

WHERE THE RIVERS COME TOGETHER: RECLAIMING AND RE-IMAGINING INDIGENOUS HISTORY,
IDENTITY, AND LANGUAGE IN THE CITY

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ABSTRACT

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The movement and migration of Native Americans to urban areas is usually traced to the urbanization programs of the 1950s and 1960s. However, the recent scholarship of Coll Thrush (2007) and John Low (2016) highlight the long history of urban spaces as Indigenous spaces and the role Indigenous people and communities have played in their growth and development. Similarly, the discourse of language loss and revitalization, urban spaces, and Indigenous urban communities are seen as places or endpoints of assimilation. Thus, language revitalization efforts and programs often focus on reservations as the primary domains where Indigenous languages and their speakers persist and thrive. Yet, despite settler colonial narratives of vanishing that erase Indigenous people and Indigenous languages from urban areas, cities have, and continue to be, important intersections of movement and migration and with deep historical roots where Indigenous languages persist and thrive as ideological markers of identity, belonging, and as spoken languages.

This Research shows how Lansing, Michigan, Nkwejong (the place where the rivers come together) has a long history as an Indigenous intersection and space that challenges the local settler-colonial narratives of removal and erasure. Lansing has remained an Indigenous space through traditions of movement and migration that were driven by the auto industry and educational opportunities. Through these movements, Anishinabek from reservations in and around Manitoulin Island came here in the 1960s and 1970s who were fluent speakers of

Anishinaabemowin. Anishinabek from Canada and local Anishinabek, who had lost the language, created community and belonging through educational programs. These spaces have become focal points where community comes together and, for many individuals, are the primary spaces where language, culture, and identity are reclaimed and passed on. However, these are also spaces of tension where gender roles, language ideologies, and linguistic practices concerning language as an ideological marker of identity and its role as a communicative system are challenged and reimagined.

Through interviews with community members and participant observation, I explore relationships to urban and reservation “homelands,” the importance of education as places where individuals develop relationships to their identities and culture, and the role that language, as both an ideological marker of identity and belonging and as a communicative system, play in their everyday lives and experiences. While most participants agreed that language was important to preserving identity and traditional knowledge, their relationships with their identities as urban and Indigenous, and their relationships to Indigenous language, highlight: (1) the need to reexamine language ideologies that link Language to “traditional culture and Knowledge” and the impacts these ideologies have on language revitalization. (2) The importance of urban areas as Indigenous homelands and places where Indigenous languages persist, and (3) the role of education as intersections and places of tension where multiple ideologies, identities, and ways of being Indigenous are expressed and reimagined.

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INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, local elders, fluent speakers, and others from the Indigenous community in Lansing started getting together every other Wednesday to share food, stories, and language. The purpose of these gatherings was to record the stories, oral history, and language of fluent speakers and elders who were part of the Indigenous community in Lansing. The idea to begin this work came about through the efforts of community activists, educators, and language learners who understood the importance of preserving and learning the stories and language of the community as a way to maintain and revitalize Anishinaabemowin. During the sessions, these elders and fluent speakers told us stories about growing up on Manitoulin Island, their original home, and coming here to work in the auto industry and other jobs. Some of these were in English, and, at other times, they shared these stories in Anishinaabemowin. The idea behind the project was to begin creating a body of knowledge on the Native history of the Lansing area in Anishinaabemowin from an Indigenous, community-based perspective.

As these elders and fluent speakers shared their stories of growing up on the reservation, coming to Lansing to work in the auto industry, and their experiences as Ojibwe first-language speakers, I began to understand how significant it was that so many fluent speakers called Lansing their home and how important it was to have the language here, in this urban space, when many other Anishinaabeg communities in Michigan had few left who were first language speakers. Some of these elders and fluent speakers, based on their personal knowledge, estimated that close to two-hundred fluent speakers lived in the Lansing area when they came here in the 1960s, the majority of them from reservations in and around Manitoulin

Island, such as Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve. They came here to work, some from their home reservations, but also from other cities, such as Chicago, Detroit, and Ottawa, moving wherever they could to find jobs, as there was not much in terms of employment and opportunities back home for them. Over time, they built lives here, created families, retired, and stayed in the area. Some of them became language teachers, going back to school and using their knowledge of the language to help revitalize Anishinaabemowin here, in local Anishinaabeg communities, and at universities and community colleges.

During one of our talks, our group began discussing the history of Lansing and these elders were asked to name this place in the language. They came up with the word Nkwejong, where the rivers come together. Like a river, Anishinaabeg identity, culture, and language are fluid and in movement. Rivers, movement, and migration are significant to Anishinaabe culture and identity and are a powerful metaphor for exploring the life and history of Anishinaabemowin and of this place. The Washtanong (Grand River) and The Miskwa-Giizhik (Red Cedar) flow through Lansing, and the numerous trails and paths that intersect them have always been important for Anishinaabeg people in Michigan. These intersections mark and define a shared space where ideologies, identities, cultures, and languages come together and flow, like the rivers that meet here.

Migration and movement mark Anishinaabe language, culture, and identity and includes both rural reservation and urban history, spaces, and experiences. Research on Native communities engaged in language revitalization has focused on rural reservations and the idea that these spaces represent and define authentic Indigenous identity and experience and are spaces where language and culture persist and survive. Urban Indians and urban communities

have been assumed to be composed of individuals who were displaced and marginalized from their home reservations, assimilated, or caught between two worlds. The works of Indigenous studies scholars are challenging these ideas by showing how urban Indigenous communities create and maintain connections to culture and identity. Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters (2001) and Evelyn Peters and Chris Anderson (2013) bring together multiple approaches to framing urbanization and Native culture that challenge assumptions and ideologies of Native identity and authenticity in relation to modernity, urban spaces, and Indigenous experience in the United States and Canada. The scholarship of Renya Ramirez (2007), Susan Applegate-Krause and Heather Howard (2009), and Heather Howard and Craig Proulx (2011) show how urban spaces and centers are hubs of activism and community network-building, with women playing central roles as community builders and the revitalizers of Indigenous language, culture, and identity. Others, such as Coll Thrush (2007) and John Low (2016), explore how Native people have always been part of the fabric of urban spaces, creating them, moving through them, and, in the process, changing the fabric of their home communities. However, the dominant historical narrative that writes Indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages as the vanishing of Indigenous people, writing them out of existence and modernity through language, writing, and historical texts (O'Brien 2010; Buss 2011) or through physical removal and relocation, education, and political termination (Fixico 1990; Adams 1995) has always been countered and resisted. The narrative of vanishing marginalizes Indigenous cultures, languages, and identities as incompatible and oppositional to modernity and progress (Freeman 2010). Yet, urban spaces have long been the center points for Indigenous resistance and persistence and the

intersections of Indigenous movements and migrations, rather than end points along the path of assimilation.

My research questions began with those recordings I made with elders and fluent speakers, as I sought to understand and frame their experiences and the role of movement and migration in shaping the dynamics of identity, belonging, and the creation and maintenance of the urban Indigenous community in Lansing. This dissertation scratches the surface at the story of Nkwejong (Lansing) as an Indigenous space through the history and lived experiences of Anishinaabe and other Indigenous people who call this place home. It is also the story of how Anishinaabemowin persists in this space and its roles as both a communicative system and a symbolic marker of identity and belonging. My goal is to develop a framework for understanding the history of Nkwejong as an Indigenous space through movement and migration of people and language, a space where tensions and language ideologies create and define the boundaries and intersections of identity and heritage language and how the language marks Nkwejong as an Indigenous space where Anishinaabemowin and traditional knowledge persist. I center my research and understanding within an Anishinaabe worldview and ways of knowing by focusing on the lived experiences of those who shared their lives and stories for my research, Anishinaabe oral history, and language (Wilson 2008; Shoemaker 2002; Doerfler, Sinclair, Stark 2013). With this comes the realization that the role of language and language revitalization are contentious issues, with many conflicting histories, ideologies, and practices associated with them.

Through my research on this place and with the Indigenous community that claims it, I posit that Nkwejong (Lansing) has always been and continues to be Indigenous space through

historical and contemporary movements and migrations, a place where language as both a communicative system and an ideological marker of belonging and identity have persisted side-by-side but often in tension with each other. These linguistic dimensions and the boundaries that separate them are marked by ideological disjunctures as to the importance of language as a carrier of culture and identity, relationships to language across genders and generations, and the location of language revitalization in educational spaces. This research adds to a growing body of literature that shows urban spaces have always been Native spaces by showing them to be locations where Native languages and traditional knowledge persist and are maintained through language ideologies, linguistic practices, education, that are the physical and ideological spaces and intersections of identity, social networks, and belonging.

CHAPTER OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE

I have chosen to present my data in four chapters. The foundations of my data presented in these chapters are the lives and experiences that community members shared with me. One of the issues that faces researchers working in Indigenous communities is how to ground the data, research and theories within the history, knowledge, and experiences of those people with whom we work. Thus, it was important for my research and scholarship to not only present this knowledge and data truthfully, but to show it in relationship to their own personal histories and experiences. Throughout each of my chapters, I will be referencing specific examples from these interviews, to bridge the gap between various bodies of knowledge and scholarly work, and also to challenge others. However, I believe it is important to see these examples within the context of their stories and experiences. To do this, I will be referencing

data in my chapters to appendices where the whole transcript of each interview can be read in the context in which it was made. My approach and research methods use Anishinaabe oral traditions and ways of knowing that are foundational to Anishinaabe culture and identity. These stories and the body of knowledge they bring together are reflected in the lived experiences of community members and in the language of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomie of Michigan. Using Indigenous methodologies and theories that are grounded in local Anishinaabe knowledge and oral history (Kovach 2010; Tuhiwai-Smith 2012; Wilson 2009), my goal is to challenge the settler narratives of Indigenous place, modernity, and identity, and to enhance the qualitative foundations of my research. I also used a mixed methodological approach that brings together historical and anthropological methods and bodies of knowledge with *Anishinaabe gikendamowin* (knowledge) and *e'zjigeyaaanh wii gino-maadiziyaanh* (methodology).

My first data chapter presents the history of Lansing as a Native space. In this chapter, I explore how the area was used by Anishinaabe peoples as an intersection of people, cultures, and practices and how that has changed over time in response to contact with Europeans and the colonization of the area by Euro-Americans settlers. I also explore how Native people adapted to these changes over time and continued claiming and relying on this space, even though the historical and settler narrative erases the presence of Native people. In this chapter, I also examine the importance of Chief Okemos (Ogimoos) as both a historical figure and as the archetype of the vanishing Indian used to mark the transition of the area from Native space to a settler-colonial place of modernity and progress that is absent of any Indigenous presence or participation. By examining historical sources, the archaeology of the Grand River Watershed,

and Anishinaabe oral histories, I shed light on how Native people used and claimed this space, resisted removal and relocation, negotiated identity, and continued to occupy the area through movements and migrations, resisting policies and narratives that sought to erase Indigenous identity and define the places where Indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages could exist and persist.

My second data chapter looks at these historical and contemporary migrations and movements of Anishinaabe and other Native peoples onto the area as a counter-narrative to the national consciousness, which imagined Indigenous peoples as a vanishing race, static and fixed to the margins of modernity and urban spaces. Through census records that trace patterns of migration, interviews with individual community members and interviews across generations in families, I show how Lansing continued to be Indigenous space from historical to contemporary times. These movements have been shaped by historical processes, government policies, economics, kinship, and individual agency. An important part of my analysis of these movements is understanding the role of gender in historical and contemporary patterns of migration and place-making. Gender roles are important in maintaining kinship between communities and across generations for the persistence of identity, and the maintenance of community in urban spaces. I observed that these roles and gendered experiences with language loss caused tensions between language ideologies and linguistic practices in the community.

In my Last chapter, I look at language revitalization as a site where various language ideologies and tensions that are expressed in the community. These ideologies and tensions center on language revitalization and language as a marker of identity and place, its importance

as carrier of culture and identity, as a source of traditional knowledge and worldview, and its role in economic and educational domains. The Lansing Native community is both fluid and heterogeneous, with individuals, families, and groups from different communities, each with their own unique experiences and histories concerning language, culture, and identity and how they are performed. While language tends to be, at times, unifying, tensions surrounding language, the ideologies and practices of language revitalization, and the performance of language and culture through language use create disjunctures that affect when and where language is used (Meek 2010). In this chapter, I examine these tensions and divisions and explore how they influence people's relationships to Anishinaabemowin and how the language is positioned within the community in relation to other forms of cultural knowledge, identity, and authenticity.

Language revitalization programs are often located within Western educational institutions using Euro-American epistemological approaches to teaching, learning, and knowledge production. For many of the people with whom I spoke, these locations became central to learning about and fostering their identities as Native people, as places where Indigenous communities gather in solidarity and kinship. Through the inclusion of language learning, Indigenous studies and perspectives, and traditional knowledge and ways of knowing, these educational settings have also become intersections of identity and culture that mark Lansing as Indigenous space. In this chapter, I explore the role of education as intersections of Indigenous knowledge and language and their importance as a space where individuals learn and foster their identity and connections to their culture and community. This chapter also explores this process within the lives and experiences of community members and others who

came to Lansing for education and how the knowledge gained from those interactions is shared through networks of kinship and contemporary moments and migrations to other Indigenous communities and spaces.

Together, this dissertation shows how Nkwejong has a long history as an Indigenous intersection and space and challenges the local settler-colonial narratives of removal and erasure. It shows how this place remained an Indigenous space through traditions of movement and migration that brought Anishinaabe and other Indigenous people here seeking work in the auto industry and to further their educations. Through these migrations Anishinaabe from reservations in and around Manitoulin Island came here in the 1960s and 1970s. These migrants were fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin and their arrival reinvigorated local efforts to reclaim and revitalize Anishinaabe language and culture. These efforts brought together Anishinaabeg from Canada and local Anishinaabe who had lost the language as they sought to create community and belonging through educational programs and spaces for Indigenous youth, their families, and the community. These spaces, as this dissertation shows, became focal points where community comes together and as spaces where language, culture, and identity are reclaimed and passed on. However, these are also spaces of tension; where language ideologies and linguistic practices are challenged, negotiated, and reimagined.

CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The theoretical and methodological foundations of my research are based on Indigenous epistemologies that are rooted in local knowledge and experience, oral history, and Anishinaabemowin as a way of conceptualizing and reframing language in relation to movement, migration, and place. To this end, I explore Anishinaabe storytelling, oral history, and language as a body of knowledge that is capable of theorizing contemporary Anishinaabe cultural and linguistic ideologies and practices and their relationships to historical and contemporary migrations and movement and how this defines Indigenous space in relation to modernity and identity. Anishinaabe storytelling, oral histories, and ways of knowing are also stories of survival and resistance. These resistances and adaptations are based on historical relationships and specific cultural, social, and linguistic practices that are the philosophical and methodological foundations of Anishinaabeg knowledge and knowledge production. As Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik (2013) explain in *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World through Stories*:

Anishinaabeg Studies has really been operating since time immemorial. Our communities have always been intellectual and philosophical, with stories and storytelling practices at the center of this endeavor. It doesn't seem to matter what activity, - whether ceremonies, hunting trips, history sharing, medicine gathering, constitution writing or cooking- there is a body of Anishinaabeg knowledge involving stories about it (Introduction: xx).

Storytelling and stories are active and lived experiences that encompass and connect people and communities to bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing that reinforce identity and culture, while also being contradictory to or in tension with them. Stories and storytelling come

in many forms, from creation stories and mythic history to contemporary stories and oral histories. Wendy Makoons-Geniusz (2009) writes that the colonization of Indigenous knowledge, bodies, and beings was used to gain control of the land and people, and through colonization and assimilation, Indigenous knowledge and knowledge production were positioned as evil and inferior, even as the colonizers were claiming and exploiting this knowledge for themselves (2-4). Traditional and contemporary stories and storytelling work to ground one's research and understanding within specific communities and their experiences and they are the foundation of an Indigenous methodology and praxis, and a way to challenge the assumptions, stereotypes, and theories contained in western bodies of knowledge and knowledge production.

Anishinaabe ways of knowing are founded on oral history, kinship, and reciprocity with the physical and spiritual world. Stories shape the identity of Anishinaabe people and their relationships to land and place. Oral history and traditional knowledge were marginalized in academia and the hegemonic methodologies of Western scientific theory and practice where non-Indigenous scholars were the story-tellers and historians and Indigenous people were the subjects. Indigenous scholars are using traditional knowledge held in oral history and language as the foundation to reclaiming Indigenous history, literature, and experience. Anishinaabe scholars use traditional and contemporary stories as maps or instructions that teach us how to navigate past, present, and future and the creation and re-creation of who we are (Doerfler, Sinclair, and Stark 2013: 17-18).

Stories are also living things as they flow through people and the landscape of experience. Reclaiming stories and language is part of the revitalization of Native identity and a

resistance to the settler narrative of Native identity and presence on the land. They are also a way to heal. As Metis scholar Dylan Miner shows, “Stories of migratory healing connect with the medicinal qualities of mshkiki at desperate times and in random geographies. Each of these experiences confronts the never-ending efforts of colonialism in a way that begins to heal generations of linguistic and intellectual ethnocide. By reclaiming our own stories and locating them within our own sovereignty, these narratives are the mskkiki we so intimately long for and so desperately need” (2013: 334). An important part of this research is to reclaim this knowledge through relationships to land, movement, and migration and reclaim urban spaces as Indigenous spaces and places where Indigenous, knowledge, and language persists.

Anishinaabe oral history tells us that movement and migration are as important as place in constructing relationships and worldview, and they are the starting point for reclaiming traditional knowledge as a methodology and praxis. The migration story of the Anishinaabeg (Benton-Benai 2010) and the stories of Nanaboozho contain the history of these movements and their relationships to Anishinaabe culture and identity (Johnston 1990; Webkamigad 2015). Historical sources and tribal histories also speak of the roles and relationships of movement and migration to specific spaces, cultural practices, and identity (Michigan Indian Claims Commission Report 1970; McClurken 1991; Williamson and Benz 2005). While western bodies of knowledge tend to separate movement and place making, marking them and juxtaposing them along racial, class, and social hierarchies. Keith Basso (1996), in his work on place names, stories, and identity writes that there is more to making places than living local history in a localized way. Place-making is not just about remembering what happened; it is a way of constructing history itself, of revising and imagining places in ways that others might not

suppose (6). It is impossible to talk about Lansing as an Indigenous space without exploring local experiences, stories, and histories of movement and migration and how they influence the construction and persistence of the Native community that calls it home. By grounding my work through stories of place and movement, I seek to disrupt and challenge the local settler colonial narratives of Indigenous history and identity through counter narratives, theories, and ontologies grounded in Anishinaabe relationships to land, movement, and migration.

POSITIONALITY

My research and scholarship is also influenced by my positionality and experiences growing up and living in Lansing as part of the Native community. When I was in second grade, I was friends with a boy named Jason, who was also of Native descent. Each year during Thanksgiving at our elementary school, students were required to participate in a Thanksgiving celebration where the students acted out the myth of peaceful coming together of Indigenous and colonizer. The class was divided in half, with one side assigned to be pilgrims and the other side to be Indians. Using cardboard, paper grocery bags, and construction paper, students would make outfits. Pilgrims made pilgrim hats; Indians made vests out of the bags and headbands with feathers. If the Indians were caught being “good,” they got to make more feathers and put them on their headbands. Because we were always in the same class, we both tried to be on the right side of the room so we could be Indians because we had some idea of our identities, and we knew that something about being the other was not good. In second grade, however, we found ourselves on the settler side. When we complained, the teacher told us that not everyone could be the Indians and it would not be fair to the other kids. My friend

Jason boldly told the teacher, we are real Indians, not pilgrims, and in an act of seven-year-old defiance, we made Indian outfits anyway and added as many feathers as the headbands would hold.

This memory was one of my defining moments, something I have thought about and carried with me ever since. I didn't grow up in a family that recognized their Indigenous identity. My grandmother was born and raised in a small farming community north of Lansing and growing up racism toward people of color was practiced in overt and subtle ways. The high school play was done in blackface, and I often wonder how she felt or if she had to deal with racism directed at her. My grandmother explained how she was told from an early age not to discuss her identity or ancestry with anyone; as she grew older and before her passing, she started talking about her life when she was young, the poverty she came from, and about her grandmother, who lived in a tar-paper shack dried berries on the roof of her home.

My parents moved to Lansing from Saint Johns, Michigan during the 1970s when my father got a job in one of the factories in the area. We lived in the north end of Lansing, which was and still is a low-income area with a high population of Indigenous, Latino, and African American families. It was not the easiest place to live. Racial tensions, poverty, and an active police presence in my neighborhood growing up made life feel uneasy and uncertain. When I entered high school, I participated in the Title 11 and Title 6 Indian Education Programs in the Lansing School District. However, my family was not connected to any reservation community. Neither side was raised to embrace their Native identity and were able, for the most part, to pass as white and obtain the benefits that brought. The urban Native community was the only one I knew, and not until after high school did I develop connections to communities outside of

Lansing through my work as an educator. It was from local community members, elders, and fluent language speakers that I learned about Anishinaabe culture, language, and practices and developed a sense of myself in relation to my Anishinaabe identity and heritage. This dissertation represents my desire to give back to the community that has helped and guided me through life, but it is also an attempt to understand and trace my own families story and identity.

Today, as a community activist and educator, I work with different groups, such as The Indigenous Youth Empowerment Program, Native American Youth Alliance, and the Lansing School District Native American Parent Advisory Committee. I have also worked for over 20 years for Fenner Nature Center. I Used this place to conduct interviews and it is also used collaboratively for community events such as the Ghost Super and for monthly community potlucks. My positionality as a community member, parent, and community advocate made my research and writing sometimes difficult as I worked to maintain balance in the value of my subjective position. During the course of my research and writing I began to notice tensions and conflicts over issues of leadership and programming that targeted youth and the community. Often, I felt I was caught in the middle of these conflicts and had to walk carefully around certain subjects and positions as I worked. As I worked, I also observed the effects these conflicts had on programs and their relationships to belonging and identity, and I saw how important these were to understanding my research questions. It was difficult to write about these because I was so close to the people and the issues, and, at times, I could not distance myself from them. However, it was important to situate myself and my research within these community experiences, tensions, and points of view and to include my own experiences and

viewpoints as well. While conducting my research, writing, and composing my chapters, I worked to describe the tensions and boundaries of language and identity in a way that was beneficial and respectful. Using standpoint theory (Harding 1992) and intersectionality (Hill-Collins 2016) helped me to ground my research in the lives and experiences of those who participated to understand the role of Anishinaabemowin, their relationships to the language and language ideologies, and to Lansing as an Indigenous space to challenge dominant settler colonial histories of erasure and the marginalization of indigeneity from modernity. My positionality and subjectivity are issues I struggle with, but one that is perhaps unavoidable when doing research in a community one is part of and with people who are deeply connected to one's life.

RESEARCH AREA

The people I interviewed are part of the urban Indigenous community in Lansing, Michigan, most were longtime residents but a few came here recently for work or school. Many of these individuals live in diverse households and have various expressions of identity. The area's Native American population is 0.8% of the total population, while the overall percent of Native Americans in the State is 0.6% (United States Census Bureau 2010). Most of these individuals are Anishinaabeg from various reservation communities around the state and Canada, but there are also a large number of Six Nations families, and community members from tribes from other areas of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Within this community there are a large number of fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin from Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve and other reserves on Manitoulin Island in the Manitoulin District of Ontario, Canada

who came to work in the auto industry and made Lansing their home. This community is unique for having one the largest concentrations of fluent speakers in the state. These individuals and the fluidity of their movements and identities connect them to multiple communities, identities, languages, and places. The concept of Indigenous space is defined by Indigenous people in relation to social, political, geographic, and historical understandings that have been influenced by treaties, kinship and ties to the land that often conflict with boundaries and borders of reservations, urban spaces, and modernity that underlie the narrative of Indigeneity from Western and settler colonial perspectives.

Because of the large percentage of fluent speakers from Canada who have made the Lansing area their home, there are many opportunities for community members to engage with the language through various programs and institutions. The language is taught to Native youth in the area involved in the Indigenous Youth Empowerment Program in the Lansing School District. Language classes are also held at the Nokomis Learning Center for community members. However, compared to the overall number of Native people in the area, the percentage who attend these activities is small and infrequent. For the fluent speakers in the area, this becomes a place to socialize and use their first language while sharing it with anyone interested in learning it, including non-Natives. Some of these fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin, while retired, are now engaged in language education in various ways and are a valued resource for community members for their knowledge of the language and culture.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Because my research is focused on concepts of Native space, language, and culture in relation to urbanity and modernity, it was important for me to understand the history of this area prior to becoming the state capital and how it was used by Native people. I also wanted to explore the settler narrative of encounter and vanishing that centers on the life of Chief Okemos and his community. I examined sources from different collections, including the Indiana State Historical Society, the Newberry Library in Chicago, the state of Michigan Historical Library, Michigan State University Library, the Public Library in Okemos, Michigan, numerous digital sources published online by the University of Michigan Library, the Ingham, Eaton and Clinton County historical societies, and census data published online from Ancestry.com. I was also fortunate to have the help and guidance of Dr. James McClurken, who allowed me to research his vast collection of digital materials collected through his work with Michigan tribes. Through these collections, I was able to examine the history of Anishinaabeg communities living in the area over time as they interacted with settlers coming into the area and adapted to the rapid changes that took place as the land was claimed and transformed. I explored reports, letters, and other documents related to Anishinaabe history that mentioned Lansing or the surrounding area. As I did this I also began interviewing community members, looking to find connections between these historical documents and the memories and stories they told me. In many cases I found that these sources were intertwined but only scratched the surface of the areas Indigenous history.

These sources allowed me to understand how they integrated into urban centers early on and used their identities and kinship networks strategically, making places for themselves in

the city while maintaining connections to their identities and histories, laying the foundations of the present-day Native community in Lansing. However, archives don't always give a complete picture of the past or show how they affect the present. It was important for my research and my understanding of place, language, and community to get out and explore the landscape. I traveled to different places and communities to see how they were marked as Indigenous space and how language was used to mark or erase the history and presence of Native people. I visited the stopping places along the Potawatomi Trail of Death, Prophetstown, The Tippecanoe battlefield, and looked at their connections to communities in lower Michigan. I wanted to know how the land had changed and how these spaces were related to by both Indigenous and settler-colonial descendants, as spaces that mark the transformation of the Great Lakes from a Native space to one dominated by settlers; and the narrative of the vanishing of Indians. I also went to reservation communities and other urban Native communities for some of my interviews and examine interconnections between historical and contemporary relationships of kinship, identity, and language.

