory." (Blessing 1977:iv) As a member of this group of proud Native Americans, I find that Blessings' work is indeed a lasting memorial of the information he gathered and may contain the seeds of an important work yet to be completed. Thomas Vennum Jr. a non-native scholar familiar with Blessing and his work, wrote in the forward to the posthumous publication introduction, "Fred's unfulfilled goal, to write the definitive work on the *mitewiwin*, will now have to be pursued by other scholars. They will find that Fred's groundwork has facilitated their task considerably." (Blessing 1977:xi) The fact that Blessing lived among the Ojibwa people and married an Ojibwa woman, with whom he shared an Ojibwa lifestyle, gave him credibility and gained the trust of many of the people in the communities he studied. This credential, being a part of the culture, was invaluable in terms of moving freely about in any indigenous setting, but like Blessing, some of my inquiries met with suspicion when certain questions were asked. As expected, people with ties to the Midewiwin were sometimes unwilling to discuss their practices and beliefs.

Indigenous researchers share similar concerns that are remarkable. For years, there has been a sense of urgency in collecting information before elders pass away. Part of the urgency involves the loss of language and oral history that have been fading since the boarding school era took away the family unit of the Ojibwa, as happened globally with other indigenous groups, such as the Aborigines in Australia and the First Nations people in Canada. In my study, both the United States and Canadian Anishinaabeg were affected by governmental efforts in both countries to assimilate the indigenous culture by erasing Indian culture and practices, including language, and replacing them with Anglo-European culture and practices, including the replacement of Anishinaabemowin with English and the replacement of spiritual practices with Anglo-European Christianity. Despite those efforts, indigenous scholars are on the rise and are often of the same mind to capture information and frame it for an indigenous audience with the goal of preserving cultural information for future generations. This goal presents a conflict with academic writing, which has an established Western form that often forces indigenous writers "to write in a particular manner for the academy, which is often a non-Indigenous audience," according to Absolon. (Absolon 2011:152) I think Absolon has a valid point. In my indigenous worldview, everything is connected and interrelated. My mind sees that invisible thread as I endeavor to explain the holistic viewpoint in the oral history, the storytelling words of the indigenous people interviewed. It is very difficult to attempt to categorize their stories and limit what they are saying to just one concept because most of their stories affect every theme in this dissertation. Absolon said:

> It creates pressure to fragment information by creating themes and categories, thus forming a reduced and de-contextualized analysis, whereas Indigenous approaches would keep stories and voices within a wholistic context and let the readers make their own conclusions and interpretations. [Absolon 2011:152]

In order to complete this dissertation, my compromise was to shorten or eliminate some of the stories and paraphrase what I could save into categories that may be more comfortable for academics to read, while preserving enough information for indigenous audiences, future indigenous scholars, and future generations of Anishinaabeg who may be able to hear what I have said. I have also incorporated pertinent information into Appendices.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn asserts that N. Scott Momaday's 1968 *House Made of Dawn* "is considered a classic in the study of Native American literatures not simply because it adheres to the principles of the oral traditions of the tribes, though that is vital to classic indigenous literatures, nor is it a classic because it seeks out the sources of ritual and ceremony, language, and storytelling, although that too is essential." (Cook-Lynn 2008:342) As Cook-Lynn said, it is important to consider the source when writing about Native American oral traditions, which are examined in this dissertation.

Three recent dissertation topics closely related to my research area by indigenous scholars relates to Ojibwa "religion," as some scholars tend to call spiritual practices and the way of life of the Ojibwa. The work completed by these indigenous scholars offers more recent insights to indigenous peoples' worldview. The dissertations were published in the year 2000 or later in the Great Lakes area. These are: (1) Acoose, Janice Miskwonigeesikokwe. "*Minjimendaamowinon Anishinaabe*: Reading and Righting All Our Relations in Written English," 2010, (2) Waucaush, Chad M. "Becoming Christian, Remaining Ojibwe: The Emergence of American Protestant Christianity in the Great Lakes, 1820–1900," and (3) Westman, Clinton Norman dissertation, *"*Understanding Cree Religious Discourse*,"* 2008.

These three recent dissertations are directly related to my area of interest and offer valuable insight into the question of identity from an indigenous viewpoint that may help non-

indigenous scholars see the value of the "Decade of Critical, Indigenous Inquiry," as described in various chapters written by indigenous authors in the *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. These chapters illustrate the concerns of indigenous people, for whom it seems that there are aspects of culture that are sometimes not seen by people outside of the culture, even when those aspects are right in front of them. As an indigenous person, much of my empirical research had already been gathered by a lifetime of living among the Ojibwa and practicing common community activities. As such, reading what other scholars have said about their observations and their conclusions is of great interest to me, especially in regard to spiritual practices.

The editors of *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* invited indigenous and non-indigenous qualitative researchers to think through the implications of connecting indigenous epistemologies. The preface states, "Non-indigenous scholars have yet to learn . . . that it is time to dismantle, deconstruct, and decolonize Western epistemologies from within, to learn that research does not have to be a dirty word, and to learn that research is always already moral and political." (Norman K. Denzin 2008:ix) One of the indigenous scholars, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, a member of the Crow Creek Sioux tribe, born in 1930 in Fort Thompson, South Dakota, and raised on the reservation wrote of indigenous identity in her chapter contribution "History, Myth and Identity in the New Indian Story." Cook-Lynn's work earned her a lifetime achievement award in 2007. Her life's work and the reasons she writes make her one of my personal heroes, and exemplary of a life well lived. She said, "Writing is an essential act of survival for contemporary American Indians. . . . The final responsibility of a writer like me . . . is to commit something to paper in the modern world which supports this inexhaustible legacy left by our ancestors." (Cook-Lynn, accessed October 22, 2014) While Cook-Lynn is not a

member of the Ojibwa nation, her experience as an indigenous person is a common story shared by the indigenous people of the Great Lakes area. Government policy and the colonial experience gave us similar cultural, historical, and political experiences that evoke similar emotional and intellectual reactions.

One indigenous scholar whose work exists in archival form is concerned about tribal stories being written down and losing their meaning in the process. Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor, member of the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota, wrote about Midewiwin songs in his work *Summer in the Spring*, first published in 1965 and again as recently as 1993. In his introduction, he offers this opinion of the translation from oral to written songs and stories:

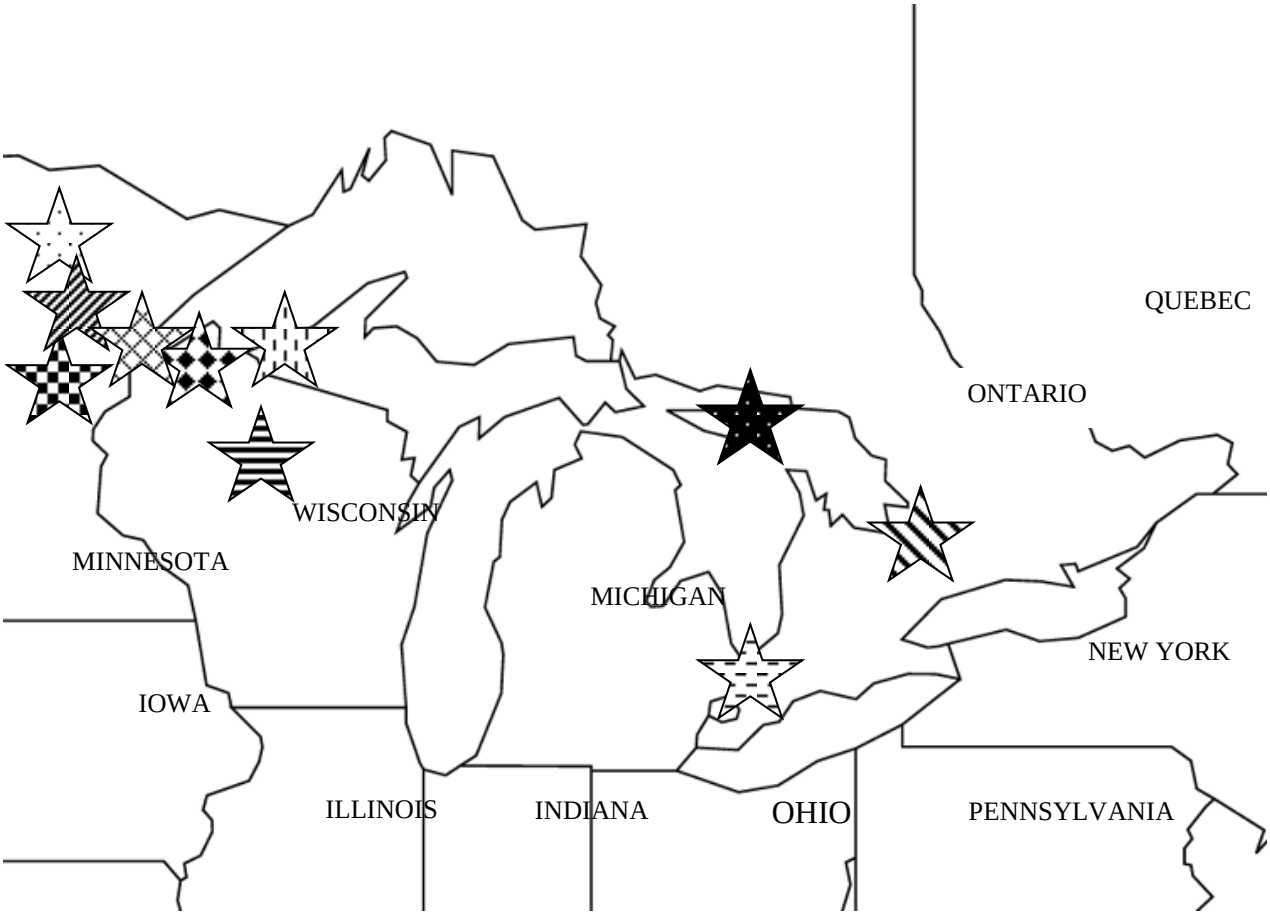
> The transvaluation from the heard to the written is a transvaluation of the heard to the seen, the listener once and the reader evermore. Those who heard stories were hounded to the sense of the present; the bent of communal remembrance was never the same. Tribal stories in translation, however, are tributes to that sense of the present that is abandoned to the weakness of historical time. The visions, scenes, and seasons once heard in tribal stories were broken on ideologies, and overturned in revisions that counted too much on the assurance of cultural permanence. [Vizenor 1993:4]

Vizenors' evaluation that "visions, scenes, and seasons once heard in tribal stories were broken . . . and overturned in revisions" is shared by George Roy, fluent Odawa (Anishinaabe), and one of those I interviewed, who insists that translations from 100 years ago depend on what was being seen, what the setting was, and who was observing it when they first wrote the words. (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011) In short, Roy contends that it is very difficult to apply today's words and values to someone else's experience that took place 100 years ago. The process of transitioning from oral to written language, and overturning the visions, scenes, and seasons of the tribal stories and original meanings is one of the language translation issues discussed in chapter 1.

However, in my opinion, we must try to envision what was being said in order to have even a rudimentary understanding of cultural values during that time period. Finding a common orthography is another issue of language translation concerns. The factors of time, historical and technological change, living environments, and the setting of what is being described by the Anishinaabeg needs to be understood in order to get a complete in-depth meaning for the words that were used at the time of translation. The bridge from the past to the present is not so much an assurance of cultural permanence, to use Vizenor's words, but a recognition that indigenous culture, like any other culture, does not exist in a vacuum, and is affected by new experiences, people, environmental changes, political developments, and both individual and community reactions and adaptations to these factors. We must, however, make a continual attempt to hear what our ancestors have told us, by whatever method they had available, in order to collect the messages from them that will allow us as Anishinaabe to retain the essence of that which we are as a people. If we look carefully, we will find within their messages the means to continue on as a distinct people with a distinct culture.

One surprise result of the interview process was finding an Indian Mission School that had been operating for more than 100 years with the support of the Indian community at Lac Courte Oreilles, Wisconsin. Sr. Felissa Zander is not indigenous but speaks Ojibwa, has an Ojibwa name, and has the support of the Ojibwa community she serves. (Sr. Felissa Zander, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011) With her 50 years of community interaction and service to the Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation, her comments are an added bonus to gaining an understanding of why Ojibwa hymns are still being sung on that reservation. The hymn "Go Preach My Gospel," listed as hymn no. 35 in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910,* is deemed significant due to its persistent usage over the 100-year period and provides the basis for

discussion in the interview document. Questions used in the interview are included in Appendix D.



Legend:

Location:

Minnesota:

Fond du Lac Indian Reservation
Leech Lake Indian Reservation
Mille Lacs Indian Reservation
Red Lake Indian Reservation

Wisconsin

Bad River Indian Reservation Midewiwin Ceremonies
Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation
Madeline Island Indian Cemetery

Ontario, Canada

Cape Croker First Nation
Walpole Island Unceded Territory First Nation
Wikwemikong Unceded Territory First Nation

Figure 1. Fieldwork Map of Locations Visited

Table 1. Alphabetical name list, ages and affiliations of people interviewed by Janis Angela Fairbanks in 2011

Name	Age	Tribal Affiliation or Location of interview
Michaa Aubid	24	Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, MN
Jennie Blackbird	80	Walpole Island First Nation, Ontario
Benjamin M. Bonga	39	Red Lake Indian Reservation, MN
Glen Bressette Jr.	39	Bad River Indian Reservation, WI from Marquette, MI
Helen Cummings	81	Leech Lake Indian Reservation, MN
Paul DeMain	48	Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation, WI
Melvin Eagle	79	Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, MN
Georgina Elliott	71	Cape Croker First Nation, Ontario
Medora Rose Hicks	71	Wikwemikong Unceded Territory First Nation, Ontario
Bryan Jon	60	Fond du Lac Indian Reservation, MN
Molly Littlewolf	55	Leech Lake Indian Reservation, MN
Molly Miller	58	Stockbridge-Muncee Mohekan, WI
Lawrence L. Moose	75	Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, MN
Mary Moose	63	Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, MN
Rianne Nahwegizhic	59	Wikwemikong Unceded Territory First Nation, Ontario
Wesley Pagel	52	Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation, MN
Robert Peacock	66	Fond du Lac Indian Reservation, MN
George Ross	80	White Earth Indian Reservation, MN
George A. Roy	64	Wikwemikong Unceded Territory First Nation, Ontario
Dennis I. Thomas	74	Walpole Island First Nation, Ontario
Nancy White	70	Leech Lake Indian Reservation, MN
Sr. Felissa Zander	Many Moons*	Non-native-Father Solanus Indian Mission School, WI

Source: Fieldwork notes of Janis Angela Fairbanks 2011.

* Sr. Felissa Zander did not give her age in years; an estimation of her age would be about 70, considering her 50 years working at the mission school where she started work in 1961 after becoming a nun.

Table 2. Data on interviewee's religious or spiritual declarations and Anishinaabemowin fluency levels were self-declared with additional quoted comments included.

Name	**Christian or Midewiwin**	**Fluency Level in Ojibwa: scale from 1 to 10**
Michaa Aubid	Midewiwin	"A learner"
Jennie Blackbird	Christian	10
Benjamin M. Bonga	Midewiwin	3 or 4
Glen Bressette Jr.	Midewiwin	5
Helen Cummings	Christian	10 – "I'm out of your range."
Paul DeMain	Unstated	3 or 4
Melvin Eagle	Midewiwin	10
Georgina Elliott	Christian	7
Medora Rose Hicks	Christian	8 – "still learning some of the old words"
Bryan Jon	Christian	2
Molly Littlewolf	Unstated	0
Molly Miller	Midewiwin	5
Lawrence L. Moose	Midewiwin	10
Mary Moose	Midewiwin	10
Rianne Nahwegizhic	Midewiwin	1 or .5 "I'm floored at .5"
Wesley Pagel	Midewiwin	6 or 7
Robert Peacock	Christian	1
George Ross	Christian	1
George A. Roy	Unstated	10
Dennis I. Thomas	Christian	6
Nancy White	Christian	3
Sr. Felissa Zander	Christian	9 or 10

Source: Fieldwork notes of Janis Angela Fairbanks 2011.

Background

In order to properly analyze the information presented in this dissertation, I used archival secondary resources to find the background of the development and uses of Ojibwa hymns. In the years prior to 1910, two of the native clergy involved in the translations and dissemination of Ojibwa hymns were Rev. Peter Jones (1802–1856) and Rev. Edward C. Kah-O-Sed, both Ojibwa tribesmen from Canada. As the songs continued to be sung by the indigenous peoples, the language used was being eroded and displaced by other societal changes that were taking place. Between 1910 and as late as the 1960s, the era of boarding schools that took children away from home and banished the use of Ojibwa language was taking place; in the early 1940s, World War II took many young men away from home and family; and in the1950s, the government's relocation program splintered tribal groups by moving families to urban areas for job programs.

Another change by the early 1950s was that the indigenous people were straining against all of the restrictions and seeking to reaffirm their identity and culture. One way they did this was through the reemergence of powwows and the search for cultural practices and identity ties to the old ways. One of the old ways, at least to the people of the 1950s, was the practice of hymn singing, which had established itself as an Indian practice. There is much to be said about the practices that were incorporated by the Ojibwa people, who created and maintained a tie to the past that is now truly a tie to identity and culture, as shown by the responses to the interviews I conducted in the summer of 2011. Every decade from 1950 to 2010 brought change to the lives of indigenous people, bringing a new set of legislation or administrative challenges that would have Ojibwa people become a part of the melting pot of the larger culture. Yet for every new challenge, indigenous people exhibit and vocalize their determination to remain a distinctly separate and identifiable segment of the population. In every age range interviewed, there is

some variation of a statement to the effect that it is important to remember who we are, to sing our own songs, and to practice our cultural beliefs, among them singing the Ojibwa hymns, practicing Midewiwin and Big Drum ceremonies, and passing the language and culture along to future generations.

Even after 2010, the end mark of my 100-year-study time frame, there have been activities that illustrate the importance of the culture, indigenous cohesiveness, and the strong unifying influence of song. Witness the phenomenon of the Idle No More movement (Tristin Hopper, accessed December 8, 2014) that started with Canadian indigenous concerns for the environment. Those concerns quickly involved indigenous people on both sides of the Canadian border and the appearance of hand drumming and dancing. This became known to the whole world through the Internet. Men, women, and children of all ages joined together to sing songs and support one another. This practice goes back to a gathering the missionaries may have characterized as a pagan ritual. That is, the songs that are sung by the flash mobs are forms of communication that frighten members of the dominant culture. The rhythm of the drum that indigenous people recognize as the heartbeat of the people reminds the dominant culture of the old 1950s movies where the sound of the drum meant war. There is a large, cultural communication gap that remains between indigenous and non-indigenous people. But one practice that seems to be a mediation point is the practice of indigenous people singing gospel hymns. Rev. Joseph Gilfillan, in 1908, said, "As for the Christian Indians they are excellent people, and there were everywhere among the Christians, saints. The best people and the best Christians I have ever known were Indian Christians." (Charles Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011)

A century later, in 2011, Nancy White, one of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers who considers herself a Christian, told a story about being invited to sing at a wake for a family member of a Midewiwin family. Usually the hymn singers arrive with a leader, who directs them in their duties and also informs the assembled people of what is happening. On this occasion, however, only four singers could be located on short notice and a leader was not among those who went to sing. After a brief discussion, two of the group decided to "wing it" and begin with a prayer and a reading from the bible, followed by hymn singing. But one of the family members, a Midewiwin practitioner, told the singers that the family did not want any prayers. The question posed by White, the Christian hymn singer, to the Midewiwin family member was, "Don't we believe in the same God?" The answer given by the Midewiwin family member was, "Well, I don't know." This exchange is one aspect of the need for identity and community, and the request for the Ojibwa songs indicates the need for continuity and language retention. (Nancy White, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011.)

This dilemma of being called to sing Ojibwa hymns to comfort the families, yet being asked not to pray is confusing to both the traditional Midewiwin individuals and to their Christian contemporaries who are there by invitation.

In order to explore and clarify what happened historically to contribute to the sense of confusion, the secondary sources consulted will be used to highlight an ongoing sense of confusion over the issues that have arisen since missionary contact with the indigenous people. Early researchers, who gave no indication of being a part of the culture they were studying, but who wanted to understand Midewiwin beliefs and practices, wrote about music and lodge gatherings, but by the nature of their lack of ties to cultural experience, they did not fully

understand what they heard and saw. Members of the culture likely had a deeper understanding, although sometimes the Midewiwin cultural beliefs and practices were called by other names.

The older form of Ojibwa traditional beliefs in the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island was not referred to as Midewiwin. It existed, but George Roy from Wikwemikong said that he knew about the teachings of Midewiwin but that it was called *Anishinaabe zhitaawin* (Anishinaabe religious affiliation or belief), not given the name Midewiwin. Roy gave several examples of the changes he has seen in his lifetime in language and culture. These include the singing of hymns in church when he was young and recalling that, although he is a fluent speaker, he did not always know the meanings of all the words to the hymns he was singing He learned songs by rote, just as many of today's Ojibwa Hymn singers do, both fluent and non-fluent singers. (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011)

There will be more discussion of Ojibwa hymns as they were used at the start of the 20th century as my research expands on the modes of religious worship and focuses on the relationship between Ojibwa hymns and their function. I will also include comments on Midewiwin practices reflected in hymn-singing practices that support the preservation of the language, culture, and worldview of Ojibwa hymn-singers in nine Anishinaabeg communities in the Great Lakes area. There was a migration factor among the Anishinaabeg during the time the hymns were translated in the late 1800s. Archival research utilized indicates certain practices used in several Anishinaabeg communities in the Great Lakes area point to a significant blending of community traits that affected the common result of retaining and maintaining original translations from 1910 and earlier. The Anishinaabeg continue to use them even into the 21st century.

The archival holdings prepared by ethnographer Walter James Hoffman and anthropologist Ruth Landes regarding the Midewiwin and spiritual practices of the Anishinaabeg are mentioned only as examples of non-indigenous research. The point of preparing this dissertation is to incorporate the oral history of living Anishinaabeg interviewed in 2011 to give a current-day indigenous framing to the various perspectives. Two other important non-indigenous resources analyzed are Frances Densmore's musical recording descriptive notes used in "Healing Songs of the American Indians," and the more recent books by Michael D. McNally titled *Ojibwa Singers: Hymns, Grief, and a Native Culture in Motion* and *Aging, Authority and Ojibwe Religion: Honoring Elders*, as well as his journal article, "The Practice of Native American Christianity." Commentary on their work arises in the appropriate chapter.

Chapter Overview

Ojibwa hymns have endured in Anishinaabeg communities for more than a century, although the system they were designed to replace, the Midewiwin, or Grand Medicine Society, has continued to exist as well. In this dissertation, I will talk about the 100-year-history of Ojibwa hymn-singing practices; Anishinaabemowin (or Ojibwa) language challenges and symbols; Midewiwin and traditional singing practices; and Anishinaabe identity, spirituality, and cultural continuity, framed around a discussion of hymn no. 35 and the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910.* Song and singing in *Ojibwemowin*, also known as Anishinaabemowin, the language of the Ojibwa people, is important to both Christian Indians and traditional Indians who follow Midewiwin, or Big Drum, teachings, which show no signs of diminishing or going away. In fact, some people interviewed during fieldwork say both are making a comeback. The catalyst for this study is the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* compiled by Rev. Edward C. Kah-O-Sed, which contains 68 gospel hymns without English language translations.

The impulse that led me to choose Ojibwa hymn singing as a focus for my research is the persistent use of the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. As a child, I recall my father singing some of these hymns. As a young adult in 1975, I recall in particular a certain hymn that was sung for him at his wake by the Ojibwa Hymn Singers on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in Cass Lake, Minnesota. The hymnal in use in 1975 was the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. Thirty-five years later, in 2010, I attended the funeral of my aunt that also took place on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in Cass Lake, Minnesota. At the end of the funeral service, two Ojibwa Hymn Singers stood at the head of my aunt's grave and sang one song from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. I recognized it as the same song that I remembered hearing at my father's funeral. This was no small coincidence, as at my father's funeral, the Ojibwa hymns were sung all night. At my aunt's funeral, only one song was sung.

After the service ended, I spoke with Rev. George Ross, who was one of the two singers present that day. In later discussions with Ross, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe from White Earth Reservation, I learned that he is the lead singer for the group and had been singing with them for 30 years. He was 80 years old at the time of the interview in 2011 and though officially retired, he still travels to conduct Sunday masses every Sunday in neighboring Red Lake Indian Reservation. (George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011) He also attends or conducts community services in Cass Lake on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. He is a well-respected, active man with a great sense of humor and a great deal of knowledge, which he willingly shared during two separate interviews, one in 2010 and one in 2011. On the occasion of my aunt's funeral, I asked him if I could see the hymnal he was carrying and he gave it to me to examine. I was struck by the fact that the hymnal was still in use 100 years after it had been compiled. After a brief conversation, I asked which hymn it was they had sung and he said,

"no. 35." Attending a relative's funeral is difficult to begin with, but to hear the same song again and have it bring back memories of a beloved parent's funeral sets off a whole unexpected wave of emotions, one of which is a strong sense of grief even though many years have passed since the initial loss. Thirty-five years had passed, yet the sound of the song had the power to arouse fresh emotion in me, now compounded by my most recent loss of my beloved aunt. Yet strangely, there was also a sense of peace and comfort in hearing the hymn again. The chorus of the song means, "I'm going home to die no more."

As we discussed the hymnal, I asked Ross if any of the singers understand the words to the songs they sing. He said no. Then he amended his answer to say that some do, but most don't. (George Ross, in discussion with author, October 1, 2010) I wanted to know why. Why in many respects did the singers want to sing songs when they don't know what the words mean? The pivotal question is with regard to the use of Ojibwa hymnals that were initially conceived as a means to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity but are still being used in Ojibwa communities today in their original form. The hymnal now represents a respect for and continuation of a cultural practice that preserves the tie to the Ojibwa language.

The hymn singers recognize that language is an important aspect of Anishinaabe culture, and for that reason, they wish to retain the language. In many instances, the singing of songs leads to a renewed effort to study the language. Certain reservations have a higher fluency level, but fluency does not always guarantee that the meanings of the songs will be understood. With songs that were translated over 100 years ago, today's fluent speakers say that even they have sometimes sung the hymns without understanding what they were singing. That is because Anishinaabemowin is verb-based and translations are a picture of what is happening, not the noun-based translations that are available in other languages, like English. For today's fluent

speakers to translate an old hymn from 1910, some of those interviewed agreed that it would take a group of fluent people sitting around discussing the words to decide on what they mean. They would also need an English translation of the song close by to see what the English words say and mean to get an idea of what the century-old Ojibwa translation might have meant. They would have to imagine themselves in that 100-year-old environment and try to picture what the translator back then was seeing. (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011)

The fact that Anishinaabemowin has undergone a shift from an oral to a written language is also a factor in loss of fluency. The ongoing debate over whether to learn by writing words down or immersing students in oral dialogue only will be incorporated as one means to examine the changes in print media during the 100-year time study. The vehicle to examine the changes in written Anishinaabemowin will be Ojibwa hymn no. 35, which has been in continuous use since 1910. This fact indicates to me an opportunity to contribute to a scarcely tapped area of interest in ethnographic studies in the field of American Studies. That area is the continued practice of singing Ojibwa hymns, despite the fact that many of the singers today do not understand the Ojibwa language.

More than one of the first-language-fluent Ojibwa speakers described the translation process as a group project that would probably result in many different translations due to the nature of the Ojibwa language. According to George Roy, whose first language is Ojibwa, the old translations of Ojibwa hymns would be "exceptionally hard" for him to translate by himself, without a group of fluent speakers to talk to. "We've lost some of them words. We don't use them anymore, until you hear them, then you recognize them; for me to spontaneously to come up with a word, I'd have to sit here and talk to someone." (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011) Further discussion of the difficulties or necessity of translating Ojibwa to

English appears in chapter 1. Notably, Anishinaabe scholar and first-language-fluent professor Mary Ann Corbiere-Naokwegijig's article "Flying Blind over Strange Terrain, or *Ezhi-mkoshnang Kweji-aan'kinoosjigeng*: Issues in English-Nishinaabemwin Translations" will be incorporated as the experience of a current-day Anishinaabe translator. Her comments support those made by Roy that even a fluent speaker may face challenges in translating to English.

Ironically, although there are hymn singers on reservations in the United States and First Nations in the Canadian Great Lakes communities visited, most singers do not understand what the Ojibwa words mean. However, 100 percent of the people interviewed said it is important to continue to sing the songs in Ojibwa. Their reasons are mainly tied to identity and will be discussed in chapter 4. It is anticipated that the information collected from the fieldwork interviews will add to a greater understanding of native perspective and worldview for interested scholars researching Native American culture in the 21st century.

The question of interest in this study is, "Why do Ojibwa people continue to sing Ojibwa hymns in Ojibwa even though many of the singers no longer understand the words they are singing?" Both the "Praying Indians" and the traditional Midewiwin practitioners agree on two points: (1) the language is important, and (2) singing is an important cultural trait. But early reports on Ojibwa religion were highly contradictory even when Anishinaabe informants were consulted or observed and despite the fact that in some instances, the reporters were themselves of indigenous origin.

Similarly, there were points of contradiction among the 21 indigenous interviewees and the one non-indigenous subject included in the interviews. I visited nine indigenous communities around the Great Lakes. See Tables 1 and 2. These tables contain characteristics of the places

and people interviewed. The places visited during fieldwork include Great Lakes Ojibwa, Odawa, and Pottawatomie communities of people collectively referred to as Anishinaabeg.

During the summer of 2011, my fieldwork travel included talking to 23 individuals with tribal ties to U.S. reservations and First Nations listed previously. There were many commonalities among these widespread people and communities. Their stories and their histories were similar enough to lend support to their common ties as one people, one larger community, even though they were split up into different geographic locations. It is their common stories, beliefs, and practices that rise above the geographic location differences and tie them together as one people in community as well as title. This is the story of those people, those Anishinaabeg, as they were interviewed to find their role in the history of a century of hymn-singing practices and how they are dealing with spiritual and language transition issues.

CHAPTER 1: Language Translation Issues

Although Anishinaabemowin has been changing, particularly spelling conventions, many of the written hymnals have remained the same, causing some of the translation dilemmas. The *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* may be considered a literary artifact, and its continued use over a 100-year period represents continuity in culture, change in the reasons for the hymnal's use, community and individual identity ties, and language translation issues as the question of translating the hymnal back into English is explored, and the importance of Indigenous oral history. This chapter deals with language translation issues.

Is it possible, desirable, or necessary to translate Ojibwa hymns from the turn of the 19th century to English? Anishinaabemowin is changing, words have been lost, and new words have been created. Dialects and orthographies are different and, although symbolism between Midewiwin and Christianity exists, adding to the need for translations and re-translations of Ojibwa hymns written over 100 years ago, several of the people interviewed said it would be difficult and time consuming to translate from the Anishinaabe language back into English. They mentioned a number of reasons related to the structure of the English language as compared to the structure of the Anishinaabe language, and the basis of the hymns and word–pictures from 100 years ago versus different word–pictures that may be used today. When the hymns were translated and spread by missionaries among the Anishinaabeg, they were used as a mechanism to convert fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin from the Midewiwin to Christianity. At the time of inception, all singers understood the language. The hymnals, the hymns, and their history are discussed under the next section in this chapter.