My research explores the role of language in peoples' everyday lives and the ideological foundations that inform their relationships with Anishinaabemowin. To understand and explore this in the Lansing Native community, I wanted to ground my research in the everyday lives and history of the people who live, work, and call this place home. Historical records helped me understand the importance of this place as a cultural contact zone, and as an intersection of movement and migration, and the diversity and complexity of communities that were here and how they adapted to the transition of the landscape from an Indigenous space to a settler-colonial one. However, many things are missing in these sources that are important to my

research. Why did people come here? Why did they stay, and what makes this a Native community? I chose to use for my research open-ended ethnographic interviews to investigate these questions, to discover others I did not think of, and to involve the community in both presenting and understanding the role of language, identity, and place. Interviews allow for an understanding of the complex ways that people experience the world from their own point of view, creating a critical reconstruction of the meaning of marginalized people's social experience (Anderson et al. 1990; Geiger 1986). My goal was to understand how individuals create space through language use and the ideologies that lay behind how Native languages are positioned as a symbolic marker versus a communicative system by listening to them describe their relationships with Anishinaabemowin and the ideologies that inform them. Using interviews as a methodology for collecting data allows for an in depth understanding of why and how people use language and how they negotiate their identities and claim space through language. It also allowed me to develop and adapt questions to create a more meaningful understanding of the issues and to find new directions that may have not been apparent in the beginning (Anderson et al. 1990). I sought out and interviewed elders and fluent speakers (mostly men who migrated from Canada) and community members who are language learners or support language programs. I also interviewed others who fall outside of these groups who have also made Lansing their home. During the course of my research I interviewed 24 individuals in one on one and group settings and across ages and genders. However, the majority of the participants I interviewed were women who were not fluent speakers. Many of these women described themselves as both Indigenous and multi-ethnic. Because relationships to language and language revitalization were important to my research questions, I included

fluent speakers, language learners, and non-speakers of Anishinaabemowin in my research. I was able to interview across generations among women, mothers and daughters, aunts and nieces, and grandmothers and grandchildren. I Also had two group interviews, one made up of men that was recorded prior to my data collection, and the other was women community members who were involved in the parental advisory committee that oversees Indigenous education programs for the Lansing School District.

My research questions focused on the participant's family history, the reasons they and their families came to Lansing, their home communities and kinship networks. For my research, it was important to examine different views and linguistic practices, particularly those that may be silenced or hidden by ideologies and cultural practices that favor heritage language use and fluency as ideal markers of belonging and authenticity. My other questions sought to understand participants' views on language and language revitalization, how active they were in learning Anishinaabemowin, how they were learning the language, and, finally, if they felt that keeping the language or losing the language would affect their personal or community identity.

While there are exceptions, the majority of the visible language teachers and language bearers in this area are men. Women are predominantly active in roles that center on maintaining family and community through the maintenance of kinship networks between groups and communities. Women are also the primary organizers of educational and community events, passing on Native identity and culture through food, crafts, and cultural knowledge. However, because they don't see themselves as fluent speakers or language teachers, often very little or no language is present during these activities. A critical part of my

research was to interview women in the community across different generations and within families to understand their roles in the community and their relationships to language as a marker of identity, belonging, and authenticity.

Participant observation was also a large part of this research. There are many events that occurred around the state, such as gatherings and conferences specifically created as spaces to learn and share knowledge of Anishinaabemowin and ideologies associated with the importance of the language as a carrier of culture, identity, and traditional knowledge. There are language camps that different tribes put on through the summer that bring together people from many locations. These are places to learn how language is conceptualized and how belonging is created through language at these events. I also attended conferences, such as Anishinaabemowinteg in Sault Saint Marie, Michigan. The annual Anishinaabemowinteg conference focuses on Anishinaabemowin scholarship and language revitalization and draws presenters, fluent speakers, educators, and language learners from urban and reservation communities across the Great Lakes. The goals of the conference are to create a forum for sharing knowledge and experiences that facilitate the revival and revitalization of Anishinaabemowin. Through participant observation, I was able to observe how language was being taught, who was teaching it, and how age, gender, and gender roles influenced issues of power, authority, and authenticity.

LIMITATIONS AND ISSUES

There were important limitations and issues that I had to address in this study. The first relates to the population and cultural dynamics of Native American communities in the Great

Lakes area. The second deals with the issue of language and what it means to be a speaker of Anishinaabemowin. While these aspects are not unique to this community, they do need to be addressed, as they influenced how my data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

The first concerns the size of Native communities. In the Great Lakes area, most are only a few hundred to a few thousand people. Many Native people have relatives in multiple urban and reservation communities, and the networks of kinship, culture, and economics that connect them creates complex and interconnected communities and individuals. While this makes it easier as a researcher to gain access through the snowball method, it also made anonymity difficult. Also, many communities are factionalized around important issues like language, who has the right to teach it and to whom. Thus, working with some individuals made it difficult to work with others. It was important from the beginning to present myself and my research to this community and individuals in a way that was both transparent in its goals and negated feelings that I was choosing sides. Also, it was important to understand how my position as an insider, as well as an anthropologist, will affect my ability to gather research.

The second issue is more complex and difficult to navigate. Every person has their own understanding of the language and, thus, different opinions about what it means to be a fluent speaker. For my own definition, I understand fluency to mean any person who can use the language in conversation. For others, to be a fluent speaker means that they are a first speaker of the language, and that English is their second language. One of the questions that arises is how to measure fluency, or even what it means to be fluent. Most language teachers I work with are first-language speakers. It is also important to consider from where these speakers come. For the most part, there are only a few remaining fluent speakers left in the many of the

reservation communities in Michigan. Many are well past the age to pass on their language, or they do not have the knowledge to work as instructors. Many fluent speakers teaching in immersion programs in Michigan come from Canada, particularly from Wikwemikong First Nation, while others come from Minnesota or Manitoba. This brings up the issue of dialects, which is beyond the scope of my dissertation, but it influences the way people position themselves to the language and immersion programs.

The methods I used also presented other limitations. The fractionalization and tensions over identity, blood quantum, and kinship within Native communities sometimes presented problems when it came to working within and between different groups. Also, when it concerns elders, Native people traditionally do not question what they say or interrupt them when they are speaking. Thus, it was challenging at times to create an atmosphere where everyone in the groups I interviewed had an equal opportunity to speak and express their views and experiences in a way that was respectful and met community norms.

This study also examined the way individuals position themselves and the language of their culture through beliefs and linguistic practices. Some of these ideologies are part of the historical legacy of oppression stemming from the boarding school experience and government policies aimed at wiping out Indigenous languages and cultures. Some are part of the dominant culture's current positioning of Indigenous languages in education, literature, economics, and popular culture as inferior or limiting. Other ideologies stem from how individuals and communities position the language as a way to protect it from being exploited by the dominant culture because of its connections to spirituality, oral history, and identity.

INDIGENEITY AND MODERNITY

Indigenous culture, language, and identity are framed within the narrative and discourse of assimilation and vanishing. These processes, informed by the narrative of vanishing, has and continues to marginalize Indigenous cultures, languages, and identities as incompatible and oppositional to modernity, and progress. My research looks locally at the vanishing of Indigenous people, writing them out of existence through language, performance, and historical texts (O'Brien 2010; Buss 2011) or through physical removal and relocation, education, and political termination (Fixico 1990; Wallace 1995) and seeks to disrupt these narratives through the lived experiences of participants in this research through their relationships to language as a marker of identity, and their relationships and experiences of being urban and Indigenous. Urban spaces have long been the center points for Indigenous resistance and persistence, rather than end points along the path of assimilation. Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters (2001) and Evelyn Peters and Chris Anderson (2013) highlight the heterogeneity of Indigenous urban experiences in the United States and Canada while framing the effects of urbanization on Indigenous culture in a way that challenges assumptions and ideologies of Native identity and authenticity in relation to modernity. Indigenous urban spaces are hubs of activism and community network-building, as shown by Renya Ramirez (2007) and as Susan Applegate-Krouse and Heather Howard (2009) show, women are central to maintaining these spaces and communities through activism and leadership. This research expands the scholarship on urban Indigenous identity and history to include the role of Indigenous languages in urban spaces and challenge the notion that cities are where Indigenous languages go to die or irrelevant to modernity. Indigenous urban communities and the networks of

kinship and identity that maintain them have deep historical roots with Indigenous people a part of the fabric of urban spaces. The works of Coll Thrush (2007) and John Low (2016) explore in detail the Indigenous roots of urban spaces, how urban spaces are Indigenous and the focal points and intersections of Indigeneity.

Language and oral history in many Indigenous communities are closely linked to the land and place. Particular places on the landscape are woven into the construction of kinship, identity, and community, and in the construction of language and discourse (Basso 1996; Spielmann 1998). These landscapes are shared experiences that create relationships with other peoples and with other supernatural beings that make up the world (Smith 1995). While they can relate to past historical, social, or supernatural events, they also exist in the present. The power they hold is also part of the present, and part of a community's lived experience and perception (Casey 1996). Language, identity, and the land exist together in fluid and dynamic ways, and these relationships can have layers of meaning (Kelly and Francis 1994). Having relationships to certain places or creating places to grow community and culture is important for the long-term survival of Native languages, and as this dissertation highlights, urban spaces are important and vital for creating and maintaining language, oral history, kinship, and identity when they are also viewed as intersections and as indigenous spaces and homelands.

Language, oral history, and the land, as Patrick Moore and Daniel Tien (2007) explains, are tied together and important for the creation of identity and cultural maintenance. Place names and oral histories remind Native people of their history and help people reaffirm local identity (Palmer 2005; Basso 1996). They are also important as Indigenous communities begin to reclaim these places and resist the dominant hegemony and power to erase and remake

Indigenous history and persistence and rebuild relationships with the land (LaDuke 2005; Brooks 2008). These relationships are maintained through story and memory, creating a sense of belonging important to the continuity of community and identity. This process is an ongoing and evolving, as new relationships, memories, and stories are created or transformed (Thornton 2012). These connections are also relevant to language revitalization and maintenance, as they create a local context for anchoring language and identity. While place is important in the construction of identity and the maintenance of language and culture, it is necessary to see beyond the confines of space and place to look at the larger picture and examine how these things are connected through kinship, movement and migration.

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION, POWER, AND IDENTITY

The theoretical foundations of my research and scholarship approaches language and language revitalization as intersections and spaces of competing and overlapping ideologies and power, where linguistic practices shape and are shaped by the tensions and resistances of history, identity, and belonging. These practices contain multiple and competing ideologies, which influence relationships to culture, identity, and belonging through heritage languages and English as the language of power. My research is informed by the scholarship of Bauman and Briggs (2003) and Fairclough (2011), who see language ideologies as the foundations of hierarchies of social class and power that are defined and marked by language. These define both the power of the dominant class and legitimate existing social relationships and institutions of power and dominance in society that produce and maintain social inequalities. Pierre Bourdieu (1991) shows that language forms a type of wealth that gives power and

prestige to the speaker through linguistic capital, allowing them to manipulate and transverse the boundaries of social structures and the power imbued within them. However, Foucault (1980) maintains that power is not contained with any one person or individual; rather, it exists through the production of domination and resistances interwoven within different kinds of relationships that are capable of being used strategically across linguistic domains. Thus, when conceptualizing language ideologies, I view them in conjunction with social practices and power relationships as a way to understand their multiple intersections, resistances, and variations (Gal 1998).

My research explores the language revitalization and language loss as spaces and practices that mark individuals, identities, and relationships to culture. The discourse around language loss and revitalization creates a social space based on shared history and cultural practices and enables Indigenous people from diverse backgrounds a place for the expressing of a shared solidarity and as a way to frame identity and discourse (Ahlers 2006; Baloy 2011). However, while it is seen by many as vital for the continuances of identity and as a carrier of culture, most people only have a basic understanding and ability to use the language and English is the primary means of communication. While language is important, it is not deemed necessary as a primary or even secondary communicative system, but rather as an ideological and symbolic marker of belonging (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998). It is therefore important to examine the role of language in Native communities and to clarify the ideological influences that underlie relationships between language, culture, and identity in Native communities (Kroskrity 2009). The research of Kroskrity and Field (2009) and Anderson (1998) shows that communities are heterogeneous in their language ideologies and practices because

of social inequalities and the differential historical experiences with colonialism across communities, across generations, and over time.

There are also ideologies of purity, which focus on the oral nature of Native languages and a resistance to linguistic change that threatens the perceived nature and place for Indigenous languages and their ideological role in marking identity. However, many incorporate these ways of using and teaching language into already existing discourses, transforming them to fit local needs (Valentine 1995). Meek (2010) also shows that, while some ideologies support language revitalization, others create disjunctures that inhibit the success of language programs, especially when broad ideologies and policies fail to incorporate local differences. Many of these competing ideologies have their origin in the dominant culture's positioning of Indigenous languages and have been incorporated into local linguistic practices and beliefs. It is thus important not to essentialize discourse and language ideologies, but to ground them on a firm theoretical framework that recognizes their multiplicity, tensions, and relationships to cultural systems and power (Heller and Duchene 2007; Kroskrity 2009).

Language loss and linguistic rights are often positioned in terms of their impact on language diversity, human knowledge, and a loss of perspective that limits our ability to view the world in different ways (Nettle and Romaine 2000). This view tends to look at language shift in a way that focuses on the language itself and not on individuals' loss of language in daily life (Kouritzin 1999). Focusing on language rights rather than the rights of communities threatens to alienate people from their languages and to reify language and linguistic practices (Wee 2011). Language loss is framed as a byproduct of globalization and the movements of people, ideas, and commodities that disrupt and make obsolete local languages and cultures. While

globalization tends to drive the movement toward cultural homogenization, it also drives language revitalization as groups assert their identity and cultural uniqueness (Grenoble and Whaley 2006). However, communities and individuals are complex, and while it might be expected that they preserve their ancestral language, it is often not realistic, desirable, or needed for them to maintain their identity and culture (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1998). Language loss is not monolithic, and every community has different historical experiences with colonization and assimilation and varying levels of language loss. My research is grounded in community experiences with language and the intersections of identity and power that create tension and resistance to language. As Joshua Fishman (2001) argues, communities must take these factors into account when designing and implementing revitalization programs.

Understanding how ideologies of linguistic purism affect communities' relationships to language and language revitalization was essential to my research. Language revitalization movements are often concerned with maintaining purism and authenticity. This is particularly true in situations where there are a small number of remaining speakers and where attitudes exist that equate language change with language death. As Nancy Dorian (1994) shows, contrasting ideologies over authenticity and purism affect revitalization efforts, especially between the desires of older speakers, to maintain certain forms and the linguistic needs of new speakers. Literacy and language documentation, as Mindy Morgan (2009) asserts, dominates language revitalization discourse, and often conflicts with community ideologies of cultural ownership and authority and the oral use of language, even when there is a history of Indigenous language literacy. Literacy, and the standardization of Native languages, is seen by some to threaten language maintenance by creating inauthentic forms. There are also

problems related to inconsistent orthographies used to write down the language by outsiders and their inability to communicate an Indigenous worldview (Wetzel 2006). These issues are indicative of the larger struggle in Native communities that associate some language practices and domains with traditional culture, textual forms with the dominant language, and assimilation. Standardization is also a contested issue, as it has the potential to ignore the linguistic diversity that exists in Native communities (Frawley, Hill, and Munro 2002). Yet, literacy can be important in language revitalization as a way to challenge the power of the dominant language and expand the use and prestige of marginalized languages (Hinton 2001).

GLOBALIZATION, MIGRATION, AND INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Globalization and transnational migration have changed the nature of human society and the nature and scope of the flow of knowledge, capital, and people. Globalization and transnationalism also upset the centralization and borders of power, moving it to the peripheries; spaces that were once seen as the domains of those culturally, linguistically, and racially lay outside of the borders of modernity. Cosmopolitanism, once the status of the urban western elite, is now the status and experience of the other. Michael Kearney (1995) explains that, “Globalization entails a shift from two dimensional Euclidian space, with its centers and peripheries and sharp boundaries, to a multidimensional global space with unbounded, often discontinuous and interpenetrating subspaces” (549). This shift has also changed the ways in which history, anthropology, and the social sciences construct relationships between itself, others, and a world view centered on Western epistemologies and the boundaries of knowledge production. As the peripheries have become the centers, a movement away from

the colonial placement of authors and subjects has shifted the scholarly lens, challenging the boundedness of culture, identity, urban spaces, and rural homelands (M. Kearney 1995; Glick-Shiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992).

Indigeneity is viewed as localized, rooted in nostalgia, essentialist, and anti-progressive, and bound to cultures and histories that are fixed, static, and oppositional to global and transnational identities and modernity. Vizenor (1984) and Deloria (1969) posit that the Native and the Indian serve as imaginary, ahistorical inventions rooted in popular culture's ideologies of Native authenticity and settler narratives of vanishing, that to be a real "Indian" one must conform to what Indians were imagined to be in the past. Thus, as Tomiak and Patrick (2010) show, despite a long and complex history of engagement with global networks and movements, Indigenous peoples are seen as spatially incarcerated and conceptualized as incompatible with transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Indigenous peoples use and engage with transnational spaces and processes to redefine identities and affirm their rights on both local and global scales. Tomiak and Patrick (2010) also assert that, while scholarship has focused on indigenous transnational networks, little work is being done which examines transnational Indigenous movements within nation-states and the ways in which the concept of the nation-state and its prominence as a maker of boundaries and cultures has on masking the movements of Indigenous peoples both within their borders and across them. The increase in internal and international border-crossing by Indigenous peoples, also demonstrates the limits of ethno-racial categories, where the nation-state origin of an individual creates ethnic identity, while concealing Indigenous differences (DeLugan 2010: 145). The erasure of Indigeneity from globalization, transcultural, and transnational networks and movements reinforces ideological

beliefs of the vanishing Indian, the assumed assimilation of urban Natives, and the belief that rural reservation communities represent Native authenticity.

Urban and transnational Indigenous communities and their movements often go unnoticed, or it is assumed that Indigenous people who participate in these movements are a result of modernity and thus represent assimilated and therefore inauthentic identities. Native people have participated in movement and migration and have a long history of living in urban areas (Freeman 2010; Thrush 2001; Low 2016). Transnationalism, like cosmopolitanism, also assumes the rootedness of indigeneity to rural and static spaces that precludes Indigenous participation in global movements, urbanism, and heterogeneous identities. Tomiak and Patrick (2010) show, Indigenous movements and migration mirror the transnational movements of people to urban spaces within and across the borders of the state. Renya Ramirez (2007) expands this by looking at urban centers as “hubs” where the movements of people, ideas, and community collect and return back home. Further, the borders of nation states and urban experiences have shaped Native history, language, and culture in important and dynamic ways (Lobo and Peters 2001), from influencing how Indigenous identity is defined, to the renewal of Indigenous culture and language. Thus, while globalization, migration, and modernity are viewed as driving language loss, they are also creating opportunities to reclaim heritage languages and redefine their roles as ideological and linguistic markers of identity and place.

RE-CONCEPTUALIZING URBAN INDIGENEITY AND MODERNITY

Cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, modernity, and urbanity are terms that reflect Western and Euro-American understandings of relationships with identity, place, and the

ideology of progress as a linear progression. Anishinaabe language, life, and worldview have deep and meaningful understandings of these terms. Exploring these concepts from an Anishinaabe perspective challenges our reliance on Western definitions of these ideas and concepts. For this research, I wanted to understand the concept of community and belonging through Anishinaabe perspectives, and the language was central to that. Rhodes (1985) records that to belong, *dibendaagozi*, also means he or she is owned or controlled. However, I believe this is a poor translation of the meaning of this word. This word *dibendaagozi* contains the roots, *dibendan* /*dibend-/: /dib-/* even, judge, measure; /-end/ act by thought on it; perceive it by thought; and *aagozi*/s/he undergoes action. Thus, I interpret *dibendaagozi* as a relationship that exists in judgment, thought, and action through doing and being in relation to others and the land. I was at first, troubled with this word and the idea of belonging as also being owned and controlled, of not having agency. When I thought about it further, I began to see how I was thinking about it in relation to what those words represent in English and Western ways of knowing. I began to think about it in relation to my experiences living and working in the community, clan identity and responsibilities, and how those concepts are understood through Anishinaabe philosophy, relationships, and reciprocity. When one is asked to come to meetings, organize an activity for the community, tend a fire for ceremony, or hold a feast, the expectations and needs of the community come before one's own. It is a relationship based on responsibility and commitment; it is being embraced and cared for, and caring for others.

Understanding and experiencing these ideas through and the experiences and knowledge of community members challenges our understandings of these concepts and their relationship to Anishinaabe ways of knowing and experiencing and Western concepts of

movement and place. In Anishinaabemowin, modernity and cosmopolitanism are part of a single concept with multiple layers of meaning, expressed through the concept of Mino-bimaadiziwin, or the good life. It was a way of life and behavior that was based on movements as defined in Anishinaabemowin, the word *babaamigozi*, he or she moves his or her residence about, and *babaamaadizi*, s/he lives about; s/he travels about (Pitawanaquat: 2015). The word and concept contains the root verb *bimaadizi*, s/he lives, is alive (Rhodes 1993). To be alive, to live well and live as Anishinaabe, is to be in movement, to be always becoming in relationship to movement, place, and story.

The meaning in words tell stories and speak to the power they have in shaping belonging and place. Native people have been marginalized onto reservations, away from cities and modernity. The word *Ishkonigan*, a reservation, contains the root *ishk*, which means left over. According to Fredrick Baraga (1880), *ishk* is used before some verbs to signify being tired or weary (157). That reservations are defined as left over land or spaces, or places that are associated with sorrow and weariness, is interesting considering the political and historical process that shaped them through treaty-making and the Dawes Allotment Act. While the meanings of *Oodena*, for a town and *gichi-oodena*, for a city, reflect the connections between people who bring them together (Pitawanaquat: 2015). *Oodena* means where there is life, where the hearts gather together. That towns and cities could have such significance in the language underscores the reality that urbanity is and has always been a large part of defining what it is to be Anishinaabeg and central to maintaining relationships. These spaces, both urban and rural, where Anishinaabe create community, are influenced by local histories, practices, political relationships, and language, but what brings them together are the connections and

ties that emerge when they are considered in relationship to what it means to be Anishinaabe, a word that defines both who one is and what one does (Doerfler, Sinclair, and Stark 2013: xvii). Through an understanding of language and culture, what Anishinaabeg do, what defines them as being alive is movement, and the multiple connections and manifestations of Indigenous identity and places that are reclaimed and reimagined. Through my research and writing, I have tried to develop an understanding of these concepts in Anishinaabemowin. However, I realize that there are different words and understandings of these concepts and experiences across communities. My own knowledge of the language is limited and any issues or mistakes in my understanding come from my own interpretations and limited knowledge of the language.

GENDER AND GENDER ROLES IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Gender and gender roles have received little attention in the discourse surrounding language, language revitalization, and linguistic practices. The role of gender is central to my research because gender and gender roles and how individuals navigate them are important aspects of how community is maintained. Gender and gender roles are made visible in the relationships between knowledge, authority, and power. Gender and gender roles are often overlooked when discussing language, language ideologies, and the construction of belonging. Women are at the center of Native American family networks, maintaining extending kinship networks that are influenced by historical tribal mobility and forced removal policies (Red Horse et. al. 1978). Brenda Child (2012) shows that Native women use these networks to survive in cities that maintain urban Indigenous communities of the Great Lakes, the organizations, and centers that help others make the transition to urban life. While women have important roles

as keepers of culture and language, their work is often overshadowed by male-dominated aspects of culture, politics, and activism (Applegate-Krause 2009). Women support and maintain activism on the ground through the maintenance of culture, instilling pride in native identity, community-building, and education (Howard 2009). Indigenous women often struggle against ideologies of male dominance and gender roles within their own communities that limit their power and visibility (Billson 1995). In communities where language loss is taking place, gender has become interlinked with linguistic activities and language choices that can have profound and negative effects on language revitalization and local vernaculars (Cavanaugh 2006). Gender differences and oppositions are not always detrimental to language or cultural revitalization movements they are often complimentary and can work to reinforce and introduce important cultural aspects into language revitalization (Yamada 2001). These roles represent the continuation of cultural values and traditions that women have maintained and adapted to meet the needs of the present (Medicine 2001).

Indigenous women and their roles are largely ignored. This is due to stereotypical views of Indigenous women and western bias that obscures women by focusing on men and male activities (LaFromboise, Heyle, and Ozer 1990). Early observers and writers portrayed Native women as having inferior status and positions in their societies because their tasks centered on caring for the family and home. They also did the more physically demanding work that was associated with men in Western culture. In Native communities, biological gender determined a woman's role only so much as concerned childbearing and family; in social, political, and spiritual aspects, women had a greater degree of freedom and flexibility than men (Kidwell 1978). Indigenous women also had more power than women in Western culture, often

participating in social, political and economic activities usually associated with men (Mathes 1975). The power women wielded was an aspect of Indigenous cultures that missionaries and reformers sought to purge through assimilation and conversion to Western cultural norms and Christianity (Gunn-Allen 1992). Thus, many of the policies aimed at assimilating Native peoples focused on the roles of women. Native households headed by women and economic poverty became reasons for intervention and removal by the state of Indian children into foster care and boarding schools (Fournier and Grey 1997). The creation of the Indian Child Welfare Act was a response to these policies and was spearheaded by Native women (Myers 1981). This and other activism across Indian country that are led by women are rooted in their traditional roles as caregivers, healers, and as the maintainers of language and culture (McGregor 2008).

Indigenous men have also suffered from the dominant culture's stereotypes of gender and gender roles. Indigenous men are stereotyped as the hunters, savage warriors, and noble chiefs. The depiction of Indigenous men and Indigenous masculinity within the colonial narrative as the warrior antagonist who fights progress and Western civilization is juxtaposed with the caricature of Native men as lazy, indolent, and as victims of modernity and progress. These dominant cultural stereotypes have their roots in colonial narratives of encounter and differences in masculinity, masculine roles, and occupations (Cronan 1983). Robert Innes and Kim Anderson (2015) write that there is a lack of theoretical and applied scholarly work about Indigenous men and masculinity or on women who identify with them, as most of the attention has been paid on women and their social and economic conditions. Indigenous men, they write, are faced with distinct gender and racial biases that are made invisible and marginalized by the feminization of poverty and gender violence. Bob Antone (2015) writes that Native men

struggle to find their masculine identities as they have become intertwined with the dominant culture's stereotypes of Indigenous masculinity, power, and violence. He writes that, in Native culture, men's roles as caretakers were tied to fire, and, as such, the roles of men, like a fire, must be brought back and carefully tended by looking to traditional spiritual practices and experiential learning (31-36).