Beginning with the Anishinaabe language, the fact that the singers today do not always understand the words to the hymns they sing is not a primary concern for many of them; what matters is that they use the sounds to keep the songs alive. They recognize that language is an

important aspect of Anishinaabeg culture, and for that reason, they wish to retain the language. In many instances, the singing of the songs leads to a renewed effort to study the language. People interviewed stressed the importance of language retention. They also revealed certain difficulties in translating words from another time period, or in translation issues as discussed by Mary Ann Naokwegijig-Corbiere in her essay "Flying Blind over Strange Terrain, or *Ezhi-mkoshnang Kweji-aan'kinoosjiging*: Issues in English-Nishnaabemwin Translation." Naokwegijig- Corbiere is a recognized Nishnaabemwin language authority and founding member of Anishinaabemowin Teg Inc. international language preservation organization. Her current research project is The Nishnaabemwin Dictionary. She said, "We always just spoke Indian at our house." She believes in the importance of the Anishinaabe language. "I think this is one of the things Nishnaabemwin gives a person: to know his/her ancestors, and where he or she comes from." She has been working on a dictionary for a number of years and often presents portions of her work at conferences. (Anishinaabemowin Teg Inc. 2014:10)

The obvious strength of Anishinaabemowin is the number of speakers who remain, despite the history of the infamous boarding school era in the United States and the corresponding residential school system in Canada. Much has been written about the efforts to eradicate the language in both countries. Determined to hold onto their language and culture, some parents hid their children from authorities during the government-mandated roundup of children as young as five years old who were scheduled to be transported far from their homelands to be educated. The children who remained with their parents maintained their language and sometimes passed it on to their own children.

While it is true that Anishinaabemowin is losing speakers as they age and die, there is a new population of second-language learners who strive to learn and teach the language to others.

It is a rebuilding process, and the U.S. government has offered some measure of support to the effort. Beginning in 1974 in the United States, the government recognized a need for the Anishinaabeg and other indigenous groups to begin the process of rebuilding their language bases. Legislation was passed to allow funding for the tribes to establish language learning centers for their children. In addition, private citizens joined together to form language nests, also called language tables, where people get together to practice speaking, reading and writing the Ojibwe language to support language transmission through a community-based effort. Arguably, the main threats to language acquisition are the death of fluent elders and the corresponding challenge of learning centers and schools to find qualified teachers.

A secondary challenge is the lack of a common orthography for the written transmission of the language, although the Fiero system, also known as the double-vowel system, is gaining in popularity among teachers and students. In fact, on July 14, 2014, an article in *Indian Country Today Media Network.com* stated as one result of the Ojibwa Language Revitalization Advisory Committee Meeting in Ponemah, Minnesota, on the Red Lake Indian Reservation, Fiero will be the official orthography. "*The Double Vowel System:* All concurred that Red Lake will encourage the use of the "double vowel" system, as it is used at Ojibwemowin immersion schools, public schools, and colleges. It is the preferred spelling used in Ojibwemowin books." (Michael Myers, accessed July 24, 2014) Red Lake is one of the strongest areas of fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin in Minnesota, according to Anton Treuer, who estimates a total of 678 fluent speakers as of 2010, with 400, or 60 percent, of the fluent speakers from the Red Lake Reservation. The total Minnesota number of fluent speakers from Minnesota is divided as follows: (Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* 2010:75)

Table 3. This table shows the estimated number of fluent speakers on Minnesota Indian Reservations in 2010.

Name of Reservation in Minnesota	**Estimated number of fluent speakers in 2010**
Red Lake	400
Mille Lacs	150
Leech Lake	50
Bois Forte	20
White Earth	15
Grand Portage	3
Fond du Lac	0

Source: *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (75) by Anton Treuer.

Red Lake, with the highest number of fluent speakers, is a logical area to start a concerted effort at language revitalization, as they are now doing with a committee formed in 2014.

Other challenges to language revitalization include the reluctance of educational institutions to recognize credentials of non-degreed fluent speakers and the watering down of language skills among second-language learners who are hired as teachers based on their college degrees but who do not meet the same level of fluency as the non-degreed fluent speakers.

A recent MPR interview with an administrator, teacher, and students from the tribally run *Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig* (Hole-in-the-Day) school on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation is a current example of another language revitalization effort. Leslie Harper, Project Manager of *Niigaane* (Leader) Language Immersion School in Bena, Minnesota, has shown innovative solutions to today's challenges. Harper explained how the school was conceptualized. "The idea for the school grew organically from a group of elders and parents, almost out of a sense of desperation. We are really coming close to losing our language, to letting go of it, and that was just too great, too devastating a thought for a few of us to face, you know? We just said we cannot let this happen." [Tom Robertson, accessed March 14, 2013]

Harper acknowledged that one of the biggest challenges is finding teachers "who are not only fluent in Ojibwa, but also able to talk about academics and manage a classroom." There are also no available textbooks or other materials for an immersion-style classroom, so all of the teachers must create their own curriculum and teaching materials for every subject. In 2013, Niigaane encompassed grades K-6, although funding issues and finding certified high school eachers who also speak Ojibwa for grades 7-12 have halted the addition of those grades. Despite the challenges, the progress of the existing grades is remarkable. They are learning the language to the point of fluency. In 2008, eight-year-old third grade student Willow Miller said sometimes elders approach her and seem to test her, to see if she can really talk Ojibwa. This happens even when she is away from her home territory on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation, such as her visit to the near-by Bois Forte reservation. "Last time in Bois Forte, a guy, he's an Indian, he could talk Ojibwa," said Miller. "He was talking about me because I talked Ojibwa to him." (Tom Robertson, accessed March 14, 2013) The success of that immersion school is real. Some *Niigaane* students won scholarships in 2012 for their progress in the language from the international language preservation organization Anishinaabemowin-Teg, Inc. (Anishinaabemowin Teg Inc. 2012:6)

People interviewed during fieldwork show an awareness of measures that need to be implemented to preserve Anishinaabemowin. Fluent speakers Medora Hicks and George Roy both agree that hearing the language and repeating often what you hear is needed to retain language skills. When asked, "Do you think it is it important to understand what you're singing?" Roy said it is important, but in the late 1940s into the 1950s, the singers who knew the songs were dying off, and the newer singers who tried to memorize and recognize what was in the book discovered that they could not understand what was written there. Roy said the loss of

the ability to understand the words was a lost part of the culture. “Sometimes we don’t know it immediately, at the time we say the words.” (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011)

Hicks said it’s very important to sing the hymns in church for the parents and grandparents because it is important for them to hear the hymns being sung in the language. For her personal retention of the songs, she often sings them at home by herself because “if you don’t sing them regularly, you can lose them.” She said when she was little, she didn’t really understand because the words are pronounced a little bit different to fit the music. (Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011)

Hicks and Roy are both Wikwemikong community members who had left Wikwemikong years ago. Roy agrees with Hicks that when they were younger, they did not really understand the words to the hymns. Roy also talked about not understanding the songs because the words are broken down into syllables. Both of them said if they took the time to put the words back together again, they could probably understand them, and it is the unnatural separation of the syllables that made the Ojibwa words unrecognizable. Roy also agrees with Hicks regarding re-translations of songs that were translated over 100 years ago, that even fluent speakers have sometimes sung the hymns without understanding what they were singing. (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011)

The fact that Anishinaabemowin has undergone a shift from an oral to a written language is also a factor in loss of fluency. There is an ongoing debate over whether to learn by writing words down or immersing students in oral dialogue only. By the mid-1800s, hymn translations were well underway for the purpose of converting Anishishinaabe people and establishing Christianity as their primary belief system. In the process, Midewiwin practices were meant to be

suppressed or eliminated as another way to break up the indigenous life–way in favor of the colonial power structure. Missionaries were sent to live among the Anishinaabeg and eventually, members of the Anishinaabeg were employed as missionaries to assist with the conversion of their people. One missionary, Frederick Augustus O'Meara, is described in *The Book of Common Prayer*:

> Rev. O'Meara was born in Dublin, Ireland, and obtained his master's degree from Trinity College, Dublin. Shortly after his ordination he answered a call made by the bishop of Dublin for young men to do missionary work in what was then Upper Canada. After a year or two as travelling missionary he was asked to take charge of the Indians on the Georgean Bay and Lake Huron generally. For a year he lived at the Sault Ste Marie. At the request of the late Bishop Strahan and the Governor of Canada he accepted the position of Government chaplain to the Indians on Grand Manitoulin Island and remained there a little over twenty-one years. The work in his new field was richly blessed. His services to the Church in his different translations of the Prayer Book and of portions of the Bible, with his untiring labours among the Indians received high commendation from the bishop of Toronto. [Charles Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011]

An example of O'Meara's translated hymns appears in Appendix E

Although Rev. O'Meara did not go to Manitoulin Island until 1844 with his translated hymns, other missionaries traveled in Canada and had their own hymn translations. Rev. Peter Jones, an Ojibwa Methodist missionary who lived from 1802 to 1856, and Rev. George Copway, another Ojibwa Methodist missionary, who lived from 1818-1869, looked to Jones for guidance in the missionary effort. Both used translated hymns to work with their *Anishinaabe* converts. Donald B. Smith relates the story of Peter Jones accompanying a white missionary, Rev. Alvin Torry, on a missionary journey among the Thames, Munceys, and Ojibwas where Indians walked out because they could not understand what Torry said. (Donald B. Smith 1997:86-87) Apparently Torry spoke in English and did not use Ojibwa hymns; he lost his audience. According to Smith:

> An important part of the conversion process was the singing of Ojibwa hymns, which Jones used to top advantage with his native converts: Peter Jones, his Indian helpers and the Methodist ministers in one day converted all the newcomers, including the head chief, George Paudash. In squads they taught the Rice Lake Indians the Lord's Prayer and the important hymns. The new converts clapped their hands and these lovers of music rhythmically shouted, "*Jesus nin ge shah wa ne mig*," [Jesus has blessed me]. [Donald B. Smith 1997:96]

There is an even more telling aspect of the conversions, and that is the Indians wanting to keep singing all night, much like the Midewiwin practices during some of their ceremonies. These converts, however, justified their all-night singing as follows: "When we were Heathen we never gave up drinking the fire-water the whole night, and why should we now go to bed? Why should we not go on singing and praising God till daylight?" Peter Jacobs, another young Methodist missionary who learned from Peter Jones, agreed and stayed with them, preaching most of the night. (Donald B. Smith 1997:96)

A similar phenomenon was taking place in Minnesota on the White Earth Reservation around the same time period, when Episcopal ministers were concentrating on effecting conversions among the Ojibwa people of northern Minnesota. Melissa L Meyer's *White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation, 1889-1920* gives an account of missionary activity there that involved recruitment of native ministers who were familiar with Anishinaabe customs and values. One of those, John Johnson, or *Enmegahbowh*, an Odawa who was raised in an Anishinaabe community on Walpole Island in Canada, arrived in 1834 at White Earth as an interpreter and mission assistant. Within the next ten years, he married a highly placed Anishinaabe woman, *Biwabikogizigokwe*, niece of the *Bugonaygeshig* (Hole-in the-Day-the-Elder). Meyer quotes historian Rebecca Kugel in describing the process by which native missionaries received their training: "First, they worked as interpreters at mission stations,

then as schoolteachers and assistants, finally, after some formal religious education, they became qualified as missionaries." (Melissa L. Meyer 1994:41)

The hymnals continued to undergo changes as the hymns were reviewed and translated again by these new native missionaries. In 1852, Episcopalian missionary James Lloyd Breck opened a mission and school at Gull Lake to train young native missionaries. (Melissa L. Meyer 1994:97) By 1875, Rev. Joseph Alexander Gilfillan had worked with reviewing and re-translating some of the hymns O'Meara had translated in 1856, with the help of three half-breeds, Paul Beaulieu, Truman A. Warren, and François Bellair. Gilfillan was one of the ministers who traveled extensively between several Minnesota Ojibwa Reservations and Canadian First Nations. These Episcopalian and Methodists ministers and their native trained ministers were instrumental in translating English Gospel hymns to Ojibwa and disseminating them among U.S. reservations and Canadian First Nations as they moved around in their missionary assignments. (Charles Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011)

The translator and editor of the Ojibwa Hymnal 1910, the Rev. Edward Coley Kah-O-Sed; born on Walpole Island, Ontario, Canada, September 30, 1870, the son of Christian parents. In 1894 he came to Minnesota as an interpreter for a missionary at Red Lake, Indian Reservation. In 1896 he went to Seabury Hall, Faribault, Minnesota, and graduated there in 1900. Since 1905 he has been stationed at Beaulieu, Minnesota. He was ordained priest in 1907 by the Right Rev. James Dow Morrison, bishop of Duluth. The 1895 edition of Dr. Gilfillan, having been exhausted by this time, Mr. Kah-O-Sed prepared the edition, just described. [Charles Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011]

One of Kah-O-Sed's translated hymns is referred to as "no. 35" by the Ojibwa Singers. At the end of the song, the singers conclude in English, "We're going home to die no more." The

side-by-side version of the hymn is shown in Figure 2. The left column contains the English lyrics to the hymn and the right column contains the three verses from *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. Figure 4 shows a set of added choruses, created and included by Anishinaabe ministers who had formerly belonged to the Midewiwin and therefore knew the significance of being able to properly send someone home after they died. It is most probable that the chorus was included to allay the concerns of converts who needed to know that there was still a method of sending them home after they died. This topic will be clarified under the spirituality section in chapter 3.

Table 4. First Translation of Ojibwa hymn no. 35 "Go Preach My Gospel." Two verses in the English version are not written in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*.
This is the first of three sequential translations of Ojibwa hymn no. 35. Both omitted verses contain abstract references to terms or peoples for which a translation was either not attempted or not given in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*.

English Lyrics	**Ojibwa Translation**
"Go Preach My Gospel"	hymn no. 35 in *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*
"Go preach My Gospel," saith the Lord,	*Babaminwadjimoyuk su*
"I'll make your great commission known,	*Gi ikito Tebendijiged*
He shall be saved that trusts My word,	*'Wegwen ge-debuetumogwen*
He shall be damned that won't believe	*Mii go au ge-nojimoint.*
I'll make your great commission known,	*Nin ga babawidokan su*
And ye shall prove My Gospel true,	*Iu nin minwadjimowin*
By all the works that I have done,	*Ga-aiijichigigeyan su*
By all the wonders ye shall do.	*Ki ga-ni-aiijichigem.*
"Go heal the sick, go raise the dead,	THIS VERSE IS NOT IN THE HYMNAL
Go cast out devils in My Name;	
Nor let My prophets be afraid,	
Though Greeks reproach, and Jews blaspheme.	
"Teach all the nations My commands,	*Windumageyuk go mizi*
I'm with you till the world shall end;	*Iniu nin gagiquewinun;*
All power is trusted to My hands,	*Kaginig ki ga widjiwinim*
I can destroy, and I defend."	*Nananj go che 'shqua-akikag.*
He spake, and light shone round His head;	THIS VERSE IS NOT IN THE HYMNAL
On a bright cloud to Heav'n He rode;	
They to the farthest nations spread	
The grace of their ascended God.	

There are no translations in the hymnal and no sheet music to guide the singers of the Ojibwa hymns. Rev. Ross explained that singers learn the songs by sitting with other singers.

Also, the three verses that are shown in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* have been translated for actual meaning, as an English version of the chorus was not found. To provide some guideline in preparing a translation, the English lyrics were selected from current English versions available. The three verses in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* previously shown in Table 4 are reproduced in Table 5 with more commentary on differences, followed by Table 6 which contains a chorus added by the Ojibwa translators that did not exist in the original English version of the hymn and two additional choruses neither translated nor sung.

Table 5. Second Translation of Ojibwa hymn no. 35 "Go Preach My Gospel" rewritten in Fiero system, also referred to as the Double Vowel orthography and the general meaning of the translation.

Hymn # 35: Original/Respelled/Translated		**"Go Preach My Gospel"**
hymn no. 35 in Ojibwa Hymnal	Rewritten for Double Vowel	Translated Meaning
Babaminwadjimoyuk su	*Babaaminwaajimojig*	Those spreading the good news,
Gi ikito Tebendijiged	*gii ikido dibenjiged*	The owner said;
'Wegwen ge-debuetumogwen	*wegonen ga-debwetaamogwen*	Who may believe,
Mii go au ge-nojimoint.	*mii go iw ge-naajimowi*	This is what you will tell!
Nin ga babawidokan su	*Nin gaa babaawidokoon sa,*	I will support you,
Iu nin minwadjimowin	*Iw niin minwaajimowin*	That I tell a good story
Ga-aiijichigigeyan su	*gaa ezhichigeyin sa*	The things that you have done!
Ki ga-ni-aiijichigem.	*Kaa ni-zhichigem*	You will continue to do.
Windumageyuk go mizi	*Wiindamooig go mizi*	Tell everyone!
Iniu nin gagiquewinun;	*Iw niin gaakwe'aayaanh*	That I preach;
Kaginig ki ga widjiwinim	*Ka ni wiijiiwinim*	I will walk with you
Nananj go che 'shqua-akikag	*nowaanch go jishkwaa-akiiwong*	Close to the end of the world!

Table 5 shows hymn no. 35 rewritten in the double-vowel orthography more commonly used today and translated for English meaning with input from first language fluent speaker Alphonse Pitawanakwat. The original phonetic spelling was challenging, one reason I believe for adopting a common Ojibwa orthography. The next chart is Figure 5. Since *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* hymn no. 35 also contains a chorus and two alternate choruses not shown in the English lyrics, nor heard in

the Marion Williams English vocal, Table 6 shown below depicts the original chorus that is heard on the Ojibwa Hymn Singers CD and that is the first chorus shown in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* in column 1, the rewritten orthography in column 2, and the translation for chorus 1 in column 3.

Table 6. Third translation for Ojibwa hymn no. 35 "Go Preach My Gospel". This table shows one chorus translated in Fiero system and sung, and two choruses not translated or sung.

hymn no. 35: Original/Respelled/Translated	**Chorus in Ojibwa Hymnal and sung on Ojibwa Hymns CD**	**"Go Preach My Gospel"**
hymn no. 35 in Ojibwa Hymnal	Rewritten for Double Vowel	Translated Meaning
Chorus 1	Chorus 1 sung	
gi ki way min	*ka gii-emi*	we will be going home,
gi ki way min	*ka gii-emi*	we will be going home,
gi ki way min	*ka gii-emi*	we will be going home,
che ne bo si wang,	*ji niboosiiwang*	so that we die no more
che ne bo si wang,	*ji niboosiiwang*	so that we die no more
che ne bo si wang,	*ji niboosiiwang*	so that we die no more
Gi ke way min	*ka gii-emi*	We will be going home
che nen bo si wang	*ji niboosiiwang*	so that we die no more
Chorus 2	Chorus not sung	
Binozi ka wada Jesus		
Binozi ka wada Jesus		
Binozi ka wada Jesus		
Gega sha weni ni go wa		
Chorus 3 (alternate chorus)	Chorus not sung	
Binozi ka wik au Jesus		
Binozi ka wik au Jesus		
Binozi ka wik au Jesus		
Gega sha weni ni go wa		

The presence of the Ojibwa chorus and its repetition of words illustrates another point McNally noted in his study of Frances Densmore's recordings of Midewiwin songs. "Because sung words could generate transformative power, repetition could intensify that power." (Michael D. McNally 2000:29) This incorporation of Midewiwin convention may exist in Ojibwa hymns without current-day Ojibwa singers being aware of its presence. However, the

continued use of the ritual device of repetition denoting and intensifying power is a continued use by Christian hymn singers of cultural practices (repetition) of Midewiwin practitioners.

In 2014, the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* continues to be reprinted and used just as it was used in 1910, with one significant difference. In 1910, the people using it understood the words they were singing. Today, many do not. One of the current Ojibwa Hymn Singers, Helen Cummings, age 81 in 2011, whose Ojibwa name is *Zaangwewegiizhigokwe* (Cummings explains: *"giizhik*" means sky or day and "*kwe*" would be a woman; "*zaangwewe*" would be like joyful singing.) Cummings, first-language fluent in Ojibwa, started singing with the group when she was in her mid–50s or 60s, as she recalled. Cummings described her group of hymn singers: "There are just the ones that go with us when we go anywhere. I'd say about 20, maybe not even that many. Episcopals are the ones who, some of them come and sing the hymns but they don't even really know the words. I mean, they can sing along with others, but to know the words by themselves, they don't." (Helen Cummings, in discussion with the author, July 1, 2011)

Cummings is in a good position to assess the language skills of the others. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, when asked to rate herself, she said with a laugh, "I'm out of your range!" One of her fellow singers, Nancy White, age 71 in 2011, agrees that many of the people, especially the younger ones under age 50, don't understand the words. ". . . some of these younger people don't even know the meaning of what we're singing about." (Nancy White, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011) Cummings and White are two fluent and current Ojibwa Hymn Singers from Leech Lake, Minnesota.

Two other fluent elders who were interviewed and had sung Ojibwa hymns when they were children shared the opinion that they sometimes did not understand the words they were singing either, even though Ojibwa was the first language of their households. The reason, both

agreed, was that the words were cut into syllables to fit the melodies of the gospel hymns they were singing. Another commonality between these two fluent elders, George Roy, 64 in 2011, and Medora Hicks, 71 in 2011, is that they both left their home communities in young adulthood and moved to urban areas where they spent their working lives. Both talked about forgetting the sound of the language. Hicks said she had to relearn it when she retired in her home community Wikwemikong, Ontario. She said she had not heard the CD songs when I showed her the CD by the Ojibwa Hymn Singers. She said she had made her own CD with translated hymns.

I asked her if she had translated them from English, or if she had looked at something else to sing them. She explained her process, which involves reading hymnals until she recognizes the words, then practicing singing the songs while she plays her guitar. Hicks said if someone did attempt to write the words, the result would be the [breakdown of syllables] of meaningful words into disjointed syllables that by themselves make no sense, much as the translation of English gospel hymns into Ojibwa sometimes make no sense when the syllables are read by themselves. Hicks said the words are pronounced different to fit with the music. The syllables are different, and as a child, Hicks heard the Catholic hymns sung in Ojibwa in church but did not understand them. "So it's not the same, you know. So you have to kind of stretch it out to expound on the meaning of it." (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011, and Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011)

Roy's experience in attempting to read and understand the written Ojibwa Hymns revealed the same information. The songs were written in syllables, and when you put the syllables together, you can figure out what the words mean. By themselves, in syllables, they do not mean anything.

> Rev. Ross from Minnesota agrees with Roy and Hicks. He said, "Well, I just can pick bits and pieces of it, you know, and I'm not fluent at all with

> the words. But the words I hear that are translated to me are very beautiful, very good. And you know, all those Ojibwa hymn singers, they're similar to the way I am, you know? W can't read the language, but we can sing the language. Does that make sense?" He continued, "We can all sing the words, but we can't read them. The reason is, when you take those little vowels, I point that out to them, the words are how those vowels are pronounced. And sometimes I tell them not to try to pronounce the whole word, only pronounce the vowels. And subsequently, you can just sing along with that." (George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011)

This statement is very similar to what Hicks and Roy said about the breakdown of syllables into separate sounds. The "little vowels" Ross mentioned are syllables that don't make any sense until the fluent speaker puts them back together and recognizes a word.

There are other challenges of using a hymnal from 100 years ago. According to Roy, the same word can mean different things depending on what else is going on at the time the translator did the translation. He first said he could not understand the words to the hymns because of the breakdown of syllables of the words. But on second thought, he said:

> Okay, I backtrack on that. I would definitely understand all of the meanings if it was ah, slowly I looked at them, if I know the writing system of the time, I'd have to teach myself that because we all write differently, and if I know that writing style at the time, I'd be able to use it, I'd be able to decipher it. If I don't know; it would be time consuming. Some people are probably studying to be translators, or they're working already, but I'd have to go over it along with maybe the English translation in front of me. [George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011]

Roy's method of reading the hymns is looking at them and reading them phonetically, depending how they are written. He said that of course today, we're still learning that and that he needs to learn the Fiero double system, also called the double-vowel system. He gave further elaboration on the challenges of attempting to translate a hymnal from 100 years ago, when the

surroundings and translator are gone. I asked him to look at a hymn in the hymnal and see if he could read or understand any of it. He responded and this dialogue followed:

George Roy: Yah, yah, yah. Look at this one here. I would have seen that this *adopowin* is table and *gchitwa* means the Holy Table, and maybe that adopowin was, maybe because it's to do with religion, so we don't have, I would translate in my mind what's in that setting, and I would consider, I would translate that as the altar.

Janis Fairbanks: The Great Table?

GR: Yah, the table because we don't have a word for altar,

JF: But what's this here? Is it the Great?

GR: That doesn't . . .

JF No, no, the second line.

GR: Yah, Gchitwa, that's the great table, which would be altar. Gchitwa, you can interpret that in many ways. It could be big, it could be holy, it could be something of, something that is of value; all the synonyms for "great" are something that is holy and all that, depending. Again it's very, very situational; whatever the situation is that you're going in. So it's pretty useless and complicated; the situation at the time... that's how I would interpret. I would have to know that in order to properly translate it to what the person was translating at the time. I would have to put myself in that time period. That's what I find with the language here. It's all very, very situational. Okay, so gchitwa adopowin, then I said, [because] this (indicates the kitchen table where we are seated) is adopowin. Is it gchitwa adopwin? It could be gchitwa adopwin if you made it fancy, if you put the tablecloth and fancy it up, then it could be gchitwa adopwin, but take that cloth off and then it's just a table; a plain table. But this is in a religious setting in a church, then I'm going to go to church and I'm going to view the church and that, and what else is there that could be translated as a table and that would be altar? You know. So

> that's how I would translate the word "adopowin" if I was translating it into English, because we don't have the word "altar" per se. (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011)

This extensive explanation from a fluent speaker who is accustomed to the oral tradition but who has been asked to evaluate a written translation from 100 years ago illustrates just one of the many changes the Ojibwa language has gone through over a 100-year period. It is no small matter to go from an oral tradition to a written rendition of a spiritual value from another culture and attempt to reconcile the meaning. A fluid language where the same word may mean something different depending on the situation one finds oneself in at any given moment is destined to be a language in constant evolution. It may not be important to have the exact translations of the hymns if the purpose they serve is being met and the people they affect are satisfied with the outcome. This may change as translation and a common orthography are developed, but for now, Ross says the main function of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers group is "comfort, support, and eat." Even the "eat" function has a basis in Midewiwin feasting, but that discussion is beyond the scope of this paper.

Other issues in language translation were discussed in detail by Mary Ann Noakwegijig-Corbiere. The issues Noakwegijig-Corbiere mentioned that are most relevant to the hymn translations are twofold. First, she said what would most typify a major translation problem would be the absence of *Nishinaabemowin* (same meaning as Anishinaabemowin) words for many English terms. When I was reviewing the English words for hymn no. 35 from the *Ojibwe Hymnal 1910,* it occurred to me that there is no Anishinaabemowin word for "devils," and I wondered what term had been used for the translation of the phrase, "Go cast out devils in My Name" in the hymn. As it turns out, the lyrics that contained that phrase were omitted from the hymnal. Another set of lyrics omitted from the hymnal contained the words "On a bright cloud to

Heav'n He rode," which may be considered an abstract concept in terms of Anishinaabe language in the late 1800s when the hymn was translated. Riding on a bright cloud to Heaven would present a challenge in translation, since it may be possible to say the words, but likely not plausible that the Anishinaabeg could picture a person physically riding on a cloud. It is significant that these two verses were omitted from two separate hymnals in widespread locations. My theory is that they were omitted due to the abstract concepts and foreign terms the hymn contains. See the differences in spelling and the common omitted verses in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Comparison of *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910 and Walpole Island Hymnal* shows that the same three verses were used and the same two verses were omitted.
A further distinction between the two hymnals is that the Leech Lake version contains one chorus and two alternate choruses "I'm going home to die no more," and the Walpole Island version contains no choruses at all.

Ojibwa Translation Leech Lake	Ojibwa Translation Walpole Island
hymn no. 35 in Ojibwa Hymnal 1910	"Go Preach My Gospel, saith the Lord"
Babaminwadjimoyuk su	Puh bah me nwa je mo yook suh
Gi ikito Tebendijiged	Kee e ke do Ta ba ning a;
'Wegwen ge-debuetumogwen	Wa gwain ka da bwa tuh mo gwain,
Mii go au ge-nojimoint.	Mee go owh ka noo je mo ind
Nin ga babawidokan su	Ning uh puh bah wee doo kon suh
Iu nin minwadjimowin	Mon duh Ne me nwah je mo win,
Ga-aiijichigigeyan su	Kah uh ye zhe che ga yon suh,
Ki ga-ni-aiijichigem.	Keg u ne uh ye zhe che gaim
FOURTH VERSE IS NOT IN THE HYMNAL	FOURTH VERSE IS NOT IN THE HYMNAL

Table 7 (cont'd)

Windumageyuk go mizi	Ween duh mah ga yook go min ze,
Iniu nin gagiquewinun;	Mah min ning uh gee qua win un;
Kaginig ki ga widjiwinim	"Kah ge ning ke wee jee we nim,
Nananj go che 'shqua-akikag.	Nuh nonzh go che 'shquah uh kee kog."
THIS VERSE IS NOT IN THE HYMNAL	THIS VERSE IS NOT IN THE HYMNAL

Noakwegijig-Corbiere had this to say about abstract concepts and foreign terms:

> [Translation issues] also arise in relation to abstract concepts such as *liberal thought* (as used for example in political philosophy), *nation,* and *province.* Some terms defy translation, or at least a readily intelligible one. Many foreign terms can actually be translated; they just are not expressed in terms that are structurally and grammatically equivalent in the target language. [Mary Ann Naokwegijig-Corbiere 2008:519]

Another contributing factor to lack of understanding written Anishinaabe words from 100 years ago may be that Bible translations to Algonquian languages have also in many cases been reprinted without updating translations. In a 1998 paper, Robert Bryce stated, "In the decades that have passed since the work of the first missionaries in central Canada, we find that the churches by and large have simply reprinted their early work again and again." (Robert Bryce 1998:57) Another scholar, David J. Silverman, in 2000, wrote an article, "Losing the Language: The Decline of Algonquian Tongues and the Challenge of Indian Identity in Southern New England." On the east coast, the language was Massachusett, and the rapid language loss of the area left very few speakers in the congregation of the last minister to use *Massachusett* in church. Sometimes he would speak in English, but sometimes he would speak "very solemnly in the Indian tongue, and they would cry and he would cry." They cried for their lost language, and when the minister was asked why he preached in the language, he replied: "Why to keep up my

nation." Silverman states, "A distinct language heritage was an essential component of the way Indians defined themselves, and the way outsiders defined them as Indians." (David J. Silverman 2000:346) Let us hope the day does not come when Anishinaabe people will have to listen to their last speaker and cry. Whether the language is being systematically lost, as Roy asserts, it is true that even fluent speakers have trouble interpreting what the words in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* mean. "Language and culture loss is one of the biggest concerns in Ojibwa country today. There are fewer than one thousand Ojibwa speakers in the United States and nearly all of them reside in Minnesota." (Anton Treuer, 2010:74)

Fortunately, as Treuer said, there are thousands more fluent speakers in Canada. Roy and Hicks are two examples, but like their United States counterparts, they are among those speakers age 55 and over. Since both Roy and Hicks are fluent and Roy suggests using a group to translate the hymns, while Hicks actually did use a group in her translations, I would recommend to future translators of hymns that same method. Translation activities for other projects have also used the group method to arrive at words. Anishinaabemowin, like other languages, changes over time. The old words fall into disuse and new words have to be created to describe new objects as they are invented or encountered by a people. In 2009, Anton Treuer produced a new dictionary, "*Aaniin Ekidong*," by asking a group of fluent elders to create new words to describe new objects, that is, objects that did not exist in pre-colonial days, at least not in the Ojibwa culture. Creation of such dictionaries will be a constant need, as writing conventions being developed for Ojibwemowin (the Ojibwe language) will ultimately be widely and commonly used, such as the question mark. Here as an example is the word the group created to say question mark: "*Question Mark gagwedwebii'igan ni* question mark." (Treuer, 2009:112) Treuer's work group came from several different communities, and they all agreed that their work was to be

distributed free to language learners; such is the extent of their passion for ensuring continuity of the language. “It is the sincere wish of the entire team that all of this material will be used, freely distributed, shared, taught, and incorporated into dictionaries and other publications (with proper credit given to these authors).” (Anton Treuer 2009:11)

Proper credit belongs to Lawrence L. Moose, Mary Moose, Gordon Jourdain, Marlene Stately, Leona Wakonabo, Eugene Stillday, Anna Gibbs, Rosemarie DeBungie, Nancy Jones (authors) and Editors Anton Treuer and Keller Pamp, all of whom worked for three intensive days to compile the Ojibwa Vocabulary Project. Treuer states:

> The Ojibwa Vocabulary Project is not a final product, but rather just the beginning of a massive undertaking to expand usage of the Ojibwa language and maintain its vibrancy. It is a starting point, not an end point. We need to have many more workshops and publications like this to help teachers of the language fill holes in their knowledge, curricula, and resources for the betterment of the language and the instruction of Ojibwa youth . [Anton Treuer 2009:11]

Three very encouraging and important points emerged during the production of *Aaniin Ekidong*. These are:

(1) All participants agree that the writing system is not the critical focus of instruction, but rather the spoken word. The writing system is just a tool.

(2) Amazingly, nobody once fought over, questioned, or doubted the validity of the system itself, but simply expended energies on the work, enabling maximum productivity.

(3) The participants were very careful to include all entries no matter how divergent the dialects were so that all speakers had a voice. There was no attempt to standardize the language. On the contrary, difference of dialect and view were all documented with equal care. [Anton Treuer 2009:11]

Taken together, these three points achieve the goal of producing new words in a written form that all participants agreed upon. When speakers from various regions come together and agree to honor all dialects as valid ways of speaking, the language has a stronger chance of surviving. As in the past, Ojibwa words are verb based, and it seems reasonable to assume that translations from English to Ojibwa will continue to be verb-based descriptions of actions that are taking place. It will be useful for researchers and scholars to have this bit of knowledge as they seek to understand and re-translate older printed materials, such as the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. As Robert Bryce noted, "Churches have, by and large, have simply reprinted their early work again and again. . . . And the effects of language change sometimes necessitate re-translation. (Robert Bryce 1998:57)

Another project that will need constant attention is the creation of new words to describe things that did not exist in the Anishinaabeg's world prior to colonization, such as those created in the Ojibwa Vocabulary Project. The group created new words cooperatively through the use of group discussion in a respectful, non-adversarial environment. As Anton Treuer noted, the meeting started on time with a meal and a pipe ceremony. The speakers came from Mille Lacs (Lake Lena), James Bay Area (Ontario), Lac La Croix (Ontario), Leech Lake (Ball Club), Leech Lake (Inger), Red Lake (Ponemah), and *Nigigoonsiminikaaning* (Ontario). There were three speakers from Ponemah. Treuer said the team agreed to use the double-vowel orthography but, as previously mentioned, did not argue over dialects but included them all. (Anton Treuer 2009:10) This labor of love for future generations is evident in the work the group selflessly produced and proof that a dedicated effort can support the five basic characteristics found in my groups' interviews during the summer of 2011. We can maintain and support Anishinaabe language, and the importance of the use of symbols, Anishinaabe individual identity,

Anishinaabe community identity, and Anishinaabe spirituality and continuity of culture, so our future generations will benefit.

As Treuer states with regard to youth and future generations of Anishinaabeg, "We may have never met, but you are the greatest hope and inspiration for all of our work. Our language is already in your hands. We believe in it. And we believe in you." (Anton Treuer 2009:12) As stated in my abstract, "The tie that binds Anishinaabeg together is community identity with strands firmly anchoring individual identity back to the cultural marks that each generation preserves and passes down to succeeding generations." In this case, Treuer identifies retention of the language as one of the cultural marks that this generation strives to preserve and pass down to youth and future generations.

There is a sense of loss, yet a sense of continuity as the Ojibwa language preservation measures once again adapt to the changing environment. It is as important to find ways to ensure continuity of the language and culture today as it was in the late 1800s and early 1900s when the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* became a transitional device. Although it was designed to take Ojibwa people away from their language and culture by converting them to Christianity, it is now viewed by many Ojibwa people as another way to continue the Ojibwa language. It is an ironic twist but an unexpected benefit to help assure preservation of the language. The hymnals have been copied and recopied over the years in their original form, which means there is a certain type of continuity in the books as printed, but there is also some concern that simply copying the old texts without updating them for changes in orthography may be confusing to some people who are trying to learn the language. For instance, according to hymn translator/teacher Medora Hicks, the words in the hymns as they were translated and as they appear in old hymnals still in use are broken up to fit the musical score, and these sound bites by themselves do not mean

anything. This result is probably what scholar Robert Bryce referred to as translations that "bent the structure of the target language." (Robert Bryce 1998:58) In discussing Bible translations in Algonquian languages, Bryce explains the reasons for current efforts at re-translating earlier works into works that will reflect the way the indigenous Algonquian speakers speak today. He said:

> Early translation work was often the work of the "formal correspondence" type. While reflecting the flavor of the source texts, this style of translation often bent the structure of the target language. The goal of the current work is to provide translations into the contemporary languages as they are spoken by the people. This is called "dynamic equivalence translation;" it attempts to translate the meaning of the text and not its external linguistic structure. I will illustrate this with a container analogy.
>
> English is a very utilitarian language. I will symbolize it by a plain bucket of water. The container is the linguistic "shape" of the language; the water is the message. I will symbolize Cree as a shapely vase. In formal equivalence translation the transfer of meaning (the water) often results in distortion of the Cree "vase" by underlying structure English imposed on the translation. The result is a flattened out vase taking on some of the shape of the English "pail."
>
> Much of the meaning is transferred, but some of it gets distorted in the process. In dynamic equivalence translation the aim is to transfer every drop of "water" or meaning from the English to the Cree container without distorting the Cree language, that is, to retain the "vase" shape by using the natural forms of the Cree language. [Robert Bryce 1998:58]

While Bryce uses the Cree language as the "vase," this explanation could as well apply to the Ojibwa language, and he acknowledges that the Canadian Bible Society prior to 1985 had conducted "a survey in Canada which showed that many translations had been undertaken, especially in the central Algonquian languages of Cree and Ojibwa." Bryce goes on to say that modern methods of producing translations, such as computers to aid in manipulating text and

formatting options, greatly reduce printing costs. These computer-formatted options are used to create one base template, which may be used to produce various dialects of a language once they are ready to print. (Robert Bryce 1998:59) This dialect discussion is ongoing and even one of the people I interviewed is aware of it and commented on the possibility of Ojibwa language loss as follows:

> Actually, we're all Algonquian languages. We're all the same. Actually, the Ojibwas, I'm on some statewide stuff with language, and I can hear Ojibwas, we had some from immersion school up in Minnesota last time. They can't even get together on what they're going to speak! You can't lose the Ojibwa language. I mean, God, you've got so many speakers! Just somebody come along and agree to disagree. Or agree that there are different dialects, but we're still going to learn. [Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011]

Treuer's work group for *Aaniin Ekidong* did exactly what Miller had recommended. They agreed that there are different dialects, and they used them all in completing their work.

Some of the people interviewed said Ojibwa hymns should not be written or translated back into English. However, 100 percent of the people interviewed said it is important to continue to sing songs in Ojibwa, especially Midewiwin songs, in the lodge. Nonetheless, there exists earlier work by both native and non-native researchers that lists songs and sometimes translations of those songs. Native scholars have also translated Midewiwin songs. Basil Johnston in *Ojibway Ceremonies* devotes a large section of his book to translating songs for certain petitions that are sung in the Midewiwin lodge. Scholar Gerald Vizenor wrote *Summer in the Spring*, published in 1965, which interpreted some of Frances Densmore's *Midewewin* songs. Both are Ojibwa. Johnston is from Cape Croker, Ontario, and Vizenor is enrolled with White Earth Reservation in Minnesota.

As Basil Johnston stated, one word may have multiple meanings:

> Everyone knew the primary meaning of words. There was not a person who did not know that the word "Anishinaabeg' referred to a member of his tribe, though few knew that it meant in its most fundamental sense, "people of good intentions." But it meant more than that; it reflected how men and women saw themselves influencing their notions and their exercise of equality, as well as governing their communion with the *manitous* (Spirit, Mystery) and *Kitchi-Manitou* (Great Spirit).
>
> And because they could not or dared not define God or the deities, or explain or reduce to human terms certain phenomena, they invented the word *manitou*, which at times, depending upon context, might mean spirit, but which in its more fundamental senses meant talent, attributes, potencies, potential, substance, essence, and mystery.
>
> If one is to know what a medicine man or woman is doing by addressing plants and offering tobacco as he or she gathers and prepares medicines, or to whom the celebrant is offering the incense of tobacco in the smoking of the Sacred Pipe, it is essential to know precisely the sense in which the term *Manitou* is being used. Otherwise one may be led, as many have been, into thinking that the Ojibway were chanting and performing rituals to great and little spirits. For me it was absolutely essential that I know the distinctions before I set out to record my tribe's ceremonies. [Basil Johnston 1982:6]

Johnston's understanding of the language makes it likely that he would support the alternate translation to Densmore's Midewiwin song, had she not discarded it.

Another fluent speaker, Melvin Eagle, is very proud of his Ojibwa culture and his ability to converse with a neighboring fluent speaker. When asked to rank his fluency with the Ojibwa language, Eagle said:

> Yah, whatever, yah, whatever the highest one is. I can't describe that. I just speak Ojibwa when I'm around with people that can understand me. Herb and I talk a lot, Ojibwa language; he's over at Hinckley now. He lives over in Hinckley (Eagle lives on the Mille Lacs Ojibwa Indian Reservation in Minnesota). Herb Sam – that's a traditional healer. I'm not sure what he does … he's a healer. But I got my own way. I do [a lot of]

> ceremonies. Naming ceremonies and get-well ceremonies because people bring food to the drum I keep. [Melvin Eagle, in discussion with the author, June 22, 2011]

Eagle did not venture further in explaining the significance of bringing food to the drum he keeps. But he did explain about singing *Mide* songs. "We just sing our own songs, like *Mide* songs; you know you can't translate those. But we talk anyway; we talk when they're singing that." (Melvin Eagle, in discussion with the author, June 22, 2011)

Contrasting Eagle's statement with that of a the observations of a younger singer of songs, Benjamin Bonga, who at age 39 in 2011 views history through a point of awareness that is separated from Eagle's viewpoint by a full 40 years. Eagle stated that not much had changed in his lifetime. He grew up fluent, singing Midewiwin songs, understanding the Ojibwa language, and following a certain way of life. Bonga, on the other hand, has had to go in search of songs, practices, and language teachers, and he has sifted through pieces of information to form opinions. Bonga's opinion is that the Anishinaabeg have survived genocidal events and atrocities that caused a loss of culture, identity, spiritual songs, social songs, and language in general. He believes the abuse has caused generational damage, and he stated, "I can see there's evidence of abuse from the oldest person I know to the youngest person I know." He surmised, "Maybe someone who's a fluent speaker, maybe they don't want to teach anybody because maybe they feel like that's the last thing they have. And also, on the other end of the spectrum, you have people who are novice, beginning learners, and they're afraid to try to learn because . . . fluent speakers might make fun of them. (Benjamin Bonga, in discussion with the author, June 20, 2011)

I agree that the history of genocide and genocidal practices against Ojibwa people caused a good measure of the loss of culture and identity, spiritual songs, and language retention

dilemmas we now face. However, there are other dilemmas that present challenges with retaining the language. One of the fluent language teachers relates a common issue that presents itself in the classroom. When he is trying to teach students how to speak, they will often argue with him and persist in mispronouncing words, claiming it is a dialect difference. He sees this as a challenge on two fronts. First, the students are showing a lack of respect for him as a fluent speaker and their elder. And second, in persisting with their mispronunciations, they are diluting the language. (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011)

Despite the challenges associated with attempting to teach or learn the language, the people interviewed in 2011 want to learn.

CHAPTER 2: The Importance of the Thunderbird Icon

In addition to the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* now being viewed as a literary icon of the Anishinaabeg, there is another type of communication device that also represents a cultural icon. That is the symbol of the Thunderbird, which is referenced in oral history, written stories, pictographs, and petroglyphs. Pictographs are rock paintings, and petroglyphs are rock carvings. Thousands of years ago, before the Anishinaabeg began to develop an alphabet, there is evidence that they had early methods of communication, in the form of signs and symbols in rock paintings and petroglyphs. These signs and symbols have been meaningful to generations of tribal members to the current day. According to Patty Loew, pictographs were used to supplement the oral tradition of the Anishinaabeg, as were rock paintings in a cave known today as Gottschall. The walls of the cave are covered with pictographs. Loew explains that the walls of the cave were sanded and prepared by the artist-historian to receive images that would be painted on using pre-mixed basic paint colors of red, black, and blue-gray. Loew asserts that cave paintings represent an origin epic story. (Patty Loew 2001:1-5) She writes:

> The Gottschall site, a place of obvious cultural and religios significance, is just one of more than 100 rock art sites identified in Wisconsin, most of them in the Driftless Area of the southwestern part of the state. From simple grooves and incised geometric design to elaborate painted birds, animals, and human forms, these cave drawings may have been created for spiritual or sacred reasons, inspired by dreams, fasts, or rituals. Perhaps Native artists carved or painted these motifs to educate the young or commemorate the dead. It is likely that the ancestors of today's modern Indian nations used pictographs as mnemonic devices to help tribal members remember important events or complex ceremonies. [Patty Loew 2001:1-2]

The cave paintings, which testify to the enduring power of the spoken word and the persistence of Native American oral tradition, are, in fact, the result of "generations of tribal members" repeating stories based on the pictographs and petroglyphs. The Thunderbird

Petroglyph is located in Twin Bluffs, Wisconsin. Loew states, "The Thunderbird is one of the most consistent images in Wisconsin rock art." (Patty Lowe 2001:1-5) Another rock art carving from Wisconsin of the powerful Thunderbird Icon is called, "A Native American Thunderbird rock art carving (or petroglyph) from Juneau County, Wisconsin. It is housed at the Photographic Collection, Office of the State Archaeologist, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and may be seen on their website. (Loew 2001:4)

There is early evidence that the Thunderbird was used in Midewiwin ceremonies, and it is also an important symbol in other Anishinaabe writers' stories. The Thunderbird symbolizes thunder and lightning in the mythology of many tribal people. Hoffman illustrates a pictomyth that shows the spirit of the Thunderbird flying in the sky. Hoffman wrote of the pictomyth:

> O-wē´-nĕn bĕ-mī´-sĕt.
>
> I am flying into my lodge.
>
> [Represents the Thunder-Bird, a deity flying into the arch of the sky. The short lines denote the (so-called spirit lines) abode ofspirits or Man´idōs.] (Walter James Hoffman, accessed May 12, 2012)

Hoffman described the meaning of the Thunderbird as a deity, which Christians would not usually recognize. We can conclude that the Thunderbird in Hoffman's description pertains to the Midewiwin belief system. However, during the fieldwork, another group expressed interest in using a symbol of the Thunderbird as an emblem on their jackets. The Ojibwa Hymn Singers now have a jacket that was in the process of being designed when I interviewed Ross in 2011. When asked if there was anything else he wanted to say, he wanted to talk about the jackets. We talked about the jacket design, and it became important to distinguish the Ojibwa Hymn Singers from other Ojibwa singers. Our conversation was about the jackets but encompassed symbols of identity, respect for tradition, respect for Ojibwa drummers, and a built-in logic for the need for continuity. The symbol that represents all of these aspects is the

Thunderbird. Rather than being a part of a pan-Indian identity pool, Ross explained how and why the Ojibwa Hymn Singers should have their own cultural identifiers and symbols:

> We're trying to get jackets. And this was initiated by this one little girl; she lost her voice someway and now she writes everything down. And she said she wanted to get jackets for us. And that's a very good idea. And it was brought up before, too, but years ago. And now I think we're really going at it. We're inundated; we're covered with these Sioux symbols. They're very good ambassadors of their culture. And the Navajo's say, "We've got our own culture, we don't need them." And we should do that too. But they infiltrate us with their culture. Everything's that circle thing, the colors of their colors. [Ross was referring to the medicine wheel]

He continued his statement:

> But, I said, why is that? When I was growing up, we had what we called a Thunderbird; that's what we had. The Thunderbird was our symbol. The Thunderbird is just an abstract drawing of an eagle. And that's a messenger. So these jackets, we'd like to have with the word messenger. We can have that there. And some would have their White Earth, Red Lake, Leech Lake name over here and have up here the Ojibwa Hymn Singers. What that says, the reason they want the White Earth, Red Lake, or Leech Lake on here is because they do come from a long way sometimes. We go to Ponsford, Pine Point, White Earth, and they come from Red Lake. That's one heck of a ways; Leech Lake, they all go there, and they'll see these jackets and that gives them a sign of support, and they feel good about that healing stuff. And no one here is bringing these people in. They're coming here because they love helping us with that grieving. We're all relatives. [George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011]

It is very difficult to compartmentalize aspects of the Ojibwa culture, because the reality is that the aspects overlap and intersect, and each one affects the other, as Ross's story of wanting to get symbolic jackets illustrates. He touches on individual and community identity, an important symbol of the Anishinaabeg: recognition of community support and community

relatedness. His next statement extrapolates one method of cultural adaptation and continuity. He proposed combining a symbol of the Midewiwin, the Thunderbird, with the Christian symbol of the cross from the Ojibwa hymnal as the design for the hymn-singers' jackets. "I'd like to have that Thunderbird in there because when I was growing up, that was what we had. *Eyah* (yes). And see, we've got that cross on our hymnals, that Ojibwa hymnal. I'd like to have that name in Ojibwa of course; messenger, with our Leech Lake, Red Lake, White Earth someplace." (George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011)

Further discussion with Ross clarified that he wanted the jackets for the Ojibwa Singers to have the design that is on the hymnals superimposed on the Thunderbird, along with the Ojibwa word for messenger in large letters. Ross also explained why the word "hymn" had to be included with the group name, according to the Ojibwa Hymn Singers' group discussion. He asked them, "Why can't you say Ojibwa Singers?" They said, "No, George, because there's the drum people too. They're Ojibwa singers." The group showed an understanding of the use of symbolism in their decision to differentiate themselves from the drum people. Their decision also incorporated two other teachings: respect for the drum group and humility in respecting that group as a separate but equal set of singers. Ross sees the jackets as an important symbol. He knows there are fewer singers today than there were years ago, and he knows people rely on him to keep the songs and singers active. The jackets with the names and Thunderbird symbol and reservation names will immediately identify each group of singers, according to Ross:

> That way, when you go to those wakes, and we have a ton of those wakes all the time here, and we get invited, they like the Cass Lake Singers all the time, because Cass Lake singers are one of the most prominent groups of singers. See, so I've been doing the supplying. They don't have a regular priest up there. He retired, so I've been going up there. And so we try to encourage those guys to start up there. Years ago, every reservation

> had their singers. We always had them here from day one. Red Lake used to have singers. And they had different ones. The Catholics had theirs. Episcopals; it was primarily all Episcopals. [George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011]

The sense of community and the desire for continuity is strong in the Ojibwa Hymn Singers' united effort and determination to carry on the hymn singing practice for the benefit of the entire extended community. Ross said the community singers "will see the jackets, feel supported, and feel good about that healing stuff." This goal is also a characteristic, maybe the main characteristic, of the Midewiwin. The Midewiwin is a healing lodge, and that feeling of responsibility apparently carried over to the Christianized Ojibwa singers, who take pride in singing Ojibwa hymns as a part of healing. But there is another major component of Ross's remarks that gained my attention immediately, which is his reference to the Thunderbird and the word "messenger." Ross said when he was growing up, the Ojibwa had what was called a Thunderbird. The Thunderbird was our symbol, and the Thunderbird is just an abstract drawing of an eagle. And that's a messenger. So these jackets we'd like to have are (represent) the word of a messenger." (George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011)

Ross's stated goal is to have something he remembered from his childhood, the Thunderbird, which he sees as an abstract drawing of an eagle, which is a messenger, on the jackets. I wonder if he realized that the Thunderbird is also an important symbol in Midewiwin ideology. Either way, the use of the Thunderbird on the Ojibwa Hymn Singers' new jacket to me represents a carryover symbol of the Midewiwin, as identified by Anishinaabe scholar Basil H. Johnston in his story about the Thunderbird and Midewiwin cultural practices. Ross says his symbol of the Thunderbird means messenger. The Ojibwa Hymn Singers bring messages of comfort through the use of the Ojibwa language in the songs they sing at wakes, funerals, and

other gatherings. The symbol of the Thunderbird on the jackets and the Ojibwa language in the songs are current-day signs of the importance of a cultural activity that had its base in Midewiwin songs and language use after a person died, when the song and music sent the person home. This is just as today's hymn no. 35 is used to send a person off at a funeral, sending him or her "home, to die no more," as stated in the chorus of the hymn.

This discussion of the Thunderbird by Rev. Ross and his insistence that it become a part of the design that would be used on the Ojibwa Hymn Singers' jackets because it was something Ross remembered from when he was growing up as "something that we had" is similar to a recollection of Ross's contemporary, Melvin Eagle, who talked about a Midewiwin drum, called the Thunderbird Drum, being presented to an old man at the old lodge in Inger on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. (Melvin Eagle, in discussion with the author, June 22, 2011) These men of the same generation share the memory of the Thunderbird being a significant cultural marker that continues to the present day, even though Ross now associates the Thunderbird with the eagle, which is a messenger, and Melvin Eagle, being a member of the Midewiwin, associates the Thunderbird with the traditional beliefs of the Midewiwin.

The Thunderbird is a mighty symbol of power, commanding respect from the Anishinaabeg, as illustrated by the chant Basil H. Johnston related in his story of the origin of offering tobacco to allay the anger of the Thunderbirds when their hidden abode was approached by an interloper. Johnston used written Anishinaabemowin to describe the chant. His written words are another example of the variance in written Anishinaabemowin that is a result of the transition from oral to written language conventions. Johnston wrote *Anishinaubae Thesaurus*, published in 2007, that uses the spelling conventions shown in the chant from the Thunderbirds. His thesaurus is not an attempt to offer a standardized orthography, which he states in his initial

paragraph of his Preface, though he says there is an urgent need for such a standard. Instead, his objective is to offer "a small but practical thesaurus that will be useful to teachers, translators, interpreters, writers . . . and maybe orthographers." (Basil H. Johnston 2007:vii) Johnston said:

> The orthography used in this and other texts is not offered as the final solution, but rather as a start in establishing some form of standardized spelling in our language. Ideas and suggestions to help refine and improve the spelling a simplify it so as to facilitate reading are welcome and invited. Above all, if there are no texts, novels, histories, storybooks, songs, prayers, poems, and dramas to read, there is not much point in developing spellers and orthographic systems. [Basil H. Johnston 2007:xi]

Johnston's points enumerated above are well founded. Anishinaabe culture is essential to the development of a standard orthography, but his thesaurus is a strong contribution to the retention of cultural concepts that may be used by many people, including orthographers. His spelling convention is phonetic as opposed to the double-vowel Fiero system that is gaining popularity. The following warning chant from the Thunderbirds, written in the style shown in his thesaurus, is shown below.

> *Waegonaen maenaepowunt?*
> *Waegonaen wauh pagidinigawssik?*
> Who dares without tobacco?
> Who dares without offering?
> *Saemauh bizaundae/aekaugne.*
> *Saemauh waussaeyaukaugae.*
> Tobacco will allay our anger.
> Tobacco will clear the cloud. [Basil H. Johnston 1982:34]

Another of Johnston's stories reinforces the prevalent reliance on the Thunderbird icon dating back to a Midewiwin tradition. In his discussion of Midewiwin practices in "The Offering of Tobacco," from *Ojibway Ceremonies*, as told by Basil H. Johnston, contains a cultural spiritual teaching concerning the tradition of offering tobacco to the powerful Thunderbirds. He tells of the origin of offering tobacco to powerful deities, of which the Thunderbird is one:

> Once there was a village – and beside the village there was a mountain whose summit was always hidden by the clouds. Even on sunny days the cloud remained, and the thunders echoed around the mountain top while lightning flashed in the skies. Thunderbirds were said to live on the mountain crest.
>
> In the village there lived a young man who longed to see the Thunderbirds, or even capture one; and he dared to think of scaling the mountain. He had no fear of Thunderbirds or the deities, and little regard for traditions that forbade anyone to climb the mountain and enter the domain of the spirits. (Basil H. Johnston 1982:33)

The rest of the story tells how the foolish young man convinced another young man to go with him to see the Thunderbirds. As they neared the mountaintop, they could hear voices chanting; the chant was a warning from the Thunderbirds about approaching them without offering tobacco. Johnston tells us that the first young man ignored the warning and continued upward, where he shouted back to his companion that he had seen the Thunderbirds. "At the same moment, there was a mighty roar and a blinding light." When the thunder died and the light faded, the young man fell to his death, the mist on the mountain went away, and the Thunderbirds, having taken their revenge, were gone. The people say that the area was desecrated and the Thunderbirds would never return. And many fishermen continue to disappear near that area and are believed to have drowned.

Johnston continues with the story of the second young man getting caught in a storm there and remembering the chant, he offered tobacco to the voices he heard. The tobacco was accepted by Little People in canoes, and the young man's life was spared. Thus began the practice of offering tobacco to deities, according to Johnston's story of the powerful Thunderbirds. (Basil H. Johnston 1982:34-36) I believe that purists hold the offering of tobacco in highest regard today, and when they offer it the creator, the Thunderbirds, the Little People, or

any specific deities they wish to honor, they do not include the Christian God in their offerings. In the strictest sense, Midewiwin practitioners do not mix their ceremonies with Christian rituals. Likewise, Christians do not mix their rituals with Midewiwin practices. However, the Thunderbird remains an important cultural icon to both groups of Anishinaabeg.

CHAPTER 3: Spirituality

Colonizing Influences on Ojibwa Spirituality

Rev. Peter Jones, a Mississauga missionary in the early 1800s, saw the wisdom of conversion to Christianity as a way to allow his people to keep their lands. He traveled among the Indians gaining many converts, but his success over a five-year period among the Ojibwas of the Thames met with resistance from Chief Kanootong, who remained adamant that he and his fellow traditionalists would not convert, telling Jones, "The Indians must honor their own religion. If the Creator had wished the Indians to worship like the whites, He would have made them white. Instead, he presented to the white people across the waters a religion written in a book. To the Indian, He gave His way of worship written in his heart." (Donald B. Smith 1997:90) Emphatically the hardened warrior, who had fought beside Tecumseh in the War of 1812, told his young visitor that he would hold to the old ways. (Donald B. Smith 1997:90)

This conflict between Christianity and the old ways has remained in place since the coming of the missionaries. It took on a different facet when Ojibwa missionaries were recruited to help the conversion effort, as in the case of Peter Jones. As effective as he was in translating hymns and speaking to the Ojibwa in their own language, he could not succeed in converting the core traditionalists, who stayed out in the woods to preserve their traditions. Jones remained a staunch Christian to the end of his days, working for the good of his people in a manner that suited his skills.

One of Jones' contemporaries, an Ojibwa missionary whose English name was George Copway, was the son of a medicine man who had converted to Christianity. Copway's Indian name, "*Kahgegagahbowh*" [he who stands forever] is well suited to his legacy of the Ojibwa hymns he used in the 1800s that are still being used in 2013. The irony is that the hymns are now being sung to reestablish and reaffirm Ojibwa traditions that were taken away during the early

days of colonization. While the Midewiwin songs cannot and will not be sung at public gatherings, Ojibwa hymns are being sung at funeral gatherings for the same purpose the old traditional Midewiwin songs were sung when someone died. They were sung to ease the passing of the person and to bring comfort to the survivors. Copway wrote some of the rites of his Midewiwin lodge as a part of his lamentation over the changes he witnessed during the period when alcohol was used as a trade good and as a way to subdue the Ojibwa and other indigenous nations. Copway's description of what he saw is related here as a method of seeing through the eyes of a participant of the Midewiwin during a time many Ojibwa people were turning away from traditional practices to Christianity:

> Our religion consisted in observing certain ceremonies every spring. Most of the Ojebwas [Ojibwas] around us used to come and worship the Great Spirit at Rice Lake. At this festival a great many of the youth were initiated into the medicinal mysteries of the nation. We were taught the virtues of herbs, and the various kinds of minerals used in our medicine. I will here describe the *Me-tae-we-gah-mig* or Grand Medicine Lodge. It was a wigwam 150 feet long and 15 feet wide. The clan of medicine men and women alone were allowed to be inside, at each sitting, with their medicine badge, on each side of the wigwam. Then there were four old men who took the lead in singing, and beating the drum, as they stood near the centre; before them were a company who were to take degrees. There were four grades in the institution; and, as I have thought, somewhat similar to the Masonic institution.
>
> After the singing commenced, the whole company arose and danced, as they moved from one end of the wigwam to the other. As they go round, one-half of them cast their heads down upon their bosoms, as if affected by the medicine, which was kept in small skins, and which they pretended to thrust at each other; this was done to deceive the ignorant. These forms were continued several days. The party to be made medicine men and women looked on in the mean time, to see what they would have to do themselves. Then they are taken to another place with our medicine men, and are taught the science of medicine. After receiving instructions,

another day was allotted to give them instruction on morality. They were advised on various subjects. All were to keep silence, and endeavor to retain what they were taught. I will give you some of the sayings of our medicine men:

"If you are a good hunter, warrior, and a medicine man, when you die, you will have no difficulty in getting to the far west in the spirit land."

"Listen to the words of your parents, never be impatient, then the Great Spirit will give you a long life."

"Never pass by any indigent person without giving him something to eat. *Owh wah-yah-bak-mek ke-gah-shah-we-a-ne-mig*." (The spirit that sees you will bless you)

"If you see an orphan in want, help him; for you will be rewarded by his friends here, or thanked by his parents in the land of spirits.'

"If you own a good hunting dog, give it to the first poor man who really needs it."

"When you kill a deer, or bear, never appropriate it to yourself alone, if others are in want; never withhold it from them what the Great Spirit has blessed you with."

"When you eat, share with the poor children who are near you, for when you are old they will administer to your wants."

"Never use improper medicine to the injury of another, lest you yourself receive the same treatment."