Within the contexts of urban Native communities, women are seen as the caretakers of family and community while the men engage in wage labor and masculine activities that prescribe to Western norms of male behavior and place. Sam McKegney (2014) asserts that, for Native men, the challenge is to develop and cultivate a model of masculinity and men's roles that are not just opposites of women's roles and behaviors but ones that assert the positive social and political potentials of Indigenous masculinity built from and dependent on men's experiences and in solidarity with Indigenous feminist and queer theories (8-9). The role of gender in my research adds to this limited but growing body of scholarship on gender roles and the role of language in the fabric of contemporary Native communities in relation to identity and belonging, by claiming modernity and urban areas as historical and contemporary Native spaces and examining how language, gender roles, and relationships of power mark linguistic spaces and performances.

Native people have been depicted as living at the boundaries of urbanity and modernity, on distant reservations. Those living in urban spaces, the majority of Indigenous people, are seen as assimilated, lost, living in two worlds, and in-authentic. The narrative of vanishing, as written by settlers, policy-makers, and historians, relies on essentializing Native identity and culture to claim Native spaces and erase Native histories. These stories exclude the presence

and participation of Indigenous people in modernity and urban spaces. Locally, this narrative centers on the many stories of Chief Ogemoos and the transformation of this area from an untamed wilderness to civilization. However, this area was and continues to be an important space for many Indigenous communities, as an intersection of place and movement where Anishinaabe and other Native peoples came together in both peace and conflict. In the next chapter, I examine the historical use of Lansing as a cultural contact zone and the settler narrative of vanishing that has erased the deep history and complexity of this area as an Indigenous homeland and its importance as a place of movement and migration that continues to weave and shape the fabric of the contemporary Native community in relation to identity, culture, and language.

CHAPTER TWO: THE INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF LANSING AND ITS ERASURE

"That a mixed occupancy of the same territory by the white and red man is incompatible with the safety or happiness of either, is a position in respect to which there has long since ceased to be room for difference of opinion. Reason and experience have alike demonstrated its impracticability. The bitter fruits of every attempt heretofore to overcome the barriers interposed by nature have only been destructive, both physically and morally, to the Indian; dangerous conflicts of authority between the federal and state governments, and detrimental to the individual prosperity of the citizen, as well as to the general improvement of the country. The remedial policy, the principles of which were settled more than thirty years ago under the administration of Mr. Jefferson, consists of an extinction, for a fair consideration, of the titles to all the lands still occupied by the Indians within the states and territories of the United States, their removal to a country west of the Mississippi much more extensive and better adapted to their condition than that in which they then resided; the guarantee to them by the United States of their exclusive possession of that country forever, exempt from all intrusions by white men, with ample provision against external violence and internal dissensions, and the extension to them of suitable facilities for their advancement in civilization."¹

-President Martin Van Buren 1888

¹ Van Buren used this passage in his address to congress in 1888 in reference to the use of soldiers to remove Pottawatomie from Indiana at the request of the governor as both a necessary evil and one that would ultimately benefit the Indians. From "Removal of the Pottawatomie Indians from northern Indiana; embracing also a brief statement of the Indian policy of the government, and other historical matter relating to the Indian question." Daniel McDonald. Plymouth, Ind., D. McDonald & Co., Printers, 1899. pg. 58.

The above passage, taken from a speech by President Martin Van Buren in 1888, sheds light on the role the “Indian,” played in creating spaces for modernity and the ideologies of progress, civilization, and Manifest Destiny. Indigenous people were imagined as fixed to the margins of modernity and civilization in the wilderness, and later, on reservations. Those who integrated themselves into urban spaces and life-ways became invisible as “Indians.” Taking this thought further, Gerald Vizenor writes in *Fugitive Poses* that the Indian and the Native serve different functions in the narrative of vanishing and the construction of modernity.

Natives and Indians are the savage in the pieties of civilization, nationalism, and modernity of a constitutional democracy. Natives are an absence in histories, and that national vanishment has many names and contingencies. The Indian, on the other hand, is the counter discourse of modernity. The savage is named the cause of national paranoia in captivity narratives and, in other frontier stories of sacrifice and redemption, a cultural hyperparasite and structural scapegoat; one parasite is the host of the other in the course of savages, civilization, and victomry. Nostalgia, remorse, the row of tradition over reason, are the natural deconstruction of the Indian as a simulation of modernity (Vizenor 1998: 39).

The function of the “Indian” and the “Native,” that Vizenor posits, is to create modernity by structuring the “savage” as oppositional to progress, a force of nature that civilization must overcome, and only after the savage is concurred can civilization and modernity take root and

flourish. To accomplish this, Indigenous people and communities had to not only be physically removed, but they also had to be erased and rewritten through narrative, policy, and history in a way that legitimated their removal as a preordained precursor to colonization and settlement. In this chapter, I examine the Indigenous history of Lansing, Michigan, also known as Nkwejong, the place where one river flows into the next. This name came about after conversations with community members and fluent speakers as a result of my research to what Lansing would be called in Anishinaabemowin. I could not find any historical sources that name this space prior to settlement; thus, this name represents contemporary understandings of Indigenous space by the community through the language in relation to physical features, historical uses of this space, and the philosophical importance of water and movement in Anishinaabe worldview.

The settler colonial narrative describes this area as a barren wilderness occupied by wild animals and a scattering of wandering Indians who would eventually perish as the seeds civilization were planted. Exploring the foundations of the local settler narrative of the vanishing Indian and locating it within the larger narrative of manifest destiny that defines American history and identity is important, as it has been used to obscure the scope and importance of local Indigenous communities in the creation of urban spaces and their continued presence in these spaces after settlement. Through historical documents that speak to the presence of the local Indigenous communities, local Indigenous oral history, and census records that mark Indigenous people living in the area, I will show how Lansing, like other urban spaces, was and continued to be important and claimed as Indigenous space. This space, and the Indigenous people who claimed it, were fluid, with movement and migration an essential and defining aspect of Anishinaabe identity, language, and place-making. Anishinaabe stories of

movement and migration, as well as Indigenous concepts of place, are a unifying theme throughout my research and inform my understanding of the relationships between Anishinaabemowin, identity, and community in urban spaces.

ANISHINAABE AADIZOOKAANAN

Anishinaabe creation stories, *Aadizookan*, place them here on Turtle Island. While archaeologists debate and refine the arrival of human beings to the Americas, Indigenous people continue to look to their oral histories and their creation stories to inform them of their beginnings, of where they belong, and as a counter-narrative to Western scientific, political, and popular culture narratives of Indigenous origins. Originally, these stories were written on birch bark scrolls and kept by members of the Midewewin (Benton-Banai 2010; Benz and Williamson 2005). Anishinaabeg communities have their own local variations of the creation story and other stories fundamental to Anishinaabeg identity and spirituality. In one version of the story of the Great Flood, Nanahbozo, the Original Man, with the help of the animals trapped with him, creates new land and a new beginning for the world on the back of a turtle (Benton-Banai 2010). However, Basil Johnston tells the flood story differently, with Sky Woman as the one who recreates the world on the back of a turtle using earth retrieved by Muskrat. She would later give birth to a boy and girl who would become the first Anishinaabe (Johnston 1976). These variations in oral history and Indigenous ways of knowing have been used to discount them as inconsistent, or as products of political, social, and cultural invention and bias, that have little to say about the true origins of Indigenous people (Mason 2008). However, a close look at the scientific theories of human origins in the Americas shows multiple and

competing beliefs and interpretations held by archeologists and anthropologists that, while founded on the scientific method, also contain bias and political, cultural, and social influences (Harding 1992). In my research, it is not my purpose to uphold one as superior to the other. However, I seek to include Anishinaabeg oral history and knowledge as a foundation of my research because it is viable, valuable, and based on generations of inquiry and experience. It also helps me remember that there are multiple stories and experiences that can inform my understanding of what it means to be Anishinaabe and Indigenous and to view each within the context of people and communities that experience them.

Anishinaabe stories of movement and migration are also an important part of my understanding of Nkwejong, its history, and the role language plays in shaping and maintaining this urban Indigenous identity. According to Eddie Benton-Benai (2010), the migration story begins with the ancestors of the Anishinaabe living in the east next to the Atlantic Ocean. After the arrival of seven prophets who brought the teachings of the seven fires, the Anishinaabe were warned that they must move to the place where food grows on water. Many left following the course of the Saint Lawrence River to the Great Lakes, making seven stops along the way, including Bawating and Manitoulin Island. Finally, they arrived at the place where Manoomin (wild rice) grows. During the migration, three groups of Anishinaabe emerged: the Ojibwe were the faith-keepers, the Odawa were responsible for providing for the people, and the ishkodaywatommi (Pottawatomie) were responsible for maintaining the sacred fire. They became known as the Confederation of the Three Fires (Benton-Benai 2010: 94-99).

The migration story is another fundamental part of Anishinaabe oral history and cultural knowledge that is shared by local communities and Anishinaabe communities across the Great

Lakes. This story is told in different versions in the published histories of the Saginaw Chippewa and the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians. (Benz and Williamson: 2005; McClurken: 1991). While many understand, and, to some extent, acknowledge Western scientific explanations of Indigenous origins, the belief that Anishinaabe people were created and placed here by the creator remains a powerful belief that is practiced in their relationships to land and water as caretakers and protectors. Some of the people I interviewed learned about the creation story and the migration story through ceremony, but most learned these oral histories through educational programs taught by elders and community members in the local school district and the Lansing Indian Center. As I will discuss later in chapter four, urban education programs for Native youth and the larger Native community are important spaces where language, identity, and Anishinaabe ways of knowing are passed down, shared, and reimagined. Movement and migration are central to Anishinaabe ways of knowing, language, and cultural identity. The contemporary movements and migrations of Indigenous people to this area trace their roots back to pre-contact subsistence patterns and relationships to land, resources, and kinship responsibilities. As the story presented above highlights, these aspects of Anishinaabe identity and culture evolved as the people migrated to the Great Lakes.

THE ARCHEOLOGY AND ETHNO-HISTORY OF THE GRAND RIVER AND LOWER

Ethno-historical and archaeological records speak to the movements and place-making of Indigenous people. The defining feature of the landscape and ecology of the Lansing area are its system of rivers. In 1790, Hugh Heward, an Englishman living in Detroit and working for John Askin, explored lower Michigan by following the Huron and Grand Rivers across the state,

making his way to Chicago. At a place where the Grand River meets the Red Cedar River and Sycamore Creek, Heward's party stopped to repair his canoes at hunting cabins that belonged to a group of Saginaw Chippewa. He described the area as a place of high, broken land and pine trees, where on a river that flowed from the east, he found two cabins of Indians from Saginaw who were building Canoes.² When Heward explored this stretch of the Grand River in 1790, he was entering a place that had a long history of use and occupation by Indigenous people. This was not an empty wilderness but a place of mobility and exchange, a shared space that was claimed and used by different Indigenous communities. The Grand River, and the trails that came together here, were a shared space for Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwa communities. It was a homeland, a trade route, and an intersection for the seasonal migration for Anishinaabeg who came here to fish, trade, plant crops, and gather maple sugar.

Numerous trails also intersected at this place, connecting communities through trade and kinship. One trail came west from Detroit following the Grand River and Red Cedar River near the MSU campus and continues east to Grand Rapids. This trail became what is today Grand River Ave. Other paths connected the local community to communities in Saginaw Bay and southwest Michigan (Hinsdale 1931). Anishinaabe located their villages upland from the main body of the Grand River, which seasonally floods, and along the smaller rivers that feed it, such as the Looking Glass and the Red Cedar (Hornbeck-Tanner 1987). With numerous interesting waterways and trails, the area was a natural hub for the movement of people and an important place to gather seasonal resources. As I show later in this chapter, these trails also

² Heward's journal was the first to describe this area and the people who lived here in detail, but these details were recorded after he completed his journey. Journal of Hugh Heward, Sunday, April 24th 1790. <https://archive.lib.msu.edu/MMM/JA/09/a/JA09a001p008.pdf>. Accessed 2 Sept. 2015.

facilitated the movement of settlers into the area and were used to bypass swamps, wetlands, and locate farmable lands with the assistance of local Indigenous people.

The rivers and waterways of lower Michigan have always been important to Indigenous people in the area. The Grand River is the largest and longest river system in lower Michigan, with a watershed encompassing roughly 5,572 miles. Archaeological sites located along the Grand River and its tributaries have shown that it has been used by Native people from the Paleo Indian period (7000 B.C.) through the historic period. This area provided many seasonal resources from wetland and flood plain areas, such as water fowl and deer, and in upland areas, there was an abundance of nut-bearing trees and sugar maple (Hansen 2010).

Subsistence patterns in lower Michigan reflected a strategy based on long-distance mobility to take advantage of seasonally and spatially determined resources. While these groups were limited in size by the availability and reliability of resources, they remained connected to each other through the networks of riverine systems moving through the interior, gathering the specific resources they needed and returning to larger multi-use settlements (Lovis, Donahue, and Holman 2005). These larger settlements, located along river systems including the Grand River and Kalamazoo River in the western part of lower Michigan and the Saginaw Valley, highlight the importance of these waterways for movement and migration in shaping both cultural change and continuity. These were multi-use spaces that were often occupied by a mixture of groups who occupied these areas and shared resources at the same time or close proximity to each other (Brashler and Holman 1985).

With contact and interactions with Europeans, new settlement patterns and patterns of resource use evolved that were not stable and relied heavily on materials acquired through

trade, which also consolidated social and economic power within these communities to individuals who had access to these goods. This also affected settlement patterns and subsistence use as well as socio-political structures (Theler and Boszhardt 2006). These changes, such as the building of confederations and alliances, have been seen as more recent developments in response to conflicts with Europeans. However, new interpretations of material culture and oral history show that these alliances were more complex than previously thought and based on earlier relationships that predate European influence (Wonderley 2005). While Indigenous people adapted to the changes taking place during the fur trade and into the removal period, the underlying cultural traditions and many of the responses to these changes remained consistent with their roots in the Early Woodland period (O’Gorman and Lovis 2006). These cultural traditions and responses are rooted in the oral history of Anishinaabe that describe the importance of kinship and the role of movement and migration for subsistence that define Anishinaabe identity and place-making. Examples of these oral histories can be found in the depositions taken for the Indian Claims Commission of 1953, where elders from the Little Traverse Bay Band testified to the importance of seasonal migrations from Harbor Springs to Chicago to hunt and trap, and make maple sugar in the spring near Benton Harbor, and travel back to Harbor Springs to plant crops and fish. These seasonal moments maintained kinship networks between the Pottawatomie living in southwest Michigan and the Odawa in the north and would later become important when Pottawatomie fled north to resist removal (The Indian Claims Commission 1953).

NARRATIVES OF SETTLEMENT AND ENCOUNTER

Before the arrival of Euro-American settlers, Anishinaabe living in the area had undergone a great deal of cultural change and stress from the impact of the fur trade, intertribal warfare, and many the wars and conflicts with England, France, and the United States. Hugh Heward, in his travels through the area in 1790, describes communities hit hard by the effects of alcohol and dwindling resources. He describes those he meets on the Grand and Huron Rivers as “vagabonds” and “refugees” of the Ojibway, Ottawa, and Potawatomie tribes.³ When early settlers encountered these communities they attributed what they saw to their being “primitive” and under developed. While they were seen as the original owners of the land, their rights to the land were seen as inferior because of their habits in relation to seasonal movements and land use:

The Indians who principally inhabited or occupied this region belonged to the Saginaw tribes of Chippewa’s or Ojibwas. There were no very important villages or trails in Eaton or Ingham County except the village of Okemos, the chief, where the white man's village of the same name now stands, and a principal trail following substantially the valley of Grand River. They had numerous camping-places during the hunting and fishing seasons, and while making their annual supplies of maple-sugar in the spring (Ellis 1880).⁴

³ HUGH HEWARD'S JOURNAL FROM DETROIT TO THE ILLINOIS: 1790 The John Askin Papers 1928 in Vol. 1 of the Burton Historical Records Journal of a Voyage made by Mr. Hugh Heward to the Illinois Country. <http://archive.lib.msu.edu/MMM/JA/09/a/JA09a001p008.pdf>

⁴ Ellis, Franklin, 1880 History of Shiawassee and Clinton Counties, Michigan : with illustrations and biographical sketches of their prominent men and pioneers. Philadelphia: D.W. Ensign & Co. pg. 189. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=micounty;idno=BAD1049.0001.001>. Assessed, 13 August 2015.

As the above excerpt shows, Indigenous people of lower Michigan and elsewhere were recognized by settlers as being the “occupants” and “inhabitants” of the land rather than the possessors. That right was reserved to Euro-American settlers who brought progress and civilization to the wilderness. Indigenous rights to the land and its resources were further eroded through the ideologies of Manifest Destiny and the narrative of the vanishing Indian. Indian rights to claim the land were also eroded by imagining them as recent arrivals who dispossessed previous cultures. Many settlers and explorers believed that the many mounds that existed in the area were the work of a more ancient and advanced race of people who predated them. Indians were seen as incapable of creating such monuments because their cultures, languages, and technology were primitive. In their writings on the history of the area, settlers cast doubt on the relationships between these structures and local Indigenous people:

....many years ago, before the surveyor's transit or compass had marked the course of a meridian or a base line across the peninsula, this same territory could not have been described much more correctly than as a wilderness tract, extending from the Grand River north and east, embracing nearly the whole of the valleys of the Wabwaysin (Looking-Glass) and Du Plain Rivers to their heads; as also the valley of the Shiawassee River, from the point where its two principal branches mingle their waters, down the course of the main stream for more than two-thirds of the distance to the place where it enters the Saginaw. This was a country of dense forests and timbered openings, occasionally interspersed with small prairies, tamarack swamps, and marshes covered with coarse, rank grass; and it was well watered by the streams above mentioned, and their tributaries. Its only human inhabitants at that time were the native Indians, and it is with these people that its history commences; though the existence here of numerous earthen mounds (which were of unknown origin, and wholly unlike anything known to have been constructed by those to whom we apply the term aborigines) has induced the belief that they were the works of a people who were superior to the Indians (Ellis 1880).⁵

⁵ Ellis, Franklin, 1880 History of Shiawassee and Clinton Counties, Michigan: with illustrations and biographical sketches of their prominent men and pioneers. Philadelphia: D.W. Ensign & Co. pg. 10.

Mound Building has a long history in the Great Lakes. Ethno-historical and archaeological evidence points to their association to the Midewewin in Birch Bark Scrolls (Megan, C.L., and O'Shea 2006). Other sources show that mounds were still being constructed when the Jesuits arrived in the Great Lakes (Doty, Congdon, Thornton 1940). These mounds served multiple purposes, but they were important as a way to mark the landscape and create a place for pan-residential and intra-community interactions (Howley 2012). Great Lakes Indigenous communities created complex centers of spiritual and cultural life that were centered near intersections of movement and migration, such as waterways and trails; these mounds may have served as places where community identity and kinship were centered and, in many ways, were urban hubs and intersections.

The Grand River was both a route and an intersection that facilitated mobility and exchange between different communities of Anishinaabeg. It was a cultural interaction zone and a space of tension and conflict. During the Fur Trade era, American and European interests and refugees from other Native communities fleeing violence and the growing numbers of European settlers moving west increased these tensions, as different groups fought for control and access to the area. From the beginning of the historic period to the time of final removal, 20 different tribal groups migrated into and through the lower Great Lakes and upper Ohio Valley. Hugh Heward, mentioned above, described those he encountered on the river as vagabonds and refugees, Odawa and Potawatomie (Heward 1790: 350). This area served as a

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=micounty;idno=BAD1049.0001.001>. Assessed 13 Aug. 2015.

refuge and route for many who were fleeing inter-tribal conflicts during the fur trade and the loss of land and resources during the removal period. Some of these migrants and refugees intermingled with local communities and formed strategic alliances and confederations, while others were here only temporarily (Sweatman 2010). These movements also created tensions and conflicts. Early settlers to the area talk about the local Chippewa's' fear of the Sauk, one of these groups.

The Sauk came into the region sometime in the late 1600s and settled around Saginaw Bay, which is named after them: Saginong, the place of the Sauk. The Sauk and the Misquaki were driven out of Saginaw and central Michigan by a combined force of Chippewa and Odawa after a violent period of conflict. The escaping Sauk and Misquaki fled to Wisconsin following the Grand River. Local Anishinaabe felt that their spirits still haunted the area and blamed them for accidents, missing people, and other misfortunes that occurred (Ellis 1880: 10-11). This is remembered also in the written and oral histories of Odawa and Ojibwe communities that occupy the areas today (Webkamigad 2015; Benz and Williamson 2005). The movements and migrations of Indigenous people in the area in historical times were driven by external forces that created conflicts between Indigenous communities and internal changes as communities adapted to social, cultural, and economic stress. As settlers began to dominate the landscape and the social, political, and economic power in the area and as treaties eroded away tribal access to land and resources, Indigenous settlements were renamed and absorbed into "civilization" (Hornbeck-Tanner 1987). It was during this time period that the local settler colonial narrative of the vanishing Indian, as part of the larger national narrative of Manifest

Destiny and progress, began erasing the complex history of Indigenous people, their connections to the land, and their relationships to urban development.

KINSHIP, GENDER, AND THE LAND

Anishinaabe culture, society, and worldview was based on kinship and reciprocity and these were foundation of Anishinaabe relationships to land, to place, and to the movements and migrations of Anishinaabe during the seasonal round, for ceremony, trade, and negotiations. Before tribe and individual, one's clan and clan responsibilities took precedent. Anishinaabe were organized by a clan (*ndoodem*), and clan identity was passed down through the father. Clan responsibilities dictated relationships between family members and created kinships connections that created networks of kinship across the Great Lakes. These kinship relationships and responsibilities also connected Anishinaabe to the land, their ancestors, and these relationships were a source of knowledge, spirituality, subsistence, and law (Simpson 2008; Cleland 2011; Bohaker 2006). Kinship and reciprocity also extended to relationships with spiritual and supernatural beings that occupied the land and who had power such as *Mishipeshu* the water-panther and the Animikiig the thunderers (Smith 1995).

Ancestors played a large role in concepts of kinship, place, and belonging. Witgen (2012) describes how Anishinaabe created alliances and kinship through the Feast of the Dead Ceremony with the Dakota their traditional enemies. This ceremony, borrowed from the Wyandot, culminated in feasting, the reburial of the dead together in a common grave, and gift giving both to the living and the dead. Coming together to bury their dead, Dakota and Anishinaabe could imagine a shared history and past and made traditional enemies into kin

(31). Thus kinship and kinship practices were flexible and adaptable and used across a wide variety of needs and experiences to create kinship connections and maintain kinship networks. This adaptability also allowed individuals to use identity and kinship relationships strategically as a way to form alliances through marriage, and as a way to exercise power and leadership (Chute 1998). While clan identity was passed down through men; women also used kinship to exercise power as leaders, negotiators, and traders during the fur trade and it was through women and women kinship that the French and other European powers negotiated with during the fur trade (Sleeper-Smith 2001; Bohaker 2006).

Through changes that took place during the fur trade, treaty making, settlement, and removal periods, Anishinaabe ties to land through kinship and clan identities were challenged and transformed. While still important, identity and knowledge related to *ndoodemag* were disrupted by changes in subsistence, trade, and settlement by Euro-Americans who disrupted traditional Anishinaabe culture and life ways. However, kinship remained important and flexible. Anishinaabe remained connected to each other through kinship that was measured in different ways. While *ndoodem* was measured and passed on paternally, women were and remained the center of family and community. Anishinaabe women used their kinship and their kinship networks strategically, and, as I show in the next chapter, these kin networks and kinship expanded to include indigenous people who lived and worked in urban areas, and indigenous people from other Nations and cultures.

CHIEF OKEMOS AND THE LOCAL NARRATIVE OF THE VANISHING INDIAN

For my research, I wanted to understand how this narrative of vanishing shaped the story of Native people of this area and to uncover some of the Native history that had been erased. The official history of Lansing, as presented on its web page, states, “Long before Lansing became Michigan's capital city, the region was unsettled, full of dense forests and abundant wildlife. The only occupants were Native Americans who survived by living off the land along the state's longest river.”⁶ In these two brief sentences, the identity of the local Native community is erased and made insignificant in relation to the history that begins with the surveying and settlement of the area by Euro-Americans. Despite multiple historical sources I found that spoke to the presence and complexity of the local Indigenous community prior to and during the process of settlement, this remains the way Indigenous people are seen and positioned in relation to modernity. Lansing’s transformation from an Indigenous space to an urban space required the erasure of this Indigenous history and people.

No person occupies a larger place in the local narrative of the vanishing Indian than Chief Okemos. Okemos (Ogimaas) was born sometime around 1762 on the Shiawasse River. Different local histories record slightly different events concerning his life and death, but what can be said is that Ogimoos was and continues to be viewed as the archetype of the noble savage, the vanishing Indian, and the focal point for the creation of the settler narrative of the area. Okemos, Michigan is marked with street signs that celebrate an imagined Native history, with the names of tribes that never occupied this area, words like Tomahawk and Indian Hills

⁶ “History of Lansing” <http://www.lansingmi.gov/lansing-history>. Accessed 17 Mar. 2016.

that stereotype Native people and their culture and made-up words that sound authentic but have no meaning except to reinforce and celebrate this narrative. Local residents refer to themselves as the chiefs, after the local high school mascot, and local businesses use the word chief or the image of the Indian headdress in their logos. All of these celebrate this imagined history of the area's Native presence by centering on the life of Ogimoos. These memories and stories often depict the local Native community as small, living in primitive and destitute conditions on the borders of civilization, and clinging to the past (Durant 1880: 189).

Ogimoos was the leader of the Ojibwa community that was located on the banks of the Red Cedar River. Ogimoos was present at many of the treaties signed by Anishinaabeg in southern Michigan that ceded lands. On the treaty of Saginaw, signed September 24, 1819, his name is listed as Okemans, while, in another treaty signed in Flint on December, 20, 1833, it is recorded as Ogimous meaning the Little Chief, or Chief of subordinate authority (Vogel 1986: 34). Language and words are important and so I use the word Ogimoos, (little Chief) to describe the man from an Anishinaabe perspective, and Okemos to describe the town named after him and the settler-colonial image of the vanishing Indian cast from his life and death.