"When an opportunity offers, call the aged together, and provide for them venison properly cooked, and give them a hearty welcome, then the gods that have favored them will be your friends." [George Copway Kahgegagahbowh 1997 [1850]:82-83]

Copway concluded this description with a curse on the coming of whiskey among the Indians. He described the medicine lodge as a method of securing peace and happiness for the Indian race. (George Copway Kahgegagahbowh 1997 [1850]:82) Copway stated that one of the

main reasons he and his family converted to Christianity was to avoid the drunken path of destruction brought about by the whiskey traders commonly brought or sent to the reservations. It does not necessarily follow that these Christian converts, Jones and Copway, rejected the Midewiwin so much as they recognized the benefit the Ojibwa communities would enjoy by embracing Christianity, either in terms of land preservation or community health and well-being. Jones was a master of drawing comparisons between native beliefs and passages in the Bible (Donald B. Smith 1997:250). This suggests that he saw enough common beliefs to convince some of the Ojibwa people that Christianity was not so different than traditional beliefs. These men were contemporaries, working to save their cultures and communities.

Back in the 1800s, as now, Ojibwa people had a choice to convert and follow Christian traditions, then later return to traditional practices. This was mentioned by lifelong Midewiwin drum keeper Melvin Eagle of the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation and by a number of the other people interviewed in 2011. In response to my question, "So, I guess, you are Midewiwin, so do any of your people also go to church?" Eagle said, "There used to be, but a lot of them are coming back to the original way because they go to these ceremonies a lot." (Melvin Eagle, in discussion with the author, June 22, 2011) Three other people interviewed, Robert "Sonny" Peacock and Bryan Jon, both of Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota, and Molly Miller from Wisconsin agreed that people who used to go to church are now going back to traditional teachings and ceremonies.

Peacock said that he thinks the movement between Ojibwa belief systems and Christianity is a transition from one culture to another and then maybe even back again. (Robert "Sonny" Peacock, in discussion with the author, June 27, 2011)

Miller told the story of her people, the Stockbridge-Muncee, who were forced to move several times from their homeland. (Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011) This viewpoint is shared by some of the others interviewed and recognized as a form of adaptation by indigenous people as a means of retaining their homeland while seeming to adopt another form of religion.

Jon noted that the churches on the reservation are no longer open, since there is no congregation. (Bryan Jon, in discussion with the author, June 21, 2011) Similarly, although Copway spent his life as a Methodist missionary, during the last year of his life, he went home and returned to the function of medicine man for his people.

It is not a simple matter or proposition when it comes to the spiritual beliefs of a people. Just as Peter Jones went to England in the early 1800s to plead for assurance that his people could retain their homelands, since they had become civilized and converted to Christianity, Molly Miller, 58 in 2011, a member of the Stockbridge-Muncee Mohican nation who was attending Midewiwin ceremonies in Bad River, Wisconsin, told of her nations' history of thinking that if they were Christians, their homeland would be safe. They followed all the rules set out for them with each move, but in the end, they were forced to move again. Miller said, "Every time they had to move, they built a church, they built a sawmill, they built a school, they fenced in their gardens, they made gardens, they fenced in their cattle, thinking if we're good little Christians and we do everything like the colonists want us to do, we can stay here. And they had to move seven times!" (Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011)

Today the connections between Anishinaabe spirituality and continuity of culture are very strong, despite the effects of missionary influence. Ojibwa hymn-singing practices and Midewiwin and Christian spiritual beliefs and practices have the potential to split the culture and

the people apart, if the people are willing to let it happen. According to all indications, the Anishinaabeg are not willing to be split apart. A comparison of what respondents said about Midewiwin singing practices and Ojibwa gospel singing practices sheds some light on what the connections are, how they have evolved since colonization, and the strength of the missionary influence among the Anishinaabeg today.

Another question is whether Ojibwa hymn-singing practices represent a blending of Midewiwin and Christian spiritual beliefs and practices. Referring again to archival documents, the question of continuity of the Midewiwin is examined in published work done by Fred K Blessing Jr. in the years 1944-1969 when he lived in northern Minnesota among the Ojibwa people. A summary of Blessing's contribution is in Appendix F. Other significant work by Frances Densmore, Theresa Schenck, and Michael D. McNally also offer insight into Ojibwa singing practices that have continued to exist, despite predictions that these practices would soon disappear.

Frances Densmore lived in Cass Lake, Minnesota, for a time and recorded some of the *Midewewin* singing she heard there. Her book, *Chippewa Music*, originally published in 1910 and 1913, and again in 1973, was (and still is) a valuable contribution to the study of Midewiwin at precisely the same time the *Ojibwa Hymnal* was being compiled. Portions of her work were compared and contrasted with the study and uses of the hymns found in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. These publications represent two types of music with two different ethno-historical uses by Ojibwa people of the same area and same era. While this is an immensely useful basis of comparison, this dissertation also discusses another book by historian Theresa Schenck, the *Ojibwe Journals of Edmund F. Ely, 1833-1849,* published in 2012, for the additional information about hymn singing practices and missionary efforts at conversion among the Ojibwa population

on what is now Fond du Lac Indian Reservation in Minnesota. There was much missionary travel back and forth between White Earth, Leech Lake, and Fond du Lac, Minnesota, and LaPointe, Wisconsin. As a result, Ely's journal entries that covered a 16-year period when missionary efforts at conversion were beginning to enter Ojibwa territory in what is now Minnesota contributed some background information on the Ojibwas' resistance to Christianity, although they embraced the practice of singing the hymns associated with it.

Midewiwin and Christianity may be celebrated as separate and divided spiritual behavior, referred to as Purist Spirituality, or they may be combined as blended components of spiritual behavior referred to as Syncretism. Both behaviors are presented respectively in the first and second sections of this chapter, since both purist behavior and syncretism were demonstrated, or voiced, by the people interviewed. (See Appendix C Glossary.)

Purist Spirituality

For the Anishinaabeg, a purist spirituality worldview generally means that either Midewiwin or Christianity constitute the spirituality of a believer or practitioner. It is not acceptable to blend these belief systems, according to the purist. Purist spiritual worldviews, which have been presented by indigenous scholars, have also been stated by some of the people interviewed during my fieldwork travel. The first comment is from Janice Acoose, who, in her 2010 dissertation, wrote, "According to Wolfe, the Thunderbird stories and Rain Dance Ceremony are ancient forms of knowledge that belong to the Midewiwin Society; these systems of knowledge are generally passed on only in ceremony." (Janice Acoose 2010:12)

Acoose's statement is supported by the oral history gathered in my fieldwork. First, Benjamin Bonga sings many different types of songs, and he tries to learn the traditional songs so he can pass them to the younger generation. Although he does not consider himself fluent, he

insists on understanding the words to every song he sings. When asked the names of the current most common hymns he sings in Ojibwa or English, Bonga said he does not sing Ojibwa hymns and that the songs he sings mostly do not have names, but they do have meanings and reasons for singing them. He said each song has a certain place, such as a ceremony or a social gathering or just around the house, where it should be sung. Bonga said he learns his songs from elders who listen to him and critique his singing, correcting his words or the melody as needed. He also feels it is important to sing the songs as a way to preserve spirituality and Ojibwa language. When government policy drove the Midewiwin underground, Bonga said that not only words were lost when the songs were lost but the spiritual essence of the Anishinaabe people was affected too. With the loss of the songs came the loss of words in those songs, because those words used in ceremonial songs were not used in everyday conversation. Bonga identifies as a member of the Midewiwin and does not believe in mixing Midewiwin teachings and ceremonies with Christianity. (Benjamin Bongs, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011)

The second example of purist spirituality came from Rianne Nahwegezhic, originally from Wikwemikong First Nation, Ontario, who gave her opinion of a difference in worship as a person familiar with both Christianity and Midewiwin beliefs. Much of what she said had to do with differences in terms of translation issues. Although Nahwegezhic's parents were both fluent, she said she is just learning the language. She does see a difference in the understanding of "spirit" in Christian belief and Anishinaabe belief. When asked about translating Ojibwa hymns back into English, she said that the hymns were translated into Ojibwa mainly by priests, who had a different context or meaning for what a spirit is, as opposed to what the Ojibwa interpretation of what spirit means. Nahwegezhic said. "The old, old, old way of native people knew of the spirit and creation and nature. That's where it gets complicated; in Ojibwa, it all had

to do with creation, with nature. Because if you go into the Midewiwin and talk about the spirit, it's not the same context of that of the church and Ojibwa hymns, you know? It's a Christian context." (Rianne Nahwegezhic, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011)

Nahwegezhic's statements are supported by another of Acoose's findings. Acoose wrote that her research found two other scholars' work that supports the notion that Midewiwin teachings represent the continuity of traditional knowledge. Acoose stated:

> Rhealt's Anishinaabe Mino-Bimaadiziwin: The Way of a Good Life: An Examination of Anishinaabe Philosophy, Ethics and Traditional Knowledge; Wolfe's "The Last Raid;" and Tarasoff's Persistent Ceremonialism: The Plains Cree and Salteaux make clear that following the signing of the treaties and the people's subsequent placement on the reserves, Anishinaabe carried with them an ancient Midewiwin body of knowledge. Rhealt identifies medicine bundles, sacred scrolls, and oral teachings as vessels of such Spiritual teachings. Wolfe recalls that after the people were settled on reserves, clan leaders continued to use medicine bundles, pipes, and traditional ceremonies to invoke the Spirit of their Doodaem (Totem). Rhealt's and Wolfe's statements about the continuity of traditional knowledge are confirmed in Tarasoff's research findings. For his study, Tarasoff interviewed Felix Penipekeesik who was an Oshkabaywis (ceremonial helper) to Ni'capan Qwewich, [Acoose's] great-great grandfather. (Janice Acoose 2010:11-12)

The third example of purist spirituality came in response to the question "How has Ojibwa language and culture changed during your lifetime?" I had the following conversation with Wesley Pagel, age 52 in 2011, who identified himself as a member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians in Wisconsin. Pagel spoke of conversations he had with his mother about her participation in Midewiwin healing ceremonies and the age-old tradition of receiving a gift for her services. "Although my mother was only eight, nine, ten, at the time, she asked my grandmother if she could go along to help." The custom was to get *zhooniyaa* (money) or some other form of pay. His mother went with Gus, the medicine man

from Chief Lake to the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation, apparently quite a distance, to perform the ceremony. Pagel said he didn't know what Gus got, but his mother got a winter coat for helping Gus. His mother told him:

> You know, that man lived. He had pneumonia real, real bad. And he came out of it, he was like in a coma but he came out of it. He was real, real weak. . . . That man sucked it right out of him; drew it right out of him. Pagel shared information about other things his mother had seen as a child, when that was a way of life to her, but he said, "If that was to happen now, oh my God! Oh! (Hearty laugh) You know; you know." [Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011]

This signal of trust and camaraderie happened more than once with the people I was interviewing. The fact that they were talking with a member of their own culture may have contributed to the amount of knowledge and experience they were willing to share. "You know; you know." This simple repetition from Pagel told me he thought I shared his knowledge of what his mother's way of life entailed. I continued the conversation. "So that's been during your lifetime that this change took place." Pagel answered:

> Yah, well I never got to see it, I just got to hear the stories of it. But it intrigues me enough to ask questions. I may not have heard it when I was nine, ten years old but when I got to be an adult, it's like, okay now I'm [going to] go find this out for myself. And you go searching here and you go searching here and then you start hearing the Midewiwin teachings about there would be a time when they would fall asleep and the elders would be asked and they would have nothing to give them. You see. And they would retrace the steps of their ancestors and pick up what was left on the trail. It kind of makes sense, eh? What they're saying is this new generation, the eighth generation of the people, will have to be careful. [Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011]

This comment from a middle-aged Ojibwa man who remembers stories of the Midewiwin from his mother and goes in search of more information about the Midewiwin is further evidence

that Hoffman's prediction that "It will be but a comparatively short time before the Midewiwin will be only a tradition" has not yet occurred. What is a short time? Is 128 years a short time? I choose to define a comparatively short time as something less than 50 years. Something that persists beyond 50 years and shows signs of growing is not likely to disappear into the shadowlands of becoming "only a tradition." I am not sure what that means; Hoffman has me confused with his statements of the Ojibwa "pagan" practices becoming "only a tradition." Statements such as these from non-indigenous researchers are problematic from the indigenous viewpoint, or, more specifically, from my viewpoint as an indigenous member of the group to which he is referring. It is true that the so-called "pagan" practices associated with the Midewiwin ceremonies are more difficult to carry out because of the geographic splitting up of the Ojibwa communities, but the Ojibwa people are adaptable at finding ways to come together to celebrate culture, language, song, and community.

In traveling the Great Lakes area in 2011, I attended Midewiwin ceremonies, an Ojibwa funeral where Ojibwa Hymn Singers sang for the deceased and the mourners who gathered to sing at the memorial service, a language camp, several powwows, church services on three reservations where Ojibwa hymns were sung, and a present-day Indian mission school, where the Ojibwa language is being taught in the classroom to Ojibwa students by a non-native teacher who learned to speak Ojibwa so she could teach her students to sing and pray in the language. Whether Ojibwa people believe in Midewiwin or Christianity, it is important to them to retain the Ojibwa language to use in either belief system. It is a cultural identifier of those tribal ties that Hoffman thought would disappear in a comparatively short time. He said:

> There is scarcely any doubt that these ceremonies will still be secretly held at irregular intervals, but under the watchful eye of the national authorities it is doubtful whether they will be performed with any degree of completeness, and it will be but a comparatively short time before the

> Midewiwin will be only a tradition." (Walter James Hoffman, accessed May 12, 2012)

Hoffman's research took place in 1885-1886. Is it a comparatively short time from 1885 to 2013, when Midewiwin practices are still here? That is a period of 128 years. I think Hoffman's prediction that "the Midewiwin will be only a tradition" meant that it would no longer be a practice, as opposed to my meaning for tradition, which means nearly the opposite. To me, a tradition is an ingrained practice. Some traditions are so sacred, and have been so threatened, that the need for secrecy is one weapon of preservation that will not go away. When asked, "What do you think about providing English translations with Ojibwa hymns?" Leonard Moose remained silent, but Mary Moose said, "Well, it depends. I won't talk about the *Mide* songs. I won't talk about the ceremony songs. But I don't know about the hymn songs. I don't know anything about the hymn songs." (Leonard and Mary Moose, in discussion with the author, June 23, 2011)

I really like the protective measure of not knowing about something. It says a lot when traditional people band together to protect what they say they don't know. They invariably will look at me and retreat with the signal I've come to recognize so well through the years. In my early searching years, when I talked to many tribal elders searching for meaning of dreams, experiences, visions, and the *miigis* (Mide shell, pearl), many of them told me, "I don't know anything." But I persisted in asking the questions of the same people, and even though they always gave me the same answer, "I don't know anything," we would sit and have conversations, and slowly, over time, I learned from them all that they had the answers to questions to which they had previously responded that they "didn't know." Sometimes they would refer me to someone else.

I remember one time in particular that I had been searching for an answer for three years. Finally I was told to go to talk to so-and-so, a well-known and well-respected medicine man in Inger, Minnesota. As soon as our car arrived, the door to the house opened, and when I heard "*biindigen*" (come in), I walked in. I saw my vision in a painted picture hanging on the wall of the home I was visiting. It was a mesmerizing moment, a moment when I knew I would get an answer, a moment when my questions actually left me, and all I could do was stare at the painting and listen to the words that were being spoken to me. It was a powerful experience to get answers to questions I hadn't asked, and when that happened, I knew that the medicine people understood me and my need to know, and may have even heard similar questions from others before me.

The medicine man talked to me about the picture hanging on his wall, and during our discussion, answers to my questions were not only answered, I was given additional information through an interpretation of the picture on the wall. I had not asked about the picture, but the medicine man immediately began talking about it when I entered his home. The medicine people accepted me. When they gave me answers, I knew they accepted me. I feel a great affinity for those who protect sacred information, or who decide to share it very selectively. I will share only as much as they want me to share. For instance, when asked whether there was anything else the Mooses wanted to say about the topics we discussed—the importance of the language, the culture, and spirituality—these two traditional people answered the question with the following comments:

Leonard Moose: We don't want to talk about spirituality.

Janis Fairbanks: Okay.

Mary Moose: The only thing I would say is we need our language so when we leave the earth, and then we want somebody to send us back, if we don't have

anybody to send us back again, we're [going to] have problems.

LM: If we don't have anybody to send us back, there'll be nobody. We'll be stuck here on earth. We can't go [anyplace].

MM: It's very important. [Leonard and Mary Moose, in discussion with the author, June 23, 2011]

What does it mean to send someone back? A recognized indigenous scholar and an authority on Anishinaabeg culture, Basil H. Johnston, recorded the process of sending someone back according to Midewiwin practices. Johnston wrote in *Ojibwe Ceremonies* the steps that describe sending someone on the journey to the Land of Souls along the Path of Souls. In this case, *Mishi-Waub-Kaikaik*, a Fourth Order member of the Midewiwin, came to conduct burial service for a fallen warrior named *Zhawaeshk*. Johnston describes the preparation for the first instruction as follows:

> At last, the two attending women were finished with their task. *Zahwaeshk* lay on a pallet, dressed in his ceremonial head-dress and his chest shield, his face painted in the way he used to paint it whenever he had gone on the War Path. Beside him were his weapons and his personal possessions. Bending down, one of the women cut off a lock of *Zhawaeshk's* hair. Wrapping it in birch bark packet, she gave it to *Zhauwoonoquae*.
>
> Then *Mishi-Waub-Kaikaik*, in his role as a Fourth Order of the Midewiwin, arrived to conduct the burial ceremonies. He sat next to the body, on the side where *Zhawaeshk's* father, mother, and brothers and sisters were also sitting. On the other side of the pallet sat *Zhauwoonoquae* and her children. *Mishi-Waub-Kaikaik* chanted:
>
> *K'neekaunissinaun, k'e'ninguzhimim*.
> Our brother, you leave us.
>
> *K'neekaunissinaun, k'maudjauh.*
> Our brother, you are leaving.
>
> *K'neekaunissinaun, k'cheeby/im.*
> Our brother, your spirit.

> *K'neekaunissinaun, neewi-goon cheeby-meekun.*
> Our brother, four days on the Path of Souls.
>
> *K'neekaunissinaun, waukweeng k'd'izhau.*
> Our brother, to the Land of Souls you are bound. [Basil H. Johnston 1982:133-134]
>
> *Mishi-Waub-Kaikaik* paused. When he spoke again, he would be addressing the soul/spirit of *Zhawaesh*. It was there: unseen, but seeing; unheard, but hearing; unsensed, but sensing. Sundered from its physical form, it lingered near its body, slowly taking leave while the transformation from *cheejauk* (soul/spirit) to *cheeby* (spirit) took place. It was said that four days were required before the transformation was complete and the spirit was fit to enter its new life. Four days were needed for the soul/spirit to travel the space from the Land of the Living to the Land of Souls. [Basil H. Johnston 1982:134]

The entire set of instructions is in Johnston's book *Ojibway Ceremonies* for those who wish to read more. The substance of the story is that if the Anishinaabeg follow the teachings of the Midewiwin, they will be allowed to enter the Land of Souls. Johnston wrote, "Our ancestors taught us – and the Midewiwin teaches us – that there is a Land of Souls. In that land there is no sickness, no hunger, no sorrow, no anger, and no envy. It is a Land of Peace inhabited by men and women of peace. For them there is plenty and comfort and joy." (Basil H. Johnston 1982:134)

Throughout the burial rites, the medicine man conducting them chants instructions to the deceased, always in the Ojibwa language. It is imperative that the language be retained so the instructions may be understood and followed to guide the spirit home. Here again, I see a parallel with the Midewiwin practice of sending someone home and the Ojibwa Hymn Singers' practice with their words for hymn no. 35 for funeral services of using the Ojibwa words for "Going Home to Die No More." It is a great comfort to think of going to a pleasant home with certainty, rather than having the fear of being sent to a place of fire and brimstone. Our creator, the Great

Spirit of the Anishinaabeg, under the Midewiwin belief system, provides the assurance of a truly happy and peaceful final destination. They do not wish to convert others to their way of life; they do not wish to combine Christianity with their way of life; they strive to live a life that honors all of the Great Spirit's creation and, in the end, simply go home.

Similarly, at least one of the people interviewed said he does not believe in mixing Christian doctrine or ceremony with Midewiwin. Rev. George Ross, who conducts services on the Red Lake, White Earth, and Leech Lake Reservations, is a man who has lived a long time. He spends his days reaching out to his Ojibwa community, both within the Christian community and outside of the realm of churchgoers, to offer his ear to anyone who has a need to unburden themselves. He sees no conflict in his attendance at powwows, because he ministers to all who may need him, whoever and wherever they may be. Despite his statements that Christianity and Midewiwin should not be mixed, Ross may actually represent a blended view of Anishinaabe spirituality, given his attendance at powwows, which some Christian Anishinaabeg consider pagan practices, and his firm belief in Christian services. He did not seem to realize that his loyalty to the symbol of the Thunderbird, which he had emblazoned on the Ojibwa Hymn Singers' jackets, may represent early childhood memories of being a part of Midewiwin ceremonies or teachings, which he also mentioned during the interview.

When asked how the Ojibwa language and culture had changed during his lifetime (1931-2011), Ross, who sings Ojibwa hymns andconducts funeral services, said that there are fewer and fewer Midewiwin people, and that there are some people who imitate or want to be Midewiwin, which Ross thinks is okay, but he said, "You can't be a fence rider; you have to be one or the other." He then gave a summary of what it takes to be Midewiwin:

> If you want to be *Mide*, then you had better change your life, because when I was growing up, a *Mide* person was highly respected. He was a

> gentle, kind, brilliant, intelligent person and he didn't flaunt himself around or anything like that; you know, bring attention to himself. In fact, you wouldn't even know he was around. But people would know who he was, and they would go to him. They had that charisma. That's just the way the old *Mide* people were; highly respected people, and well loved. [George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011]

Ross is included in the purist spirituality section because of his statement, but he could just as well fit into the blended spirituality section due to his attendance at powwows, his high regard for Midewiwin people, his disdain for pretenders, and his veneration of the Thunderbird. In my opinion, there are degrees between purist and blended on the continuum, and that is unavoidable with people who have been exposed to both belief systems, as with Ross's life experience.

William H. Warren (1825-1853) summarized what is probably the most often-mentioned example of purist behavior in the Anishinaabe community, which is the preference of members of the Midewiwin to keep their rites and ceremonies totally separate from Christian rites and ceremonies. The Midewiwin, also called the Grand Medicine Society, was described by Warren as follows:

> Their aged men are fast falling into their graves, and they carry with them the records of the past history of their people; they are the initiators of the grand rite of religious belief which they believe the Great Spirit has granted to his red children to secure them a long life on earth, and the life hereafter; and in the bosoms of these old men are locked up the original causes and secrets of this, their most ancient belief. [William H. Warren 1984:25]

Warren's mother was Anishinaabe and his father was white. Warren stated that he felt it was his duty to collect every fact to "save their traditions from oblivion." (Warren 1984:25) However, even though Warren lived among the Ojibwa on the White Earth Indian Reservation in

Minnesota, and despite the fact that he spoke fluent Anishinaabemowin, he stated that he had great difficulty obtaining information from the elders on the reservation. He predicted that within ten years of the time he wrote his notes that it would be too late to save the traditions of Anishinaabe forefathers from oblivion. (William H. Warren 1984:25)

Approximately 100 years later, another researcher and writer, Fred K. Blessing, was carrying on the same research and lamenting the same concern over the possible loss of traditions, in particular the Midewiwin practices of the Ojibwa in northern Minnesota. Blessing wrote a letter to non-native scholar Thomas Vennum Jr. that said, "A search is now on for photos of the old personalities. I have a secret project underway. It is so secret that even my Indian friends know not of it. The time isn't ripe for open fieldwork on that project. But I have to start it even with all I have on my hands, while those involved are still living." Vennum concluded that "Fred's unfulfilled goal, to write the definitive work on the *mitewiwin,* will now have to be pursued by other scholars; they will find that Fred's groundwork has facilitated their task considerably." (Fred K. Blessing 1977:xi)

Vennum said this message was written shortly before the automobile accident that ended Blessing's life. I concluded that Blessing's letter would ɬikely have been written in 1971. The concern that Blessing had of the need for secrecy was probably well founded, because if he told his "Indian friends" what he was doing, he may not have had such easy access to their meetings and ceremonies any longer. I would classify Blessing as a purist, since he specialized in collecting material culture from members of the Midewiwin. Blessing moved freely among the reservations in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin as he studied the Midewiwin. He described his work and his efforts to collect old artifacts for the creation of a museum at Mille Lacs

Trading Post as “above ground archaeology.” (Blessing 1977:237) Is the convention no first names on subsequent citations once the first citation is listed with a first name?

He gained enough support from the Indian community of Red Lake, Minnesota, that he was able to collect a number of Midewiwin artifacts for the museum, such as old wooden spoons, medicine bags (minus the contents), mortar and pestles used to pound medicines, Midewiwin medicine sticks used with initiates, two large medicine dance drums, and a doctor’s curing drum. These items were found inside an abandoned cabin that Blessing had obtained permission from an old man to find and enter. Blessing would not tell the exact area where the cabin was located because he had promised the old man that he would not. Two similar cabins that he had visited, where he found material for his research, burned down a few weeks after he entered them. His interpreter’s name was John, and when the two of them found the cabin with a rusty padlock on the door, John did not want to go inside. “There might be Grand Medicine in there,” he said. Blessing, having received permission to enter, pried the padlock off the door and after he did, John “insisted on going in first, despite the fact that he was reluctant to do so. I found out later he was trying to protect me in case some bad medicine might be there to harm us.” Of this large cache of goods in this abandoned cabin, Blessing wrote, “John said we had better not take the two big drums, and with reluctance, I left them. The next day, however, I told John I would inquire about them before they were discovered and ruined. He would not go back, but I looked up the old man again and he told me to take them. I paid him for his help and he was very grateful.” (Blessing 1977:239)

As Blessing conducted his fieldwork, he visited Mille Lacs reservation and asked if he could take pictures of the medicine lodge there. After several refusals, the Mide lodge leader finally told him he could take pictures. But as he set up his camera, a voice from the cabin called

out, “Get out of there.” He glanced at the cabin but saw no one. He raised his camera again and another voice called out, “Don’t do that.” He took a few pictures and left quickly. (Blessing 1977:241) This experience is consistent with what people of the Midewiwin believe today. There are some things that are too sacred to talk about, let alone photograph.

The members of the Midewiwin, even today, do not want to talk about what they do. One example of one of the old men of the grand rite of religious belief, as Warren called them, is Melvin Eagle, who in 2011 was 79 years old, a member of the Midewiwin, and a drum keeper. Melvin Eagle passed away on August 9, 2014, and an article honoring Eagle’s life referred to him as a Keeper of Culture. Eagle had made several comments about the Midewiwin in his 2011 interview:

> I don’t like to translate anything that’s sacred. Like our ceremonies, [Because] people start misusing and that’s the reason why we never allow anybody to take pictures of our ceremonial drum because our drums are sacred to us and people want to imitate our drums. It’s pretty hard to explain the way I feel about it. I was raised this way. And I never forgot my Indian language, so I’m very fluent. But I, you know, I can’t read any Ojibwa writing. It’s all Greek to me because that ain’t the way I learned from the time when I was small. [Melvin Eagle, in discussion with the author, June 22, 2011]

Eagle’s comments are representative of comments from other communities that yield a common result of belief that the Midewiwin belongs to the Ojibwa, and one way of ensuring its survival is through Ojibwa language retention and application to the traditional belief system encompassed in the Midewiwin. Melvin Eagle was fluent, an elder well known in Minnesota, and a longtime participant at Midewiwin ceremonies, estimating that his first visit to ceremonies took place when he was about three years old. In Minnesota, there are Midewiwin lodges that still practice that “most ancient belief” that William H. Warren and Fred K Blessing both feared

was disappearing during their lifetimes. It is not disappearing; quite the contrary. According to Eagle and several other people interviewed, Christianity is declining and a return to traditional Midewiwin practices is on the rise.

Syncretic Spirituality

The blending of spiritual beliefs among the Anishinaabeg had its roots in the early 1800s when, as part of their conversion efforts, Christian missionaries began to call on native missionaries to help them with their conversion tasks. I am including this discussion in the syncretic spirituality section because the term "conversion" tells us that those converted also had prior spiritual beliefs that were not Christian. Two important figures in the Minnesota conversion efforts, Peter Jones and Kahgegagahbowh (George Copway), came from Canada.

In the mid 1820s, native missionaries joined the effort to convert their fellow tribesman to Christianity, inspiring other native missionaries to take up the cross and join the conversion efforts. (George Copway Kahgegagahbowh 1997 [1850]:24) Jones, affiliated with the Methodist Church, was a bilingual and bicultural missionary who had hundreds of indigenous followers. One of those followers was Kahgegagahbowh, whose mother on her deathbed advised him and his siblings to "be good Christians, to love Jesus, and meet her in Heaven." She then sang her favorite hymn, which had been translated by Peter Jones, "Jesus ish pe ming kah e hod. Jesus My All to Heaven is Gone." (George Copway Kahgegagahbowh 1997 [1850]:25)

Kahgegagahbowh (1818-1869) at age fourteen the following summer became a convert to Christianity. In his adult years, he was an active missionary known as George Copway who traveled among the Ojibwa people of the Great Lakes area. It was these missionaries who joined the missionary effort who brought about the creation and use of the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* at White Earth. Another influential book translated by Rev. William McMurray (1810-1894) and

used on the White Earth Indian Reservation is *The Book of Common Prayer among the Nations of the World,* which contains 87 translated hymns. (Charles Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011) In addition to Rev. Jones, hymn translations were done by the Revs. James Evans and George Henry, with consultations for translations provided by a full-blood Ojibwa, *Ki-shi-bi ne*, "The Big Partridge." (Charles Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011)

The evolution of the translations of songs took place through the various renditions of the missionaries who were trained and ordained under the superintendent Dr. Joseph Gilfillan, who was in charge of all missionary work of the American Episcopal Church among the Chippewa in Minnesota from June 1873 until September, 1908. After Rev. Edward Coley Kah-O-Sed, who was born on Walpole Island to Christian parents on September 30, 1894, arrived at White Earth in 1905, he prepared a new compilation of hymns to replace the 1895 edition done by Dr. Gilfillan. (Charles Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011) After Kah-O-Sed's compilation, there were no further revisions to the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910*. The hymnal has been in continuous use by the Ojibwa Hymn Singers in Minnesota for more than 100 years. Hymn singing remains an important part of the Anishinaabe culture, as the following examples of syncretic spiritual behavior indicates. The first three examples are Medora Hicks from Wikwemikong, Bryan Jon from the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota, and Molly Miller, a member of the Stockbridge-Muncee Mohekan community in Wisconsin.

First, Medora Hicks said since she returned to Wikwemikong, Ontario, she and her singers try to do quite a lot to incorporate the native spirituality with the Catholicism. She said, "The whole reserve was Catholic, the whole end of this island, the whole reserve of Wikwemikong, and so they had the traditional hymns always sung in church." She said doing that is really important because as far back as she could remember, she could hear her mom and

dad talking about it, and there were children growing up in Wikwemikong who had the lay language (Anishinaabemowin) and also always had the Catholic services. There were no Protestants, as she recalls, in Wikwemikong.