The town of Hamilton, which was founded near that location, began as a trading post, later becoming a focal point for settlers who were attracted to the area's rich soil and lumber. Ogimoos was a popular figure during the early days of settlement. He was famous for participation in the War of 1812 and his kinship to Pontiac, famous for his siege on Detroit and resistance to American expansion and settlement of lower Michigan. During the War of 1812, Ogimoos attacked a United States cavalry unit near Sandusky with other Anishinaabeg allied to the British. During this battle, he was severely wounded by a saber to the head that left a large

scar, which he covered with a turban-style headdress, seen in his photographs. According to Emerson Greenman, the chief was second in command to Tecumseh at the battle of Fallen Timbers. After ending his days as a warrior, Ogimoos became a local leader, who used his celebrity to gain access to resources and maintain his family in the area. Greenmail writes, "From 1839 to about 1858, Ogimonse and his band wandered around Michigan between Lansing, Saginaw, and Detroit" (Greenman 1961).⁷ Through his leadership and kinship networks Ogimoos continued to help his people and resist removal by creating connections with local settlers to remain in the area and resist removal.

Ogimoos was a common sight around Lansing during its early years and was on friendly terms with many of Lansing's founding families. He was famous for walking into people's homes and inviting himself to dinner. Many considered it a great honor for the leader to come to their homes, and settlers readily feed him, traded with him and his band for supplies, and listened to the stories he told of his exploits in war and life (Stillman 1978). Many settlers wrote these stories down and passed them on to writers and historians, leading to many different remembrances of his life and experiences that sometimes conflict with each other. Virgil Vogel (1986) writes, "Ogimonse died at his camp on the Looking-glass [river] above Dewitt [Clinton County] in the year 1858. He was rumored to have been almost 100 years old when he died. However, attorney William Webber mentioned court testimony by Ogimoos at Saginaw in 1850, in which the chief said: "I am 76 years old; have lived in Michigan 48 years" (Vogel 1986). In 1859, the town of Hamilton, was renamed Okemos to honor the Ojibwe leader who died in

⁷ Ogimoos and his band continued to stay in the area after losing their land in Hamilton, Michigan, traveling between Pishminiconning in Portland, Michigan, the Indian village at Dewitt, Michigan and Canada. Emerson F. Greenman 1961 *Indians of Michigan*. Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission.

1858. The death of Ogimoos, the man and leader, and the birth of Okemos the place and myth, fed into the larger narrative of the vanishing Indian and marked the final transition of the area from a Native space to a place dominated by Western civilization, progress, and modernity.

By focusing on the life and persona of Okemos, the lives and stories of other Native people living in the area were omitted from history. This narrative and many others, with their focus on the roles and stories of Native men, erases the role women played in the local community. Native women played active roles in the survival and persistence of Indigenous communities during the nineteenth century, using kinship networks created and maintained through intermarriage, religion, and economics as a means to survive and negotiate the changes taking place during the settlement of the frontier as cultural mediators (Sleeper-Smith 2001). While there are few records in this area that speak to the presence and importance of Indigenous women except those mentioned above, historical accounts of Lansing's early history talk about Native women acting as midwives and supplying food to settlers who relied on them to find land to clear and build their homes. The Cooley family, one of the first to come to the area, relied on local Anishinaabe women for their survival and subsistence. "On the 6th of January 1840, Mrs. Cooley gave birth to a son, which is said to have been the first male child born in the township. He was named Nathan L. Cooley. A friendly squaw performed the role of physician and mid-wife and was the only woman present" (Durant 612). Women were an essential aspect of cultural contact in the area but were looked down upon for the roles they performed in Anishinaabe society. Anishinaabe women were seen as squaws who performed all the menial labor (Durant 198). Yet, without this labor, many of the settlers would not have been able to survive. The myth of the frontier and the cultural and historical focus on

Indigenous male figures, such as Chief Ogimaas, obscure the prominent role Anishinaabeg women played in the persistence and perseverance of Indigenous communities and culture. These omissions also diminish the scale and scope of Native occupation, use of the area, and the adaptability of Anishinaabeg culture, limiting it to a small group of Anishinaabe living out their final days on the margins of its towns and settlements. Those who remained or who continued to pass through the area were seen as poor and destitute examples of their race: “Thus passed away the once-proud owners of the land, leaving a sickly, depressed, and eventually a begging and debased remnant of a race that a few years before had scorned a mean art and whom a mean act was scarcely ever known. I do not think I possess and morbid mentality for Indians. I simple wish to present them as we found them; what they are now is easily seen in the few specimens left around us” (Lamb 1976).

The narrative of encounter and vanishing that centers on Okemos simplifies the extent and scale of the Native presence in the area. Ogimaas was but one leader, and the small community that occupied the area where the town of Okemos stands was but part of a larger local network of Anishinaabe communities. In the same works of historians who were writing that the area was sparsely occupied by Indians contains references to a larger network of interconnected Anishinaabe settlements situated along the Grand, Maple, Looking Glass, and Shiawasse Rivers. The history of Shiawasse and Clinton County, written and compiled by Franklin Ellis in 1880, describes these villages and their locations. Near the town of Dewitt, just north of Lansing, was a village called *Wabwahnahseepee*, led by *Wahbaskonoquay* (White-locks) and his son, *Canorbway*. I could not find any other reference to *Wahbaskonoquay* (the white haired one) in other writings from this period or later that spoke of this community and

what happened to them after settlement and removal. However, according to Ellis, after settlement, Dewitt remained a meeting place and temporary camp for migrating Anishinaabeg who continued to use and travel through the area (15).

South on the Grand and the Red Cedar rivers, Anishinaabe led by Okemos, and two others; Manitocorbway and Shingwauk maintained villages. These communities were engaged in agriculture, growing large fields of corn, beans, pumpkins, and melons. On the banks above the Grand River, the local Native community dug storage pits to secure food through the winter and in the many places settlers claimed and farmed, the land was already under cultivation by local Anishinaabe (Ellis 1880: 13-16). These places became the perfect spots to begin creating settler communities, as they were already made. The changes to the landscape that were the work of Native people enabled the easy transformation of these spaces to fit the needs of settlers. However, Anishinaabe subsistence and agricultural practices were viewed as primitive. Settlers saw their crops as stunted, overgrown, and ill-cared for, writing that they would have starved had it not been for the abundant resources gathered by them through hunting and fishing. The only endeavor practiced by Indians that was regarded in any positive manner was maple-sugar making. "The manufacture of sugar was one of the principal Indian industries, if the term industry can be properly applied to anything existing in an Indian community" (Ellis 1880: 14). Large stands of maple were located in the area and sugar was harvested by Anishinaabe in the spring before returning to their summer villages to plant crops. The seemingly transient nature of local Anishinaabe and their cultural adaptations toward resource management and land use was proof for many settlers, politicians, and writers of their primitive nature and incompatibility with modernity and civilization.

REMOVAL AND RETURN

In 1830, political leaders led by Andrew Jackson put into place the policy of Indian removal. Removal advocates believed that Native people and whites could not live side-by-side peacefully. These beliefs were laid out by removal advocates as a need to protect Indigenous people so that they could be slowly brought into the folds of civilization. Native people were believed incapable of adapting to Euro-American civilization or Christianity. In Andrew Jackson's address to congress in 1830, he states the benefits of removal:

It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community.⁸

Indians, according to Jackson and others, had suffered due to their proximity to whites and their inability to accept or adapt to civilization. Using the narrative of the vanishing Indian, Jackson pointed to the fate of tribes who had once lived in the east who seemed to have disappeared due to the encroachment and proximity of whites. He, and others, also believed that previous attempts at civilizing Native peoples were seen as unsuccessful, and they believed that only the removal of eastern tribes to lands west of the Mississippi River would solve the "Indian Problem." Lewis Cass, the territorial Governor of Michigan from 1813 to 1831 and an advocate for Indian removal, viewed Indigenous people as ill-suited to the prospects of

⁸ Andrew Jackson, 1830 Annual Address to Congress. United States National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/museum/tmc/MANZ/handouts/Andrew_Jackson_Annual_Message.pdf

civilization and believed they would be better off removed from their lands and sent beyond the Mississippi. In his view, despite a long period of contact between whites and Indians and the numerous efforts of many to civilize them, Indians were predisposed to their primitive ways and occupations:

Colonel McKenney's investigations into the condition of the Indians, and into the causes which have obstructed their advancement in civilization and religion, and have counteracted our efforts to improve them, are just and striking, and evince an intimate knowledge of their character and disposition. 'Need I stop to demonstrate,' he observes, 'how utterly impracticable it is, to remodel the Indian character, and fashion it after the civilized form, situated as those tribes are within our states? Where is the example of a single transformation in a tribe, of this sort? I know of not one. But I know of many, in which, even amidst efforts the most untiring, the Indians have (although individuals have profited) disappeared; until, now, many of our states, that once swarmed with an Indian population, contain not a vestige of one.'⁹

Removal was the quickest way to claim Indigenous lands, timber, and other resources, which were seen as underused and untouched by Indigenous people. Jackson lays out the precise reason for removal in his 1830 address, stating: "It will relieve the whole State of Mississippi and the western part of Alabama of Indian occupancy, and enable those States to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power."¹⁰ The idea of Indian removal can be traced back to Thomas Jefferson, who detailed the procedure for removal after the Louisiana Purchase as an alternative to assimilation or war. However, the idea did not become popular until after the

⁹ Lewis Cass in *Removal of the Indians*, North American Review, January 1830. Excerpted and numbered footnotes added, by the National Humanities Center for use in a Standards-Based Professional Development Seminar.

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/triumphnationalism/expansion/text4/cassremoval.pdf>.

Accessed 20 Aug. 2015.

¹⁰ Andrew Jackson, 1830 Annual Address to Congress. United States National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/museum/tmc/MANZ/handouts/Andrew_Jackson_Annual_Message.pdf

War of 1812, as more settlers began moving west, fearing the large numbers of Natives who had allied with the British (Neumeyer 1971). Memories of the massacres at the River Raisin and Fort Dearborn in Michigan during the War of 1812 and the escalating tensions on the frontier between settlers and Indigenous communities over land increased anti-Indian sentiments. The removal of Native people from the southeast, the Ohio Valley, and Great Lakes became a focal point of treaty negotiations (Sweatman 2010). Extinguishing Indian title to lands through treaties rather than warfare was seen as a more legal and humane way to remove Indigenous communities and make way for Euro-American settlement.

Henry Schoolcraft and Lewis Cass, actively sought to achieve title to Indian lands by negotiating land cession treaties. Extinguishing Indian title to lands through treaties and removal was seen by them and others as a precursor to settlement and statehood (McClurken 1986). These treaties also established a time frame for removal and resettlement, but resistance and the movement of Indigenous people complicated the process. In 1832, Lewis Cass, as Secretary of War and later as the Territorial Governor, was deeply involved in many of the treaties between the United States and tribes in Michigan. Motivated by political and economic interests, and to speed up removal, Cass initiated a vaccination program for Native Americans along the western frontier and among tribes scheduled for removal. However, its primary goal was to consolidate these communities onto reservations as a means to expedite removal and gain control over land and resources. Tribes who were in the process of transferring lands to the United States through treaties, or who were viewed as economically beneficial to the United States were specifically targeted, while those who were viewed as hostile or unwilling to cooperate with American interests were left out (Pearson 2003).

However, Indigenous people were not passive participants in treaty-making or resigned to removal, nor were all communities affected the same way by this policy. The Pottawatomie were the largest group in southern Michigan and were the most affected, with 1,200 forced or voluntarily moving west to the Sugar Creek Reservation in Kansas. Another 1,500 to 2,500 Pottawatomie fled to Canada to places like Manitoulin Island, Walpole Island, and reservations in Sarnia, Kettle Point, and Parry Island, at the invitation of the British. Others resisted and remained in the area, hiding out in marshes at the headwaters of the Kalamazoo River or migrating north to Odawa communities and returning home when they were able. Others stayed in Michigan by becoming citizens in the 1850s (Karamanski 2011). Communities in Michigan also resisted removal through negotiation and cultural adaptation. The Pokagon Band were able to resist removal by actively showing they were embracing civilization by converting to Christianity and obtaining title to their lands using money gained from previous treaty funds and annuity payments. Although the government attempted to enforce the removal of the Pokagon through the terms of the Treaty of Chicago, they were able to resist removal through their positions as land-owning Christian farmers. The Odawa in northern Michigan followed a similar path, by maintaining relationships with Christian organizations that advocated against their removal and helping them secure their lands (McClurken 1986).

The fluidity of identity and kinship also played an important role in Indigenous people's abilities to resist removal in the Great Lakes. However, the removal process was also slowed by bureaucracy, corruption, and inadequate funding. The process of removal was often handled by government contractors, many of them prominent local businessmen and land speculators with long histories as merchants and traders working with Native communities. For them, Indian

removal was a business opportunity to make money through government contracts and the sale of Indian lands. Their motivations were aimed at making as much money as possible with little attention paid to the well-being of those being removed. However, removal of Pottawatomie from Wisconsin and southwestern Michigan proved difficult for a number of reasons. Small groups of itinerant Indians, whom settlers wanted removed, were scattered about the land and often moving about. Roads were primitive or nonexistent, and removal agents often met resistance. Many refused to go, claiming they either did not fall under the treaties in question, or were members of other tribes who were located on reservations (Trenert 1979). Those who were forced west suffered hardships, sickness, and death on what would become known as the Pottawatomie Trail of Death (McKee 1939).

THE VANISHING INDIAN

Vine Deloria Jr, wrote: "To be an Indian in modern American society is in a very real sense to be unreal and ahistorical" (1969: 2). Native people are hardly noticed unless they somehow fit the cultural and historical assumptions and stereotypes Western society created to represent them. These representations, be they historical, anthropological, cultural, or political, work to erase Native people, their experiences, and stories out of existence. The narrative of vanishing and the erasure of Native identity, space, and presence occurred on many levels and in many places, particularly in cities and urban spaces, which are the focal points for the construction of modernity and cosmopolitanism. Gerald Vizenor again writes, "The cultural and political histories of the Anishinaabeg were written in a colonial language by those who invented the Indian, renamed the tribes, allotted the land, decided ancestries by

geometric degrees of blood, and categorized identities on federal reservations” (1984: 19).

These histories serve to tell the story of the vanishing Indian, the colonial settler narrative in which Native people disappear from the landscape as it is being transformed by progress and Manifest Destiny into settler societies. In this story, authentic Indians can only exist on reservations and are denied the ability to exist in any sense as “modern” or have a place for their culture or language in urban spaces. As Jean M. O’Brien (2010) states, these stories narrate the disappearance of Indians through both the written word and the ceremonial style of commemorations and performance that tell the story of Indians past, present, and future that speaks to the larger National narrative, denying modernity to Native people by writing their story as one of extinction (Introduction: xiii-xv).

The Indian, the savage, and the narrative of vanishing is part of the national narrative that shapes American identity, history, and culture, made concrete in local narratives and historical texts, pageantry, imagined historical markers, and place names (O’Brien 2010; Vogel 1986). These narratives, performances, and markers ignore and erase the continued presence of Native people in the process of settlement and urbanization. James Buss (2011) writes that, as settlers in the Great Lakes wrote of the demise of Indigenous people and their vanishing from the land, Indigenous people continued to be actively living, working, and engaging with Euro-American settlements. The idea that Indigenous people did not “vanish” or disappear but remained, not bound to distant reservations or as historical characters and victims in the settler narrative, but as part, and engaged with, and living in urban spaces and cities disrupts the narrative of vanishing and challenges the marginalization of Indigenous peoples, languages, and cultures to the borders of history and modernity (Cole 2008). Indigenous people and

communities in cities are assumed to be assimilated and out of touch with their identities, languages, and cultures. However, urban Indigenous communities like Lansing's maintain connections to their cultures and identities through migration and kinship. Kinship and the complex social networks that facilitated movement and migration were also used strategically and as a source of identity and belonging as individuals moved between Indigenous urban and reservation homelands. As I will show in the next chapter, these movements have a long history, going back to the beginning of the auto industry in Lansing. The early migration of Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous people to Lansing was made possible by kinship networks and the recognition of indigeneity and laid the foundations of the contemporary Indigenous community in Lansing. These movements and migrations to urban areas were also a strategy of resistance, rather than assimilation, as individuals came to urban areas and participated in modernity, while maintaining ties to their identities and the land. In the 1960s and 1970s, the tradition of Indigenous movement and migration brought a large number of Anishinaabe men from reserves on and around Manitoulin Island in Ontario, who came here to work and seek better opportunities. These men, women, and their families also brought Anishinaabemowin with them, revitalizing local Indigenous identity and marking Lansing as an Indigenous space through language and education. In the next chapter, I explore how community was brought together through language and the importance of educational spaces as primary to reclaiming identity. These spaces, where language and culture persist and are passed down, are also intersections where gender and gender roles are maintained and adapted to meet the needs of the Lansing urban Indigenous community.

CHAPTER THREE: MIGRATION AS RESISTANCE

The index finger of the past and present is pointing to the future, showing most conclusively that by the middle of the next century, all Indian reservations will have passed away. Then our people will begin to scatter, and the result will be a general mixing of the races. By intermarriage, the blood of our people, like the waters that flow into the great ocean, will be forever lost in that of the dominant race, and generations yet unborn will read in history of the red men of the forest, and inquire, where are they? ¹¹

Chief Simon Pokagon

¹¹ Gilman, Daniel C. 1898 *Alexis De Tocqueville and his Book on America Sixty Years Later*. The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine. Josiah Gilbert Holland and Richard Watson Gilder Ed. New York: The De Vinne Press. Vol. 56, Pp. 709.

The above statement, attributed to Simon Pokagon chief of the Pokagon Pottawattamie in southwest Michigan, like many other statements of lament attributed to Indigenous leaders, was used to reinforce the narrative of the vanishing Indian. This narrative proclaimed the end of Indigenous people who were doomed to extinction as the wilderness was claimed by civilization and transformed by progress and modernity. Indigenous culture, language, and life ways were imagined as incompatible with urban life. However, Lansing, like many urban areas, has a long history as an Indigenous space. Anishinaabeg, and other indigenous people who claimed this space in the past, and those who do so today, are united by kinship, culture, and an understanding of place that is fluid and adaptive; with roots in Anishinaabe oral history and traditions of movement and migration.

During my interviews, several of the elders I spoke with talked about the migrations of men from their reserves for work. One of the things they spoke of was that, everywhere they went, they were able to find other Anishinaabeg living and working in cities. In places like Chicago, Detroit, and Ottawa, urban spaces were filled with Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous people who recognized and assisted each other. One elder stated, “Anishinaabe are everywhere.”

It is something I am reminded of constantly, in urban areas, reservations, and the spaces in-between; this is Anishinaabe land. It is a concept that has taken time for me to truly comprehend. Growing up, I had always imagined rural reservations as representing what it meant to be “Indian” based on the stereotypes I was brought up to believe. During a trip to Birch Island in 1994 while an undergraduate at Lansing Community College, I encountered an overpass spray-painted with “This is Indian Land.” Having grown up in the city, I felt as though,

by coming to this reservation, I was entering authentic Anishinaabe space for the first time. This place with trees, and rocks, and Anishinaabe people everywhere seemed like what Indigenous space should be rural, original, and a place where Indigenous identity, culture, and language thrived and persisted. Yet, in Lansing, Anishinaabeg language and culture were also present and persisting. There were clan feasts, ghost supers, pow-wows, and people speaking Anishinaabemowin. It was a home and a place where Anishinaabe identity, language, and culture persisted and thrived. Today, whether they were born here or came here to work or go to school, Lansing is seen as Native space, with many referring to it as the "Lansing Rez." Lansing is "Indian Land."

In this chapter, I examine Lansing as both an Indigenous space and intersection of Indigenous persistence and resistance created through the moment and migration of Anishinaabe and other Indigenous people for employment and education. Through historical and contemporary Indigenous migrations, I look at the reasons people came to Lansing and how it has remained an intersection of identity and language that complicates and challenges the settler colonial narrative of vanishing that dominates Lansing's history. These movements became gendered, due to policies in both the United States and Canada, that sought to control Indigenous movement and connections to lands and resources. This area, however, remained an Indigenous space and a location where language and traditional knowledge persist and are reclaimed.

REIMAGINING URBAN INDIGENEITY

Reservations and rural spaces have always been imagined as Indigenous homelands, the strongholds of culture, where identities and languages are maintained in a space that is fixed in time and space. Scholarship on Indigenous migrations to urban areas was framed as the result of modern process and policies with few references to the role of Native people in urban spaces as participants in their creation. Fixico (1990) and Deloria (1969) look at urban Indigenous migration as a failed policy of the federal government, whose goal was to continue assimilation and remove people from their lands and resources. Those Indigenous communities and individuals living in urban areas are often described as being out of place, out of touch, and unrooted. Indigenous identity is seen as authentic when local and bounded and inauthentic when displaced or participating in transnational or imperial networks (Carey and Lydon 2014), and it is linked to ideologies of race, assimilation, economics, and education (Strum 2002; Ellinghas 2017; Doerfler 2015). However, while these relocation policies were a vital and visible time period for the movement of Native people from reservations to urban areas and the Indigenous Civil Rights Movement, it does not represent the beginning of Indian urbanization (Shoemaker 1988). James LeGrand (2002) writes that the urbanization of Native people deserves a deeper exploration, by examining the movement of people to urban areas and urban Native communities as a product of policies and the internal motivations of these movements as part of economic, social, and political trends.

Yet, with few exceptions, the deep history of Native urbanization that existed prior to this time period and the role of Indigenous people in creating urban spaces has been overlooked. Recent Native studies scholars have begun to re-examine the historical role of

Native people in urban spaces and Indigenous urban history. Victoria Freeman (2010) examines the discourse of the history of Toronto, which excludes Indigenous history because it was “uncivilized,” making settlers the “Indigenous” founders and makers of that space through representation and selective memory. Cole Thrush (2008) and John Low (2016) examine how Native people shaped the history of urban spaces in ways that were fundamental to their development and challenge the way we view Native urban experience. Thrush (2008) writes that: “the vanishing red man, like most creation stories, makes invisible the deep and complex histories of native peoples, the processes of empire and ecology that preceded settlement and urbanization, and creates Native and urban histories that were in opposition and alien to each other” (20). Low (2016) adds to this by showing how the Pokagon Pottawattamie, were from the beginning, part of the fabric of the settlement and urbanization of Chicago, a process that transformed both the city and the Pokagon who lived outside of it. Low’s work also highlights the agency of Indigenous people, showing that the Pokagon were not victims of assimilation and progress but active participants in a complex relationship with these forces, accepting modernity on their own terms and rejecting the social and political marginalization of their community.

The works highlighted above challenge scholarship on urban Native communities that focus on the period after World War II and the urban relocation programs that followed, which have been seen as the starting point of Indigenous urbanization and another attempt at assimilation by removing Indigenous people from their lands, languages, and communities. Using Lansing as a focal point, these movements speak to the agency of Indigenous migration and movement to urban centers. Lansing was never a destination of the urbanization policies of

the 1950s and 60s. Indigenous people came here from reservation communities and from other urban areas through kinship networks that have been maintained since historical times. These movements were influenced by internal and external pressures faced by those seeking to build a place for their culture and identity in Lansing. They also speak to the underlying Anishinaabe tradition of movement and migration found in oral history, language, and contemporary lives and experiences of Lansing's Indigenous community. Census records are an important source for exploring the complexity of these movements and, as I show next, reveal Lansing as an Indigenous space with a deeper history of movement and migration that challenges the local narrative of the vanishing "Indian" and how Indigenous networks of kinship and traditions of movement and migration were used as a form of resistance and persistence.

ANISHINAABE MOVEMENT, MIGRATION, AND PLACE

Native people and communities are often described as culturally, linguistically, and spatially rooted in the local and the past (Forte 2010). This positioning prevents Indigenous people from participating in globalization and modernity without losing their authenticity and identities as Indigenous. However, Anishinaabeg culture and oral history are based on movement, migration, and a sense of space that is fluid and transformative (Benton-Benai 2010; Doerfler, Sinclair, and Stark 2015). In Western epistemologies, movement and rootedness are often seen as oppositional forces and markers of identity. Movement, cosmopolitanism, and modernity mark Western identity, while the local and a sense of rootedness mark Indigeneity and are oppositional to the latter. Amy Hamilton (2007) argues that movement and a sense of place are not oppositional markers of identity or belonging but are intertwined.

Movement, identity, and worldview, Hamilton states, are bound to the land and story, marking the always present potential for change and movement. This idea, that movement can be an expression of Indigenous identity and a way to mark Indigenous space, became apparent during a talk in Lansing by elders from the Sault Saint Marie Tribe and Mackinaw Islands Band, walking from their homes in the upper Peninsula to Washington DC to raise awareness of treaty rights and Anishinaabeg obligations to protect the water and land. One elder said:

It used to be that there were only a few pow-wows in Michigan, and everyone went to these. We got together not as separate bands or tribes but as a people, as Anishinaabeg. Today, we have casinos, and everyone stays clustered together, in our own little bands, and our Leaders, or tribal governments, only seem to be concerned about the next casino. This walk is about waking the people up. To raise awareness that our sovereignty is in danger if we don't protect it, if we don't fight to maintain our treaty rights. We need to come together again as Anishinaabe to protect our language and our culture. I have learned many things by walking our treaty lands; we should all be doing this. You should all take time to do this; walk these lands for a day, or two days. Walk with your children and see what's going on. This is who we are. We are a walking people, a migrating people, its part of who we are as Anishinaabe (Treaty Walker Speech, Lansing, MI 10-7-15).

This aspect of Anishinaabe identity is interwoven in the present-day experiences of those I interviewed and is a fundamental part of Lansing's Indigenous history. Walking and movement serve as a site to explore complex connections between place, story, and identity (Hamilton 2007). Place, movement, and identity are explored by Keith Basso (1996), in his work on place names, stories, and identity among the Apache. Basso writes that there is more to making places than living local history in a localized way. Place-making is not just about remembering what happened; it is a way of constructing history itself, of revising and imagining places in

ways that others might not suppose. Movement and migration have always been part of Indigenous identities, experiences, and place-making. Craig Proulx (2010) brings in the idea of a rooted cosmopolitanism that is experienced by Indigenous peoples moving back and forth between reserves and cities. The roots of Indigenous peoples that tie them to places and relationships are ever-growing and evolving through the routes they take and the places they live. Craig Proulx (2010) also highlights the importance of recognizing the multiple experiences and practices of Indigenous cosmopolitanism and trans-indigeneity, as there has been a tendency to homogenize Indigenous as a singular experience and identity.

Indigenous migration and trans-indigeneity often imply movement across the borders of nation-states; however, Indigenous migrations occurring within the boundaries of states and between homelands and urban areas mimic the movements and migrations of transnational migrants, with similar issues and experiences maintaining identity, language, and connections to their rural home communities (Tomiak and Patrick 2010). In looking at the relationships between urban spaces and Anishinaabeg communities in the central and lower Michigan areas, the boundaries that separate urban and rural communities become blurred by their proximity and their role as social, political, and economic intersections. When viewed from historical and cultural perspectives, urban spaces like Lansing have always been Indigenous spaces. They lie within ceded and un-ceded territories, at locations that were always used and continued to be used, inhabited, and claimed by Native peoples. Despite the views and stereotypes of Indigenous people as bound to specific locals and ways of life, movement and migration between reservations and between urban areas have defined and maintained Anishinaabeg culture and identity rather than erasing it.