I visited the church Hicks attends and saw evidence of a syncretic worldview inside. There were the typical Stations of the Cross, but there were also hanging from the rafters the symbols and colors of the four directions. Hicks said that some of the people who attend church also follow the Midewiwin. Most of the people in her community, Wikwemikong of the older generation are fluent. If they are singing the songs, they are fluent, according to Hicks. (Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011) So at least in that community, some people seem to think there is a blending of the Ojibwa hymns and the Midewiwin practitioners. That is not as clear in some of the other communities.

Bryan Jon, an Anishinaabe deacon from the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation in eastern Minnesota, has visited Midewiwin ceremonies by invitation. He clearly believes in syncretic spirituality and stated that prayer can be offered and has the same meaning in any venue. However, his story about attending a different church service with his wife led to other instances of visiting other churches and Midewiwin ceremonies, where Jon's wife noted a difference in spiritual practices. He said:

> There is a Christian denomination; I think it's the Church of God and Christ, that doesn't allow any instruments in church. And my wife and I went to a service and she was there and she said, "You know, I don't feel comfortable in here. Something is not right." And we couldn't figure out 'til the end when they were [going to] sing some songs, and she said, "That's it, there's no music" [Bryan Jon, in discussion with the author, June 21, 2011]

Jon said they just sang without instruments, so his wife asked them, and they said, "We don't use instruments, you can't use instruments, we sing from the heart." Jon concluded:

> That may be the initial religion that they hooked up with; a group of Christian believers who said, "You can't use that kind of stuff." But to say you can't use a drum, especially if I come from Mide or I come from traditional background, and I've been using a drum for various traditional things, and they say you can't use that drum, because it was used for other purposes other than Christian. I can read the Bible where things that were used for pagan worship were used to worship God, where they broke it down and they burned it and when they burned it, they sacrificed things on it, so it was used for God. So if that can be done, so can this drum if I so choose to use it for God, it can now be used to worship God with. And any argument anyone has ever tried to use with me, I've got a biblical answer for them, so, both Christian and non-Christian; the *Mide* society also. [Bryan Jon, in discussion with the author, June 21, 2011]

Jon said he is not Midewiwin, although he has attended Big Drum ceremonies, which were conducted by the Midewiwin lodge in Sawyer, Minnesota. He knew that Big Drum and Midewiwin were not necessarily separate functions, and the reason he attended was because he had been invited to attend. "I've visited. Yah, just like I would go to the Catholic Church." When asked why he visited the lodge, given that he does not consider himself Midewiwin, he replied, "I was invited, and if I'm invited somewhere, I'll go! If you ask me to pray, I'll pray! I've been to the Native American Church too." This represents a diverse and blended spirituality. Clearly Jon believes in the power of prayer and does not hesitate to pray anywhere, any time. His statements that he finds a Biblical answer for anything indicates a Christian viewpoint, but the fact that he goes to Midewiwin ceremonies indicates that he also honors Midewiwin traditions. (Bryan Jon, in discussion with the author, June 21, 2011]

Finally, the third example of blended spiritual beliefs comes from Molly Miller. Although raised as a Christian, she was attending Midewiwin ceremonies when she agreed to talk with me. Miller is among the people attempting to regain contact with ancient history and culture,

although she is Stockbridge-Muncee-Delaware, not Ojibwa. She knows the value of the language and she knows about the Midewiwin. Here is what she shared about her experience:

> Christianity truly affected my people. Someone told me a story about Midewiwin though, and I haven't heard it in, well, this is my first time here at this big lodge, but there was an agreement that we were going to try living like the colonists but our relatives agreed to bring the, if it didn't work out, they would bring the tradition back to us, they'd keep it for us. I heard, you know, it was a long story, but that made me feel better about being who I was, because we were not raised in tradition. [Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011]

Miller finds a difference in the concepts delivered by the Midewiwin songs she hears in Midewiwin ceremonies and the Christian-based hymns she translates into her language, Lenape. She believes there is a big struggle going on between people who follow one tradition versus the other, using her own experience as an example. She said:

> I believe there's a major struggle still for many people about Christianity, the positive parts of it. Can you still be traditional, Midewiwin, or Big Drum, or longhouse, and still have good feelings about the positive things you were taught? I mean, Jesus didn't say anything wrong. All his words I read were fine. It's all the other stuff that comes with it; the manmade laws and rules and all that stuff. So I think that's a big struggle. [Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011 by author June 15, 2011]

She compared the sound of the Ojibwa Midewiwin songs to the Christian hymns she has heard and concludes that Midewiwin songs are more beautiful, more positive, more loving, and not punitive. She said, "Are you [going to] go to hell if you don't do this or that; it's not like that."

On the other hand, Miller sees a use for translating old hymns, even though she doesn't think the concepts they convey are the same. She said:

> Some of those old hymns help us to find lost ones. But then we question their interpretation of some of those concepts that probably don't even really exist. They're Christian concepts, so they don't exist in the tradition. You can tell at church when there's some new hymn (laughs). Everybody stumbles along; they don't know the words (laughs). But they have certain old hymns like that, that they've been singing forever. They like to sing! People like to sing! I think Indians like_to sing! [Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011]

Miller's love of singing, her work in translating hymns and teaching her language, her status as an active participant in both church and the Midewiwin, and her wish to pass the language and the hymns to future generations all indicate a dedication to spirituality and ensuring continuity to the culture. She is the only person interviewed who discussed an ongoing, active participation in both Christian and Midewiwin practices. I got the sense that although she is more interested in traditional practices than in Christian beliefs, she is not willing to discount the positive aspects of her Christian experience, but states that others may have difficulty in that regard. When asked whether she had anything else she wanted to say, Miller had much to say. First of all, she said she thought I would have a difficult time finding Midewiwin people who would also talk about Christian hymns and offered as one reason the fact that many of the people at the Midewiwin ceremonies where her interview was taking place were there because they have negative feelings about their Christian experience. Her tribe was probably 99 percent Christian, and they were raised in the church because the tribal location was in New York, but they "became disillusioned after seven moons." She stated:

> The church was still the center of the community, you know, you group the ladies aid, the dinners, the weddings; things are changing, so that going back to the tradition is okay. I believe though, there is a catechism written in our language, there are hymns, a hymnbook, written in our language, the old Mohican, and in Delaware there are some, they're difficult to read, because everybody has their, you know, the preacher or

> the anthro, or whoever had their own way of writing and it's not clear and it's not easy to understand, so we need linguists for all that work, so I believe it's [going to] be helpful to restore languages. [Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011]

In 2011, at least two respondents indicated that they knew Anishinaabe people who followed both Midewiwin and Christian practices. According to Medora Hicks, a then 70-year-old pianist who frequently attends church in Wikwemikong, Ontario, and leads Anishinaabeg singers through Ojibwa hymn-singing, "Pretty well everybody in this reserve now, some follow, I'm not sure how active, Midewiwin but they also come to church. Both, you know." (Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011)

There were comments from the non-native nun, Sr. Felissa Zander, who had worked with Ojibwa children at the mission school on the Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation for 50 years, who saw a blending of Christianity and Midewiwin beliefs. At first she said, "They couldn't have other beliefs, they'd have to believe." Then she quickly amended that statement with the following:

> I mean, they could have other beliefs! I mean, they can believe in Ojibwa and Catholicism. Well, years ago, it was Ojibwa or Midewiwin, you know, anything of the culture was considered pagan. And that was really bad, because they were never pagan. The Ojibwa were never pagan. They believed in the Great Spirit. And that makes a big difference. [Sr.Felissa Zander, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011]

Zander was very generous with her time and information regarding the history of the mission and the oral history of her tenure at the school. She provides the antithesis of missionaries such as Edmund F. Ely, who wanted the Indians in Fond du Lac to give up their language, their culture, and their spiritual beliefs to become Christian farmers. Instead, one of the first things Zander did when she arrived at the mission was to start up drumming and dancing for

the students. She also encouraged them to speak their language, using Ojibwa hymns to teach them their native tongue. She learned Ojibwa from the local community and uses it to teach her students songs and prayers. But she also encourages them to offer tobacco and take part in other traditional Ojibwa belief patterns. She models and encourages syncretic behavior for her students.

One Ojibwa religious leader voiced sentiments of tolerance for allowing Midewiwin beliefs to coexist with Christian beliefs. According to Rev. Ross, "All the services that I do, not only me, but other, the drum does not. . . . They know that themselves, the Mide or Medicine people, they can't bring that drum in the church. But a public place, like the Vet's Building, you can bring your drum right there, you know, have everything coincide and coexist." (George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011) His answer to the question, "Do you see that as a blending of the two traditions?" was:

> In a way, it is. It really is a blending. But it doesn't . . . either side is real exalted in their own areas. So, ah . . . but if you really know your Bible and all that. . . . You know, my attitude is to let them go; let them be. Help encourage them as much as possible, but bring them together. Because it's really that family, that grieving family, that we're assembled here in the first place. And that's what the whole situation is all about, is to help our family get through this time of crisis. [George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011]

Ross is an indigenous Christian leader who believes in syncretic religion; he believes in God, and he remembers the significance of the Midewiwin. He wants the two to coincide and coexist.

CHAPTER 4: Community and Individual Identity

Chapter 4 focuses on the sense of community both within and among the members of tribal groups interviewed and represented in the respective areas visited. Movement between their home base and other localities is often experienced by Ojibwa people, but the sense of individuals belonging to a distinct indigenous community remains strong. Community identity is tied to individual identity, but among the Anishinaabeg, it is also tied to historical traditions and beliefs and, as a people, on whether your individual community practices are shared by other enclaves of similar communities. This chapter deals with both community and individual identity among the Anishinaabeg, as hymn no. 35 is discussed in terms of the way it has been used by communities and individuals and how it is understood to impact perception of identity.

To illustrate the concept of community identity, I refer to an article that deals with identity of the Anishinaabeg of Manitoulin Island that was published in 1996 by Theresa S. Smith that appeared in the *American Indian Quarterly* (Summer and Autumn 1996). The title is "The Church of the Immaculate Conception: Inculturation and Identity among the Anishinaabeg of Manitoulin Island." (Theresa S. Smith, accessed October 6, 2012) Smith's fieldwork on Manitoulin Island among the Christian Indians and the traditionalists found that the Anishinaabeg on Manitoulin Island, like reservations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Walpole Island, maintained their traditional beliefs and practices in spite of threats of eternal damnation for practicing their pagan and evil beliefs.

There was one striking example of a traditional Midewiwin member, Leland Bell, on Manitoulin Island who used his powerful artistic talents to paint the Stations of the Cross in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. He did it not because he was a convert to Christianity and not because he expected to convert the Christian Indians back to traditional ways but because "it

was Native people who asked me to do this thing. . . . I'm not up for conversion; I never was." (Theresa S. Smith, accessed October 6, 2012)

Smith's article describes the construction of the church in West Bay as a work of the local Anishinaabeg, who designed a new structure after the old church was destroyed by a propane explosion in 1971. She describes the gradual installation of church décor that seems to blend Christian and Midewiwin iconography, such as statues of Mary and Joseph beside carved totem poles. The latter are from the Northwest tradition, not Anishinaabeg at all, except they were a gift from a parishioner, so they are in the church. There are symbols of the Midewiwin, such as the colors yellow (East), red (South), black (West), and white (North) for the four directions, blue for the symbol of spirituality, yellow rays as symbols of 12 moons. On the door there are carvings of clan symbols. Instead of a Christian steeple, there is a raised "smokehole." The tabernacle is a teepee shape, and the baptismal font rests on a carved turtle, an imported symbol borrowed from the Huron and Iroquois, according to Smith. This odd assortment of symbols combined under one roof causes confusion or discomfort for some of the parishioners, and several have decided that the two traditions, Christianity and traditional Anishinaabe rituals, should not be mixed. Choices have to be made for one or the other path, and people are making them.

One man practices both Christianity and traditional Anishinaabe practices. Raymond Armstrong had trained to be a deacon, but in 1995, he was an elder who sponsored sweat lodges and conducted traditional rituals for his people. His wife had tried going to church but quit when she found it interfered with her finding traditional medicines. "She couldn't find the medicine she was looking for, she couldn't see it. Yet it was right at her feet." (Theresa S. Smith 1996:524) There are still others who go to church but leave when sweet grass is used,

remembering a time when they or their ancestors were told to "hand over their medicine bundles to the priests and reject the old ways as demonic." (Theresa S. Smith 1996:523) Despite all of the seeming contradictions and resulting confusion among the Anishinaabeg in making their choices, one fact remains clear to Smith, who said:

> For both Christian and non-Christian Anishinaabeg, the symbolism of the church may not be about identification with one religious system or another but about identity itself. And the reclamation of *Anishinaabe* identity on Manitoulin is an ongoing journey, the character and outcome of which will only be determined by the Anishinaabeg themselves – perhaps in consensus, perhaps in factionalism – but always, on their own terms, in their own time, and in their own sense of place. [Theresa S. Smith 1996:525]

The church on Manitoulin Island that Smith wrote about shares some characteristics with the St. Francis Solanus Indian Mission School in Wisconsin. Inside the church, there are symbols of both Christian and indigenous religious symbols that are set up side by side. A crucifix hangs on the wall, and a covered Bible with the emblem of a medicine wheel on it lies on the podium. Stained glass windows that have images of traditional Christian motifs in some, and in others, images of indigenous people dressed in traditional clothing adorn the building. Children attend mass there and are encouraged to incorporate their tribal traditions and language into the celebration. These traditions include the use of tobacco offerings and the singing of hymns in the Ojibwa language. Sr. Felissa Zander, who taught at the St. Francis Solanus Indian mission school for 50 years, said she learned the Ojibwa language so she could teach the schoolchildren prayers and hymns in Ojibwa. Zander said that teaching the children hymns in their own language was simply for their spiritual growth and so they could praise creator together.

Zander is approximately the same age as George Roy from Wikwemikong First Nation, and both are aware of the residential school effect on the indigenous culture. Roy recalls the

experience of attending the residential schools and living the culture, while Zander recalls the experience of being one of the administrators of a mission school that has operated for more than a century teaching indigenous children Christian prayers, songs, and tribal history, but with a different emphasis than Roy experienced. Zander arrived at the mission school in 1961, so when I interviewed her in 2011, she had been teaching at the school for 50 years. Incredibly, she has made a practice of creating memory books for each class of children she worked with that constitutes half a century of local history on a current-day Indian Reservation in Wisconsin. The local community not only welcomes the school's presence but rebuilt the physical structure after it was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

In 2011, Zander had 50 three-ring-binders filled with indigenous history of Lac Courte Oreilles school children dating from 1961 to 2011. She is also hidden away in rural Hayward, Wisconsin, one of only two nuns who operate every aspect of keeping Saint Francis Solanus Ojibwa Mission operational. The mission, she said, was established in the late 1700s by Jesuits who came to what is now Wisconsin from the Lake Superior area. One of the later missionaries was the famous Bishop Frederic Baraga, the snowshoe priest who traveled among the Ojibwa and established a mission on Madeline Island. According to the Biographical Introduction in *The Diary of Bishop Frederic Baraga: First Bishop of Marquette, Michigan*, edited by Regis M. walling and Rev. N. Daniel Rupp, Bishop Baraga arrived in America in 1831 from his native Slovenia. He had come to bring Christianity to the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians:

> The hallmark of Baraga's mission life was his great love for the Indians. Unlike many Protestant missionaries, his first goal was to learn the Indians' language and to make teaching and prayer aids available to the Indians. He used the Indian language for every service he could, especially for vespers. He recognized that Indian education had to begin in the native tongue, and because of Baraga, many Indians achieved literacy first in Ottawa or Chippewa. The Indians thus taught had a great advantage, then,

> when it came to learning English, which the government insisted should be taught. [Frederic Baraga 1990:24]

Like Rev. Edmund F. Ely, a missionary who lived among the Ojibwa Indians at Fond du Lac, Baraga kept a diary of his daily activities and of day-to-day events. Both diaries give insights into the daily lives of the indigenous people the missionaries came into contact with, and they highlight the struggle that took place between the people who wanted to maintain traditional practices and beliefs and the ones who embraced Christianity. Ely referred to the people of Fond du Lac as "the pagans" in his diary entry of May 31, 1835. "The valley is filled with the sound of the pagan drum, rattle & song this evening. The pagans are preparing (I am informed) for a *Meitei* (Midewiwin)." (Theresa M. Schenck 2012:156)

Ely's efforts at converting the Indians of Fond du Lac relied on the indigenous people's love of song and singing, and he concentrated on teaching the children of the village to sing and pray. At one point, he acknowledged his intent to preach to them for the purpose of conversion, even though he knew the Indians would not like it. "I commenced teaching the Commandments in the school today. Expect they will fall out with me bye & bye, as I intend to preach Jesus Christ as plainly as I can to them and their children." (Theresa M. Schenck 2012:173) Over the course of his 16 years at Fond du Lac, the indigenous people did fall out with Ely and his intent to break the *"Miteui"* (Midewiwin), as shown by the fact that when he left, not one Indian came out to see him off. One legacy Ely did leave at Fond du Lac was the practice of hymn singing that persevered into the early 20th century. It is still a practice among the Ojibwa of the Great Lakes area, even though many, if not most, of the singers do not understand the Ojibwa words they are singing.

McNally saw the tie between singing as a part of the indigenous community identity and indigenous history. He states: “What contributed to the emotional investment in funerary hymn singing, beyond the bereavement at the loss of a loved one, was an unspeakable grief concerning the direction that history appeared to be taking the entire community and its way of life.” (McNally 2000:109)

I will not argue that those emotions are not there, but today’s singers also take pride in the fact that they continue to sing the songs and they control when and how they sing them. It is true, as non-native scholar Michael D. McNally found, that Ojibwa hymns have become associated with sickness and death, but it is also true that the reason for singing hymns is to cement and preserve an Ojibwa cultural identity. For many hymn singers, that cultural idenrtity includes offering tobacco at the graveside and preparing to erect a spirit house for the one who has walked on in anticipation of placing an offering on small shelves built for the purpose. Occasionally family members have reported the sound of *nagamowinan* (singing), beautiful Ojibwa songs coming from the Indian cemetery while walking past the area at night. Such is the power of *nagamowin* (songs).

Does hymn singing work? What is the logic of ritual practice? “Songs governed by the Midewiwin or other ritual contexts can be seen as invocational prayers requesting or generating powers of the *manidoog* (God, Spirit).” (Michael D. McNally 2000:32) With that statement, McNally draws a parallel between songs of the Midewiwin and songs of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers. Ojibwa people are, after all, one people, and their basic cultural values, cultural identity, remain rooted in a common history. *Nagamowin* in all its forms is the tie that binds past, present, and future; hymn singing, especially in funerary practices, is one of the forms of *nagamowinan* that works.

The questions posed in the previous paragraph center on Ojibwa hymns, but respondents expanded their answers to clearly indicate that hymn singing or other types of singing are tied to both community and cultural identity. For example, the recognition of a community identity and understanding was discussed with one of my fellow Anishinaabeg, George Roy, in answer to the question, "Do you have any other comments you would like to share about this topic?" Roy stressed the importance of having native people in education promoting their own Anishinaabe language and trying to preserve it, as opposed to educators who have never lived interactively in the culture. He said it would be hard for those who have not lived the culture to translate into English cultural activities and that they would translate in a different way. He further stated that he likes natives themselves trying to promote their language and trying to revitalize language, since language in the mind is not the same as it is in the language itself.

He used my indigenous *Anishinaabe* identity base as an example: "You have that innate thing, you know, it's just there. When we talk, you know what I'm saying, and you know what I mean. You know the culture; you are part of the culture. That's good." (George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011) I agree with Roy that those who have lived the culture are better equipped to understand what another member of that culture is saying, because as an Anishinaabe scholar, I have seen writings from non-natives, and I thought that they were missing the mark in some of their interpretations of what they had seen or been told. That's why I wanted to interview native people, Anishinaabe people, in order to get their perspectives first hand. This form of decolonization lends credibility to indigenous people by allowing them to speak for themselves and in their own words.

It is difficult to divide the elements of identity, because community identity and individual identity are so closely aligned. The same elements that create a sense of individual

identity are also the elements that create and maintain community identity. For instance, when Rev. George Ross talked about the jackets for his group, it was very important to him that the Thunderbird symbol be on the jacket design. Since the Thunderbird symbol is essentially a cultural icon that has meaning for both Midewiwin tradition and the newer Ojibwa hymn-singing tradition, as something Rev. Ross said he remembers from his childhood as "our symbol," the carryover symbol of the Thunderbird satisfies a need for continuity and community identity among the Ojibwa Hymn Singers. That is, they decided to use the Thunderbird as a symbol on their jackets, and although the Thunderbird is clearly tied to the Midewiwin as a sign of identity, it is now also a symbol of identity to the Ojibwa Hymn Singers. For them, it serves as a symbol of continued community identity and is a visible emblem of who they are today.

By 2013, the jackets were finished and distributed to practicing members of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers from the White Earth, Leech Lake, and Red Lake Indian Reservations in Minnesota. Each jacket has the symbol of the Thunderbird on it. Each jacket represents individual identity, as the design includes each singer's first name and reservation affiliation, but it also represents community identity with the incorporation of each community name and the groups' chosen name of Ojibwa Hymn Singers tying all the reservations' peoples together under one umbrella. This community identifier sets these hymn singers apart from other indigenous groups, such as the Salish, Kiowa, or Oneida. It represents pride in each of their Anishinaabe communities located in Northern Minnesota.

A sense of community was also eloquently expressed by one of the elders from Wikwemikong, Ontario, and is representative of similar statements heard from people interviewed in 2011. Medora Hicks said:

> I really enjoy living here in Wikwemikong. I think it's a really wonderful community. Things do happen in the community, but I don't think they're

> new to us. We get over the hurdles together. Like over the past week. And we get through these things by helping each other, sticking together. And that's when we really realize fully how the people in this community do things together. And that's just what it is, it's a hurdle everywhere. So even though it's a sad time, we get through it. Together we can work it out. And I help out in any way that I can, you know, by singing. So it's a really nice community. I enjoy living here. [Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011]

The finding of commonalities across a traveled expanse of approximately 3,762 miles, or 6,057.64 kilometers, driven, covering a vast geographical distance that separates these little community pockets is a healthy sign. The Anishinaabeg sense of community survived missionary attempts to divest these communities of their traditional practices and self-esteem as distinct, yet united communities. Community allegiance and the ability to find common values among people through the use of language, song, and traditional practices, despite the physical separation of these people, gives a strong indication that maintaining the Ojibwa language is a major component of culture and identity. Furthermore, the fact that all communities value the hymns and wish to maintain them in the Ojibwa language, whether all the singers understand the words or not, creates a strong tie among the communities.

These communities share even more commonalities. One of the main commonalities was the use of the hymns to attempt convert the Ojibwa and then relocate them away from their homelands. The Ojibwa hymns that all communities that I visited in 2011 still use were translated by an Ojibwa missionary named *Kahkewaquonaby*, whose English name was Peter Jones. According to information in *Sacred Feathers: The Rev. Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Misissauga Indians* by Donald B. Smith, the Ojibwa missionary, lecturer, and writer had many reasons for his conversion, not the least of which was trying to assure the *Mississauga* Ojibwa people of staying in their homeland and not being relocated to Wikwemikong on "rocky

and barren" Manitoulin Island, as the previous lieutenant governor of Canada had attempted to do in 1836-37. Jones was aware of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 in the United States, where the removal of "fifty thousand Indians from their ancestral lands in the eastern United States" sent them west of the Mississippi. (Donald B. Smith 1997:xi) As a part of his petition to the Queen of England, Jones included this message: "Our people have been civilized and educated, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been preached to us. We have also learned the ways of the white people; they have taught the children of the forest to plough and to sow. Will your Majesty be pleased to assure us that our lands shall not be taken away from us, or our people?" (Donald B. Smith 1997:xii)

The sense of community and of wanting to hold the community together was significant and continues to hold significance for the Ojibwa people.

There are outside factors that influence whether a belief system will change or simply go underground as a means of self-preservation. I have seen Ojibwa funerals where the service was held in a church even though the deceased was not a Christian. It provides a sense of comfort to the family members who follow traditional ways to hear even one Ojibwa hymn being sung for the deceased. This is a community tradition that is remembered by the collective communities across the Great Lakes area. Singing is a cultural trait, and singing in Ojibwa is remembered as an old tradition. Why do people like to sing the Ojibwa hymns? It was a pleasant surprise to find people in each community who talked about the importance of singing. A sampling of responses from the people interviewed in 2011 is as follows:

> **Georgina Elliott:** "It means a lot more in Ojibwa to express oneself and to tell stories and has extra meaning. Like when it's translated to English, it's not saying exactly what they, not saying exactly the English, I can't explain it. What it says in English means more in Ojibwa; yeah." (Georgina Elliott, in discussion with the author, July 23, 2011)

Molly Littlewolf: "I think it sounds prettier." (Molly Littlewolf, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011)

Helen Cummings: "Well, it depends on what the people want. Most of the people want Ojibwa hymns at their funeral services." (Helen Cummings, in discussion with the author, July 1, 2011)

Rev. George Ross: Ah, well, because we're Ojibwa, I suppose. Really, we want to keep this going. We're always . . . it's so comforting to the bereaved, you know, to the family. And they want it. They can remember that when they were small. And we all want to keep that going as long as we can. We're always encouraging young people to come and join us because we're getting older and older. And we don't want it to go away. We want to nurture that part of it [Because] it's vital. It's in our grasp and we want to keep it going. We want to make it last. We don't want it to go away. Not on our watch. (Laughs.)" [George Ross, in discussion with author, July 2, 2011]

Nancy White: "Well, in the first place, I enjoy music. I enjoy singing. And I've lost that part of my life, my language. And a part of me wants to hang on to the little I know. And I want to learn the Ojibwa language farther." (Nancy White, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011)

Wesley Pagel: Because it gives it more meaning for me; you know, it's oshki; it's new. It touches me in a way that other things don't. It touches me in my heart. It just touches you. I think you have to be Anishinaabe to truly understand what I'm trying to say. You know, [Because] I think the way we learn, and the way that things are passed on to us and are shown to us, given our respect and love, g'zaagiwin (respect and love), you know. The language gets you more and more in touch with it. And it's very deep, it's very deep. Our love goes deep in our people. [Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011]

Molly Miller: "Well, its part of identity; personal pride in identity. And they sound prettier. They're all prettier in the native language, and more meaningful. You can say one word in a native language that can describe a whole concept that would take a whole paragraph in the English language." (Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011)

Sr. Felissa Zander: Because I think it means more to the people. They're so proud; they should be proud of it. It's their language, it identifies them, and they want to do it. And even if some, let's say I have a new singer in the choir, and they're just really happy to sing Ojibwa, even if they don't get the pronunciation right, right away. And sometimes they're in the second or third year when they finally get it. You know. But they really try hard. But it's very good for the culture. [Sr. Felissa Zander, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011]

Bonga: Some of them are spiritual songs, some of them; some of the songs I sing are just fun social songs. And personally to me, I've learned to speak quite a bit of Ojibwa through singing the learning songs. And I think primarily because Anishinaabemowin is almost like a song when you speak and those are pretty much the primary reasons: spiritual reasons, social reasons, and just downright fun. [Benjamin Bonga, in discussion with the author, June 20, 2011]

Given the broad geographical expanse of the responses, there is a sense of community among the respondents, and common motivations. They sing because they like to sing, they think Ojibwa sounds prettier than English, they want to use the songs to help them retain the Ojibwa language and they want to share the songs with others in their families and community. They want to feel the love of culture and identity that the sound of the songs arouses, and they want to experience the pride in culture that comes with the sounds of the Ojibwa language. In this community response, the Ojibwa of the Great Lakes area in 2011 did not seem so concerned that either Midewiwin or Christianity wins as the right practice for them. They are tolerant, and they are determined to find their own way. They are aware of their history, and they are also aware of the challenges facing them as a community. As long as they retain that awareness, and the will to survive, whichever nativistic path they choose to survive as a community is equally valid. Michael D. McNally describes the longstanding community practice of singing regarding the gatherings of the *Anami'aajig* (Praying People) who gathered to sing the old gospel hymns using only Anishinaabemowin. According to McNally, in "Practice of Native American Spirituality,"

the locations of the hymn singers were at home in locations other than the mission chapels on the reservations. He said:

> But on the field of culture, there was only so much that missionaries could do to discipline native practice. Although missionaries boasted how Ojibwe singing graced Sunday morning worship, their letters indicate that the music was truly at home elsewhere than the mission chapel. Its soul developed at the margins of the reservation, where the Anami'aajig gathered almost nightly to eat, sing, and piece together a collective living based on traditional values of reciprocity. Hymns accompanied every community gathering and set the tempo for a new way of life on the reservation. [Michael D. McNally, The Practice of Native American Christianity 2000:857]

On the other hand, sometimes people who are technically a part of the Ojibwa culture have no frame of reference to identify all community cultural aspects right away. It is my belief that this fragmentation of community culture occurred due to geographical separation, but once a term is defined, despite geographic separation, the result is that the item or aspect itself is a known factor. One example of this is the term "Midewiwin." Knowing the teachings of the Midewiwin but not knowing the term "Midewiwin" causes confusion. It is no coincidence that the elders interviewed from widespread locations contributed the most information about Midewiwin practices, even though the term "Midewiwin" was not always the term used in different communities. They have lived longer, experienced more, heard more, and have more to remember. George Roy, age 64 in 2011, whose Indian name is *Signaak* (Blackbird), provided a wealth of information about history, teaching the language, changes in the language, the importance of trying to preserve the community culture and language, and what he saw in the classroom among his students' search for identity. He also exhibited a sense of quiet humility and ingrained connection to the Ojibwa culture.

His willingness to overcome moments of shame because he did not know the meaning of some of the terms he encountered in an urban area after leaving Wikwemikong First Nation Reserve where he grew up is an admirable trait. It seems the more he learns, the more he wants to know. His pursuit of cultural knowledge made it possible to gain additional insights on the topics discussed during our interview. When I asked, "What is the main function of the practice of maintaining and singing Ojibwa hymns? Why do people still do it?" I got answers that had to do with finding and preserving that cultural tie. Roy, who is a language instructor at Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College and who works with many young people had this to say:

> Ah, tradition; tradition, because today, especially with the younger generation, seeking their roots, their culture, because we did lose it, almost did lose it therefore with the Christianizing of the Jesuits. I always refer to Jesuits, because they're the only ones I can reference; because they were very strong when they were in the community. People went to them for advice. And the Jesuits were the decision-makers at the time. We're getting our culture back. A hundred years ago . . . (Roy's sentence trailed off.) [We're] getting our culture back. They were kind of up above; nobody ever said anything. Oh, that was the idea of them thinking that, I hate to say "brainwashed" (laughs) at the time. Nobody made any major decisions but the agent; they were running it by the powers that be at the time. [George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011]

Roy's comment about the Jesuits as decision-makers on Manitoulin Island and the agent making all the decisions needs clarification. According to the *Manitoulin Expositor* series of articles published about the Manitoulin Treaty of 1862, the Anishinaabe were a thriving, autonomous community in the early 1800s and had occupied the island since at least 1615. (See Appendix G.)