ANISHINAABE ODENONG

My research in Lansing looked at census records to trace the historical moments as individuals who returned or continued to persist in Lansing as it grew into an urban area after settlement and removal. However, these records often hide or erase the identity of Indigenous people engaged in urban migrations or living in urban spaces (Hoy 2015). The Indian in the city was an oddity; as Victoria Freeman (2010) writes: “Indigenous people who lived or worked in the city were either invisible or too ‘civilized’ to still be considered Indians” (5). Freeman highlights one of the important challenges facing Indigenous people who migrate to urban areas. Stereotypes and the settler-colonial narratives of encounter and vanishing both mark and erase Indigenous identity, making it impossible for “real Indians” to be urban Indians or to be active participants in modernity. However, as Vine Deloria, Jr, (2004) shows, Indigenous people were engaging with and creating modernity in ways that challenged the stereotypes of Native people that bound their identities and histories to the narrative of vanishing. In Lansing, there are traces of these early migrations in letters, reports, and census records. Those I interviewed and spoke with about their experiences coming to Lansing spoke about getting help from Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous people in Lansing who migrated here long before them.

Searching through census records for Indigenous people living in the Lansing area was both challenging and fascinating. Just as looking at historical documents showed a much more complex picture of the Indigenous community in this area prior to settlement, census records showed a complex picture of movement and migration after settlement by Euro-Americans. First, I began looking for people who were marked as Indian in and around Lansing between

1890 and 1910. I chose this time period as a starting place because I thought it would show me where people had settled after removal and, for those who stayed, if they continued to be marked as Indian in records. It was also a time when there was a great deal of changes taking place. The auto industry was just beginning to replace agriculture as the dominant economic activity with more jobs and opportunities in the Lansing Area. By 1897, the Olds Motor Company, started by R.E. Olds, established Lansing as the focal point of Michigan's Auto industry. These economic changes, once again, made Lansing a focal point and intersection of Indigenous migration.

Despite their limitations, these census records were a valuable tool that showed the dynamics and complexity of these early migrations and a glimpse at the lives of those who came here from both far-off Indigenous communities and local ones. Before 1890, there is little record of Indigenous people living or working in the area. This could have been due to the bias of census takers or the mobility of Indigenous people who were engaged in seasonal labor that only brought them through the area in cycles. However, by 1910, individuals marked as “Indian” began to appear living as residents. Many were coming from Indian territory in Oklahoma and returning to Michigan to Anishinaabe communities in southwest Michigan. Alex Bushman, who was born in Missouri in 1827 but returned to live with relatives near the Pokagon Pottawatomie homelands, along with his daughters was one such person.¹² Another, Samuel Harris, who is marked as Indian and white, was born in Canada but came to the area

¹² “Lansing Michigan Censes Records, 1890-1920,” *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 9 September 2016) Year: 1900; Census Place: Silver Creek, Cass, Michigan; Roll: 706; Page: 5B; Enumeration District: 102; FHL microfilm: 1240706

from Massachusetts and worked as a gardener. His wife, also marked Indian and white, was born in Alabama.¹³ These records hint at the complexity of Indigenous identities, migrations, the maintenance of kinship networks, and participation in urban wage labor that marked their experiences. An examination of census records for 1920 through 1940 showed a steady and growing flow of Indigenous individuals and families coming to different areas of the lower Michigan to live and work from local communities and communities outside of the Great Lakes, and Lansing appears to have been both an intersection and a destination for these movements. James W. Robertson, marked as mixed-blood who migrated here with his family in 1920 from South Dakota, worked as a Crank Shaft Printer in an auto plant.¹⁴ There was also a large number of single Indigenous women, working as skilled laborers in jobs that required education, as well as having jobs associated with the auto industry and with men.¹⁵ However, most Indigenous women I found in census records for Lansing were employed in jobs that were acceptable for women of the time, as cooks, maids, nannies, stenographers, and housewives.

There are important aspects to these people's identities that stand out when looking at these records. The majority of those returning to Michigan from Indian Territory were marked as mixed-blood. Also, the majority were recorded as having some education, in some cases college. These factors could have facilitated their movements and made it easier for them to

¹³ "Lansing Michigan Censes Records, 1890-1920," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 9 September 2016) Year: 1900; Census Place: Summit, Jackson, Michigan; Roll: 719; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 0031; FHL microfilm: 1240719

¹⁴ "Lansing Michigan Censes Records, 1890-1920," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 9 September 2016) Year: 1920; Census Place: Lansing, Ingham, Michigan; Roll: T625_771; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 117

¹⁵ "Lansing Michigan Censes Records, 1890-1920," *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 9 September 2016) Year: 1940; Census Place: Manistee, Manistee, Michigan; Roll: T627_1785; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 51-14

get jobs because they would have received vocational training and experience. These skills may have also helped them be seen as less “Indian” or as having assimilated. Others seemed to have lost or left behind their identities as “Indian” as a way to become invisible. Sometimes, this happened across generations. This is reflected in one of the interviews I conducted and is present later in this chapter, which highlights the importance of education to facilitate these movements but also how indigeneity was left behind or hidden as a strategy for survival, at least for some individuals.

I also looked for patterns of movements and settlement in the Durant Rolls, taken 1870 and 1908 for comparison. The Durant Rolls show most Anishinaabe living in the northern counties of lower Michigan, around Sault Saint Marie in the Upper Peninsula, and southwest Michigan near South Bend and Niles. The closest Native community still in the local area at this time was in Ionia at Pishminicon (Place of Apple Trees), near present-day Portland, Michigan. These were members of the Mackinaw Island Band, which speaks to the complexity of these movements and how they were still an important aspect for many Anishinaabeg people.¹⁶

The Durant Rolls were taken to mark the locations of Anishinaabe in Michigan and the bands they belonged to in order to make payments to members and decedents of the Sault Saint Marie, Mackinac, Grand Traverse, and Grand River bands of Ottawa and Chippewa. What I found interesting was that many of those listed do not have a county residence named. Seasonal migrations to gather resources and engage in wage labor kept many in movement and transitory, making it difficult for roll-takers to place them in any specific area. Many were

¹⁶ “Durant Roll: 1890-1910 Ionia County”, [mainlymichigan.com](http://www.mainlymichigan.com); accessed 12 June 2017. <http://www.mainlymichigan.com/nativedata/DurantRoll/CountyResults.aspx?County=Ionia>,

engaged in season migrations, working in the lumber industry or as seasonal farm hands (Littlefield and Mack 1997). Others may have purposely withheld this information as a way to avoid and resist state and federal government policies that sought to control their movements and force them into a life of agriculture or bound to their reservations. The disenfranchisement from their lands through allotment and policies that facilitated loss of land and resources kept many from remaining in their homelands (Fletcher 2016). Thus, those involved in movements and migrations for wage labor and to urban centers might have done so out of necessity, as an economic strategy, and as a form of resistance facilitated by culture and kinship networks that remained intact but transformed and adapted to fit the needs of the day. Many scholars have explored in detail how urban areas became focal points of Indigenous economic, social, and political empowerment (Lobo and Peters 2001; Ramirez 2007; Peters and Anderson 2013). Lansing seems to have been such a focal point because of the growing auto industry and the opportunities for further education at both Lansing Community College and Michigan State University. For the majority of those described in census records, as well as those whom I interviewed, employment, particularly in the auto industry, was the driving factor that brought them here. The history of Lansing Indigenous community is closely tied to the auto industry, and it has been a driving force in the movements and migrations of Indigenous people to the area for over a hundred years. This part of the local Indigenous history, the history of Anishinaabe in the auto industry, deserves further research and development.

WE CAME HERE TO WORK

For the last few years, the Nokomis Learning Center in Okemos, Michigan has hosted a weekly language table for anyone interested in learning Anishinaabemowin. The language speakers who attend this event are all men who came here in the 60s and 70s for work because life on Manitoulin Island offered few economic opportunities. I interviewed two of these men for my research to understand what brought them to Lansing and why they chose to stay as a way to understand the motivations of early migrants to the area and link them together within the history of Indigenous migration to urban areas and the forces that drove them.

According to one elder I interviewed, the Canadians encouraged farming and agriculture as a policy to motivate Anishinaabe communities around Manitoulin to become modern and self-sufficient; however, the geography of the area is not conducive to farming. While many people had gardens to help them get enough to eat, the soil was only a foot or so thick. It was solid rock under that with no way to access enough water for agriculture or livestock. Because of this, many of the men left the reserves there to seek employment as lumber men, planting trees, building roads, or working in local towns as general laborers. Others were able to find employment in agriculture as seasonal laborers in Michigan and Ontario, picking fruit crops in northern lower Michigan and tobacco in southern Ontario. However, many faced discrimination and were given less-desirable jobs or were paid less than others because they were Indian. One elder I spoke with told me how he and others had to work twice as hard to earn the same pay as their white counterparts.¹⁷ These movements of men from the reserve have a long history,

¹⁷ Interview with Alphonse Pitawanakwat; 10 September 2015.

with each generation of men seeking opportunities as laborers in agriculture and in urban areas in manufacturing and construction:

It seems like, over generations, there is an extensive migration of young men off the reserve, by chance or because of work. They settle down and raise families, up in Sudbury, about 80 miles up the road from where we were at, because there were jobs, and they wanted to raise families. Then, there was another movement in the early 60s about five years later. A lot of young men moved down to Chicago, and then, not long after that, some moved to Toronto; these were all places where there was work. And not long after that, we came to Lansing. There seem to be these surges: not sure why this happens, but it always has to do with economics. Or is it something that just happens because, before that, you know in history, Anishinaabeg moved around and intermarried and through the clan system as a way to prevent in-breeding. Maybe this is how it happens. Now Native people are more spread out there: there all over and stuff like that. Before, when you left the reserve usually you went to another reserve through marriage or something, not the male specifically, but the women came to where ever the male was a band member of, and if a women did marry, she would give up her rights, her status a Native, and was the way life was.¹⁸

Settler colonial governments like Canada and the United States sought to assimilate Indigenous communities by making them settled farmers, breaking up traditional movements and subsistence practices, and destroying traditional gender roles and identities. Restrictions on marriage and gender were important in these policies and had a great impact on the movements of Indigenous people in Canada that were used to disenfranchise Indigenous people, in particular Indigenous women, from their land and communities. Sylvia Van Kirk (2002) explains how the idea of marrying-in and marrying-out was tied to changing kinships and relationships to land that evolved during the fur trade. Marrying-in was an Indigenous way for Canadian European men to become incorporated into Indigenous kinship networks to

¹⁸ Interview with George Roy; 25 September 2015.

strengthen socioeconomic bonds. By the end of the colonial period, intermarriage had been transformed into marrying-out, as Indigenous homelands were converted into settler lands, and Indigenous women lost their Indian status, regardless of Indigenous kinship practices. The Indian Act of 1876 defined indigeneity in patriarchal terms, linking men's status as Indian to their bands through kinship, and a women's status to that of her husband's (Van Kirk 2002). Thus, intermarriage became a colonizing tool and was seen as a way to move Indigenous women from their cultures and communities.

The Indian Act, also called The 1876 Gradual Enfranchisement Act, created the legal definitions of status and non-status Indian and stipulated that Native women who married non-natives or non-status Natives would lose their status and any rights they had as band members, making Indigenous a category that could be granted, withheld, and defined by the needs of the settler society (Lawrence 2004: 4). Over time, the Indian Act became a tool to erase Native identity and erode the land base of Native communities, as non-status women were forced away from their communities and into urban areas. For non-status Indians, Indigenous identity and decent, as defined by the State, was gendered and colonized:

For over a century, the Indian Act has controlled Canadian Native identity by creating a legal category, that of the "status Indian," which is the only category of Native person to whom a historic nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and the Indigenous peoples is recognized. With this legal category set into place, until recently the only individuals who could consider themselves legally Indian were those who could prove they were related, through the male line, to individuals who were already status Indians (Lawrence 2004: 6).

Indigenous communities were bound to these definitions, and, over time, they became incorporated into First Nation concepts of identity and belonging. For some of the women I

interviewed, who were non-status Indians from Canada, urban spaces like Lansing, with a large population of other disenfranchised Indigenous people, became one of the few places where their identities could be claimed and recognized. Despite the fact that the Act was considered unconstitutional in 1985, it was not thrown out, only amended. The ideologies and practices it centered on still inform concepts of identity and belonging to this day (Lawrence 2004).

The pressures of colonialism and policies like the Indian Act also affected Indigenous men, their occupations, and their movements. The control of First Nation communities in both Canada and the United States was based on policies that sought to change Indigenous substance patterns by tying them to specific reservations and lands to pursue agriculture and individualism as a way to erase Indigenous culture and community and acquire any “surplus” lands and resources. According to one elder I interviewed, men who sought to leave the reserve had to get permission from the Indian agent in charge. Those who found jobs outside of the reservation or who went away to pursue an education were often not welcomed back by the agents and were denied services:

Historically, the Natives who were living in the reserve had to get permission to leave the reserve. Either to go hunting, or go to work or even to go to school. And if they got a college degree they were not supposed to go back to the reserve. That really was not part of the treaty but that was something that got attached to that. It was part of controlling the Natives, and that was absolute control, you had to have permission for this and you had to have permission for that.¹⁹

This could explain why, with few exceptions, the majority of Anishinaabe who came to Lansing from Manitoulin in the 1960s and 1970s were men. At one time, almost two hundred came

¹⁹ Interview with Alphonse Pitawanakwat, 10 September 2016.

here to work in the auto factories and related industries. There were Anishinaabe women, some who came here on their own and others who came here as spouses; however, men made up the bulk of this migration. In Canada Indigenous women were funneled into vocational and professional schools in cities like Toronto (Howard 2003). Looking back at the data from early census records, a similar pattern emerges with women working in professional careers while the men worked primarily as laborers. The similarities between cities like Toronto and Lansing are partly due to similar policies of assimilation and control, but also point to the importance of kinship connections and the shared history and culture of Anishinaabeg.

The men I spoke to who came here from Manitoulin heard about jobs and employment through relatives and friends who already worked here or who had heard about them while engaged in other types of employment in agriculture, lumber harvesting, and in other urban areas as factory workers. While many came directly from their reserves, others I spoke with told me how they came to Lansing from other urban spaces, such as Chicago and Detroit, and cities in Canada looking for employment. One elder I spoke to came to Lansing for a pow-wow and was told by a cousin about the high wages offered in the local plants and decided to stay. These lateral movements between urban areas by Native people seem to be a common experience and highlight the complexity of Native transnational urban migrations and movements that relied on kinship networks to find both jobs and places to live in the city.

ANISHINAABE WHO CAME FROM MANITOULIN

I met up with George at Fenner Nature Center to interview him about his life and work in the auto industry and as a teacher of Anishinaabemowin. George is from Wikwemikong and

came here in the late 60s when he heard there were jobs. George worked as a pipe-fitter for GM and, after retirement, began teaching the language as a second career. He was very involved in the community, teaching Anishinaabe language and culture, when I was a youth and now works for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe teaching the language at their community college. George's experience coming here to work is typical of many men who came here from Manitoulin:

I came here in 1968, and it was for work, and that was the way it was for most. It was, he was not really my uncle, he was my mom's first cousin, but because I didn't have an extended male family as far as uncles and grandparents and fathers, so he kinda took on the role of being my uncle. So, he was working as a lumber jack up in Grayling, and he came up around May up in Wikwemikong. I was at my first year in college up in Ottawa and I came home at that time and I was just hanging around, bumming around and stuff like that, waiting for work. I was your typical 20/22-year-old at that time. He came around during Memorial Weekend there to my mom's house looking for me and says there's work in Lansing; you should go and look for work there for the summer. All these Natives down there work in the factories. At that time in 1968, we still kinda respected our elders, yah know, so you listened to them. Even though he was just my second cousin, he was an elder to me, and you respected and listened. He said I am leaving soon to go back to Grayling, but so and so is going down there, too, with a friend that happened to be at that time a friend of mine, too.

So, we left, and we took a bus from Grayling to Lansing. We pulled into the bus station here downtown, and know what? Ya know, we were in Lansing, and all we were told was that they had a family member that we had to look up who lived on Pine Street over there. So, we came looking for them, wandering around all day, and that's when they were building 496 at that time, and I remember we followed that big ditch being built, and there were all kinds of heavy equipment. So, we hopped down there, not knowing where we were going, and we must have missed Pine Street cause; we ended walking all the way out of town, all the way to Saint Josephs Road. It wasn't built up out there at that time, so we decided to make a turn where there were a lot more houses, and, somehow, we came across Saginaw Street where Quality Dairy is. We went in and got some drinks. As we were coming out, this guy driving by toots his horn, so he turns around and picks us up and took us down to where we wanted to go at Pine and Oakland. So, that's where we stayed. I decided I was going to live with a buddy of mine who was already half moved-in down here about six months before I came down here.

He already had a place, and he let me stay there for 20 dollars a week. That was on Friday.

On Monday, after the weekend, a guy we already knew from back home who was working at Fisher Body picked us up and took us to the post office to get our social security cards, and we showed them our status cards and birth certificates. I didn't have my status card, just my birth certificate, but they accepted that. After that, we went with our paperwork to put in applications at Motor Wheel, Oldsmobile, and Fisher-body. And, by that time, it was noon. The guy that was taking applications (at that time, they needed men because it was during the Vietnam era, so they were short of men, and auto jobs, at that time, were not the premium jobs that they came to be) interviewed us on the spot and says: "are you guys ready to work?" We said anytime. He says, "Can work this afternoon?" So, he says ok; be here at 5 o'clock. And that's how I started working there.²⁰

Through my interviews with community members who came here from Canada, the majority of whom were men, it seemed that it was easier for men to migrate here than it was for women; although some women did come here from Canada as well. The treaty of Jay allowed these Anishinaabe men to cross the Canadian border to work without a visa. Once they arrived here, as George's story shows, getting the paperwork and landing a job was very easy. The recognition of their indigeneity by the state and federal governments is in stark contrast to the larger local Native community who lived and worked in Lansing at that time. Many were from tribal communities in Michigan that were not recognized, at that time, by the federal government. Thus, politically, they were not considered Native and did not have access to programs available to federally recognized tribes. This, combined with the fact that the majority of the migrants coming from Manitoulin were also fluent speakers of the language, created tensions over identity and authenticity that are still manifest today. Many of these tensions were centered on differences in language. While language became a focal point for the Lansing

²⁰ Personal Interview, George Roy, 25 September 2015.

Indigenous community as a way to reclaim Anishinaabe culture and identity, differences in language, language ideologies, and identity also separated these groups.

WE WERE ALREADY HERE

Prior to the arrival of large numbers of Ojibwa from Manitoulin, the Indigenous community in Lansing was predominately made up of Native people and their families who migrated earlier from reservation communities in Michigan and Indigenous communities outside the state. They came here for economic and educational opportunities, as political representatives for their communities working on federal recognition and fighting for their treaty rights, taking part in the Indian Claims Commission hearings in the 1950s, and fighting to get the tuition waiver recognized in the 1970s. Some came here because they lost their lands through allotment or, as members of the Burt Lake Band experienced, were pushed off their lands illegally. The vast majority were also survivors of the generational historical trauma of the boarding schools and the lateral violence that resulted. As I show later in this section of the chapter, this lateral violence was often directed at the women in these communities.

One of the things that stands out about George's story is how he found employment and a place to stay from other Anishinaabe living in Lansing. This story was similar for many of the people I spoke to, both from Canada, as well as those who came here from Anishinaabe communities in Michigan and beyond. Kinship and identity played a large part in their success at finding employment and services in Lansing; however, I also spoke with others who moved here as both youths and as adults who described feeling distanced from the local Indigenous community and their reservation communities. Kate, who I present next, spoke about how, as a

youth, she never saw many Natives living here or at the schools she attended. Another woman, an elder and a member of the Apache Nation from Texas, told me in passing how she never knew there were so many Indigenous people living in Lansing until she started getting involved in learning Anishinaabe and attending events after her children were grown. It was a common experience for many of the women I spoke to who came here as youth, whose families experienced multiple generations of boarding school education, or like those from the Burt Lake community, who had been pushed off their lands, to feel disconnected from their home communities and culture. However, despite the loss of language, land, and the disruption of kinship networks they continued to maintain their identities as Indigenous women as the caretakers of culture and community, and as leaders and educators.

WOMEN AT THE CENTER AND THE PERIPHERY

In the 1960s and 1970s Anishinaabe men coming from Manitoulin to work and live in Lansing were joining a community that had historical roots in the area who also came to Lansing to find employment and education. Those who lived here, many from local reservation communities in Michigan, were also survivors of multiple generations of boarding school education, experienced the loss of language and cultural knowledge, often spoke of feeling distanced from their home communities. From this community, I primarily spoke to women. These women have roles in the community as elders, community leaders, educators, and students. I was able to explore, through their stories and memories, different generational perspectives on the connections between home, belonging, and identity. Some of them were women I knew growing up who were involved in the Indian Education Programs, while others I

knew only by name. Yet, they shared with me their experiences and struggles as urban Indigenous women and leaders in the community.

I spoke to Aja during a meeting for the Parent Advisory Group for the Lansing School District's Indian Education Program. She and her family were born and raised in Lansing. Apart from a brief stay in Mount Pleasant when she was a child, she had never left the area. Her mother's family was originally from Burt Lake, while her father's family came from Grand Traverse and Little Traverse with some connections and kinship to Ojibwa communities in Canada. Her family came here before she was born, but she was not sure why they chose to come to Lansing. Her personal connections to Burt Lake and that identity, however, were strong, like many Burt Lake descendent who share that identity and history.

During our interview, Aja pointed out a painting, which her mother made when she was young, on the wall of the office. It depicted the Burt Lake burnout of 1900, when the local sheriff and a land speculator removed the women, children, and elders from their homes while the men were away and burned their homes to the ground. The memories of the burnout continue to drive the descendants of this community to seek justice and federal recognition (Littlefield 2008; Wiles 2016). During our conversation, she talked about how important it was for her to remember where she was from and what had happened there:

I know part of it was my mom's family was all from Burt Lake. From what she remembers of it, my grandmother is one of the many shadows there (referring to the painting), of the people that were burned out from there, from their homes. One of the biggest reasons why there will never be a federally recognized Burt Lake Band is because so many of our members are diminished in those fires. It was just, there was nothing left. When my Grandmother passed away, she is actually buried up there in the

cemetery at Burt Lake, we all went up there and spent four or five days up there, staying at a little trailer park, but now it's an actual hotel.²¹

Aja's family, like many others from Burt Lake, was forced to relocate, some settling up the road from the original settlement, in neighboring Anishinaabeg communities, such as the Little Traverse Bay Band, and some to urban areas like Lansing where they could find work (Littlefield 2008; Wiles 2016). Over time, the memories of the burnout and the lost land remain and are used to maintain their identities, even as many of the Burt Lake survivors became members of other federally recognized communities or moved to urban areas.

The other women and their families were also long-time residents. Keli was born and raised in the area. Keli told me she did not know her tribal affiliation because, when her father was five, his mother left him, and she has never met her paternal grandparents. However, Keli married into the Sault Saint Marie tribe, and her children are members there. Her family also has ties to Canadian Ojibwa through their paternal grandfather. Jessica, was also born and raised in Lansing, is Mohawk through her father, who came here with her grandfather to work as iron workers. They had both been involved in building skyscrapers in New York but came here to find jobs. Her father settled here and started a family. Lucy was originally from Mount Pleasant and is a member of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe. Her father has family connections to Potawatomie and Ojibwa living in Canada. Her children are also connected to the Grand Traverse Odawa through their father. Lucy came here when she was thirteen but has also lived for a time back at her home community.

²¹ Appendix D; p. 84.

Many of the women I spoke to for this research described their relationship to their home communities, families, and identities as Indigenous women as distant or strained. The damage done to Indigenous communities and individuals, in particular Indigenous women, through education, boarding school program, policies of child removal, and foster care for Indigenous children have had lasting generational effects. These generational effects have impacted not just Indigenous identity and culture, but they have created communities of survivors who still struggle with the emotional and physical scars of abuse, which is often internalized and dealt with through alcohol and drug abuse, which continues within families (Fournier and Grey 1997). These women and their families struggle with their identities and finding a place for themselves in their families and tribal communities.

KATE'S STORY

Some who grew up here told me about their families' history and what they knew. They spent their whole lives here, and, for many, the connections were distant. For most of the individuals I interviewed, employment and labor were the driving forces behind coming to Lansing. For others, education brought them to Lansing to attend either Lansing Community College or Michigan State University. A few of those I interviewed came here to support family members or their partners who had jobs or came here for school. In either case, coming to Lansing was part of a desire to better their lives and contribute to their families and communities. Many of those chose to stay here, raise their families, and create a place for themselves in the fabric of Lansing's Native community.

I interviewed Kate Ojibway at her work. I have known the Ojibway family for many years, having gone to school with Lisa Ojibwa, whom I also interviewed for my research. The Ojibway family is large, with members living in Lansing, Detroit, and Sault Saint Marie. Kate's grandfather and father, looking for work, moved from their reserve to Detroit during the Great Depression and then to Lansing. Like some Anishinaabe at this time, members her family were able to blend into the dominant culture, and on all the census records are marked as white. However, they continued to maintain connections to their identities as Anishinaabe through family and cultural activities like pow-wows. Kate spent most of her life in Lansing, along with many members of her extended family. Her story begins with her grandfather, who left Sault Saint Marie in the late 1930s.

Yah know, I am ashamed to say, I have probably forgotten exactly what the reason was, but it's my understanding that my grandfather didn't have any work up in Sault Saint Marie. Things got really bad. So, he came down to Lansing because he thought there were a million factory jobs; that's what he heard, and there used to be, but not during the Depression, so, there wasn't any work. I think he finally found a job as an insurance salesman, but nobody had money, so they paid him with chickens or whatever else they had. So, if he had a month when he didn't have any money, he said, "Well, I got this stuff," but he got fired. But, basically, it was the bad economy that my Grandpa came down, but he was the only one; he was the only one that didn't get sent to Indian school because he was in Detroit. So, him and my dad stayed there and went to school.

So, he went to Detroit first?

Yah, he went straight to Detroit. And that was like in the 30s, like 39? Yeah, well, I don't know; it was probably earlier. I'm not sure of the date. So, then, he came to Lansing. My grandpa stayed there (Detroit); my dad grew up in Detroit. Went to Saint James because they converted. I don't know who converted to Catholicism. I'm not sure if my Grandpa was Catholic, but my Father was for sure. And then he went off to war, as soon as he could, and then when he came back, I don't know exactly how he ended up at Michigan State; I'm not sure of that. He started here in 1948, I think; I'm not exactly sure. But I know that when he was in the war, he and my mom somehow started writing, so he came back. She was going to college in Jackson. But why he came here I'm not sure.

Maybe, I know he was going to school on the GI Bill, so maybe that was the draw. They had ROTC and all that stuff here, so maybe they had a program for returning military men. So, he started here, and then my mom transferred over.²²

While Kate's father had a hard time finding and keeping employment himself, he did help other young Anishinaabe men who came here to find work. Kate told me how long men would come to her house and visit with her dad on the porch while she stayed inside, as it would not have been proper for a young woman to hang out with young men. While she did not remember being part of a Native community living in Lansing, these young men knew how to find her father, and he would help them if he could. This is similar to what others told me about their own journeys to Lansing to find work. There was always someone there to help, a cousin, distant relative, or another Anishinaabe. Many of the women I spoke with could not remember particulars about their father's or grandfather's reasons for coming to Lansing, but Kate's family story and her father's relationships to other Anishinaabe men were typical. Kinship and the recognition of indigeneity in others facilitated migration, employment opportunities, and a sense of community in Lansing.

However, while Kate identifies as Anishinaabe, she expressed having little to connect her to that identity. She is only partially involved with the local urban Indigenous community in Lansing, preferring to express her identity and practice it in her own way. When she does return home, she is mostly uncomfortable, feeling out of place, preferring to stay in Lansing and not move around like many Native people:

²² Appendix A; p. 164.

I don't travel as much as most Native people do. Like some of them that just roam. Lot of people are just like that in their home range, like I was talking about this Michigan thing. The Great Lakes area, people roam around a lot. I never really have done that. But I know so many others do, but I shouldn't have felt so uncomfortable but I was really thinking I feel stupid, I feel coming up here just doesn't feel right to me.²³

The majority of Kate's immediate family lives outside of their home community in Sault Saint Marie. Her grandfather left to find a job and relocate: "Everybody who is alive is gone someplace else. Because the children and grandchildren of my father's cousins, they stayed, but he didn't. I think somebody else must have gone because they are out in California, and different places, but, at the time that my grandfather left, the rest of them stayed."²⁴

Kate's story of how her family got here and her relationship to her tribal community is similar to many women with whom I spoke. Some, like Kate and the other women presented here, were born in urban areas or came here as children when their parents came to work and did not want to or have opportunities to return to their home communities. For those who chose to come here themselves, the migration to Lansing was an attempt to better their lives, find employment, and escape many of the issues Indigenous women face on reservations in Canada and the United States. As Sylvia Maracle (2013) writes:

A number of Aboriginal women were victimized by the violence in their communities and were therefore forced to leave. Some had to leave when they married out and found themselves disenfranchised of their Indian status and band membership. Others left because they were not able to live with the very aggressive application of band policies that marginalized them as women in their communities, for example in housing. There were women who came to urban centers so their children could be educated. Many Metis and other non-status Aboriginal women came from communities that were never provided with a land base and were dispersed into the cities. For all of these

²³ Appendix A; p. 171.

²⁴ Appendix A; p. 165.

reasons and more, Aboriginal women were forced to leave their communities, but they took their identities with them, as women, as clans, as Nations (316).

Native women living on reserves continue to suffer higher rates of abuse and assault than the national average. Women also continue to be marginalized inside and outside of their communities by ideologies that see them as inferior, their roles as secondary to male roles, and dominant culture's ideologies and representations of Indigenous culture that focus on stereotyped male Indigenous identity and gender roles that imagine Indigenous women as Disney princesses or savage squaws (Green 2001). These are often the identities they grow up with and recognize, creating walls that keep them from wanting to participate or recognize their identities. Also, because many are from multi-ethnic families, they draw strength and identity from many places and perspectives and, often, their Native identities are lost or pushed aside, choosing, when they can, identities that give them more power and social capital.

The other women I interviewed who grew up here also expressed that they knew little about their family histories or what originally brought their families to urban areas like Lansing. During a group interview with local Indigenous women, only one had a strong connection to their home community. Most grew up in Lansing or had moved back and forth during their life as their parents sought jobs. Some had recollections that their grandparents had lived here at one time, but they had little knowledge of why they came or why they went back to their reservation communities, either because their parents or grandparents never told them or because those people passed away before they could ask the questions. What can be seen is that, for most, the move to urban areas was in response to the few opportunities available for Native people on reservations, the promise of high-paying jobs, and an escape from the poverty

and hardships that faced many living on reservations. These migrants persisted and resisted by claiming other ethnicities or because, within urban spaces like Lansing, the Indigenous population was small, on-the-move, and out-of-place in terms of prevailing stereotypes and assumptions that erased their indigeneity.

Despite settler colonial narratives of vanishing and policies that sought to erase Indigenous people from urban spaces and modernity, Lansing has remained an Indigenous space and a place where Indigenous language, culture, and identity persist. Many Indigenous communities and individuals disrupted and resisted these narratives and policies that worked to marginalize and assimilate them on reservations by maintaining kinship networks and by continuing traditions of movement and migration that brought them to urban spaces. This resistance, as John Low (2016) explains, was both a rejection of assimilation and a desire for inclusion into the mainstream. Urban areas became spaces where resistance and persistence were exercised, spaces that remained Indigenous intersections and homelands for social, political, and economic reasons, despite being uncounted and erased in census records and the historical narratives of urban modernity.

The quote at the start of this chapter by Simon Pokagon is a prime example of how the image of the dying Indian, immortalized in the words of famous chiefs, was used to anchor and perpetuate the story of vanishing and reinforce ideologies that make Indigenous urban communities invisible. Popular culture writers and the media continued to use this narrative of the vanishing Indian as they sought to explain, comprehend, and erase indigeneity from the time of settlement to the present day. In 1929, for instance, the *Grand Rapids Press* stated that, based on census data and data from the Division of Vital Statistics at the State Department of

Health in Lansing, Indians would soon be a curiosity. According to the article, in 1910, there were only 7,519 Indians living in the state, and, by 1920, that number had dropped to 5,613, due to disease and a “better” classification of Indians based on their mixing with other races. This better classification excluded those living in urban areas and those of mixed ancestry. The author claimed that Indians had approximately 20 years before they would all finally vanish (*Grand Rapids Press* 1929). The movement of Native people to urban areas did not conform to Indians as they were imagined by policy-makers, writers, and the general public, which focused racial identities, blood quantum, and the contrasts between the savage and the civilized (primitive versus modern) that defined settler history, modernity, what Indians were supposed to be, and where they should exist (Deloria 2004; Raibmon 2005). Urban Indigenous communities and individuals living, working, and contributing to modernity and building Lansing as an urban industrial space are contrary to the image of Indians in popular imagination, politics, and Western scholarship.

ANISHINAABEG COMING TOGETHER

In my previous chapters, I have challenged the settler colonial history of the Lansing area and the narrative of vanishing that, as in so many other places, has erased the presence and persistence of Indigenous communities in urban areas. Through this, I show how the Indigenous history of Lansing is much deeper and more complex than has been written. Lansing was, and continues to be, an Indigenous urban space and an Indigenous intersection dominated by movement and migration. Rather than vanish, Indigenous people continued to use this area as part of the fabric of settlement and progress, which transformed it into what it is today.

Through census records, I have shown that indigenous people from many places came here to find work in the auto industry at an early date. These individuals and families seemed to rely on kinship networks as they made their way here. Some stayed, while others returned to their home communities or to other urban areas, seeking wage labor and opportunities to live better lives. This aspect of Indigenous migration, the lateral movements between urban areas, and the role Indigenous workers played in the auto industry has not been explored in the scholarship of Indigenous urban migration and deserves further research. Another aspect that surprised me is the number of Indigenous women who were migrating to Lansing, some to work as domestics and secretaries, but others who worked on the line along with men. While I have worked to connect these early migrations to the contemporary community, that task was difficult and remains incomplete. However, through interviews, stories, and historical documents, the picture that comes through is that kinship networks played an important role in these movements, and that word spread, word spread about jobs and opportunities in Lansing. Those who came here and were able to find work and set down roots helped others find employment and places to live.

By the late 1960s, this continued migration brought a large number of men from Manitoulin in large numbers, many of whom were fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin, into the area. It was at a time when the larger urban Indigenous community began seeking and expressing their identities, creating spaces and events where being Anishinaabeg and Indigenous could be celebrated, explored, and reclaimed. Educational programs in the Lansing School District, the Indian Center, and Michigan State University became important places for the transmission of language, culture and identity. These spaces became important in bringing

together different parts of the community and remain important and vital to the transmission of language, culture, and identity today. Through these programs, many individuals began to reclaim Anishinaabemowin as a marker of identity, and reconnect with Anishinaabe culture. For many, these spaces are the primary and sometimes only spaces where they encounter Indigenous language and culture and develop connections to their community and identity. Indigenous women were at the center of these spaces, as leaders, activists, and educators. In the next chapter, I explore the importance of these spaces, as focal points and intersections of Indigeneity, where connections to language, culture, and identity persist and are reclaimed and the role that gender plays in the maintenance of these spaces.

CHAPTER FOUR: MAKING SPACE A FOR ANISHINAABEMOWIN

My aunt told me a story about my mom, and that story was that she was taken to residential school three times, her, my mom, and another sister, and three times, those girls went, they all ran away. They went back up the trail to the trap line where their step dad was. RCMP came and got them and brought them back to residential school, Pelican Falls, I believe. Those three girls ran away again, up to the trap line to where their step dad was, and the RCMP came and got them and brought them back. And the third time those girls ran away the RCMP never came: they let them be. So, I thought, that was an amazing story, but my Aunt said: “your mom got TB and was in the sanitarium for a number of years. When she went in, she spoke the language, and when she came out she never spoke Anishinaabe anymore.” So, something happened there. I don’t know how long she was in there; I don’t have all the details of that story, but that made me angry. Because, of course, at this point, I have an analysis of colonization, and I know what colonization is doing to us, what it has done to us, and I’m angry. And then the anger kind of fuels me. Anytime I learned what colonization has taken away from us, my approach, or my response, is to go and try to reclaim it.²⁵

²⁵ Christine Sy, Appendix B; p. 176.

Education has been, and remains, an important part of the Lansing Indigenous community as a space where language, culture, and identity are reclaimed, maintained and passed down. In exploring the Indigenous history of Chicago, John J. Laukaitis (2015) writes, “The history of Chicago’s American Indian Community cannot be separated from its educational initiatives. Education infiltrated almost all aspects of what community meant and how community preserved identity and prepared for the challenges of urban life” (166). Throughout my interviews with community members and observations in the Lansing Indigenous community, it became apparent how vital education was for families and for individuals seeking to make connections to their identity and culture. For many urban Indigenous people, it is here in Lansing, rather than in their reservation communities, where they first encountered Anishinaabemowin and developed an awareness of Anishinaabe identity, culture, and traditional knowledge. These spaces, programs, and the individuals who work to maintain them were also vital as places of resistance and persistence that challenge the belief that urban spaces are places of assimilation, where languages go to die and identity is lost. Indigenous Education in urban spaces, as Laukaitis (2015) shows, creates ways to resist cultural assimilation, while promoting self-determination, economic empowerment, and individual agency.

In this chapter, I explore the role of education as spaces of resistance and persistence, and as intersections for revitalization, language maintenance, and the nurturing of Native identity for the urban Indigenous community in Lansing. These spaces, where Indigenous identity, language, and culture are reclaimed, maintained, and passed on, are created and maintained by Indigenous women, who are leaders and centers of community, family, and

Indigenous networks of kinship. Native women have the responsibility of nurturing the transmission of language, culture, and identity across generations. For some, relationships to language, culture, identity, and the social networks that maintain them have been weakened and strained by the effects of assimilation and gendered patterns of migration. However, the migration of Anishinaabe men from Manitoulin also brought the language back into this space. These spaces also serve as the intersections of community life and well-being where many in the community, particularly youth and young adults, engage with Indigenous language and culture, forming positive relationships and connections with their identity that challenge assumptions that urban spaces are places of assimilation and language loss. Rather, urban spaces like Lansing are Indigenous homelands, spaces where Anishinaabe language, traditional knowledge, and identity are reclaimed and maintained.

RECLAIMING LANGUAGE AND COMMUNITY IN THE CITY

At the beginning of this chapter, I presented part of Christine's story which involves her mother, generational language loss, and her desire to reclaim Anishinaabemowin and her identity. Her story is remarkably similar to other urban Indigenous women I interviewed, both across generations and from different communities and highlights the effects that education and other Western institutions, as tools of assimilation, have had on the transmission of Indigenous language and identity. Indigenous languages have been marked as barbarous, primitive, and a hindrance to progress and assimilation. Commissioner of Indian Affairs J.D.C. Atkins wrote in his annual report of 1887 that he felt education in the English language was the only means to make Indigenous people able and productive citizens and that Indigenous

languages were a barrier to both citizenship and economic prosperity (Prucha 1975). In the eyes of policy-makers, such as Atkins and other “friends of the Indians,” Indigenous languages also became linked to Indigenous resistance to assimilation and modernity. Their eradication, either by choice or by force, was the ideological foundation in the war to subdue this resistance and bring Indigenous people into Western civilization. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan’s policy on this subject was plain:

The Indians must conform to "the white man's ways," peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must. They must adjust themselves to their environment, and conform their mode of living substantially to our civilization. This civilization may not be the best possible, but it is the best the Indians can get. They cannot escape it, and must either conform to it or be crushed by it. (Prucha 2000: 176).

These ideologies, informed by Manifest Destiny and settler colonial narratives of “vanishing Indians,” shaped the intent of the boarding school system developed by Henry Pratt, whose motto “Kill the Indian and Save the man” became the blueprint for Indigenous assimilation through education. Indigenous language, culture, and identity were seen as a detriment to their development toward this goal (Wallace 1995; Spack 2002). What warfare did not accomplish, education and the English language could, which was the subjugation and absorption of Indian people into American society (Prucha 1973). The militarization of education and language created a framework that marginalized children from their families and communities and taught them that they, their languages, and their cultures were beneath those of the dominant culture (Johnson 1988).

The boarding school experience, for many, included physical, mental, and sexual abuse, which led to intergenerational trauma that continues to affect families and communities to this

day. As Christine's story shows, this type of experience was not just a phenomenon of residential boarding schools, but was also present in other institutions that dealt with Indigenous people. The desire to eradicate Indigenous people, communities, and languages, to make them "vanish," is foundational to the creation of modernity and Western civilization. However, stories of resistance and survival that come out of the boarding school experience show the persistence and adaptability of Indigenous culture and identity. Individuals actively participated in resisting the pressure to surrender their "Indian-ness" and sought ways to preserve their identities while incorporating aspects of the dominant culture for survival (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006: 40). Others saw the boarding schools and education as an opportunity and a place where their children could learn how to complete and gain new skills to survive and as an escape from poverty and lack of resources that plagued reservation communities, and leave behind the poverty and violence that often marked reservation life. Mary Kate Ojibwe spoke to me about her father, her thoughts on her family's experiences, and the reasons they left Sault Saint Marie:

I think there was something in the Indian community that my dad was trying get away from, and that he didn't want us to associate with. We knew he had this connection, but he knew about a lot of bad stuff, like the aunt that was a little off, who was a rape victim up there; different things he kind of just thought, don't do that. He was happy sitting on the porch when the guys would come and talk to him; that was kind of a touch stone for him. But we were not supposed to know or be a part of that. It wasn't really said; it was understood.²⁶

²⁶ Appendix A; p. 157.

The goals of the boarding school system, assimilation through the English language and the eradication of Indigenous identity, made their way into Native homes and communities. The violence and shame many experienced became part of the social structure of reservation life, and the historical trauma was expressed laterally and generationally through substance abuse and patterns of violence that were often directed at women. Parents and grandparents stopped speaking Native languages around their children and grandchildren, locating it to places and times where it would remain hidden, preventing the next generation from experiencing the shame and hurt they suffered in boarding schools. This was a survival tactic that reinforced the marginalization of Native American languages and identities to certain events, times, and places that lie outside the domains of English. This continues to influence current views and relationships between Native communities and their traditional languages, reinforcing the dominance of English as the method of gaining political and economic power and on generational language transmission. Indigenous languages were imagined as being incompatible with modernity. Thus, authentic language and language speakers became seen as located outside of modernity, surviving and persisting in reservation communities and anchored to specific activities, genders, and generations, and domains such as ceremonies, pow-wows, being an elder, or being “traditional.”

The presence and persistence of Anishinaabemowin in Lansing as a spoken language, as an ideological marker of identity and belonging, and the educational spaces where Anishinaabemowin is cultivated and reclaimed challenges the boundaries and domains of language and language use. Those I interviewed, whether they were long-time residents or only here briefly, spoke to the importance of education and their experiences in primary school and

college in shaping and strengthening their connections to their Indigenous language, culture, and identity. In Lansing, Indigenous educational programs for Indigenous youth, families, and adults across all levels, from k-12 to higher education and community events, are places where individuals can negotiate and navigate their heritage languages, the ideologies that connect language to being indigenous, and the history and traditions of their communities. For many, it was not in rural reservation communities where these things were encountered but in the city, through these Indigenous education programs and community events. For many youth and families living in Nkwejong, these places and times are often the only access they have to learning about their language, culture, and identity.

These educational spaces are focal points where urban Anishinaabe, and their children and grandchildren, create community, and a commitment to teach and pass on language, culture, and identity. With the exception of a few, the majority of migrants who came from Manitoulin to live here and, thus, the majority of local fluent speakers and teachers in the area are men. One exception was Helen Foust (Roy), who taught Anishinaabemowin in the community, at language revitalization events around the state, and at Central Michigan University and Michigan State for a number of years. At community language tables, events, and programs, men are recognized as the fluent speakers, primary language teachers, and carriers of culture, identity, and traditional knowledge. However, it is the women who organized the community and brought people together in its early days and continue to be at the center of community activities that focus on creating spaces for language, culture, and the maintenance of identity. Urban Indigenous women, as Susan Lobo (2009) writes, are at the center of fluid urban networks and activities that are the gathering places that support the

social, economic, and spiritual health of urban Indigenous communities. The roles urban clan mothers, lobo (2009) explains, fulfill roles that are founded on Indigenous gender roles and traditions that have been adapted to urban life. These gendered roles, and the spaces urban Indigenous women provide represent diverse perspectives on community needs, but they also represent the struggle for social equality, activism, and community development for the creation of spaces that cultivate Indigenous culture and identity (Howard 2009). What makes this place unique, aside from the large number of fluent Anishinaabemowin speakers, is how the language and traditional knowledge have become the intersections of gender and gender roles.

The role of teacher, language bearer, and leader, which have their roots in Anishinaabe culture and tradition, have been affected by the history of assimilation, educational policies, and the gendered migration of fluent speakers to the area. They also reflect traditions and knowledge practices that have been adapted for the needs of urban life. George Roy, describes how the community came together in the late 1960s and 70s after this migration:

The second or third year we were here, we decided to form a club, an Indian club. We started having a lot of people from our reserve and from west bay, some from Birch Island. And it was all hearsay, "Hey, they got jobs" from their friends there. And in that time span, from 1966 to 1968, people were coming down, they heard about it from their friends or families and they helped their friends and family members come down and get jobs. It was all word of mouth. From the island, there was, we counted one time, almost 200 who were originally from the island, and the majority were from Wikwemikong. A lot of them were working in Toronto at the time and they came down to visit and they stayed to put in applications. Some came from Chicago, and they came over here and they put in their applications. There was a lot of movement like this, especially the ones who were free to move, single ones. A few years later, that's when the women decided to get together, because we were starting to have families and kids, and decided to have an Indian club and all meet together and have parties and dances. It was more a social club because a lot of Indian communities up in Canada had

what they called Indian clubs in all the major urban communities where there were a number of Natives. They didn't have anything like that here at that time, not that we were aware of. We met in private homes, and we had our committee: president, vice president. We donated money every time we met, so we could save up to rent a hall for the kids to have a Christmas party and stuff like that. And that's when the rest of the Native community, and we didn't know that there was a sizable Native community here when we first got here, that's when they started forming a club of their own, of Anishinaabeg that were born and raised here. But they got more organized, as far as finances and stuff like that. They had all these HUD and housing programs and they had monies available for minorities. They also had young people who were going to school at MSU that came in to help them write grants and then they come and asked us to join up with them and we did. That's how that Indian center came to be. And that's when we became a community, rather than just a little group, but that didn't happen right away. It took three or four years for that and it started over there on Ottawa Street in a private home that someone had made into a little hall. Then they moved it over to Saginaw and Charles Street. But then they overgrew that, and it moved over onto Center Street. It was the women that did this.²⁷

The text presented above, highlights the development of educational spaces by the Indigenous community in Lansing, which, over time, brought people together and created a sense of community and belonging. These spaces resembled the social and educational spaces urban Indigenous people were creating in Canadian cities like Toronto and Ottawa (Howard 2011). While there were many individuals who took part in the creation and development of these spaces, it was, and continues to be, Indigenous women who provide the leadership that brought them into being and who use them to pass on culture and identity. However, with few exceptions, Indigenous men are the language bearers, and keepers of traditional knowledge in these spaces; blurring the lines of gender and gender roles.

²⁷ George Roy; Interview, 25 September 2015.

IT WAS THE WOMEN THAT DID THIS

One of my elders, a man who goes by the name of Two Dogs, always tells the same jokes and stories no matter how many times people have heard them. His jokes or stories are always told during ceremonies, as we wait on the rocks to heat up before a sweat, or while people are resting in between songs around the drum. One of his favorites, and least dirty jokes, satirizes the roles of women in the community:

There were three women in a car. A Mohawk, a Lakota and an Anishinaabe. They were on their way to a pow-wow and got into a freak accident. Suddenly, all three were standing before the gates of heaven and waiting in line to speak to Saint Peter. The first to approach was the Mohawk woman. Saint Peter asked, What do you Believe?
The Mohawk woman said,
“I am a member of the Longhouse and follow the teachings of Handsome Lake.”
“You may enter,” Saint Peter declared.
Next was the Lakota woman.
“What do you believe?” He asked.
“I am a Sun Dancer and practice the teachings of White Buffalo Calf Woman.”
Saint Peter told her she may enter.
Saint Peter then asked the Anishinaabe women, “What do you believe?”
And she said, “I believe you are sitting in my chair.”²⁸

While the above joke is meant to be entertaining, it does describe, at least from an Indigenous male perspective, the power of women in Anishinaabeg communities. The role of women as caretakers, leaders, and nurturers of culture, kinship, and identity has been explored by Indigenous scholars (Maracle 2002; Anderson 2011; Child 2013). In the Lansing Native community, leadership is, and has probably always been a domain of women. As a youth myself

²⁸ This bit of humor was given by Odawa elder Two Dog’s during ceremonies held at his home in Michigan in the summer of 2014.

growing up in Lansing and taking part in the Lansing School District's Indian Education Programs, it was Indigenous women who developed, organized, and carried them out. The first person to introduce me Anishinaabe culture and life-ways was the late Carol Kay, also called Niimkiboonikwe (Winter Thunder Woman), from Bay Mills, Michigan. Carol worked as a counselor and advocate for Native students at Eastern High School in the early 1990s and took myself and other students to ceremonies, sweat lodges, and community events. Helen Roy, from Wikwemikong, also taught Anishinaabemowin at the High School during the lunch hour. It wasn't that there were no men present or taking part, planning, or carrying these things out as well; however, women played the predominant roles when it came to bringing community together and creating opportunities for passing on both language and culture at this time.

Through these experiences and through my observations and interviews for my research, I developed a deeper understanding of Indigenous gender roles that conflicts with stereotypical views of Indigenous women, and men, held by Western society. The roles of Native women as caretakers of families and communities places them in positions of leadership, where they actively engage in redefining their identities while maintaining past traditions (Anderson 2011). However, gendered stereotypes of Native Americans locate women as subservient to men and were created by a male-dominant society that equated anatomy with sex, gender, and power. Kidwell (1978) and Mathes (1975) have shown that a woman's status within Native American families and communities is based on different cultural values that give a great deal of power and respect to women and their roles. However, most studies on gender roles reflect the traditionally male-oriented western viewpoint, which assign importance to male behavior patterns over female. This view hides the flexible nature of

Indigenous gender roles and power that existed and continue to evolve in native communities. For LaFromboise and Heyle (1990), traditional male dominated social science has also created inaccurate and incomplete depictions of Native American social systems and behavior. Overlooked and often hidden are the ways in which women, as the centers of families and caretakers of culture, have maintained traditional values while adapting to the external pressures of the dominant society (Child 2013; Anderson 2011, Applegate-Krouse and Howard 2009).

For this dissertation, I was interested in looking at these spaces and speaking to Ogimakweg, who are at the center exercising the roles of leadership as organizers and advocates, as well as those who seemed to stand on the peripheries, helping out when they can as mothers, teachers, and nurturers of community and culture. I wanted to understand these roles and the power Indigenous women have, through their perspectives and experiences and the spaces they make. However, I found that, while the boundaries between groups and individuals who work in them were not always so clearly defined, there are clearly defined spaces and individuals who kept to them. Lansing Community College, Michigan State University, and the Lansing School District act as intersections of community, where Indigenous identity and space are interpreted and performed. I interviewed community members and elders who were active within each of these spaces as helpers and participants, both men and women. In most of these spaces, there was an overlap in both leadership and those who participated and brought their children to programs and events. These places are important, not just because they offer a physical space and the much needed funding to carry out these programs, but also because of the ideological space they occupy within the community.

Institutions of education are seen as places where families can pass on culture and identity to their children and help with their academic and social skills. Yet, they are also places haunted by the memories and historical traumas of boarding schools and the loss of language, culture, and identity. Thus, for many, they are a natural stepping stone, and a place where they find and nurture their identities as Native people. For others, they are places that compromise identity or lie outside of Indigenous space or what it means to be Indigenous, and challenge where and how language should be used or practiced.