Roy's statement of all the decisions being made by the agents in Wikwemikong suggests that the Canadian government forced its will upon the Anishinaabe of Manitoulin Island—in spite of the efforts of the indigenous people of the island to maintain their lifestyles and retain

their homeland for their children. That autocratic decision-making is contrary to Anishinaabeg community-inclusive decision-making. The tie to honoring overall community wishes, identity, culture, and spirituality is evident in the speech given in 1861 by selected Council Orator when he told government agents how every man, woman, and child felt about signing the proposed Treaty of 1862:

> On Saturday, October 5th, 1861, a treaty council was held and attended by about 130 warriors with their Chiefs. When questioned about a possible surrender, the selected Ogimaa-giigido (Council Orator), Itawashkash (also spelt as Edowishkosh, Atawashkoshi a chief from Sheshegwaning) stated: "I wish now to tell you what my brother Chiefs and warriors, women and children say. The Great Spirit gave our forefathers land to live upon, and our forefathers wished us to keep it. The land upon which we now are is our own, and we intend to keep it. The whites should not come and take our lands from us - they ought to have stayed on the other side of the salt water to work the land there; the Great Spirit would be angry with us if we parted with our land, and we don't want to make him angry." [Alan Corbiere, accessed August 6, 2013]

The trait of selecting a spokesperson to speak for everyone in the village was common in other indigenous communities, as expressed in 1834 in a letter from Ayer to Green, as referenced in *The Ojibwe Journals of Edmund F. Ely: 1833-1849*, which states: "On May 9, 1834, *Kishkitanog*, speaker for *Maaingans* and two other Yellow Lake chiefs, told Ayer: The same Great Spirit made us all. He made you white & us red. He gave you your religion, manners, customs and all you have. So he did to us." (Theresa M. Schenck 2012:215)

This differentiation of religion, manners, and customs between whites and the Anishinaabeg represents an honorable acknowledgement of community, and that awareness exists today, according to statements from Anishinaabeg interviewed in 2011 and included in this chapter, as it did in the early 1800s, as shown by *Kishkitanong's* statement to Ayer in 1834.

The persistent use and practice of singing hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* is evidence of preserving communal values as well as preserving a distinct identity for members of the Ojibwa nation. Beginning with the continuous use of the Ojibwa hymns since 1910, it is necessary to ask the question: Are there any additional studies scholars can reference to find more information about what was happening in Ojibwa culture in Minnesota where the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* was introduced and has been continuously used since then?

Michael D. McNally wrote an article, "Practice of Native American Christianity," which summarized some of his 1990-1995 fieldwork findings on Ojibwa Hymn Singers in Minnesota. I find it useful to compare his findings to my 2011 fieldwork findings. The *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* that is the basis for my study is the same hymnal that the singers in McNally's study used. His presentation of an historical overview of the beginnings of hymn singing among the Ojibwa at White Earth, Minnesota, included a description of the reasons for the Ojibwa translations by missionaries, the reasons the Ojibwa embraced the hymns, the occasions the hymns were sung, and the distinct adaptation of hymn singing that the Ojibwa inflected on the translated hymns:

> Hymn-singing mattered for the same reasons that cultivating land, keeping Sabbath, wearing dresses, and cutting one's hair mattered. Missionaries welcomed hymn-singing. They also did their utmost to discipline it along with other inflections that Ojibwe Anami'aajig was making in Christian tradition. Some worried that evening prayer meetings were eclipsing public worship in importance. Some sought to regularize the singing with accompaniment and musical training. [Michael D. McNally 2000:857]

Some of the people interviewed in 2011 remembered the camp meetings, as they were called, where Anishinaabeg gathered together to sing hymns. When asked about the first time they had heard Ojibwa hymns, Mary and Leonard Moose, fluent elder non-Christians of the Mille Lacs Reservation in Minnesota, said they were in a different community than their home community. They were in Goose Lake, Canada. Mary estimates she was about 30 and Leonard

was in his 50s. Mary said, “First time I heard people speak their language, I walked by on the road and I heard them; they were having a tent and they were singing Ojibwa.” Leonard said he didn’t remember exactly when he heard them singing Christian songs. Mary added, “Those were Anishinaabeg.” (Leonard and Mary Moose, in discussion with the author, June 23, 2011) Mary was age 55 and Leonard age 75 in 2011, which indicates that their first experience of hearing Ojibwa hymn singing took place around 1986, approximately 25 years previous. “They were having a tent,” she said. This phrase was interesting to me, and it struck me as a very distinct Anishinaabe cultural expression. We had our discussion on the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation in Minnesota.

A few weeks later on Walpole Island, Unceded First Nation, another Anishinaabe man, age 70, spoke of similar gatherings for hymn singing in and around Walpole Island. Dennis Thomas, age 70 in 2011, gave this response. “When I was just a little kid, about four years old, they used to have camp meetings back on Walpole [Ontario] there.” A camp meeting, he explained, is a gathering where people played gospel music and listened to preaching. There were a lot of old people, elders who spoke only in Anishinaabemowin. They didn’t speak English. Sometimes they had their meetings in Kettle Point, Ontario, and Thomas recalled going to a camp meeting in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. (Dennis Thomas, in discussion with the author, July 24, 2011)

According to Thomas’s statements, the camp meetings he remembers attending would have taken place around the year 1945. This time frame predates by 44 years the time period Leonard and Mary Moose recalled hearing the gospel hymns being sung at the “tent” they witnessed. Whether the meetings were called “tents” or “camps,” they appear to corroborate the

widespread practice of the Anishinaabeg gatherings to sing together. These gatherings had the effect of creating a strong sense of community.

Ojibwa people know who they are. They knew who they were in the early 1800s as they were being displaced from their homelands, and that sense of identity was found among the Ojibwa descendents in the 2011 interviews. One of the interviewees from Wikwemikong was raised by his grandmother, who probably had memories of the oral history Alan Corbiere refers to in his Part 3 – "Treaty of 1862 – Seeking the Native Perspective" article, where he says, "Clearly there is much more to this story than we have told. This article utilized only written sources — not the oral traditions of our living Elders. The sentiments expressed in these documents are eloquent, captivating and poetic." (Alan Corbiere, accessed August 6, 2013)

Certainly George Roy, raised by his grandmother, and Medora Hicks of Wikwemikong had both heard stories of days past, since both mentioned the presence of the Jesuits on the reserve, but because both had left the community for a long time, 40-45 years, some of that oral history was lost to them. But they did not lose their sense of identity or their sense of culture. Roy talked about living in an urban area and hearing new terms that caused him to pause and question his level of knowledge. Finally, when he asked about the new terms he was hearing, he found that it was nothing new, nothing that he did not know from listening to his grandmother. The question I asked was, "How has Ojibwa language and culture changed during your lifetime?" Roy talked about the terms, the rote recitation of the Seven Grandfather Teachings, the fact that some of the younger people argue with elders instead of listening to them, and his own surprise at learning what the Seven Grandfather Teachings are. Briefly, these are (1) Wisdom, (2) Love, (3) Respect, (4) Bravery, (5) Honesty, (6) Humility, and (6) Truth. Of the teachings, Roy said:

> I lived it fervently, that's our culture. I went to Michigan, I went there, and everybody there would say, "Seven Grandfather Teachings, Seven Grandfather Teachings," and I'm a native speaker, I'm an Indian, and I'm ashamed; I'm scared to ask what they were talking about. So I finally said well, what are the Seven Grandfather teachings? And then they told me what they were, and I said, Oh, them things? We learned them every day. Every time we went somewhere, "Aasnaa! Bbaa-dbaadendizin" [Be careful! Look out! Go around with humbleness/humility or go about in a humble way] before we left, my grandmother would say that, how to behave, how to interact with people. I said, you mean them things? That's nothing special. We learned them every day. That's part of our culture. Every day we learned them. They were not like the Ten Commandments that were up on the wall that you learned on Sunday, and repeated. It was part of our life. I guess I knew them all along, and here I thought I was dumb [George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011]

This state of knowing something culturally but not knowing the English word equivalent description is a parallel to what I see happening with the connection between the Midewiwin practices in their songs and the Ojibwa hymn-singing practices with their songs. The cultural tie is there, the sense of community cultural identity is there, but the language shift has obscured the truth from both groups. Those who want to maintain Midewiwin practices guard them against any connection to Christianity, and that includes Ojibwa hymns. Those who sing Ojibwa hymns have largely forgotten the main reason their ancestors converted to Christianity and simply follow the customs they grew up with. There is an excellent analysis of the concept of conversion and the challenges of defining indigenous beliefs and modern Christian concepts in Claude Norman Westman's 2008 dissertation titled "Understanding Cree Religious Discourse." Westman stated:

> The study of religion in the Cree context is complicated by the lack of satisfactory terminology in English for the object of study. Many Cree object to the use of the word "religion" to describe Cree belief and practice. This signifies the dichotomy between belief in doctrine (the

> hallmark of missionary religions) and observance of practical relations (the hallmark of local spirituality). As I have learned, "studied" people are themselves capable of understanding the analytical difference between belief and practice, between religion and culture. [Clinton Norman Westman 2008:183]

Westman's dissertation mentions that the work of Marshall Sahlins: "Marshall Sahlins suggests that colonized peoples have instead 'indigenized' modernity, and that many practices and technologies appearing on their surface as western have been adopted and used in relation to indigenous structures of meaning." (Clinton Norman Westman 2008:244-245) This interpretation supports my contention that the Ojibwa people did exactly that when they began singing Ojibwa hymns appearing to adopt Western meaning, and yet they changed the cadence of the hymns to fulfill the need to sing them at funerals and sickbeds the way the old Midewiwin songs used to (and still do) function.

A number of people interviewed mentioned the importance of carrying on the culture through the use of the language, participating in activities such as using oral history to learn more about their history, singing, traditional crafts, following the seasons, and honoring spiritual rituals. It is this combination of traits that some people interviewed in 2011 mentioned, whether they identified as traditionalists who follow the Midewiwin or Christians who believe in and follow Christianity. For instance, Medora Hicks, age 71 in 2011, had left Wikwemikong for 51 years before returning home after retirement. She spoke of the feeling of community in coming back, and said she spent time working her way back into the local community. She had to relearn the language and reacquaint herself with everything.

Yet her sense of identity was strong. She spoke of not living in communities where the language was spoken off the reserve. She was culturally isolated during her working years, but she found ways to stay connected. One of those ways was through music and singing. And upon

returning to Wikwemikong, she started singing the hymns in church and teaching others. She explains her drive to re-establish her identity as follows: "I found myself getting involved and delving into some of the native crafts. Like, I wanted everything that was native. I wanted to do it, I had to do it, you know? When I first came back here; but I had been so long away from everything, aye." (Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011)

Being away did not cause Hicks to lose her identity. When she returned with her many self-taught skills, she turned to learning even more by immersing herself in the community activities with the fluent elders. Within a year, she says, the sound of the language came back. She used it to learn the Ojibwa hymns that she now sings in church regularly and teaches to others. Even though she has recorded Ojibwa hymns and leads the church choir in learning the hymns, she stated that she does not know where the hymns came from. To the questions, "Do you understand the meanings of all of the words of each hymn? Do they translate exactly? Is it an exact translation or is it more of a picture translation, the hymns that you know?" Hicks gave a reply that generated the following conversation:

Medora Hicks: See, they were only ever written in the language.

Janis Fairbanks: Oh, okay.

MH: They didn't come from the English language and transcribed.

JF: Wait! They didn't come from the English language? But they were hymns? Were they Gospel hymns?

MH: But, ah, it's the priests. See, this is a mystery. There's a girl that wrote, she took our Ojibwa, actually, I helped her and I'm mentioned in her book, her thesis that she wrote. She wrote this book. Anyway, it talks a lot about 'where did they come from?' Who wrote the music for these Ojibwa hymns? And who wrote the words. They were here and this lady knew. Then the priests came from the French, the Jesuits, They were the first priests and when they heard them, they're the ones that put them in paper. We didn't

> have that. We just had the songs. Who wrote those hymns? That's the mystery. And that's what she was trying to find out. [Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011]

This bit of mystery may be cleared up somewhat with information found in the archives that sheds light on where the hymns came from and who wrote them. As missionaries entered Ojibwa country, their main mission was to convert the Ojibwa people to Christianity, and one of the easiest methods they found was the use of translated hymns to take advantage of the Ojibwa people's natural inclination toward and love of singing. According to *Jesuit Relations*, on Manitoulin Island, the Jesuit missionaries record dealing with indigenous people as early as the 1600s. (Reuben Gold Thwaites , accessed October 20, 2014) Those early people, for the most part, were Huron and Iroquois, although one scholar, Theresa S. Smith, found that "Christian mission work among the Anishinaabeg (Odawa, Ojibwa, and Pottawatomi) of Manitoulin Island, Ontario, began when the Jesuit priest Joseph Poncet arrived to spend the winter of 1648 with the Odawa." (Theresa S. Smith 1996:515) Although the Jesuits were forced to leave Manitoulin by the Iroquois, according to Smith, they returned in 1844 to set up a permanent mission at Wikwemikong. By the time they returned, the Ojibwa hymns were there, brought in by missionaries and already translated into Anishinaabemowin, according to information found in *The Book of Common Prayer*. (See Appendix E.)

The hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* have been used, and are being used, to reclaim Anishinaabe identity through their consistent use in the 100-year-plus time span, and the comments the people in 2011 made support the use of the hymns today to learn the Ojibwa language to reclaim their identity.

Nancy White, an Ojibwa Hymn Singer from Leech Lake Indian Reservation in Minnesota, answered a question with a question. I asked, "What is the main function of the

practice of maintaining and singing Ojibwa hymns?" White asked, "The main function?" The discussion is as follows:

> **Janis Fairbanks:** Yeah. What does it do? Why do we do it? Why is it important to keep these hymns alive?
>
> **Nancy White:** Why do we do this? [We do it] to keep our language.
>
> **JF:** Uh-huh. Okay, we do it to keep our language, but then why is it important to keep our language? Everybody else speaks English. Why don't we just speak English?
>
> **NW:** For our identity. (Nancy White, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011)

Molly Miller, age 58 in 2011, whose tribal identification is Stockbridge-Muncee-Mohican from a reservation located in central Wisconsin, is even more specific about the relationship between language and identity. The discussion is as follows:

> **Molly Miller:** [You've just got to] keep doing it. And not be afraid of, you know, mispronunciation, or any of that. You just keep doing it, just like anything else. Don't give up.
>
> **JF:** Okay, and why is that?
>
> **MM:** [You've got to], just like when you learn to speak. They say children have to hear 6,000 words before they learn to speak. If that's true in English, why can't they hear native language 6,000 words? In Ho-Chunk, they have actually created a first-language-learner through an immersion daycare. So they've got a whole story to tell about that. And I think that could actually happen for us someday, maybe not in my lifetime, but I think it can happen. You know, it's not [going to] be like the original language on the east coast. There's [got to] be words made up, there's [going to] be some words that were lost, but a language that's our own. The identity needs to be there. (Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011)

According to Paul DeMain, age 48 in 2011, Oneida and Ojibwa from Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in Wisconsin, language, music, and identity are all a part of the Ojibwa culture:

> I think you need to incorporate music, because music is part of the Ojibwa culture. It is part of any indigenous culture, so I think it's very important to maintain music as part of the indigenous identity. And in that music when you're using the language, I think that, from my point of view, there's a better connection to the plants and animals and the creator and the spiritual aspect of things, I think that's the way they hear us, I have no doubt the spirits understand English too, but our identity, just like our story about migration, just like our story about religious practices, it's ours, so that language makes even those hymns more or less ours. It's like taking a baseball cap and putting beads on it, and we're kind of co-opting what the trader brought to us and made it indigenous. So we continue to assimilate and change society. I mean, assimilation is not just a one-way street. We've really assimilated mainstream society to the point where a lot of them don't even recognize what their roots were. [Paul DeMain, in discussion with the author, June 17, 2011]

I appreciate what DeMain said about assimilation not just being a one-way street, especially his example of taking a baseball cap and putting beads on it to make it indigenous. This is my point with the Ojibwa hymns. The Ojibwa people took English gospel hymns, translated by Christian missionaries with the help of Ojibwa interpreters, and put an indigenous bent to them. The practice of singing the hymns for funerals and sickbeds is in keeping with the earlier practice of singing Midewiwin dirge-like songs either to cure people or to help send them along the spirit path to go home. This adaptation of the hymns is comparable to DeMain's analogy of the beads on the baseball caps. It is the stamp of identity on customs or material culture objects that provides a marker of identity that this is Ojibwa. This is who we are.

Regarding the importance of teaching Ojibwa to children, the identity issue is mentioned again and again. First, when asked how important it is to teach the Ojibwa language to children, Wesley Pagel, age 52 in 2011, an Ojibwa from Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in Wisconsin, offered his analysis of the tie between identity and self-worth in children:

> I think it's the most traditional thing they can do. You know, today among Anishinaabe people, when you go home, on the reservations today, you see so much crime, alcohol and drug abuse, you know, and a lot of it is because they have no identity. So they have no real self worth. Get [them] when they're young, I wish I was like these kids today, exposed to what they got. [Because] when I was exposed to it, we, it was like, hush, you had to be silent. Today they're free to do it. It gives them a sense of well-being and identity. You know. They're proud to be Anishinaabeg; they don't have to be ashamed of it no more, or told to be ashamed of it like happened to our elders, in the missionary schools. You know, told it was a pagan religion. And when you do that to people, you're destroying, I mean, you're stripping the roots right from [them]. And they don't know. If you don't know where in the hell you came from, then where in the hell you [going to] go? So you're always [going to] be grabbing at all these things. [Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011]

Another Ojibwa from Minnesota, Benjamin Bonga, age 39 in 2011, said teaching songs in the Ojibwa language to children lifts their spirits once they start learning the songs, "especially when they know the meanings of those songs and the proper place to use them." In Bonga's opinion, knowing Ojibwa songs and what the words mean "goes hand in hand with the identity of the *Anishinaabe* people." Bonga thinks that much of the trouble in Ojibwa communities stems from a loss of identity and that the songs are one way to help restore that identity. (Benjamin Bonga, in discussion with author, June 24, 2011)

The importance of cultural identity and the concept of loss of culture as a people are not new, and were mentioned by Donald Fixico in his study on *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy 1945-1950.* Around the time the Canadian interviewees were born, a movement was occurring the in the United States that affected many of their fellow Ojibwa people, as well as other indigenous groups. Indigenous people were encouraged to leave their homelands to relocate to urban settings, as Roy, Hicks, and many of their neighbors did just a few years later in 1955 to the early 1960s. The difference between the Canadian relocations and the United States

relocations is that the Anishinaabeg who lived on the Canadian side of the border made the move to the cities of their own volition. Those on the United States side of the border were encouraged to make the move by the U.S. government with the hope that, once in the cities and away from the reservations, the Anishinaabeg would assimilate into the mainstream culture and abandon their former identity, beliefs, and way of life.

Legislation had been passed in 1953 to terminate tribes and to relocate tribal people to the cities. The policies were a failure in the sense that assimilation did not take place, and "the majority of Indians who moved to urban areas suffered socially, economically, and psychologically. In many cases, urban Indians have traded rural poverty on reservations for urban slums. (Donald L. Fixico 1986:156) Fixico cites a comment by an Indian living in California as the best summary of the Native American reaction to relocation. The quote contains the concern over loss of identity should assimilation occur within the overall concerns:

> At the very outset, we thought it would be a good thing. It would give Indians an opportunity to spread their wings and gain education and employment and generally become equal to all other men. But after about a year or two years, at the outside, we discovered there was an ulterior motive behind the earlier relocation program. It was designed, in fact, to get all Indians off all reservations within X number of years. I think at that time, it said 20 years; since then it has been erased, however. So, then we started digging in our heels to prevent total assimilation; assimilation to the degree that we would lose our identity as Indian people, lose our culture and our way of living. [Donald L. Fixico 1986:157].

The endpoint of Fixico's analysis of the termination and relocation programs is 1960, which is halfway through my base timeline of 100 years in studying my dissertation topic, which spans 1910-2010. Since evolution of any sort depends upon environmental factors and societal attitudes toward change, in interviewing Ojibwa people in 2011, I attempted to talk to people of different age levels to gain insight into the attitudes of different generations to determine whether

the younger generations showed a remarkable variance from their elders in outlook on the importance of culture and traditional practices and beliefs. Several of the youngest people interviewed showed a very strong interest in not only maintaining cultural practices, including singing songs in the Ojibwa language, but also in learning from their elders. In answer to the question, "How has Ojibwa language and culture changed during your lifetime?" I received the following responses.

First, Wesley Pagel, age 52 in 2011, said he had heard stories about traditional medicine and Midewiwin events when he was a child, and he heard from his mother that she had assisted a medicine man in a healing ceremony and got paid with a new coat for her help. The stories he heard when he was a child intrigued him enough to ask questions when he became an adult and decided he wanted to find out for himself about the Midewiwin teachings. If the elders fell asleep, they would have nothing to give. They would have to retrace the steps of their ancestors to pick up what was left on the trail. "It kind of makes sense, eh?" Pagel concluded. (Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011)

The next youngest respondent, Benjamin Bonga, an Ojibwa from Minnesota, age 39 in 2011, said something similar, something that corroborates Pagel's statement about wanting to learn what the ancestors knew. He said:

> I think there's been a huge effort to get back to the Gete-Anishinaabe ezhichiwaawin miinawaa Anishinaabe ezhichigewin; those things that those people used to do long time ago. Especially my age, I think, my generation, and maybe even more so the generation younger than me, have really made a strong effort to get back to those teachings. Because they've recognized what I stated earlier about the loss of identity, how it has affected communities. [Benjamin Bonga, in discussion with the author, June 20, 2011]

Finally, the youngest person interviewed, Michaa Aubid, age 24 in 2011, an Ojibwa man from Mille Lacs Reservation talked about his activities in his home community working with both elders and youth to learn, maintain, and pass along traditional knowledge. He said he gathers wild rice, goes to sugar bush (to tap trees to collect sap and process it into maple syrup), and goes out in the woods to gather birch bark. The birch bark is many times donated "to the elders that still work bark and are the old masters. I myself am just learning how to do crafts. But now we're working a little bit with the Mille Lacs schools, but just to get that bark in the schools and the kids working it." Aubid said a lot of the elders who are the masters cannot go out to gather birch bark, and not many people buy it by the pound anymore like the old masters did, so it is hard to get the supplies for the elders without gathering it himself. Besides working with elders, Aubid works with youth. He said he got a job with a K-12 classroom working with kids, taking them out netting (fishing), working with both boys and girls. After he had held the job for four years, he "grew up more and realized that without the kids, there would be nothing. And I'm Bullhead Clan, so." (Michaa Aubid, in discussion with the author, June 20, 2011) Even as the youngest person interviewed, Aubid has seen changes during his lifetime, such as the need to gather bark rather than buy it, and the importance of learning tradition and giving it to the youth.

One of the other traditions Aubid adheres to is being a member of the Midewiwin, and being very reluctant to talk about it. Although he did discuss it with me and I had the tape recorder going using the same method I used with other people I interviewed, it was most interesting to me that when it came time to transcribe Aubid's interview, the recording is sporadically blank and much of the dialogue is inaudible. He told me at one point that we were recording in his grandmother's house, and he didn't think she would have approved him discussing sacred teachings. These facts, the sporadic recording, and Aubid's hesitation to

discuss sacred beliefs seem to me to be more than coincidence, as there was no obvious attempt by Aubid to cause the recording to fade in and out as it does. Some things are not meant to be recorded. And in the end, they will not be recorded. Still, there was enough of the recording left intact to gain a practical application of what the young man said that ties him firmly to his sense of identity and to his realization that the children in his care need that sense of identity also to carry on cultural practices, such as singing the songs of the Midewiwin, which he does, and will eventually share with the younger generation.

Aside from the ongoing Midewiwin traditions and practices, there are an assortment of belief systems that developed during the colonization period that now exist within the Ojibwa community, as stated by a number of my respondents and by another scholar whose dissertation was published in 2010. Chad M. Waucaush's work, "Becoming Christian, Remaining Ojibwe: The Emergence of Native American Protestant Christianity in the Great Lakes, 1820-1900" provides insight into the identity issue when he says:

> Ojibwe reactions to Christianity were many and varied. My research will demonstrate that along the northern rim of Great Lakes lands, and especially along the Lake Superior and Ontario shorelines, Indian people converted the most enthusiastically to Methodism. Its missionaries would prove the most effective and while negative and favorable responses to Christianity were also influenced by personal convictions, it was the historical context in which these missionary encounters took place and the sympathetic parallels to traditional religious practices that proved the most decisive factors in the conversion process. Yet, despite the success of Methodist preaching, conversion was far from uniform. Some native people experienced heartfelt conversions, which led to an abandonment of traditional religious views. Others saw membership in the church or adherence to Christianity as the best way to procure support from the government and ensure their collective survival in a rapidly changing society. Many who adhered to traditional religious frameworks and cultural identity equated Christianity as a means employed by the

> government to strip them of their Indian identity and transform them into white people. Native people also experienced all three responses; they periodically rejected, embraced, or nominally adhered to Christianity throughout their lives. This research does not relegate Native people into fixed boundaries and patterns of behavior by attributing their motivations for conversions to strictly economic or political means. There were tangible benefits to becoming Christian, which embraced both a collective spirituality and individual Ojibwe identity that cannot be overlooked. [Chad M. Waucaush 2008:20]

Waucaush's findings correlate to my own, in that the people I interviewed said they were traditional, Christian, Midewiwin, Big Drum, or some combination of these beliefs and practices. All of these answers are equally valid, as native people do have the right to ebb and flow in their beliefs just like anyone else. Item 10 of Lisa Phillips Valentine's "Twenty-five Analytic Pitfalls in Algonquian Research" is listed as:

> Accepting static models of tradition or the traditional: Tradition may not be what one expects it to be. For example, in some Algonquian communities the Mide is traditional, in others Christianity is. Darnell in her 1993 Algonquian Conference paper presented this dilemma nicely when she stated that "tradition is whatever people say it is" (Darnell 1994) That means that tradition may be rediscovered, may be imported from other areas, or may be otherwise non-continuous. Static models assume that only certain stereotyped activities are acceptable. (Lisa Phillips Valentine 1996:328-329)

I agree with Valentine that it is a mistake to select one point in time, pick a practice of the time, and label it as the only tradition that is acceptable. My point is that some Midewiwin singing practices have been imported into Ojibwa hymn singing practices, whether the singers say they are Christian, or just sing the hymns for the love of the Ojibwa language, or use the hymns as a method of learning the language. Hymn singing is now a traditional practice. Further, this practice is now one measurement of Ojibwa cultural identity. It may have been easier for me

to obtain an audience with the members of the culture I wanted to interview, since they perceived me as one of them, which indeed I am. With many of the cultural aspects I wanted to gain more information about, I had already had some measure of first-hand experience. More than academic concerns to me are culture, language, and identity issues; Midewiwin ceremonies; Christianity; Ojibwa hymns; cultural practices such as drumming, singing, and dancing; living on a reservation; living in an urban area; feeling a connection to other Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) people; wanting to preserve the Ojibwa language for future generations; and sharing an interest in the oral history of my people. They are a way of life. Growing up with a strong sense of identity myself, as a member of the Ojibwa nation, gave me the tools I needed to recognize that identity, or at least the search for identity in other Ojibwa people. We have a basis for discussion.

The question is, why do Ojibwa people choose to sing these sometimes difficult songs when they could just as well sing the readily available English lyrics? Referring to the words of Rev. George Ross, "It's who we are." This common factor of the tie to identity was voiced across all communities by all persons interviewed, including the non-native nun, Sr. Felissa Zander, who said of her students' dancing:

> Well, I just thought they should be dancing. And I found this big drum. When Sr. Sirilla was here, she had little groups all of the time when she was here but they didn't get to go anywhere. They didn't have the money or anything. We still don't have the money but we manage to take them some way. This place we go helps us a little but I never ask for money from the school where we go. We just want to help those other kids understand the Ojibwa. And it helps our kids too. And when I first took them out, they were so shy. Oh, they were so shy! Oh, I don't know what they're going to do! They danced in front of 500 kids; and I took 22 kids out and once they got dancing, they forgot that the other kids were even there. They were in their own world and they did well. [Sr. Felissa Zander, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011)

It is this sense of being "in their own world" brought on by the cultural activity of dancing with their peers that demonstrates a positive effect of the need for identity that has been satisfied among the children. That they can forget their surroundings, forget their shyness, forget they are dancing before 500 non-native children who know little or nothing about them, and forget that the other kids are even there makes a strong statement for the power of cultural identity to bolster self-esteem and create a sense of community among the Ojibwa children. Zander told of finding the big drum that the children now dance to in a closet in the souvenir shop of the mission school when she first arrived at St. Francis Solanus Indian Mission School on the Lac Courte Oreilles Indian Reservation in Wisconsin in 1961 and was cleaning out the closet. Zander related her conversation about the drum with her supervisor, Sr. Sirilla:

> What's this doing back here? We should use this. Sr. Sirilla said, "Oh, would you? Would you? I used to have little boys and girls dance, but nobody over the years seems to be interested anymore. So I saved the drum back here." I said, "Oh, my God, it's a beautiful drum! No, [we've got to] get them dancing again." Well, in the school at that time, there were only two kids that danced anywhere. And they had powwows in Hayward; they never had the powwows out here, except the traditional had them in little groups in the woods where they met. And that was true, [because] it was all mixed up with the church. It was like evil. You know. And we started drumming right away, and the kids loved it. They danced. [Sr. Felissa Zander, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011]

Behind this description of finding the drum and getting the students dancing again is more information about the larger Ojibwa community of the day. In 1961, even though it was viewed as an "evil" activity, the traditional people met in little groups in the woods and had their community powwows. This determination to carry on traditional drumming and dancing was contrary to the wishes of the Christian community but vital to maintaining the sense of identity of the traditional people, so they kept doing it in the woods. This practice of going out in the

woods to dance and celebrate traditional identity is a practice that took place in Minnesota as well, according to a story given to me by my mother, who had older brothers who drummed and sang. She told of one of her brothers singing and drumming out in the woods and telling her, "Dance, sister, dance." She said she was just a little girl, but she remembers dancing at night out in the woods. They danced all night. This activity would have taken place around 1930, so the practice of using dance and song to maintain identity has been ongoing since colonial contact and is a common practice today.