I had an impromptu group interview with the women who make up the Parent Advisory Committee for the Lansing School District's current manifestation of its Indian Education Program. Over the years, the district's Indian Education Program has gone through a number of changes, mostly due to budget cuts. What was once a large program with a director, counselors, and cultural advisors has been whittled down to a single person who has to take on the work of all three. Mona Henry is the current director. I had worked with Mona on several occasions as part of the Indigenous Youth Empowerment Program that she, Emily Sorroche from Lansing Community College, and Dr. Estrella Torrez at Michigan State University headed. Ramona came to Lansing several years ago from Mount Pleasant with her son when her partner began barber school. For her, coming to Lansing was supposed to be for only a few years while her partner finished his education. However, it became a long-term move, and Ramona has become an important and committed leader in the community. Mona was excited about this project, and agreed to be interviewed and to also connect me with the women of the parent advisory committee to interview them.

Ramona agreed to meet with me for an interview, and surprised me by also inviting the other women in the Parent Advisory Committee. We met in her office at one of the many elementary schools closed by the district due to decreasing enrollment. Her office exemplified the school district's current commitment to its Native students. She had a desk, a small table for meetings, and a few other random pieces of furniture that held boxes, files, and materials needed to run and keep the program going. Scattered about the room and organized as best as possible with the space provided were student projects, the remnants of past programs and projects, and, in the corner, an old coffee pot with coffee brewing. It felt at home and reminded me of my own work space. I made myself a space at the table and waited for the coffee to brew and the other women to arrive. All of these women were residents of Lansing, some who came here as youth or more recently with strong connections to their home communities and others whose families had been here and in other urban areas for a long time who were distant from their families' tribal communities. All of the women were from multi-ethnic backgrounds but shared a commitment to pass on their Anishinaabeg culture and identity by supporting programs within the school system. This was my first time meeting them, although I recognized some from various events in the Native community. After speaking with them about my dissertation and research, I asked them each to tell me about themselves and how they and their families came to live here.

Aja Wheatly-Medwayosh and her family were born and raised in Lansing. Apart from a brief stay in Mount Pleasant, she has never left the area. Her mother's family was originally from Burt Lake and her father's family came from Grand Traverse and Little Traverse, with some connections and kinship to Ojibwa communities in Canada. Her family came here looking

for work, but she could not recall exactly why they chose Lansing. As I showed earlier, her connections to Burt Lake were strong, like many who share that identity and history. and her family, like many others from Burt Lake, was forced to relocate with some going to urban areas like Lansing.

The other women and their families were also long-time residents. Keli Corwin was born and raised in the area. She told me she didn't know her tribal affiliation because, when her father was five, his mother left him, and she has never met her. However, she married into the Sault Saint Marie tribe, and her children are members there. They also have some ties to Canadian Ojibwa through their paternal grandfather. Jessica Taylor, also born and raised in Lansing, is Mohawk through her father, who came here with her grandfather to work as iron workers. They had both been involved in building skyscrapers in New York but came here to find jobs. Her father settled here and started a family. Lucy is originally from Mount Pleasant and is a member of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe. Her father also has family connections to Potawatomie and Ojibwa living in Canada. Her children are connected to the Grand Traverse Odawa through their father. Lucy Jackson came here when she was thirteen but also lived for a time back at her home community in Mount Pleasant.

These women, like many contemporary Indian women have important roles in the positive formation of identity, value formation, and the transmission of culture to the next generation. They are at the center of Native American family networks, maintaining extending kinship networks that are influenced by historical tribal mobility and forced removal policies. Yet, while women have important roles as keepers of culture and family, their work is often overshadowed by male-dominated aspects of culture, politics, and activism (Red Horse 1976;

Applegate-Krouse 2009). As Howard (2009) shows, beneath the more dramatic roles that men often play in community activism are women who support and maintain these movements on the ground through the maintenance of culture by instilling pride in Indigenous identity, community-building, and education. Much of the work women do goes on quietly and few of them seek recognition for what they do as mothers, leaders, and place-makers. They also have to struggle against ideologies of male dominance and gender roles within their own communities that limit both their power and visibility (Billson 1995). Based on my own observations and experiences, I was interested in understanding their perspectives on the role of women, and, in particular, why it seemed that women were always the ones organizing, planning, and putting together activities and programs aimed at passing on Native identity, language, and culture. I was also interested in their perspectives on gender and gender roles:

AH: So, why are their only women sitting at this table?

KC: Were patient; we're head strong.

LJ: I think we're just used to running stuff (Laughter).

Aja: If you think about it, like the men would go off and hunt, and the women were the ones who handled everything, made sure the kids were there, the food was done, the clothing was done, that things were clean; we did all that. My house is run very traditional; I never realized that.

AS: My house is nothing but women now (everyone laughs)!

KC: Because we get stuff done, that's why.

AS: I think, too, that, in my experience with like working with the school's stuff, that I realized that the men are more like hands-on when it comes to being involved in things. They more want to get their hands dirty and do work, working with kids and being involved. They will share their opinions and stuff, but, mainly, they leave the organization and planning and stuff to the women.

MH: I see what you're saying. If I say there is a parent meeting, this is who shows up! But if I say, hey, we got an event going on and we need some help, then the guys and everybody else shows up.

LJ: Moving tables and other things.

CS: Yeah it's like you (talking about guys). I'm doing all this cooking; you're coming to do this.

LJ: Yeah, it's just us because we're just used doing it.

Mona: Yeah, I think cooking and that stuff in other cultures they would say that's being sexist, but, for us, it's traditional.

Lucy: Yeah, to be the mother and the head of the household and to make sure that things are in order. That's our job, as a mother, as Native American mothers. Every mother that I have known has been like that.

AJW: Yeah, even if you think about it, the men were the warriors; they had to protect. Like when you think about football, the whole defensive line protects the quarterback and everybody else. Women are the brains of the operation; we make everything happen. We are the quarterbacks (Laughter).

AJW: Some of us are the kickers, but most of us are quarterbacks. And they all (the guys), need to get up there and protect that line.

AH: So, our job as men is not to mess that up?

AJW: Pretty much, yeah (laughter).

JT: Catch the ball when we tell you to!

JT: No, but I mean it does, yeah, you know, they were sent out to protect. The younger ones were there to look after the sisters, the aunts, the mothers, grandmothers while all the other ones were off getting the food. And who was in charge of cooking the food? Yeah know, all of us kids, the boy cousins, they went off fishing, and all of us girls would sit around the table with our spoons cleaning off all the fish, gutting them, everything else. My husband and my son, I had to teach them how to clean a catfish. They were both squeamish; I thought they were going to pass out on my deck (laughter).²⁹

²⁹ Appendix D; pp. 197-198.

During our conversation, these women explained that their roles as leaders, the ones in the charge, have their foundation in traditional gender roles and responsibilities. These roles have a significant impact on the formation, maintenance, and persistence of urban Indigenous communities (Lobo 2009). Women, through their work as leaders and their connections to their tribal communities through kinship, help pass on identity, culture, and life-ways including gender roles. Many of the policies aimed at assimilating Native peoples focused on the roles of women. Native households headed by women and in poverty were targeted for intervention with the goals of removing Indian children, placing them into foster care and boarding schools (Fournier and Grey 1997). The fight to reclaim and maintain families, kinship networks, and the revitalization of language and identity were often led by women in urban communities. This and other activism across Indian country led by women is rooted in their traditional roles as caregivers, healers, and maintainers of language and culture (Anderson 2000; Howard 2009; Child 2012). One woman I interviewed who came to Lansing to attend Michigan State stated, “I think the reason that women are the ones leading or in charge is that our communities are hurt and in pain, and women who take care of the community, they are the nurturers.”³⁰ Through my observations and knowledge of the community this was true. Women stand at the center, directing, bringing together, and creating spaces for the language and culture to be reclaimed and passed down.

³⁰ Interview with Brittany Romero, 15 March 2016.

However, some of the women I spoke to for this research described their relationship to their home communities, families, and their identities and cultures as distant, strained, or as having no relationship with them. These urban Indigenous women expressed how they and their families struggle with their finding their identities and a place for themselves in their reservation tribal commutes. J. Billson (1995) shows, traditional Indigenous gender roles, and the social positions that come with them, have undergone a great deal of change. Traditional relationships and gendered roles are being challenged and adapted as more people adapt to dominant culture norms and behaviors. The breakup of traditional family structures, through assimilation and migration, has also made it difficult for women to maintain aspects of culture and tradition. Yet, Native women have been able to use and adapt gender roles and traditional culture to meet the demands and pressures of the dominant society while reclaiming, maintaining, and passing on their identity and way of life (Bilson 1995). For the women I interviewed, institutions of education like Michigan State, Lansing Community College, the Lansing School District, and their Indigenous Education Programs and events, offer spaces to reclaim and foster their identities as Indigenous women while creating a sense of community and belonging in the process. It is in these spaces where they encounter Indigenous languages, and develop relationships with their identities as Indigenous women.

BECOMING AND BELONGING IN THE CITY

Education has played an important role in helping individuals and communities reclaim and maintain their identities and community. Education also plays a pivotal role, for the people I interviewed, as a space to learn about, experience, and reclaim their identities as Indigenous.

Many described the importance of educational programs aimed at Indigenous youth, families, and adults across all levels, from k-12 to higher education as places where they first encountered their heritage languages, as well as places where they became more aware of their identities and the history and traditions of their communities. For many Native youth and families living in Nkwejong, these places and times are often the only access they have to learning about their language, culture, and identity. Mary Kate Ojibwe described her path to learning the language:

Yeah, growing up, we really didn't have any relationship with them (family back on the reservation), except I remember once going up there as a little kid and visiting relatives. And they were all people I didn't know. It was kind of uncomfortable; I'm not an especially social person anyway. So, it was a little uncomfortable. They were friendly, and I remember crossing the straits and everything. I remember going to pow-wows, not that far north, but we would go sometimes, he would drive us up to the Petoskey area around there. Only one, his older brother was somewhat involved in the community in Detroit and so was one of his sisters, Joan Ojibway. The younger sister wasn't. So I think we went up to Petoskey and to different pow-wows because she was dancing there. But she was a little odd; she had some mental health issues. She actually was the first one that helped me with the language because I always thought it would be interesting to try to learn that even as a kid. I asked did anybody know the language and they said no; they don't want to do that. They just wanted to speak English, as it would be good for you in schools. But Joan said she would teach me some stuff. And she tried too, but I didn't believe her because of her mental health issues. I thought she was making it up. And I only can remember one thing after all these years; I can only remember one thing she taught me. And I had an epiphany in Helen's class because she taught us one of the first things was Kawabamin minwa. She said it very slowly with all of the vowels, yah know, because sometimes they don't. I listened to it, and I said Kawabamin mina, oh my God, because Joan, maybe she said kawabamin minwa, but what I remember as a grown up having learned as a child was "see you later my friend" and she told me to say Kewawabominwa. And I thought if you said that really fast it would sound like that, and then I realized that she may well have known some of the language, and I just miss-remembered it, and I didn't trust her enough at the time to pay attention. That was my only chance as a kid to learn it.³¹

³¹ Appendix A; p. 167.

For many of those with whom I spoke, the loss of language occurred before they, or their families, came to live in urban areas. I spoke with Emily Sorroche and her mother about their experiences with language and how they came to live in Lansing. Her mother was from the Cayuga reservation in New York. Growing up there, were few opportunities to learn the language on her reservation, even though she had a few relatives who were speakers. As a child, there were classes in the local school, and they had access to recordings in the school library. At home, some language was used, but it was very basic.³² Emily's family moved around a lot when she was younger, moving from place to place while her father sought employment. Emily came here to go to college. Her mother was originally a nurse but stopped working once Emily was born. She moved to Lansing to be with Emily and her sister and to be closer to family. For Emily, like many women I spoke with, they didn't have strong connections to their home communities or language. It was through community events and Indigenous educational programs, that they made these connections and developed relationships to these aspects of their culture and identity:

I came to Lansing for school purposes, that's when I moved here, and I don't know how I chose Michigan State. I visited here one time for band, and I liked it. I didn't like Central, I remember that. I didn't like the campus or the people I came into contact with. They weren't friendly or warm; it was a different atmosphere. I have been here ever since I finished school, and I worked in the Lansing area, and I grew to like it here. I like the atmosphere and the culture, and I was very involved as a undergrad with the pow-wow and the Native group here on campus. It really brought a sense of belonging for me: it brought the cultural ties that existed, and I didn't know they existed inside me until I came here and acted. I was an active participant in my culture, and I met a pretty diverse group of Native students here. We went to school together, we learned a lot about each other, and we motivated and we then graduated together. We all

³² Appendix B; pp.189-190.

managed to get through it, and I don't think I would have made it through if I didn't have that support.³³

For the women I interviewed, as well as the men, these spaces became important focal points, places where they developed awareness of their identities as Indigenous and connections to their home communities, families, and Indigenous language. This was true in Lansing and in other urban spaces that individuals felt connections to. For those without kinship or connections to reservation communities, and who did not have language and culture present in the home, these spaces became the primary place where they learned what it meant to be Anishinaabe and Indigenous.

CHRISTINE'S STORY

I met Christine while she was working on her Dissertation at Michigan State University as the Pre-Doctoral Fellow in American Indian Studies. I asked to interview her because I wanted to understand her experiences as a Native woman coming to the area for the first time and her experiences making a place for herself here. We met in her office at MSU and spoke about issues of language, identity, and belonging. For her, like many of the women I spoke with, she came to find her identity and place later in life, during her time as an undergraduate studying in Canada.

I was raised pretty much in a white family, with white extended family, in a white world, so the only thing I knew about myself was that I was Indian. And my dad gave me a few political messages, which were really powerful, but he also said, "I don't know

³³ Appendix B; p. 1186.

your culture; that's something you're going to have to learn, you will learn, when you get older. There will be lots of people around to teach you." And he said things like, when I came home from school in grade 5, no kindergarten, I remember being 5 years old, and I came home and said that I hated being Indian. And he said, "Don't hate being Indian, He said, "All this land is yours, and it was taken from you by the government, and by people. But don't worry about that, because everything is going to work out in the end. Everything will come full circle." I was 5 years old and got this political message, but, yah know, when you are that age you think your parents are, everything they say is golden. So, of course, I believed him and that really reassured me. "I just hated being Indian." He also did a lot to kind of build up my resilience in because he knew I was dealing with a lot of racism and other things. Anyhow, I didn't learn that I actually had another language until I was in the university.³⁴

What is interesting in Christine's story, and those of other women who I interviewed, is how important a role education and places created to teach language and culture in urban spaces played in their lives as the site where they learned or became aware of their identities as Indigenous women and their role and place in both their own communities. These women lost or had their connections to their tribal communities diminished through institutionalization, forced or voluntary migration and relocation, and the historical and contemporary erasure of their identities as Native women through physical and institutional violence. Yet, institutions of education have become the sites and spaces to reclaim and reimagine Indigenous gender roles and identities and challenge the colonial practices and policies of assimilation and erasure by making places to connect them through language:

..... I was so grateful for the Indian Friendship Center; they really provide a space for all the limitations of any institution. And I learned so much, and I started going to these weekly language classes for free at the Friendship center and I loved it. I loved it because it was Anishinaabe people but with all the same kind of sentiment, just community, friendship, being together; we had food and visiting and laughing. So, I started learning. The same things we were talking about back then; they are the same

³⁴ Appendix B, p. 176.

things we are talking about at the language table at Nokomis learning center. And it didn't matter to me; I don't get bored with it, just grateful to be with our people in that energy and that space. It's just so life going for me, because we can easily become separated from who we are. We don't have our people, we don't have our land, we don't have even a connection. I don't have strong connections with my mother's family. I didn't know my mom; I have memories of her, but, you know, our families are really destroyed. Different things have happened: residential schools, sanitariums, foster homes, poverty. A lot of my mom's family still over there at Lac Seul First Nation and in that area, you know she left, she went around here and there and then she ended up in the Sault, and she ended up passing away. I think she went home a few times, but I don't know how close those relationships are, I think some of them are probably close. But, anyhow, I'm just starting to learn, starting to connect back with some of those relationships, but I haven't yet made a trip back there. I have some anxieties."³⁵

What I observed, and what I heard through the stories of individuals and families I interviewed, was that, for most, particularly the women, there was a sense that they had lost connections to their language and to their home communities. Yet, they continued to practice traditional roles as Indigenous women. They were the center of family and community, responsible for passing on identity, language, and traditions to their children and their community. This is important, not just for the youth, but for the whole community, and, often, this knowledge just doesn't flow down, but also up and across. Individuals from multiple generations learn about their culture, language, and identity. Cheshire (2001) explains that, in Native American families, the mother remains the nexus for the transmission of culture and identity to her child. The power of women and their roles within Indigenous culture puts them at the center of Indigenous traditions and relationships within families, communities, and ways of knowing and experiencing the world. In many contemporary native communities and families, the woman is not only the head of the household, but she is also the caretaker of knowledge and language,

³⁵ Appendix B; p. 178.

passing them on to children and maintaining Native identity (Gunn 1992). Women are seen as the backbone of Native communities and the caretakers of language, culture, and identity, maintaining them through social networks and creating opportunities to pass these on to their children and the larger community.

The majority of Indigenous women in the Lansing community are not fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin or other Indigenous languages and many felt disconnected from their identities and culture. In the Lansing community, migration for employment brought Anishinaabemowin speakers here, the majority of whom are men. So, while women hold positions as leaders, organizers, and educators, it is primarily men who hold seen as the language teachers and the holders and caretakers of language and traditional knowledge. This is evident at the language tables held weekly at Nokomis Learning Center and during language immersion activities in the community. Men play active roles in keeping these alive by passing on cultural teachings through language. Some of these roles, such as tending and building sacred fires and drumming at pow-wows, are seen as specifically male activities that are prohibited to women, although some women actively resist the ideologies that inform these practices, citing that women didn't wait around for the men to start a fire if they needed one. Others sing and drum in social hand drum groups, and a few have even used the big drum, despite the taboos against it. This became an issue during the annual IYEP summer camp when a male community member came in to teach a hand drum workshop to the older children. Another culture teacher, who was a woman, disagreed with having him teaching drum making to both the boys and girls in the group, citing teachings from her community that marked it as a specifically male activity. At ceremonies and social gatherings, traditional gender roles are

upheld, despite conflicts over their legitimacy and whether they are “traditional” practices. Scholarship on gender and gender roles points to the practices associated with Indigenous men and masculinity as by-products of the dominant culture’s stereotypical views of Indigenous men as the providers, the hunters and warriors whose positions and roles made them socially and culturally more important than the roles of women who are positioned as mothers, caregivers, and laborers. Leah Sneider (2015) writes that it is important to dis-entangle traditional knowledge from settler colonial ideologies to reveal their effects on gender roles and masculinities. Healing, she writes, must be complementary, between individuals, the community, and the culture. There is also a need to understand and reclaim the flexibility of Indigenous gender and gender roles. As Sam Mckegney (2014) writes, “There are roles within families and community, and these reside in specific purposes and places and times and geographies; they are always shifting” (229). There were several times when I observed these shifting and flexible gender roles. At community events, language tables, and Indigenous educational programs. Both men and women are actively engaged in reclaiming and maintaining language, culture, and identity as caretakers of culture and traditional knowledge in ways that are complimentary, flexible, and shifting.

Thus, while traditional gender roles have been maintained, they have also been adapted to the needs of urban life. Gender and gender roles are fluid and flexible, and men have stepped into roles of caregivers, language-bearers, and culture keepers, while women remain central to the maintenance of family and community, as leaders and activists creating spaces and places where language, culture, and identity can be reclaimed. These spaces are important, as they are, for many, the primary place where they learn Anishinaabemowin and traditional

knowledge and develop connections to their identities. They are also important as places where youth and families develop the skills to be successful and gain skills needed to navigate in the dominant society. The Indigenous Youth Empowerment Program gives students opportunities to connect with each other and develop connections to their identity through community events and cultural programs, but it also teaches important skills that center on academic success as well as Individual and family health and well-being. While I found is that, while it is primarily men who hold the responsibilities of language teachers and culture bearers; women are teaching and passing down other traditional knowledge and the skills and knowledge to be successful in the dominant culture. These two sets of knowledge and traditions prove that gender and gender roles sometimes come together and are sometimes in tension.

Language and language ideologies are often the focal point and intersection of these tensions. After-school programs, the IYEP summer camp, community potlucks and Christmas parties, and language tables are places where language is spoken, and spaces where language ideologies concerning its role as a carrier of culture, identity, and traditional knowledge are expressed. However, these are also places where these ideologies, linguistic practices, revitalization efforts, and the realities of everyday life are often in tension and conflict with each other. Paul Kroskrity (2009) talks about the importance of ideological clarification and the importance of these sites, where ideological struggles and differences are often displayed (71). Lansing, because of the number of Anishinaabemowin speakers and its importance as an intersection of migration and education, is an ideal place to observe and understand these ideological differences and their effect on urban language revitalization. In my next chapter, I examine community members' relationships to language as an ideological marker of belonging,

its role as a carrier of culture and identity, and as a spoken language to explore how they affect local language revitalization efforts. Many of the beliefs, practices, and experiences I observed are in tension with the ideological positioning of Anishinaabemowin and the role Indigenous languages are said to play as markers of identity, culture, and belonging. These tensions, I posit, are related to language ideologies that do not reflect the needs, desires, or realities of the community, and that, for language revitalization to be successful, there is a need to develop ideologies that highlight the language's importance as a spoken language, the language of everyday life and as an urban language.

CHAPTER FIVE: LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND LINGUISTIC TENSIONS

"I always thought there was a division between us and them because of the language barrier. There were a couple of older ones here who knew the language but it was not like they were using it. But it was not our problem it was their problem, not understanding because we didn't know English. I can recall one time we used to go to the center and talk the language, and one of the administrators at the time coming in, and we were just sitting there talking, and she made the comment, "Quit talking that gibberish." That's what this person said and I remember being very disappointed in them. Maybe she was just joking, but I don't know." ³⁶

³⁶ George Roy, Personal Interview; 25 September 2015.

OUR LANGUAGE IS OUR IDENTITY

For almost everyone I spoke with during the course of my research, the maintenance and preservation of Anishinaabemowin, in some way or form, was important to them. Most of them expressed that, for them, language represented an important part of their identity and was vital for the preservation of Anishinaabe culture and traditional knowledge. This ideology has many varying levels, from those who see language as part of a larger and diverse group of practices and expressions that maintain identity and culture, to those who view language as the primary means of maintaining them. In 2008, Ojibwe writer and scholar David Treuer wrote an opinion piece for the *Washington Post*, about the importance of Anishinaabemowin and other Indigenous languages as carriers of culture and identity. In it, he stated that, without Indigenous languages, Indigenous people cease being distinct cultures and identities and become ethnicities, like any other ethnic peoples who now live in the United States, using arbitrary markers of identity and culture to define themselves. Treuer also links language to sovereignty, land, and law; he claims that believing these things can exist without language only speeds up the loss of Indigenous identity and plurality. In his opinion:

Without our own languages, however, the markers we use to define ourselves can become arbitrary. One need only change the nouns to see the difference. Instead of "fry bread," insert "corned beef," and instead of harking back to smallpox-infested blankets, say "potato famine" -- and you arrive at a completely different ethnicity. American Indians are fast becoming ethnic Americans like the Irish and the Italians and the Scandinavians, to name a few. (Treuer 2008)

Other writers and language activists have expressed similar opinions, that, without their languages, Indigenous people will lose their cultures and identities. While this represents the

extreme end of the ideological position that language, culture, and identity are interconnected and vital, this ideology informs and drives many revitalization efforts taking place in Indigenous communities. Language is seen as more than a system of communication; language holds the identity and experiences of a community. Language expresses the worldview of a culture, contains traditional knowledge, and speaks of our relationships to the natural world. These things are seen as lost, as communities shift to English, and become irretrievable once there are no longer fluent speakers left who can help us understand them. However, as the statement I opened this chapter with expresses, not everyone views the use and preservation of their heritage language in the same way. Language use and language ideologies that support language as a marker of identity and a carrier of culture, are often in conflict with the needs and experiences of community members. At times, this comes out as avoidance or antipathy; at other times, there is tension and resistance to language revitalization and the ideologies that link it to identity and belonging.

Throughout this chapter, I examine some of the language ideologies and linguistic practices I experienced through interviews with community members, in language activities and programs, and through participant observation of community events and gatherings where language was present or used to mark speakers or events. Language ideologies influence linguistic practices and inform individuals' relationships with language as a marker of status, belonging, and identity. The sites of language renewal are also important places where these ideologies intersect and are formed and negotiated. By examining these, I seek to explore the disjunctures between language ideologies and linguistic practices that inform how language is used as a marker of identity and belonging, versus its use as a communicative system. The

presence of Anishinaabemowin in this community, as both ideological marker and way of speaking, highlights the importance of urban communities as spaces where language and traditional knowledge have persisted through the movements and flow of people, despite being seen as spaces where these things are lost. While there are many language ideologies and practices associated with Anishinaabemowin in Lansing, I focused on the ideology of language as a carrier of culture, knowledge, and identity, ideologies associated with language and gender roles, and how individuals use language loss and participation in revitalization as markers of identity and authenticity.

ANISHINAABEMOWIN IN THE CITY

Urban areas are historically and socially unique places that have often been left out of the discourse on language revitalization by ideologies that locate linguistic authenticity and authority in rural reservation communities. Susan Baloy (2011) explores the possibilities and challenges of extending language revitalization into urban spaces. Baloy highlights the diversity of urban communities culturally and linguistically and emphasizes the need to recognize that being urban and Native are not contradictory identities. However, much of the scholarship on language loss and revitalization continues to equate urban and rural lifestyles and influences as being primary factors that contribute to continued language shift (Lee and McLaughlin 2001). Urban spaces are seen as Indigenous intersections or “hubs,” as Reyna Ramirez (2007) calls them, places where Indigenous people come together in different ways and whose experiences enrich and strengthen their home communities. While this is true for urban spaces and urban Indigenous communities, they are also homelands as well and places where language persists.

A review of Native American language loss and revitalization scholarship across multiple disciplines tends to focus on rural reservation communities as the primary spaces where the transmission of identity and culture across generations and efforts taking place to reverse language shift are occurring. Demiti-Leonard and Gilmore (1999), for example, describe the community-based participatory language-planning occurring among diverse and poorly documented communities in the Western interior of Alaska. More recent scholarship on heritage language loss and revitalization methods speaks to the importance of including urban Indigenous communities and facilitating language learning-networks. Hermes and King (2013) also show how technology can be used to maintain and enrich these networks, particularly for urban Indigenous families, while creating opportunities for offline language use that reinforce generational transmission in the home. This scholarship is important and vital to understanding language shift; however, it describes and positions rural communities as focal points of linguistic renewal and urban spaces as places where language is only accessible by technology or travel to rural spaces and communities. Thus, Indigenous homelands and linguistic homelands are seen as outside of and distanced from urban Native communities, and the migration of Indigenous people to urban spaces is increasing language shift as people move away from their homelands and places where their languages persist.