In order to understand why the Ojibwa people found it necessary to have their traditional drumming and dancing in the woods, out of sight of the larger non-native community, it is necessary to revisit some of the more commonly known aspects of indigenous history in the United States and Canada. Both countries had a policy of taking Indian children from their homes and communities and sending them to government-run boarding schools. There the children were systematically stripped of their tribal identities and languages. These occurrences are documented by indigenous writers of both countries, and the resulting disruption of Ojibwa families and customs is the subject of ongoing research. The year 1961 is approximately midpoint to the years of interest in my dissertation timeline. It also coincides with the date Sr. Felissa Zander arrived at the St. Francis Solanus Indian Mission School in Wisconsin and found the drum that led to her students from Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in Wisconsin to begin dancing in public schools, a practice they follow today, 52 years later. It is no longer necessary to hide in the woods to hold ceremonies, dancing, and drumming sessions. Today, if ceremonies and dances are held in the woods, it is by choice, not because the government outlaws them, as was the case until the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed on August 11, 1978. Part of the act, Section 1, reads:

> On and after August 11, 1978, it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites. [Federal Historic Preservation Laws, accessed December 10, 2014]

Although Molly Miller speaks Stockbridge-Muncee-Delaware, the identity issue was tied to her singing of hymns in her language. When asked why she sings hymns in her language instead of in English, she said, "Well, [it is] part of identity; personal pride in identity. And they sound prettier. They're all prettier in the native language, and more meaningful." (Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011) That sentiment was echoed by George Ross of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers group. "Ah, well, because we're Ojibwa, I suppose." (Rev. George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2014)

Miller related a story that illustrates the importance of identity, even in the face of purported conversion to Christianity. The Midewiwin existed in her community, but in order to try to hang onto their land, her ancestors agreed to follow Christianity, with one provision. That provision was that Midewiwin would be brought back to the people if the conversion action did not work out; the people would return to the old ways. In a story about the Midewiwin, her relatives said they would hang onto the old ways and bring them back if Christianity did not work out. In fact, Miller was interviewed in 2011 while attending Midewiwin ceremonies on the Bad River Indian Reservation in Wisconsin. Her story of her tribe having to move 50 times in 50 years, despite having adopted Christian practices indicates how betrayed she felt on behalf of her ancestors and herself. Our conversation follows:

> **Molly Miller:** So Christianity truly affected my people. Someone told me a story about Midewiwin though, and I haven't heard it, well, this is my first time here at this big lodge, but there

was an agreement that we were going to try living like the colonists but our relatives agreed to bring, if it didn't work out, they would bring the tradition [Midewiwin] back to us, they'd keep it for us. I heard, you know, it was a long story, but that made me feel better about being who I was, because we were not raised in tradition.

Janis Fairbanks: Do you remember how, I mean, how, do we have time to capture that story?

MM: When I learned about being an Indian? When I started learning about tradition, I was fifteen years old. Prior to that, I can remember telling dad, "I don't have any beadwork, how come we don't have any of that hanging around the house?" Well, my dad was a tribal leader, but those were depression years, and they were just struggling. Well, I wasn't in the depression, but you know, after! And dad brought me a pair of moccasins from Navajo country once, and also some bracelets because I told him that. I can remember telling my mother, "I like Laura Ingalls Wilder, I wish I lived in a little house on the prairie" She said, "I'm afraid you'd be living in a little wigwam in the woods." (Laughter) So my identity started in second or third grade. [Molly Miller, in discussion with the author, June 15, 2011]

I particularly like Miller's story about her father's reaction to her wanting to learn about tradition and asking why they had no symbols of their culture in the house and her mother's response to her voiced wish to live in a little house on the prairie like Laura Ingalls Wilder because it illustrates her parents' awareness and retention of their own culture. Just as in the story she heard about the Midewiwin relatives saving the traditions to give back to the people if Christianity failed, her parents gave her what she asked for in the traditional way. She received a material culture gift of moccasins from her father and a gift of a story teaching from her mother. The story reinforced her identity by telling her, "I'm afraid you'd be living in a little wigwam in the woods." That statement says a lot. It says, "The little house on the prairie does not suit you. Your culture and tradition would place you in the woods in your own cultural dwelling place." Miller acknowledges that when she says, "My identity started in second or third grade."

Speaking of a cultural dwelling place, a number of those interviewed spoke of living away from their home communities during their working years, and going home again after they retired. Helen Cummings, age 81 in 2011, from the Leech Lake Indian Reservation explained it this way:

> It wasn't until I moved up here to Cass Lake that I first started learning. [Ojibwa Hymns] And that was, oh golly, I can't even remember; I was in nursing and I went all over the country. I transferred to different reservations. Then when I landed in Cass Lake, then I just stayed here, I didn't go anywhere [Because] I was getting close to retirement. So, I must have been about in my sixties; fifties. [Helen Cummings, in discussion with the author, July 1, 2011]

In Cummings' case, she simply chose to stay in Cass Lake on her home reservation when she approached retirement age. Others, like Medora Hicks, age 71 in 2011, of Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island, who had left the reserve when she was only 16 years old to go to work, made a conscious decision to return home to Wikwemikong when she retired. Her non-native husband relocated with her. With the help of the band, Hicks found land and built a home. Like Cummings on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in Minnesota, Hicks began to participate in the Ojibwa hymn-singing practices. She had known the Ojibwa language as a child, but the years away from the Ojibwa-speaking community made her lose the sound of the language. She had to relearn it, and her method of relearning involved joining community events, such as participating in the women's quilting circle and singing hymns in the local church. Hicks is fluent now, rating herself at 8 on a 10-point-scale, but she had to re-enter and re-learn her language when she went back home. Her language journey is as follows:

> We spoke it constantly at home. And they were very good fluent speakers, I would, I don't hesitate to say that, that was their main language, that was their mother tongue and then up until the time I left home, that's what I spoke. But, like I said, the pronunciation, you make mistakes, because

> there are words that are very, very close [in] pronunciation. Sometimes it's quite funny, sometimes it can be very insulting too. Just a slight twist of the tongue can mean totally something else.
>
> I had this missal, that Brother Hinton had given us when my mom, we were all here at my moms the three nights there that they waked my mom, And Brother Hinton was with the family, and he was really, he was really helpful. So before we left, we were all going back to our respective areas where we were living, he gave us this hymnbook. And it's the old traditional hymnbook. But in there is Ojibwa hymns; after awhile, I could understand what the words mean here and there and I said, "Oh, this is what they're saying." And the more I read, the more it came back, though it's very specific in the [syllable breakdown] to pronounce words correctly, I guess. So then once I put it together, and not in the form of syllables anymore, but in the form of words, then I understood what it was saying, you know? So I kind of just taught myself just by reading the book, you know. It is not impossible because I can speak fluently today to anybody. But that's how I actually got it. So when I came here, I wasn't totally green as far as speaking the language!
>
> Maybe I'm talking fast now, but they were talking so fast, I could not pick up the language. So then I thought, well, I can hear the women speak every day. So that's what I did. I joined that (inaudible). They have crafts; like they're open every day, so I joined that center, just for that reason, so I could go there and just sit there and listen to them conversing in the language, and it was just so interesting, so eventually I picked up the sound again, which I already had, but I had forgotten the sound. And within a year, I was back to speaking fluently. Once you have that sound, it's back there somewhere, all [you've got to] do is dig it out. And listen to people in speaking in the language. And it will come back. And it's just, like it's a lot of fun to talk. [Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011]

Hicks is a talented, outgoing elder who is very community oriented. Although she willingly left the reserve as a teenager, she never forgot her identity or her hometown. She was anxious to share her experience with living away from the reserve, her temporary loss of

language skills, and her method of re-entering her home community and regaining her language fluency. Her drive to keep her identity is apparent in the following narrative statements:

> Then I was with the Heritage Organization, and I was . . . with Rainbow Lodge, which is the healing. I really enjoyed being a part of the community; it was my way of sort of re-entering the community after being away for so many years. Not because I went to residential school, but because I moved away from here when I was young. And any of the communities I lived in, I didn't get to meet people from my hometown, or that I could converse with in my language. And the closest I ever came to it was living in Meaford, and there was nobody else there that was, ah, it's easy to forget your own language when you're always speaking in English. But the opportunity just was not there. [Medora Hicks, in discussion with the author, July 18, 2011]

Being raised in a fluent household, leaving the community and coming back home, only to find that you've lost the sound of the language, is an experience Hicks shares with another member of her community who left home to work off the reserve and who spoke of losing the sound of the language. George Roy also left Wikwemikong reserve to go to residential boarding school, then left again to go to work in Lansing, Michigan, for 40 years. In answer to providing translations for Ojibwa Hymns into English, Roy said:

> I think today would be exceptionally hard because lot of us are kind of, well we're diversified. We're diverse now. We've kind of moved to different communities. We're not in that kind of community where we hear it all the time. At least I'm not. I've kind of lost the sound recognition in my mind. But I follow the hymns that are sung differently. It would be a chore, it could be done; it could be. [George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011]

Roy is fluent. He teaches the Ojibwa language at the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe Community College. He is accustomed to navigating in an urban area and in a largely non-homogeneous environment. But even though most of his life was spent living in an urban area,

Roy identifies strongly with his Anishinaabe roots. When he visits home, he speaks the language with his family members and friends who still reside there, bringing his children to the reserve so they will know where they came from. He said he visits Wikwemikong six to eight times a year. That is a very strong attachment to identity and culture as he knew it growing up.

Like Hicks and Roy, the attachment to identity and the love of our community and culture echoes throughout the responses of the people interviewed, whether they are fluent, semi-fluent, active learners, or just recognize or know a few words. Why do they sing the hymns? And are the Anishinaabeg the only group to have formed this attachment? It seems other groups like the Stockbridge-Muncee-Delaware and Oneida hymn singers from Oneida, Wisconsin, sing the hymns for the same reasons, according to interviews with Molly Miller and Paul DeMain, who are affiliated with those communities. There is also a review of the book *The Jesus Road: Kiowas, Christianity, and Indian Hymns by Luke Eric Lassiter, Clyde Ellis, and Ralph Kotay* by Joanna Brooks, published in 2003. In Part 1, Brooks notes that Clyde Ellis said:

> Overall, the story of the "Jesus Way," is not necessarily the story of how one set of beliefs replaced another one wholesale, or of the incompatibility of Kiowa practices with Christian ones. Rather, it is a story of mutual transformations: just as Kiowa people became Christian, Christian churches became important venues for the expression and renewal of Kiowa identity, language and community. [Joanna Brooks 2003:97-98]

Ellis also said, "Kiowa Christianity declined gradually after the 1950's, and hymn-singing has been supplanted, in part, by the growth of powwows as a venue for spiritual and cultural expression. (Joanna Brooks 2003:97)

While that may be true in the Kiowa experience, one Anishinaabe man, an elder who was age 80 in 2011, presented a different perspective on the idea of the complexity of identity, beliefs, and practices among his Anishinaabeg constituencies. Rev. George Ross, who has been

an Ojibwa Hymn Singer for more than 30 years, ministers to three different reservations in northern Minnesota and also attends powwows. When people ask him what he is doing at a powwow, he has an explanation for it. He broached the subject in answer to my question, "Do you have any other comments you would like to share about this topic?" Our conversation about Christians at a powwow is as follows:

George Ross: You know, some of these Indian Christians, you know, they'll say, "George, you go to powwows?" "Yeah, I go to powwows." You know, you shouldn't be. . . . So I'm kind of waiting for them to say something like that. And I say, "Hey, wait a minute. It's in my heart. It's in my heart.

Janis Fairbanks: Uh-huh.

GR: You know; I don't go over there to worship the drum or anything like that, I said. Put your ducks in order, man. You know. Besides, I'm a priest, I said, I'm not mixing anything together. I go there because, you never know. Somebody will want to talk to you about something. You know? Maybe they're suicidal, you don't know. You are supposed to be there because you are God's person to go to the people. You represent the word, you represent them. People need spiritual guidance or spiritual word, or some kind of prayer; you don't know. You don't know what kind of corner God's got you in. The Creator God asks you to go here and there. [You've got to] be open to the Spirit.

JF: Well, those powwows are, I remember those old powwows where we didn't have grand entry. They're not spiritual today.

GR: They didn't have contests either. You didn't expect money either. Now, in this day and age, I see the necessity of it.

JF: It's a gathering place. To me, it's an adaptation of the culture again.

GR: It is. It is.

JF: And we've adapted so many times and in so many different ways that I think it's okay to be . . . like, I'm going to church with you tomorrow. Does that mean I'm a Christian? You think? I'm a Christian now?

GR: Billy Graham said it good. He said, "Just because I was born in a garage doesn't mean I'm a car!" (Both laugh.)

JF: (Laughs). That's a good one! Alright, well, we can end it on that note, I think. Enh, *miigwech* (Thanks!) [George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011]

I will make one last comment on the issue of identity. Anishinaabe people love to laugh. It's a community trait, well recognized and often used in conversation. It was to my advantage that I was among my own people, who, for the most part, answered questions freely, knowing I would not twist their words or misquote them. This gift of trust is something I do not take lightly, and I share with the people I interviewed a common history of wanting to set the record straight on issues of identity by exploring and expounding on who we are from an insider's perspective. The time for native scholars is here.

CHAPTER 5: Continuity of Culture

The continuous use of hymn no. 35 from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* in the same written format from 1910 represents the use of a literary artifact that has been passed down from generation to generation among the Anishinaabeg. There has been a shift in spirituality during the last 100 years that is continuing today. The tie that binds Anishinaabeg together is community identity, with strands firmly anchoring individual identity back to the cultural marks that each generation preserves and passes down to succeeding generations. For the Anishinaabeg of the Great Lakes region, the process and practice of singing the century-old Ojibwa hymns is one way of babaamiinwajimojig (people going around telling the good news.) This concern for maintaining a distinct identity as a people was reflected in the comments of virtually all of the people interviewed. Whether they practice Midewiwin, Christianity, both, or none, when I asked people about hymn no. 35, all people responded with commentary based on their beliefs and singing practices, and all people felt that continuity of culture is important.

Many people find it necessary to make a choice between Midewiwin and Christianity, and some, like Rev. Ross, say you cannot ride both. You have to make a choice. But even this statement that a choice must be made is a form of continuity, as the statement itself acknowledges that both belief systems still exist. Whether you sing Christian Ojibwa Hymns or Midewiwin songs, singing them and teaching them to the younger generation is at once maintaining Anishinaabe spirituality and meeting that need for cultural continuity. As a means of ensuring cultural continuity, rites and rituals must be preserved and passed on to new generations. One of the ceremonies explored in this dissertation is Anishinaabeg funeral rites in northern Minnesota and Ontario. Funeral rites have been affected by colonization, which introduced Christian hymns to Ojibwa people, seemingly at the expense of Anishinaabeg spiritual customs.

However, the Midewiwin, sometimes referred to as Ojibwa religion, remains an important component of Anishinaabeg practices. Cultural preservation of the Midewiwin exists, even among Anishinaabeg who espouse conversion to Christianity. Missionaries were charged with converting Ojibwa people, characterized as uncivilized pagan savages, to Christianity, thereby denying the Ojibwa recognition that spiritual practices exist within Anishinaabeg civilization. Michael D. McNally, author of *Ojibwe Singers and Honoring Elders: Aging, Authority and Ojibwe Religion*, found in practices of Ojibwa hymn singing "kinetic integrity . . . an activity that generates meaning according to its own internal logic." (David W. Daily, accessed December 7, 2010) Ironically, the logic is nagamowin. McNally's definition of nagamowin is a simple phrase, "songs we sing." (Michael D. McNally 2000:230) McNally learned enough Ojibwa language to better understand the translations of the hymns he researched. As noted by David W. Daily, McNally found that Ojibwa hymn singing represents not assimilation, not a subversive attempt to corrupt the Christian lyrics, but a method of preserving Ojibwa culture.

In September 2010, I attended an Ojibwa funeral for my aunt where two of the Ojibwa Singers sang as the last rite at the cemetery a song from the Ojibwa Hymnal compiled in 1910 of Christian hymns translated to Ojibwa that have been in use since then. The irony of nagamowin, "songs we sing," is that nagamowin is simply "song" and the singing of song has long been a feature of the community-oriented and indigenous cultural Midewiwin, where song is used for healing, although it is combined with drums, rattles and dancing, as McNally observed. Using songs for giving comfort to individuals and families as the need arises is a distinct feature of the Midewiwin that has crossed over and survived in the form of Ojibwa hymns. The main use of hymn singing is funerals and, as Ross explained, the singers are not all fluent, and some do not

understand the meanings of the words to the hymns they sing. They travel widely throughout northern Minnesota as volunteers to sing at wakes and prayer services to provide comfort and support and because "That's us; part of culture." (George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011)

I believe it is fair to say that singing Ojibwa hymns is one method Ojibwa people have incorporated into cultural practice as a way to remember the past and recall the old ways of the people. One of the singers McNally quotes is from the White Earth Ojibwa Singers, Jack Potter, a man in his 70s, had this to say about the past: "All night long," he says, "all night long they would sing—those old people long ago, they sounded just good." (Michael D. McNally 2000:150) Further, as Ross stated, Ojibwa hymn singing is connected to cultural identity. I propose that maintaining cultural identity is also a form of maintaining cultural continuity. Singing using a written hymnal has become a part of Ojibwa culture, but it has not replaced the Midewiwin. Interviews conducted in the summer of 2011 found a common denominator in all the communities surveyed. That is, the singing of Ojibwa hymns is dependent on using a written hymnal in order to sing the songs.

Moreover, people interviewed in widespread geographic locations agreed that the written hymnal does not always make sense because of the breaking down of Ojibwa words into syllables to match the beat of the melody being sung. This is another point of evolution from the oral to the written convention in the Ojibwa language. It is also a point of contrast between the songs sung in the Midewiwin ceremonies and the songs sung from an Ojibwa hymnal. The Midewiwin songs are generally not written; however, there is early evidence that some Midewiwin songs were written in the early 1900s in Anishinaabemowin by a medicine man named George Farmer Ne-ba-day-ke-shi-go-kay. His personal journal was examined by Indian

Agent Albert B. Reagan, who asked Farmer what the strange writing was and what the words meant. “After a good deal of persuasion, I succeeded in getting him to translate the words, when to my surprise I found that the writing consisted of medicine songs and medicinal receipts.” (Albert B. Reagan 1922:332)

It is expected that members of the lodge will know a set number of songs and be able to sing them from memory, in keeping with the oral tradition. Midewiwin songs are not normally written, and when they are, it destroys or alters their meaning, much like the written form of Ojibwa hymns obscured their literal English meanings. The songs written by Frances Densmore were truncated, which dilutes their value in my estimation, as repetition is a singing convention, which may also be referred to as symbolic rhythm that connotes strength. Without the repetition, or with fewer repetitions, the meaning is altered. Maintaining purist spiritual ceremonies, such as those practiced by the Midewiwin, is an important method of ensuring continuity of culture.

McNally found evidence of continuity of culture as he studied the Ojibwa language as a means to better understand the Ojibwa words in the hymns. Through this process, he found that, while the translated hymns were meant to assimilate the Anishinaabeg, the Ojibwa instead “were able to turn texts intended for their assimilation into emblems of their own distinct identity.” (David W. Daily, accessed December 7, 2010) It appears to me that Ojibwa hymn no. 35 is an example of just such an emblem. The singing of hymns was meant to replace Midewiwin rituals according to McNally’s research, because missionaries were threatened by the powerful combination of drumming, dancing, and singing. That combination represents a strong tie to the native identity and community, two traits the missionaries wanted to eliminate. (Michael D. McNally 2000:32) McNally came very close to stating my theory that Ojibwa hymn singing was an adaptation of Midewiwin practices when he said:

> Here as elsewhere in Ojibwe music, the melody of song joined with the rhythm of the drum and the movement of dance to produce prayer in three dimensions. The prayers were not mechanistic incantations, but woven intricately into a cosmological and moral vision of the harmony and balance of bimaadiziwin, the good life . . . . The introduction of evangelical hymnody into the Ojibwe repertory would involve some measure of transformation of the hymns in terms of a standing Anishinaabe approach to song. But the Anishinaabe approach to song never stood still. (Michael D. McNally 2000:33)

From everything I know of Ojibwa nagamowin, it is a representation of a way of life. It has everything to do with prayer and vision and many dimensions of existence, and it is a basic and highly effective method of communication and memory. It is supportive of transformation and a means of transformation at the same time. The purpose of the Midewiwin may have been for healing that was tied to dancing, drumming, and singing, but likely it went beyond those ceremonies and involves activities still referred to as mysterious and secretive.

Prior to Ruth Landes' description of meeting resistance to attending a Midewiwin ceremony in 1933, McNally cites an instance where William Hoffman's 1885 study of the Midewiwin noted, "Midewiwin priests shared the esoteric ceremony with him in the first place out of their concern that native ways would not survive governmental assimilation policy." (William Hoffman 2006:7) There is certainly concern over the continuation of the culture among the Ojibwa, but at the same time, there remains an inherent distrust of telling all, lest it be taken away. Referring again to Ruth Landes' work, in her glossary, there is a word "ginyu" that she defines as "A Manitou, probably the arctic owl." (Ruth Landes 1968:239)

This is one example where the researcher may hazard a guess but guesses wrong. Landes may have asked one of her informants for the meaning of the word and been told vaguely that it was a bird. Or she may have asked and been told that it was a flying Manitou. All of the

surmising over the outcome is today merely conjecture. The double-vowel spelling of the word is *giniw*, and it means golden eagle, one of the strongest medicine bird symbols that exist in Ojibwa culture. Knowing that and knowing how to apply the knowledge are two different things; my point is that preservation of culture is a mysterious, personal, and sacred endeavor. It is also a community effort. The transformation of Midewiwin values to Ojibwa hymn singing is not so far a stretch. Even certain practices carry over into the funeral rites associated with Ojibwa hymn singing:

> Colby remembered that though Christian burials were in a consecrated church ground, Christian and Midewiwin graves alike were covered with wooden Ojibwe spirit houses. Rising two feet above the grave, these structures had a small hole in one end 'for the escape of the spirit' and a small shelf 'to hold the offerings that are brought for the refreshment of the departed.' She noted that both Christians and 'pagans' were careful to keep fires going through the first nights after death to warm the departed 'so that the soul may suffer no hardship from cold and darkness on its three day's journey to its final resting place." [Michael D. McNally 2000:110]

In September 2010, when I joined family and community members in a memorial service held at an Episcopal church, Rev. George Ross noted in English that the Ojibwa language is endangered, and said, "Well, there goes another one, since Margaret was a fluent speaker. Margaret was also my aunt, and I know she did not attend Episcopal Church services, and I know what her spiritual beliefs were. Her oldest brother did not attend the church service but waited for the procession to arrive at the cemetery. I stood beside him for the graveside service, which included the singing of Ojibwa hymn no. 35. We watched as the mourners made their way to the open grave and offered earth or tobacco as a final farewell. The singing of the hymn reminded me of other funerals where singers were present and sang sometimes all night, a practice that parallels the Midewiwin practice to offer community support and help express

gashkendam. McNally defines the term as one "which combines in one semantic field associations with lonesomeness, grief, affliction, dejection, homesickness, and melancholy." (Michael D. McNally 2000:109)

Another indication of change but at the same time continuity is illustrated by the decision to place the name "Ojibwa Hymn Singers" on the jackets. When the name was chosen, the Ojibwa Hymn Singers said the word "hymn" had to be there because there were other Ojibwa Singers also, namely the drummers. In so stating, the hymn singers are at the most recognizing the continuation of the drum societies, of which the Midewiwin is one, or, at the least, the recognition of Ojibwa singers who use a drum but do not sing hymns. Either way, the respect for their fellow Anishinaabeg is there. It is the same respect indicated by artist Leland Bell, who, although he is a member of the Midewiwin, painted an Anishinaabeg version of the Stations of the Cross inside the Church of the Immaculate Conception at West Bay First Nation on Manitoulin Island. He did it because Ojibwa people asked him to. (Theresa S. Smith 1996:522)

In order for our culture to continue, our people must practice known cultural traits, and Respect is one of the Seven Grandmother teachings. Some people say Seven Grandfather teachings. In either case, these are: (1) Honesty, (2) Truth, (3) Humility, (4) Love, (5) Respect, (6) Courage and (7) Wisdom. All of these teachings seem evident in the demeanor and behavior of the Ojibwa Hymn Singers and in the Midewiwin people I met during my 2011 travels. Whether these teachings carried over to other gatherings is not as clearly identified due to larger crowds and less opportunity to interact with all individuals present. Language camps and powwows were generally well attended, and a visit to a community college youth camp was a happy coincidence that yielded an opportunity to watch the youth work with arts and crafts and later give their graduation comments. I did enjoy these activities and the general visiting that

went on, and it was especially gratifying to be invited to speak to the students and parents at the graduation. That took place at Fond du Lac Tribal College and, as an enrollee of Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, I did experience a feeling of continuity just watching these youngsters interacting with each other and with their cultural elders who conducted their summer camp. That is another example of a different activity that ensures continuity for our people and our culture. Elders do need to continue providing guidance and support to the younger generation.

Even the youngest person interviewed exhibited a sense of responsibility in passing the culture along to the next generation. When asked, "How has Ojibwa language and culture changed during your lifetime?" Michaa Aubid, age 24 in 2011, spoke of working at a school and eventually becoming involved in activities with the youth group there. One of Aubid's observations is that a major cultural component, besides Anishinaabemowin, is core communal groups being and functioning together. For the Anishinaabeg, some activities core groups participate in are: following the seasons by gathering wild rice, netting (fishing), gathering birch bark, and harvesting maple sap. He counts himself as one who follows the seasons but says that in this modern world, you can't make a living from it. His tribe has a casino, and tribal members get a per capita payment; Aubid said that payment has had an impact on others following the seasons in terms of hunting and gathering. He, however, prefers to follow the seasons, and he has also worked with the community school since it opened four years prior, working with the youth, grades K-12, to take them out and teach them how to do the seasonal activities. He also counts singing as a core group activity; that statement supports the idea of song as an important part of the Anishinaabe culture. He is teaching that characteristic to his youth group. (Michaa Aubid, in discussion with the author, June 20, 2011)

Another person committed to keeping cultural practices alive and making sure children have them is Sr. Felissa Zander, the 50-year veteran teacher at St. Francis Solanus Indian Mission on the Lac Courte Oreilles reservation in Wisconsin. She knows that, although Midewiwin practices were banned, they never really went away. The evidence is that they merely went underground, and their continuation has been in operation all along, carried on by the Ojibwa who are commonly referred to as traditional. The non-native Sr. Felissa referred to some of the reasons the Midewiwin was banned but also agreed that it did not go away. It was carried on by the old people back in the woods.

According to Zander, she felt it was very important for the kids, her students, to speak their language, dance, and know their cultural history. The cultural history included the use of tobacco for offerings, and she incorporated that into the church services her children took part in. Since she taught in the school for 50 years, 1961-2011, the children who passed through her classroom doors were very lucky indeed to have such an open-minded teacher. She learned Ojibwa so she could teach it to the Ojibwa children:

> I think it means more to the people. They're so proud; they should be proud of it. It's their language, it identifies them, and they want to do it. And even if some, let's say I have a new singer in the choir, and they're just really happy to sing Ojibwa, even if they don't get the pronunciation right, right away. And sometimes they're in the second or third year when they finally get it. But they really try hard. But it's very good for the culture. [Sr. Felissa Zander, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011]

Another person interviewed, Wesley Pagel, age 52 in 2011, also spoke of the Ojibwa language as an important point of continuity and the struggle to keep it going. One of the causes of language loss is the well-documented boarding school era that took place in both the United States and Canada. Pagel lives in Wisconsin but was at the Fond du Lac language camp when I interviewed him. The question was, "What is your estimate of the number of fluent speakers you

have in your community?" He said he has friends who live in Canada, and one of them breaks down the pronunciation and explains it to him:

> That was his first language . . . they were oppressed for speaking it too, you know. They went to mission school and they got abused and they got punished when they spoke it. And he was telling me about a relative he had that was gone for fifteen years and he came back. Within a week, he was speaking Anishinaabemowin around him." [Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011]

Pagel's story of someone being able to recover the language within a week, after being away from it for 15 years, suggests that the person in question was very fluent. Compare this story to that of Hicks, who said it took her a full year to regain her fluency after being away from the reservation for 47 years. The fact that it was important for both of these speakers to regain their Ojibwa language is in itself a quest for continuity.

Wesley Pagel and Robert "Sonny" Peacock talked about the importance of singing and linked it to a form of continuity they remembered from childhood. Pagel said that when he was younger, he had an old cassette recording from the oldest elders he knew. He recalled seeing them once or twice when he was very small and they sang songs. "There was a song for everything. That's how they actually kept a history of the people." (Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011, and Robert "Sonny" Peacock, in discussion with the author, June 27, 2011)

Similarly, comments from Peacock recall that singing was a way of life for Ojibwa in the olden days, and he thinks it's gone as a cultural practice:

> We used to sing in the morning to praise the sun coming up. You know the prayers we had when we used to gather medicine and things? Those could be songs. When we died, we mourned. Those used to be songs. But we don't sing anymore. I'm talking about just singing. How about all the little songs that the mother used to sing to the children? Those are gone now,

> because we're doing different things like berry picking, or doing homework or housework, or picking or gathering [rice], or whatever. There isn't any of that. So it's almost like somebody shut all the songs off. And you have to be in a ceremony or you have to be singing the hymns, then it is okay to sing. But it used to be that singing… we don't do enough of it. We don't do any of it. [Robert "Sonny" Peacock, in discussion with the author, June 27, 2011]

It is clear that Peacock remembers a time when singing was a common cultural practice. But his statements also indicate that he has discontinued this practice and thinks it has disappeared. As a person who sings about anything, anytime, I know the practice has not disappeared, and I recall the words of Benjamin Bonga, who states that he sings many types of songs and wants to prevent further word loss by keeping the songs going. Bonga said, **"**I like it because they still had to use their own words at that time. They had theirs at the time. And they were more, probably more specific for that time. We've lost some of the words; we don't use them anymore, until you hear them, then you recognize them." (Benjamin Bonga, in discussion with the author, June 24, 2011)

Bonga's concern for preserving old words is shared by Hicks and Roy of Wikwemikong. Hicks said she likes to listen to the elders talk just to learn the old words. And Roy said he knows old words and sometimes uses them as he speaks. Hicks stated her fluency level is 8 out of 10, and she actively sits with other elders to hear them use old words:

> I can pick up words there that are being said and I know what they mean, I know what they're saying. But it's new to me and I just love the old, old words, the old terminology. They bring it out, these older people, they bring it out because they really want to expand on the power of their words, so they go back in time to maybe what they heard their grandfather saying or their parents saying then they bring that terminology back into the present day, which is not a word we use every day, but it's there. This is what I really strive to listen to now. It's just so interesting and I don't

> know what it does, you just get such a thrill learning another new word. [Medora Hicks by author July 18, 2011]

Roy tied his commentary on old words to the changing rate of fluency and differences in the younger generation and his own generation. He went to Wikwemikong six to eight times a year so his children would know their roots and where they came from. He wanted them to see the older generation, to learn from them. However, he has seen changes between his generation and the next generation:

> I would say right now, people my age, my generation, the next generation is a different level, because when I talk to even my siblings, my sister, she knows how to speak. But just the common words, the words they used when I was younger, they don't use them anymore. Because of the new technology and all that, the old ways of doing things is no longer…but they'll know the words, but when I would talk to them, say a word, they would smile or even laugh at me when I say a word, knowing those words and having heard them before. Like I say, I'm 64. [George Roy, in discussion with the author, July 21, 2011]

All three of these people, Bonga, Hicks, and Roy, work at keeping Anishinaabemowin alive and available to the next generation. Bonga is active with a language table, where people meet on a regular schedule to practice the Ojibwe language, and exercises the language through songs of various types; Hicks learns and teaches Ojibwa hymns to her church's choir members in Wikwemikong; and Roy is a language instructor at Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. This willingness to work to keep the language alive is a broad form of providing continuity to the culture. In my opinion, one of the biggest factors that indicates the need for continuity is the indigenous people's determination to keep their language alive and they feel passionately their responsibility to preserve it for the next generation. Among the methods used to preserve the language is the use of song, and as other scholars and the people

interviewed state, song and singing practices are a long-term Ojibwa practice to ensure continuity for the people and the indigenous culture.

Turning to Waucaush's 2010 dissertation, he cites information from Melissa Meyer that during the late 1890s, John Johnson Enmegabowh served as an ordained priest at White Earth and represented a new type of leadership emerging among the White Earth Ojibwa. Waucaush writes, "Ninety-percent of Episcopal clergy during this time were White Earth Ojibwa; Episcopal services were conducted in the Ojibwa language and hymns were sung in the native language." Waucaush continues, asserting that "Traditional practices fell into disuse and when they did occur, it was normally done out of sight of other community members and church authorities." (Chad M. Waucaush 2008:49) That statement is a bit of a contradiction. It seems to me that either the practices fell into disuse or they were done out of sight of other community members and church authorities. Since earlier research by other scholars indicates that the Midewiwin did continue to operate, at least some of the Ojibwa community felt the need for continuity during the time span; others embraced attending Episcopal services.

Waucaush later clarifies the statement himself when he says, "By the 1880s and 90s, traditional religious practices were forced underground and most occurred out of sight of missionaries, Indian agents, and Christian Indians." (Chad M. Waucaush 2008:182) However, there were certain practices that crossed over from Midewiwin to Ojibwa Christian practices, according to Waucaush. "Christian practices, such as home prayer meeting and house services, preserved many elements of Ojibwe culture. Home services occurred outside the supervision of church authorities and Ojibwe believers were free to interact and share tribal stories, histories, and spiritual perspective as they had for generations." (Chad M. Waucaush 2008:182)

As to singing practices, Waucaush said, “House meetings became the locales where Christian Ojibwe prayed and sang over and sang for one another in ways that were considerably different from that the white missionaries viewed as customary.” (Chad M. Waucaush 2008:183) In the end, Waucaush finds that Christianized Anishinaabeg, along with the Ojibwa ministers who encouraged conversion, shared the basic Anishinaabeg worldview with the traditional Midewiwin practitioners, and it was this common worldview that carried over into Ojibwa singing practices. He said:

> I assert, however, that as the Anishinaabeg were Christianized, they adopted Christian expression into pre-existing traditional frameworks. It is clear from the repeated accounts of excessively loud Christian Ojibwe worship that the Ojibwe had a different idea of spiritual and ceremonial expression than did white evangelical Christians. The intensity of their worship experience also varied from what white missionaries were accustomed to seeing. Christian Ojibwe would routinely pray and sing for hours at a time, which amazed many missionaries. Yet, it was these Christian expressions of hymn singing and praying that replaced traditional Ojibwe practices such as drum societies, which provided a model for indigenous worship before conversion. [Chad M. Waucaush 2008:215]

It is clear that singing was important in Midewiwin practices, and it remained important to those Ojibwa who began a different type of singing when they began the practice of singing Ojibwa hymns. This differentiates their pattern of singing from that of the Christian missionaries and retains for them an element of continuity with who they are within their own cultural framework. Further, while Waucaush states that drum societies were replaced by Christian expressions of hymn singing, there is evidence that drum societies continued to exist. This is another sign of the importance of continuity in Ojibwa culture.

One of the most important ceremonies that continued to exist is the passing along of a big drum from one community to another. According Josephine Kaczmarek in her paper “The

Ojibwe Dream Dance," Thomas Vennum wrote about the big drum that was gifted to the Ojibwe nation by Tailfeather Woman of the Sioux nation that came with a set of instructions that for the drum, with its associated songs and dances, [that must be] "passed on to establish intertribal peace and brotherhood." (Josephine Kaczmarek 1998:172) Vennum said that the ceremony attending the transfer of the drum varied in some small details from one place to another, but essentially the same procedure was followed among the Minnesota Ojibwe. A prospective drum owner was selected by an existing owner, perhaps on the basis of his having had appropriate dreams indicating that he would be a fitting drum owner, perhaps on the basis of an excellent reputation. But before transferring his drum, the donor would remove a piece of it from which to make a new one, symbolizing the drum's descent from a single source. (Josephine Kaczmarek 1998:172)Not only that, but the passing of the drum included teaching the songs and dances to the new drum keeper, a process that might take several months or years, ensuring that another common Ojibwe cultural practice would be continued in a new location. (Josephine Kaczmarek 1998:172-173) Clearly it was important to the drum keepers that they pass along the understanding of the songs they were transferring with the drum. It is estimated that the big drum has been a part of Ojibwe culture since the early 1800s, according to Kaczmarek's article. According to drum keepers in 2011, the Big Drum ceremonies are still an important part of Anishinaabe spiritual and cultural continuity and are in fact making a comeback.

Moreover, there are ties among the previously discussed language, spirituality, community, and individual identity that together indicate a continuity of culture that is very strong, despite all colonizing efforts to erase those ties. There is some resistance to saying there are ties between Ojibwa hymn-singing practices and Midewiwin singing practices, and those conflicting opinions are sometimes stated in the community. However, the potential to split the

culture and the people apart will only work if the people are willing to let it happen. The Anishinaabeg are not willing to let it happen, as illustrated by comments from several people interviewed. Continuity of culture requires a combination of all cultural aspects recognized and respected by other members of the culture. Examples are therefore given involving members of both Christian and Midewiwin interviewee responses. Rev. Ross, Deacon Jon, and Sr. Zander speak for the contingent formally associated with the Christian infrastructure, and Melvin Eagle, Michaa Aubid, and Wesley Pagel spoke out for the Midewiwin traditionalists.

Beginning with the Christian affiliates, Rev. George Ross, age 80, an Anishinaabe Christian minister, said he would go anywhere to minister to the needs of his people; he sees no conflict in attending powwows, which strict Christians avoid as "pagan" celebrations. Ross's statement confirms that his teachings tell him not to discriminate against anyone, and he tries to follow those teachings. (George Ross, in discussion with the author, July 2, 2011)

The second example of syncretic behavior is Deacon Bryan Jon, who conducts services at his nondenominational church at the Fond du Lac Reservation, also in Minnesota. Jon, a native of Fond du Lac, also attends Big Drum and Midewiwin ceremonies and other churches when he is invited. This is what Jon had to say about attending other services or ceremonies:

> Ah, well, I suppose they'd be upset with me, but I don't see a whole lot of difference. As I said, I've gone to Big Drum ceremonies, I've been invited and I love it, I love sitting around, I love the way it's all set up. But for me, the ceremonial part of it and all the singing is beautiful, the songs are great, but it ends up being too structured for me. And that's the same thing they say. I've heard others say about the Catholic Church, it's too structured, and I agree, it is, when [you've got to] follow all these things, I don't like that. When you hear the songs, the songs are specific songs that are sung in Ojibwa. It's just, it's just beautiful! [Personal interview with Bryan Jon by author June 21, 2011]

Jon said he would go anywhere he was invited to pray.

The third example of syncretic behavior is exhibited by non-indigenous mission school teacher, Sr. Felissa Zander, who has taught her Anishinaabeg students for 50 years to honor both Christian and traditional teachings, using written Anishinaabemowin to hymns and prayers in the classroom and for church services. (Sr. Felissa Zander, in discussion with the author, July 12, 2011)

As for the traditionalists, when asked two questions, "Okay, do you know any hymns? Are there any Christian people here in the community?" Melvin Eagle, a member of the Midewiwin said, "Well, there's a church over there. And I was always told you respect other beliefs; and I do that. I don't dislike anybody." (Melvin Eagle, in discussion with the author, June 22, 2011) Eagle's respect for other beliefs is supported by all three of the Christian practitioners previously quoted, but Eagle can be classified a purist, as he has been a practicing member of the Midewiwin since at least age three. Respect is one of the Midewiwin teachings, so his respect for other beliefs is one of his traditional teachings from the purist Anishinaabe worldview.

Michaa Aubid stated that he follows Midewiwin traditions and that when he started working with children, he "grew up more and realized that without the kids there would be nothing." (Michaa Aubid, in discussion with the author, June 20, 2011) Although he is only in his 20s, he will work to keep traditions alive and share them with younger generations.

Finally, Wesley Pagel is mid-range in age (52) between Eagle and Aubid. He is a part of the generation that is going back along the trail to find what has been dropped and picking it up again to recover Midewiwin traditions. This includes learning Anishinaabemowin and remembering his mother's ties to the Midewiwin. (Wesley Pagel, in discussion with the author,

June 24, 2011) Those who follow purist spirituality are respectful of other beliefs, as Eagle mentioned, as tolerance and respect is a part of the Midewiwin teachings.

These six people are examples of community members who are there for the well being of all of the people. Their behavior and actions indicate that cultural continuity is going to be there for future generations, as long as people follow these examples. With the overall concern for future generations and with community members voicing concern and teaching the younger generations as well as they do, cultural continuity among the Anishinaabeg shall prevail. The connection between elders and younger generations remains very strong, and elders take their roles very seriously. Elders are seen as keepers of the culture, and they view their role and responsibility for passing culture and cultural practices to the next generation as vital. This crucial quality is vital to ensuring and maintaining cultural continuity.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

The memorable journey from conception to completion of this dissertation established five themes that emerged from research and fieldwork based on the *Ojibwe Hymnal 1910,* which has been in continuous use for over 100 years in the northern Minnesota Ojibwa reservations of White Earth, Red Lake, and Leech Lake. The determination to continue to use the hymnal is based on the determination of the hymn singers to hold on to an important part of culture and history that had its origins in the singing practices of the Midewiwin, as discussed in this dissertation.

As an Ojibwa woman, I felt it was important to consider primary source oral history of current-day Ojibwa people and to include secondary sources of information such as CDs, phonograph records, books, articles, and Internet websites in my research.

Five themes emerged from analysis of the interview transcripts. These are language translation issues, the importance of the Thunderbird icon, purist and syncretic spirituality, community and individual identity, and continuity of culture. Within these categories is evidence that the continued use of hymn no. 35 in the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* (Kah-O-Sed 1910:35) demonstrates both continuity and change in the Anishinaabeg western Great Lakes Diaspora, including how the hymn fits into oral traditions, how it was produced and continues to be reproduced as a literary textual cultural icon,[I think this should be kept]how it is used by community members, and how it is understood to impact perceptions of identity.

Using qualitative methods—oral history and the interview technique—as well as conducting secondary source research, I was able to divide the five themes into the chapters that give additional information and insight into each theme.

Given the historical trauma of the effect of colonization, missionaries' efforts at conversion, and later governmental policies designed to erase native language, it is gratifying to

find that the indigenous people found a way to use the *Ojibwe Hymnal 1910* as a tool to retain language, spirituality, community and individual identity, and continuity of culture. Although many of the singers, both fluent and non-fluent, do not understand the Ojibwa words in the hymnal, there are various reasons for the lack of understanding. Writing conventions 100 years ago were not standardized, and they are still not standardized today.

Regional and dialect differences around the Great Lakes area vary, and all variances are considered valid among speakers from different regions who gather to create new words to describe new inventions that did not exist in Anishinaabe culture in 1910. One example of the creation of new words is the 2009 gathering of Anishinaabeg from different reservations and First Nations reserves that resulted in the publication of *Aaniin Ekidong*, edited by Anton Treuer and Keller Pamp, both second-language learners, who have progressed to a point of a high level of understanding with the Ojibwa language.

A secondary reason cited by fluent speakers interviewed is the written words in the hymnal from a century ago that were written as broken syllables to accommodate the melody of the hymns. Those broken syllables by themselves do not mean anything. The syllables would have to be reconstructed to yield a word.

Today's speakers and hymn singers are not always aware of the origin of the hymns but simply continue to use them as they see them. The one surprise speaker found is a non-indigenous nun who has worked at an Indian mission school for 50 years, learning the language in order to teach the Ojibwa students in her charge their native language, culture, and traditions. This practice is in stark contrast to the early mission schools, which used the Ojibwa language hymnals to convert the Anishinaabeg to Christianity and eventually away from their language

and culture. I believe Sr. Felissa Zander's mission represents a unique but effective mindset and goal of keeping Anishinaabe children grounded in their culture.

I think the most significant findings of the research are the following: I propose that the Anishinaabeg took ownership of Ojibwa hymns as a unique but distinct aspect of Ojibwa culture, adapting Midewiwin ceremonial singing practices to Ojibwa hymn-singing practices that have carried forward to the current day, and that today's Midewiwin ceremonial singing and Ojibwa hymn-singing purposes are very similar. The Anishinaabeg did this to establish and maintain a sense of continuity of culture that exists today, despite variances in spiritual beliefs and differing levels of fluency in Anishinaabemowin among local and wide spread geographical expanses around the Great Lakes. The hymns in some cases are being used to learn the Ojibwa language.

Overall, I found that there is a deeper meaning to the continuous use of Ojibwa hymns from the *Ojibwa Hymnal 1910* and it is this: that the spirituality of Ojibwa people is much more complicated than previous researchers and ethnographers have indicated. It is a tangled picture and complicated by the conversions, first, from Midewiwin to Christianity and, more recently, from Christianity back to Midewiwin.

Several people interviewed mentioned that people who had formerly attended church were now coming back to the Big Drum and Midewiwin ceremonies and that many of the churches on their reservations are no longer open or in use. There has been a shift in spirituality during the last 100 years that is continuing today. The tie that binds Anishinaabeg together is community identity, with strands firmly anchoring individual identity back to the cultural marks that each generation preserves and passes down to succeeding generations. For the Anishinaabeg of the Great Lakes region, the process and practice of singing the century-old Ojibwa hymn no.

35 is one way for babaamiinwajimojig (people who go around telling the good news) to continue.

It is my hope that future scholars will find enlightenment by reading the viewpoints of the current generation of Anishinaabeg and examining their statements regarding the use of hymn-singing practices versus Midewiwin cultural and singing practices. Both activities provide evidence of the importance of oral history among the Anishinaabeg.

We are all related.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Ojibwe Hymn Singers CD

THE OJIBWE HYMN SINGERS are a group of Ojibwe people from the Leech Lake Reservation Area that have taken on a personal ministry of volunteering their time, energy and money to sing at wakes, funerals, prayer meetings and at times of worship.

TRADITION – Over the years the group has lost many of its elders who knew these songs.

OJIBWE HYMNS – is a collection of Christian hymns translated into the Ojibwe language.

The singing on this CD is done a cappella. The CD will serve two purposes.

(1) to preserve the tradition of singing Ojibwe hymns.

(2) to assist people in learning the songs.

SUPPORTED BY – The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and the Committee on Native American Ministries, MN Conf. of UMC and My Heritage My Faith, Inc.

PROCEEDS will go to fund future ministry projects on the Leech Lake Reservation. Contributions will go to My Heritage My Faith, Inc.

Hymns from the Ojibwe Hymnal compiled by:

Rev. Edward C. Kah-O-Sed, 1910

#25, 2, 15, 35, 37, 50, 51, 58, 18, 40, 19, 20, 4, 60

Although the front cover of the "Ojibwe Hymns" CD has a picture of a group of singers, the names of the individuals are not given. There is also no record of the year the CD was produced anywhere on the product. It may be possible find the names of the singers pictured by visiting the current day singers and by asking community members to identify the singers. I

would think that since the hymn singers are still active, some of them may know who the prior singers were.

APPENDIX B

Language Translation Glossary

Anishinaabemowin Ojibwa to English Words

Aaniin Ekidong Ojibwe Language Project literally asks “How do you say this?”

aasnaa! bbaa-dbaadendizin "Be careful! or Look out! Go around with humbleness/humility or go about in a humble way" (translation credit: George Roy)

adopowin Table

anami’aajig Praying People

a’nina’nibawiyan Whenever I pause

anishinaabe person, human (in contrast to non-human-beings), Indian (in contrast to non-Indians, Ojibwa; *pl* Anishinaabeg;

anishinaabeg or *Anishinaabek pl* variable spelling for plural of *Anishinaabe*

anishinaabemowin the Indian language; Also spelled Nishinaabemwin variable spelling

babaamiinwajimojig people who go around telling the good news.

Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig Hole-in-the-Day. Ojibwa chief after whom a school in Minnesota is named.

cheeby spirit

cheejauk soul/spirit

de’wewe’ the noise

doodaem Totem

Ezhi-mkoshnang Kweji-aan’kinoosjigeng: flying blind over strange terrain

gagwedwebii’igan question mark

gashkendam Lonesomeness, grief, affliction, dejection, homesickness and melancholy

gchitwa holy table; great table

geezhikokwe, sky woman

gete-anishinaabe ezhichiwaawin miinawaa anishnaabe ezhichigewin those things that those people used to do long time ago

giizhik sky or day

Ginyu, golden eagle

G'zaagiwin, respect and love

Jesus nin ge shah wa ne mig, Jesus has blessed me

Kahgegagahbowh He who stands forever

Ki'miwun it is raining

Kitchi-Manitou Great Spirit

Kwe Woman

manidoo god, spirit, *Manitou* – alternate spelling; *manidoog* – gods/spirits

Manidoog gods or spirits (Manidoo, Manitou)

Manitous Spirit, Mystery

Meitei Grand Medicine Society *Midewiwin*

Me-tae-we-gah-mig Grand Medicine Lodge

Midewiwin ni Midewiwin, Medicine Dance, Grand Medicine Society; various spellings used and left intact in the archival documents used in this paper: *mitewiwin, Mide'wiwin, Mide, Miteui, Miteui*

Mide'wiwin Grand Medicine Society *Midewiwin*

migis na Mide shell; a small cowry shell used in Midewiwin ceremonies

Minjimendaamowinon Anishinaabe, Reading and righting all our relations in written English

Mino-Bimaadiziwin The way of a good life

Minogiizhigokwe good day woman

nagamowin song; *nagamowinan* singing

niigaane leader

Noongwa e-Anishinaabemjig people who speak Anishinaabemowin today.

Nishinaabemwin Indian language, especially Ojibwa *Anishinaabemowin*

Ode'na, of the village

Ogimaa-giigido council orator

Oshkabaywis ceremonial helper

Owh wah-yah-bak-mek ke-gah-shah-we-a-ne-mig the spirit that sees you will bless you

Signaak Blackbird

Waba'cing White Earth

Zaangwewe joyful singing

zhitaawin religious affiliation or belief

zhooniyaa money

APPENDIX C

Glossary

Ceded - to give control of (something) to another person, group, government, etc. as in to yield or grant typically by treaty

Cultural Practices - activities that create a sense of identity as a distinct people; language preservation, singing, dancing, continuing seasonal activities, using storytelling as a form of oral history, and passing these practices to the next generation.

Idle-No-More - One of the largest indigenous mass movements in Canadian history, sparking hundreds of flash mobs, rallies and protests around the world in support of Indigenous inherent rights to sovereignty and re-institute traditional laws and Nation to Nation Treaties by protecting the lands and waters from corporate destruction.

Midewiwin - Midewiwin, Medicine Dance, Grand Medicine Society; various spellings used and left intact in the archival documents used in this paper: *mitewiwin,* Mide'wiwin, *Mide,* Miteui, *Meitei*

Ojibwa - Ojibwe or Ojibway plural Ojibwes, or Ojibways. Variant spellings in early docuements: Ojebwas or Otchipwe; also referred to as Chippewa. Definition:

a. A Native American people originally located north of Lake Huron before moving westward in the 17th and 18th centuries into Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, western Ontario, and Manitoba, with later migrations onto the northern Great Plains in North Dakota, Montana, and Saskatchewan.

b. The Algonquian language of the Ojibwa, also called Chippewa.

Per Cap - Per Capita refers to the payments made to tribal members who receive a share of the revenue produced by tribally owned casinos.

Practices - (1) to do something again and again in order to become better at it, (2) to do (something) regularly or constantly as an ordinary part of your life, (3) to live according to the customs and teachings of (a religion).

Purist - a person who has very strong ideas about what is correct or acceptable and who usually opposes changes to traditional methods and practices.

Purist Spirituality- A purist as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary is "person who has very strong ideas about what is correct or acceptable and who usually opposes changes to traditional methods and practices." Given this definition, a purist may be either a member of the Midewiwin or a member of the Christian community.

Syncretic - characterized or brought about by syncretism : syncretistic <a *syncretic* religion>

Syncretism - the combination of different forms of belief or practice.

Syncretic Spiritual Worldview - A Syncretic Spiritual Worldview, on the other hand, incorporates the definition of syncretic, which is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "characterized or brought about by syncretism: syncretistic <a ***syncretic*** religion>; syncretistic in turn is defined as "the combination of different forms of belief or practice."

Unceded territory - land that was not assigned, transferred, yielded, by treaty or in any manner whatsoever. Example: Wikwemikong First Nation Unceded Territory; land that was never given up by treaty or otherwise.

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Interview Guide for IRB Application ID# i038714

Primary Investigator: Gordon Henry, Jr.; Secondary Investigator: Janis Angela Fairbanks

Name: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____ email address: _____

Questions:

1. Please state your English name and the correct spelling of your English name.
2. Please state your Ojibwe name and the correct spelling of your Ojibwe name if you have one.
3. Would you like to translate your Ojibwe name into English?
4. What is your age?
5. And what is your home community?
6. What is the history of your family's use of the Ojibwe language?
7. What do you think about the contents of the recorded Ojibwe hymns that exist today?
8. What do you think about providing English translations with Ojibwe hymns?
9. On a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, where would you place yourself on that scale in terms of fluency with the Ojibwe language?
10. What is the earliest calendar year you recall hearing Ojibwe hymns? Or if you don't recall the calendar year, your approximate age when you first heard the hymns.
11. How many of the singers in your community speak Ojibwe?
12. Why do you personally sing Ojibwe hymns in the Ojibwe language instead of in English?

13. How long have you been singing Ojibwe hymns?
14. Do you understand the meanings of all of the words of each hymn?
15. What are the names of the current most common hymns you sing in Ojibwe or English?
16. What percentage of the singers of Ojibwe hymns in your community are Christians?
17. What percentages of the singers of Ojibwe hymns in your community believe in or follow midewewin traditions?
18. How do you and other sings learn the Ojibwe (Mide) words to eacf song?
19. Do you read the words in Ojibwe or do you read them pyhoentically?
20. What is the main function of the practice of maintaining and singing Ojibwe hymns? Why do people still do it?
21. How does singing, or not singing, in Ojibwe hymns affect Ojibwe language preservation or cultural heritage?
22. What is your viewpoint on the importance of children in your community's active involvement in singing Ojibwe hymns?
23. What's the difference between Ojibwe Midewiwin singing in their ceremonies and the singing of Ojibwe hymns in other community settings?
24. How has Ojibwe language and culture changed during your lifetime?
25. What is your estimate of the number of fluent speakers you have in your community?
26. Do you have any other comments you would like to share about this topic?

APPENDIX E

Rev. Frederick Augustus O'Meara's background and hymn translation

The Sault Ste Marie Mission at Garden River was begun between 1831 and 1833 by the Rev. William McMurray (1810-1894). A church was built by the Government. A few years later he was obliged to retire on account of ill-health. The mission then passed into the hands of the Rev. Frederick Augustus O'Meara, who ministered to the Indians at Garden River until 1841, when he was removed to Grand Manitoulin Island, in Lake Huron. Here the Canadian Government endeavoured to concentrate the neighbouring Indians in 1840 and 1841, after the mission at the south end of Lake Superior had been discontinued. O'Meara was born in Dublin, Ireland, and obtained his master's degree from Trinity College, Dublin. Shortly after his ordination he answered a call made by the bishop of Dublin for young men to do missionary work in what was then Upper Canada. After a year or two as travelling missionary he was asked to take charge of the Indians on the Georgean Bay and Lake Huron generally. For a year he lived at the Sault Ste Marie. At the request of the late Bishop Strahan and the Governor of Canada he accepted the position of Government chaplain to the Indians on Grand Manitoulin Island and remained there a little over 21 years.

Charles Wohlers, web author explains that from the time the translations were made by Rev. O'Meara and put into print, revisions began to appear. The first edition was published in 1846 and a revised edition printed in 1853 entitled **Shahguhnahshe* | *Ahnuhmeähwine Muzzeneēgun* | Ojibwag anwawaud azheühnwkwnootah- | beēgahdag. | Toronto: printed by Henry Rowsell, | for the Venerable Society for Promoting Christian

Knowledge. | London. | MDCCCLIII. Wohlers cites Pilling with giving the literal translation of the Chippewa title as: English | Prayer Book | the Chippewas, as their language – is so – translated – and – put - | in – writing. This early written translation looks very different from today's double vowel Fiero system of writing that is becoming more commonly used among scholars as they strive to develop a common orthography. If the same title was written today, it would be written in the double vowel system, which among other characteristics does not include the letter "u." See Table 8, which shows the comparison with the phonetic spelling which was found in the 1856 translation of the Book of Common Prayer. (Wohlers, accessed February 9, 2011)

Table 8. Fiero System vs. phonetic spelling used in 1856.

English Word	**2013 Double Vowel or Fiero Spelling as shown in a Concise Dictionary of Minnesota Ojibwa**		**1856 Phonetic Spelling Found in Book of Common Prayer – Ojibwa Version by Rev. Frederick Augustus O'Meara**
English	*zhaaganaashi*		*Shahguhnahshe*
Prayer Book	*anama'e-mazina'igan*		*Ahnuhmeähwine*
The Chippewas	*Anishinaabeg*		*Ojibwag*
As their language	*ojibwemowin*		*anwawaud*
Is so	*miish*		*Blank*
Translated	*aanikanootan*		*Azheühnwkwnootah*
And	*miinawaa*		*Blank*
Put In Writing	*ojibwewibii'igaade*		*Beēgahdag*

APPENDIX F

Fred K. Blessing Research and Background

Fred K. Blessing's work is a major contribution from a man at the grass roots level without any formal ethnographic training or academic affiliation. Blessing's work is amazing and apparently a labor of love, as he financed his own field work and purchased many items of material culture from Ojibwa people in Minnesota with his own money. He did not attend university, but became known to Thomas Vennum Jr., who is a well known ethnomusicologist who studied Ojibwa music and met ' while doing research for his book, *The Ojibwa Dance Drum*: *its History and Construction.* Vennum wrote the introduction to the book when Blessing's work *The Ojibway Indians Observed* was published in 1977. Blessing's important work centers on Minnesota with some mention of Wisconsin. This is fortuitous for me, since my research fieldwork and topic benefitted from his research.

Fred K. Blessing, a grass roots scholar who lived in Minnesota among the Ojibwa Indians and who contributed a great deal of time and effort researching the Ojibwa culture in the years 1936 to 1969 wrote, "Of all the cultural traits of the Chippewa that have persisted to the present time, the songs seem to have been altered the least with the changing way of life occasioned by contact with the white man." (Fred K. Blessing 1977:249) Work by Blessing (1915-1971) contains extensive research published between 1933 and 1969 along with his fieldwork notes on *The Ojibway Indians Observed*, the title of the book containing Blessing's work. He documented Anishinaabeg cultural beliefs, practices and material culture relating to lifestyles including Midewiwin ceremonies and singing practices he observed in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. Blessing had a great deal to say about the Midewiwin that he observed between the years 1944

and 1969, which is supplemented by archival research of earlier years. Thus his work serves as proof that there was continuity for the culture in the form of the Midewiwin being active during a period of time when it was legally outlawed in the United States. Blessing was indigenous, Seminole, and gathered considerable information while he spent his life among the Ojibway of northern Minnesota living the indigenous lifestyle of his Ojibway wife and neighbors, who accepted him as one of their own, as stated by Thomas Vennum. Blessings lifestyle gave him an insider's perspective to the culture but, possibly owing to the fact that Blessing was not involved in academia, his work has not been as accessible as the non-indigenous academic-based scholars. Previously, Blessing's work was published in article form by the Minnesota Archaeologist, but after Blessing died in a car accident in 1971, a grant was obtained through the Minnesota Historical Society to publish the articles in book form. As an indigenous scholar, I appreciate the foresight of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Archaeologist to gather all of his material in one place for future reference. The dedication page says: "This volume is dedicated to the memory of FRED K. BLESSING, JR (1915-1971) a self-taught student of the Ojibway people whose research has left a lasting memorial to these proud Native Americans and to his own memory**."** (Fred K. Blessing 1977:iv)

APPENDIX G

Manitolin Expositor Series Treaty of 1862

In 1615, Champlain met the Odawa *Anishinaabe* in Georgian Bay. They were fishing among the islands and picking berries. The Odawa he met lived semi-sedentary lives; they were great fishermen and agriculturists who grew corn and potatoes among many crops. The *Anishinaabe* told Champlain that their homeland was "*Odawa-Miniss*" which is Manitoulin Island.

Like many other reports of treaty fraud, the Treaty of 1862 that established the government agent on the island and disrupted the well and long established lifestyle and culture of the *Anishinaabe* living there is said to have been accomplished by signatures from indigenous individuals who had no signing authority after the government officials who had come to negotiate the treaty were sent away by the legitimate chiefs[2] (Pt. 4 – The Impact of the Manitoulin Treaty).

The treaty fraud prevailed in taking the land from the indigenous people who lived there and although the Jesuits tried to help the Indians protest the false agreement, the government agents were firm in their resolve to defeat any protest effort by various other devious methods. In Pt. 1 - The Treaties of 1836 and 1862, Terry Debassige states:

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[2] Who really signed this paper anyway? It has been said that George Abotossaway might have been a signatory, but his name was signed "George Webetoosown" on the treaty document. If it was his name, one wonders how that can be possible when he was one of the leaders responsible for evicting the Hudson's Bay Company off the island in 1858.
Another signature was signed "Kushkewabie" which means, I am intoxicated in the anishinabe language. Futhermore, "J.B. Assiginack" was listed as signing the treaty, but this is perplexing. He was over 90 years old and had been senile and in bad health for some time. It was doubtful he was cognizant of his actions (Pt. 4 – The Impact of the Manitoulin Treaty).

> As a further example of the questionable integrity of Indian agents, a deputation from Wikwemikong, which included Wakegejig, traveled to Montreal to protest the activity of the government on the Island. They stated that the Island was for their children and they had no desire to part with it. The Indian agent there offered to translate and told those assembled that these men had come to apologize and atone for being bad men. It was only because a priest that could understand Ojibway was present that the deceit was revealed.

In Pt. 3, Seeking the Native Perspective, Alan Corbiere wrote the following regarding the role of the Jesuits in Wikwemikong in 1863 after the Treaty of 1862 was signed:

> After the 1862 Treaty was signed, the Chiefs of Wikwemikong and the Jesuits launched an effort to have the Treaty annulled. Jesuit Fr. Hanipaux reportedly threatened to ex-communicate Sheshegwaning and Mitchigiwadinong (also spelt as Mitchikewedinong - present day M'Chigeeng band) Indians if they did not write and sign petitions. Of course, the local superintendent reported that the signatories to the treaty were 'happy and satisfied' with the treaty.
>
> There is little doubt that the Jesuits greatly assisted the efforts to have petitions sent. It would appear that the Jesuits again played a dominant role, but I do not think it was that simple because there [is] a document called the "Minutes of a council held by the Indians of the unceded portion of the Island and the Mitchikewedinong Indians on the 10th January 186[last number illegible]." In these minutes the chiefs state that Ironside is again attempting to covertly get the Wikwemikong Indians to cede their land. Taibosegai pledges his support to the Wikwemikong Chief Wahkaikezhik and states that he expects the same assistance if anybody were to attempt to 'overcome' them.
>
> During the spring and summer of 1863, two petitions written in Ojibwa were sent to the Governor General. These petitions are both made and signed by the Warriors of each band. Both contain statements from some of the respective Chiefs (Paimoquonaishkung, Taibosegai, Wakaose

{Wetcowsai}) who signed the treaty, expressing their regret at having signed the treaty (Alan Corbiere, accessed August 6, 2013)

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