My research and conversations with community members and elders who continue to use the language for everyday conversation and teach the language, here and in reservation communities points to the opposite. Urban spaces are not only homelands and Indigenous spaces, but they are places where language continues to exist and thrive, despite the ideology that when one moves to the city, one loses one's language or that there is no place in the city

for the language to have a home. As I have shown on the previous chapter, urban spaces and institutions of education are often the first place where Indigenous youth and adults interact with their heritage language and where they also interact with language ideologies that inform their relationships to language as a marker of identity, as a carrier of culture and knowledge, and its relationship to English as a communicative system. However, these ideologies are often in tension with the needs, desires, and realities of people's lives, dominant culture's ideologies that favor the use of English, and the fact that, for many, identity, culture and worldview are being passed on without the use of heritage language.

IS LANGUAGE IMPORTANT?

Is the language a carrier of identity, culture, and traditional knowledge? This is a question that I believe many people ask themselves or grapple with but are reluctant to talk about. The discourse of language revitalization and renewal, both within Indigenous communities and from academics, is dominated by language ideologies that focus on the importance of Indigenous languages as carriers of culture, knowledge, and identity. The heritage language is often situated as central to being Indigenous and articulating a tribal identity (Wetzel 2006: 64). The desire to recover Indigenous languages stems from a desire to understand identity through the medium of language and to grasp certain beliefs and ideas, which are not easily expressed in English, or lose meaning when translated (Granberg 2002: 14). There is also a belief shared by many people that, if the languages die, so does the culture; with them, the songs, ceremonies, and oral traditions would be lost, as English does not allow for exact meaning to be expressed (Granberg 2002: 248-250). However, as Dauenhauer and

Dauenhauer (1998) have shown, for some communities engaged in cultural revitalization and maintenance work, language is often not as important as other aspects of culture, such as singing and dancing. This can be attributed to the fact that, for many, their heritage language is a foreign language that is both difficult to learn and riddled with anxieties and struggles over identity, authenticity, and fear. These cultural activities are flourishing without the assistance of language. This conflicts with many ideologies that both language activists and academics share when it comes to language and culture. While the cultural function of language can be debated, what seems to be most important is the identity-making function and the reflection of cultural distinctiveness that is reinforced through Indigenous language use (Young 2003: 101).

The majority of individuals I interviewed expressed that language, identity, and culture were interlinked and that it was important to preserve and revitalize Indigenous language, like Anishinaabemowin, to maintain and access them. This view of language dominates the discourse on the importance of maintaining Indigenous languages, and explaining how individuals experience and express their identity and culture. However, their relationships to language and linguistic practices challenge this ideology. There are two fundamental questions that must be asked as communities look at the role of heritage language in their communities: are they important, and are the ideologies used to support and foster the importance of language supporting language revitalization or marginalizing the language to activities and practices that are no longer central to their everyday lives and experiences?

Speaking with elders and fluent speakers, there is a general consensus that language has an important role in informing identity and that it contains the knowledge and experiences of Anishinaabe. During one of my interviews with an elder and fluent speaker of

Anishinaabemowin, we discussed the relationship between language, culture and identity and the traditional knowledge held in the language. One learns the names of the four directions and the philosophical and cultural teachings associated with them. In Anishinaabemowin, the directions are Waabinong (east), Zhaawanong (south), Epangishmmok (west), and Kiiwidinong (north). Each direction is associated with different qualities, colors, and teachings that center Anishinaabeg philosophy, worldview, and relationships to self, community, and the larger physical and spiritual world. However, while the names of the directions, colors, and teachings are given in Anishinaabemowin, the teachings themselves are given in English. In this way, the language is used, but deeper meanings and understandings, which the language transmits, are lost. During our discussion on the words for the directions, this elder expressed to me how the words Waabinong, Zhaawanong, Epangishmmok, and Kiiwidinong should be understood. When a word has the suffix *ng* it conveys that it is a locative noun or verb, (it is at). However, in these words, */ng/* is part of the root word *anong*, which means “star.” These words are describing the stars associated with those directions, Waabinong (Morning Star: Venus), Kiiwidinong (The North Star), and Zhaawanong (Yellow Star). None of the teachings on the four directions that I had learned related this, and it points to the complexity of meaning embedded in the language and the importance of learning the language as a way to keep this knowledge alive and vital to pass on this knowledge, identity, and the worldview it informs.

My own experiences and my observations of community activities and relationships with language both reinforce and contradict this ideological positioning of the language as a carrier of culture and traditional knowledge. As a kid, I heard the language being used in certain

spaces as a communicative system, but not as a way to transmit cultural knowledge and identity. It was used to frame discourse and to mark speakers and events as coming from Indigenous perspectives, ways of being, and ways of doing. This is particularly true when looking at ceremonial events and spaces that I also attended and observed. Anishinaabemowin is seen as essential to understanding and participating in these activities and where one would assume one would naturally encounter the language used to convey important cultural and ceremonial meaning. Many people speak of the language's importance in these spaces in order for our ancestors to hear and understand us, with some expressing a more extreme view that the creator only understands Anishinaabemowin. At the majority of ceremonies, I have attended, English was the dominant language, used not just as a communicative system but also as the way to transmit specific cultural knowledge and identity. Songs are sung in the language, and prayers may be said in the language, but these are often recited through memorization and practice. The understanding and meaning of the words, songs, or stories are referenced, and transmitted through English as the spoken language among participants, elders, and teachers. This is part of the historical legacy of language loss. It is also, I posit, how language is positioned via ideologies as a carrier of culture, identity, and worldview and as a marker of identity; not as a communicative system.

One young woman I interviewed talked to me about her and her family's experience with language. For her, like many of the people with whom I spoke, living in the city and moving around distanced themselves from their identities and languages. Being multi-ethnic and trying to figure out who they were was also a challenge that made learning and relating to Anishinaabemowin difficult. These, along with a lack of speakers in their communities and

families, histories of linguistic repression by the dominant culture, and places and people to use the language with made the language secondary to other activities and ways of expressing and performing identity, as well as family histories of language loss. As Jenessa explains:

I used the language with my grandma, but I only know a few words like waboose and migwetch. I remember, when I was young, I would be driving with my Grandma, and she would see an eagle; she would stop and say migwetch, and put tobacco out, and say a prayer. Those are things that I remember, but she would just kind of mumble the words, so I don't remember what she said. But, not really; I call my grandma Nokum, Nokomis. I feel that she knows some words here and there, and my grandpa does, too, because he hangs out on the Rez a lot. But, overall, not a lot. My great grandmother went to a boarding school, and we lost both Spanish and Ojibwe because my Grandmas father came from Texas and was fluent in Spanish, but his wife was fluent in Ojibwe. It would have been wonderful for their 18 kids to be trilingual, but it was so frowned upon to speak, because we are in America, and we have to speak English. No one really shared their cultural values or language; they didn't really pass any of that down.

I, personally, from growing up with my mom mostly, who doesn't speak Spanish or have really any culture at all, I was a bit frustrated. So, every time I would go with my dad on the weekends or with them, I would try so hard to learn Spanish because I felt like I had no culture if I didn't know Spanish. I felt like I didn't have an identity because my family is from here and there, and my grandmother was from the rez. So, I really tried hard to learn it. But, with Ojibwe, there was no one to try with and I think, for that reason, I came to peace with that. There are other things I can learn, about the ceremonies, the four medicines, and things like that. But, ultimately, I didn't feel that it was as important because I kind of lost hope; I didn't know who I would learn the language with.³⁷

For many with whom I spoke, particularly Indigenous women, the language was something important but secondary to other activities, or identities they wanted to express and practice. This was particularly true for individuals who described themselves as being multi-ethnic or multi-tribal. Or, as Jenessa explains above, the lack of speakers and places to speak the

³⁷ Appendix E; pp. 204-205.

language, made them lose any hope of learning the language. Others felt that the focus on Ojibwe language at local events and programs was an attempt to mold them into something they were not, as Emily, a Cayuga woman I interviewed, explained:

I almost felt like they were trying to mesh me with another culture, and it was outside of me.....and now I find myself learning more Anishinaabemowin than my own language. Because I remember looking at your notes [to her Mother], because you showed them to me. From what you learned, and I didn't know how to say any of that [Her community's language], like I need to hear them. So, sooner than later, that's one of my things I want to learn. I want to hear how it's spoken, but I'm not going to get that here in Michigan. I would have to go back to our home community³⁸

While participation in the local Indigenous community was important for these women's well-being and the cultivation of their identity as Indigenous women, language was not of primary importance or the primary means by which they understood, learned, or marked their identity. However, they did express that language was still important as a carrier of culture, identity, and worldview. This was one of the many ideological relationships individuals have with their heritage language. As I sought to find out what made the language important and what issues continued to prevent language learning in this community, despite the large number of first-language speakers, opportunities, and places to learn the language, I began to focus on exploring these ideologies and how they position Anishinaabemowin as a marker of identity while also marginalizing the language in ways that prevent it from becoming a communicative system.

³⁸ Appendix C; p. 190.

REVITALIZATION AS SITES AND INTERSECTIONS OF IDEOLOGICAL TENSIONS

The ideologies, beliefs, and assumptions concerning language have a great effect on language revitalization programs. Within Indigenous communities, there are often many competing ideologies concerning language as a carrier of culture and world-view, language as identity, as a communicative system, and as a marker of belonging. These ideologies are often in tension with each other and with community and individual needs, desires, and resources (Danenhauer and Danenhauer 1998). Language renewal activities, as Paul Kroskrity (2009) explains, often become the intersections of conflicts between beliefs and practices about language and often become sites where these are displayed and magnified. In the Lansing Indigenous community, I observed that the presence of fluent Anishinaabemowin speakers and their interactions with other Indigenous community members who spoke English as their primary language created both conflicts and consensus on the need to revitalize and maintain the language, the importance of language as a carrier of culture and identity, and its use as a communicative system and an ideological marker of belonging and identity. In Lansing, community members engaged with language revitalization employ a number of ideologies, teaching methods, and learning goals that position language as a marker of identity and a carrier of culture, traditional knowledge, and worldview and are aimed at exposing youth to language and its association with specific cultural practices, such as canoe-building and maple-sugaring.

I observed this process during a program to teach the language through activities on the land. Anishinaabeg elders and youth worked on building the frame of a birch bark canoe, in a place not far from where Hugh Heward stopped to repair his canoes in 1790. Rather than

building the canoe starting with the bark and building the frame inside it, this canoe was built frame first, the gunnels and ribs bent and held together using pop rivets and a wood scaffolding designed to be moved and used again. The elder who came up with this design is a fluent speaker of the language and part of the group who moved here from Manitoulin Island. The youth who participated are from the Lansing area, some whose families also came from Manitoulin and others from communities in Michigan. These children have been involved in other community education programs and have also been exposed to the language as part of the Indigenous Youth Empowerment summer camp. Also present were other adults from the community who assist with language revitalization and cultural maintenance projects.

Over the course of a few weeks, we worked on building the canoe frame, shaping and bending the ash strips, and putting them in place. A few trips were also taken to gather *wagoob* (basswood bark) to sew the birch bark to the canoe. The 23-foot canoe was part of a plan to create an opportunity to teach the children how to build birch bark canoes and to do so using Anishinaabemowin as much as possible. It was also part of a larger idea to create something that could be taken to other communities, both urban and reservation, as a way to expand the use of the language and foster a greater awareness of its importance as a carrier of culture, identity, and traditional knowledge. Using cultural activities on the land was a topic that many people talked about at the previous Anishinaabemowinteg conference I attended. As one elder stated: “Our language is a language of action, of doing things. We should be teaching the language this way.”³⁹ The canoe was seen as a perfect metaphor for the power of language as

³⁹ Anishinaabemowin Conference; Sault Saint Marie, Michigan; March 2015.

a carrier of culture and identity; creating connections to language and encouraging language use through action and a land-based epistemology was a central component to this project.

As the kids gathered *wagoob* in the swamp and fed the mosquitos, I observed that little language was being used. In fact, during the course of this project, Anishinaabemowin was present but always in the background, spoken between the elders when talking with each other about the canoe and how it was being built. Both elders who were present for most of the project were fluent speakers and teachers of the language. The other educators there were also educators and community organizers and had some knowledge of the language, including myself, and we looked at this project as a way to bring youth and elders together to teach and learn the language on the land and in the context of Anishinaabe culture and life-ways. Yet, even here at a time and space that seemed perfect for creating connections and encouraging language use, the language was marginalized, secondary to English and the activity of canoe-building. Something kept it from becoming the method of passing on these activities to another generation. While the ideologies linked to language as a carrier of culture and identity informed individual and community relationships to language, linguistic ideologies and cultural practices marginalize the language. In this case, the need to use English to communicate across generations and traditional protocols that prevent questioning elders, were barriers.

While the ideology of language as a carrier of culture and Indigenous knowledge was present in the planning of this event and others like it, the need to use English to transmit this across generations marginalized the language. However, the presence of language speakers and their knowledge of both language and traditional cultural knowledge was available and used to teach canoe-building and gather from the land, even if the medium of teaching the language

and this knowledge was in English. This brings us back to the need for ideological calcification and the need for communities to understand the ideologies at work in their relationship to language as well as the goals of revitalization in the community (Krosrity 2009). While there were many missed opportunities to facilitate the intergenerational transmission of language at some of the programs I observed, they were still important places that highlight the need to examine and transform the ideologies that inform our relationships to Anishinaabemowin and language revitalization.

My experiences and my observations of community activities and relationships with language both reinforce and contradict this ideological positioning of the language as a carrier of culture and traditional knowledge. As a kid, I heard the language being used in certain spaces as a communicative system, but not as a way to transmit cultural knowledge and identity. It was used to frame discourse and to mark speakers and events as coming from Indigenous perspectives, ways of being, and ways of doing. This is particularly true when looking at ceremonial events and spaces that I also attended and observed. Anishinaabemowin is seen as essential to understanding and participating in these activities and where one would assume one would naturally encounter the language used to convey important cultural and ceremonial meaning. Many people speak of the language's importance in these spaces in order for our ancestors to hear and understand us, with some expressing a more extreme view that the creator only understands Anishinaabemowin. At the majority of ceremonies, I have attended, English was the dominant language, used not just as a communicative system but also as the way to transmit specific cultural knowledge and identity. Songs are sung in the language, and prayers may be said in the language, but these are often recited through memorization and

practice. The understanding and meaning of the words, songs, or stories are referenced, and transmitted through English as the spoken language among participants, elders, and teachers. This is part of the historical legacy of language loss. It is also, I posit, how language is positioned via ideologies as a carrier of culture, identity, and worldview and as a marker of identity; not as a communicative system.

The canoe project I referenced earlier is an example of this. The language was present, in the elders and teachers were present, but the medium through which the knowledge of canoe-making was being passed on was in English. In some cases, elders and fluent speakers rely on English when they teach, because there are many non-speakers present, as a way to prevent them from becoming discouraged or as not to embarrass them because they do not speak the language well. However, in this case, little language was used, even by myself, as I was also involved in the project. This pointed out a major disjuncture in local revitalization activities. While there may be many first-language speakers and language teachers in Lansing, the foundations of our language preservation programs and activities lack a strategy or resources for developing competent language speakers who could participate in land-based language revitalization in a meaningful way without the use of English as an intermediary.

USING LANGUAGE TO FRAME DISCOURSE AND IDENTITY

Throughout my life, I observed elders and fluent speakers speaking an invocation in the language. The protocol for this usually involves letting the eldest elder have this responsibility and honor, and I observed on several occasions when elders would defer to the oldest among them to do this. When that person was not present, another may take their place, but most

seem to feel uncomfortable or modest. At this point, another elder may say a blessing, but it is usually in English with some Anishinaabemowin to frame the speech, usually by introducing themselves in the language. These cultural and linguistic protocols and practices are influenced by age, gender roles, and ideologies within the community. However, some of the individuals I spoke with also felt that, in many cases, the use of language to frame discourse in this way seemed contrived or disingenuous.

Language is seen by some as central to articulating Indigenous identity and its use as a marker of identity and as a way to frame discourse has been explored by Ahlers (2006), who highlighted heritage language use by speakers in settings where English was the primary language of communication. One of the first things one learns is how to introduce oneself in Anishinaabemowin. This marking of identity in the language serves important social functions. Thus, when someone introduces themselves, it is customary for that person to introduce themselves in the language. These formal introductions in the language by non-fluent speakers create a space for discourse in English that is understood as being informed by Native identity (Ahlers 2006; Baloy 2011). For someone coming into the language for the first time, learning about culture and Anishinaabe identity, it also creates belonging, and a sense of self in relation to community and culture. To understand oneself and one's identity through the language is an important component to language revitalization and creating belonging and community through language ideologies and practices. Many of those I interviewed expressed how important learning the language was in developing their sense of identity and place and creating a feeling of belonging.

However, I also observed that this type of performance and use of language is less important than others and even criticized as inauthentic. One community member and language learner I spoke with thought it made people look fake: “I hate when people do that; it's so fake. They are just using it to make people think they know the language.” Another person, who was a fluent speaker, spoke similarly about the practice, stating that it seemed contrived sometimes, but they understand why people do it. This was stated by more than one person during informal interviews and was expressed by men and women across generations. My observations of language use at community events and gatherings showed me that its use was limited to formal occasions, public events, and spaces where Natives and Non-Natives gathered, such as pow-wows, where identity was being performed and celebrated, public lectures, and conferences. At gatherings in the community where everyone knows each other, no one introduces themselves in the language. Instead, authenticity and belonging are measured socially, through networks of relationships, interactions, and kinship.

This does not mean that the language, or this aspect of language performance, is not practiced, only that, because everyone knows everyone else in the community, the need for that kind of performance of language as a marker of identity and belonging or as a way to frame discourse is seldom used. Looking at the opportunities to use the language as part of community identity, this seems like a lost opportunity and another important disjuncture that could be a starting point for creating more language use at social events and gatherings that are outside of educational, spiritual, and public events. This is an important aspect of how language performance is used, or not, that highlights the tensions surrounding language as a marker of

identity and belonging, and its role in the community as a communicative system that deserves further study and reflection beyond the scope of this research.

THE DISCOURSE OF LANGUAGE LOSS AS MARKERS OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING

The loss of language that occurred as a result of the boarding schools, and the desire to assimilate Native people into the dominant culture and society using language education has had a large impact on the generational transmission of Native languages and culture across generations. Many language teachers and students point to the boarding schools as the primary reason their families and communities lost the language. While no one doubts the impact boarding schools had on language transmission in families and communities, not everyone who went through these institutions experienced this. Alice Littlefield's (1996) research showed that, for some, the boarding school experience was positive and gave them skills to be successful later in life. However, some Mount Pleasant Boarding school survivors have criticized this work by pointing out that her study only looked at those who had positive experiences and that many might have been too uncomfortable or too traumatized to speak of their experiences.⁴⁰ In Michigan, Holy Childhood in Harbor Springs, Michigan and the Mount Pleasant Boarding School, were the epicenters of policies created to eradicate Native languages, alienating children from their families, communities, and cultures. These local institutions were part of the policy of compulsory education that focused on the values of Christianity, the English language,

⁴⁰ This was from a presentation given by Dr. Littlefield in 1996 at Central Michigan University. Community members from the area who had family members who attended the school openly questioned her results and felt it did not portray a complete picture of its effect on community member's families.

and the labor and skills needed to enter American society to find employment in the agricultural industry to acquire and property over communal life-ways. Local community members were also sent to Haskell Indian School and Flandreau Indian School in South Dakota. White politicians and Christian Reformers believed that traditional Native cultures, which valued what one gave above the accumulation of wealth, were a mark of barbarism that hindered assimilation and needed to be abolished.

The experiences of students at these institutions varied; however, for most, the experience was negative. Students were forced to learn in a militaristic atmosphere that relied on physical and mental abuse to create compliance, and many students were sexually abused at the hands of educators and clergy who ran them. Food was nutritionally poor, medical care was remedial, and disease was common. Many children did not survive the experience and never returned to their homes and communities (Fletcher 2010; Adams 1995; Spack 2002).

For those who survived, the physical, emotional, and psychological scares affected their ability to reconnect with their families and home communities. Those who did retain their Native languages often refused to use them or pass them on to their children. The cumulative trauma experienced by Indigenous communities, families, and individuals related to the constant attack on Indigenous culture by the dominant society through education, stereotypes in the media, poverty, and internalized lateral colonization perpetuates the historical and intergenerational trauma passed from one generation to the next (BigFoot 2007). Many of the individuals I spoke with who were not fluent speakers or who did not know their languages pointed to these as the reasons why they and their families had lost their heritage language. Many experienced historical traumas directly through interactions within their families, as

subsequent generations attended boarding school and became marginalized and disenfranchised from their languages, communities, and identities. For others, loss occurred as the result of family members they never knew, making choices about the culture and language their children and grandchildren would learn, moving away from their reservations to cities if they could, losing contact with other family members and their communities. As I presented in previous chapters, these were the experiences of many Michigan Anishinaabe who came to Lansing and created community here. Lansing was a refuge, a place to blend in and become something other than an “Indian,” a place to escape the trauma, violence, and poverty of the reservation.

For some I spoke with, however, the use of language loss and revitalization as a way to mark and perform Native identity was questioned. Many people cite the boarding schools as the reason they do not have the language, do not use it, or have trouble learning it. One elder I spoke with had this to say about it:

Everybody is a champion of language, and I have two feelings about that. Personally, my language is very natural to me, something that I never thought about teaching or learning from someone. Because it was just the way we talked, it was my first language. But when I started raising my own kids here, they heard the language, but we never really spoke to them with it on a daily basis, just little things. So, they didn't learn to speak the language, but they understand. I think as far as that, that's a mistake I made. I should have just used the language and demanded that they speak the language to me. But it's not all gone; they know it in their heads, but they just don't speak it. But I wish I would have made it a point to making it be our first language, but when you are young like that, my thought was that I would be putting them at a disadvantage and behind when they went to school because they didn't know English, never thinking that they would be picking up English through the TV, media, and playing with friends outside. That would have never been a problem. A lot of people like to blame residential school because of punishments. Their parents were punished for speaking their language, and for that reason, they didn't want to speak it to their children. That is a common answer out there for a lot of people. But, in my readings and research, not all Anishinaabe went

to residential school; there was only a small amount. So, how come we are all losing the language? Even in the reserve, they are losing the language, but only about 10 percent of them went to residential school. So, personally, when I hear that, it is an excuse. People use it as a crutch. And that's the popular thought and idea out there today. But people don't really want to admit why they lost their language, that parents just didn't want them to learn it. They didn't want to be Indians or didn't want them to be Indians because of discrimination, or maybe because they were more non-Indian than Indian, or because they thought they were better than other Indians.⁴¹

The historical trauma created by the boarding schools is very real with real effects on the process of language shift and revitalization. However, as the above statement presents, there are those who challenge this as the primary reason for language loss. They point to their own experiences with residential schooling in Canada. While their experiences were similar in that many suffered abuse, or were forced to spend long periods away from their homes and families, they were still able to maintain Anishinaabemowin as their primary language. For many of the fluent speakers who came from Canada, the intergeneration transmission of the language was disrupted when they chose not to use the language at home, believing it would prevent them from learning English in the public schools and being successful later in life. Thus, while boarding schools had an impact on people's relationships to their language, identity, and culture, teaching them it was bad or even making them hate it, it was in the home where language loss occurred and where ideologies that marginalize the language did their work. Despite differences in time periods and colonizers and their education and assimilation policies concerning language, the collective historical and contemporary traumas flowing across generations and borders continues to harm language revitalization efforts. This collective trauma also reinforces the importance of the home as the ideal place for language and

⁴¹ Personal Interview; George Roy, 25 September 2015.

language revitalization that many scholars and activists have pointed out (Hinton and Hele 2013; Grenoble and Whaley 2005; McCarty 2013).

Through my interviews and research, I observed and documented people using the discourse of language loss and revitalization as way to mark belonging and identity. Many engaged in language revitalization activities as a way to mark their authenticity and sense of belonging and using the historical trauma of boarding schools and the discourse of language loss, despite not having family members who had gone through boarding schools. For some, these were the individuals who attended events and used introductions in the language, but never seemed to learn more or actually engage in the work of revitalization, but used it as a way to make themselves seem authentic or traditional. As I showed above, some viewed these people as less than genuine. I posit that individuals do this as a way to create belonging, a sense of place, and a relationship to their language, culture and identity. In some instances, it may be to deflect other reasons for some people's limited language ability, such as lack of time, commitment, the fear and shame of using the language incorrectly, or seeming inauthentic or less Native. Perhaps, resistance to using the language stems from ideologies that mark the language as less than English, as individuals internalized many of the ideologies about language learned in boarding schools, or from the larger society's social, economic, and political positioning of Indigenous languages, and therefore cultures, as inferior. This was an unexpected observation on how people use the discourse of language revitalization and language loss to mark identity, authenticity, and belonging that deserves further study and research.

Language ideologies, regardless of their origins, have a great impact on how people relate to speaking Anishinaabemowin as a marker of belonging and community divisions that

occurred when large numbers of fluent speakers from Manitoulin came to Lansing. Sometimes, there were subtle divisions that occurred over language use and practice, and, at other times, these were outwardly expressed such as the experience of being told that the language is “gibberish” as the quote at the beginning of this chapter highlight.

While many view language revitalization as part of a process of healing these divisions and a method to reclaim language, culture, and identity for the many who lost it through forced assimilation, relocation, survival, and neglect. However, as I discovered through observations and interviews, language ideologies, continue to create disjunctures within the community and within families as to its importance as a carrier of culture and identity and the reality that, despite language loss, culture and identity persist. One woman I interviewed, expressed the sentiment that many feel, but do not vocalize, that learning Anishinaabemowin, while important for learning about one’s identity and history, would not help when one left the Reservation:

I know it was like the school on the rez. When my kids were there, they learned so much in the Native culture and language. And then, when they moved down here to the Lansing School district, they had no idea what they were doing. To me, it was all right that they understood. They knew and they learned that, but it’s not going to apply to them in the real world. It was ok for them to have that knowledge of their history and language and everything, but when they moved down here, they were completely lost, they had no idea because they were taught so much and everything in Ojibwa in school on the rez. Everything was taught in the language before it was taught in English.⁴²

⁴² Appendix D; p. 208.

This experience highlights one of the major hurdles facing revitalization efforts. For those who want to maintain the language, finding spaces to speak it is a challenge, even on reservations. It is further complicated by policies and ideologies that marginalize indigenous languages in public education. While many families want their children to learn and use Anishinaabemowin, the fear that they will get behind in school, it will limit their opportunities, or make them appear less educated or backward are constant thoughts. This was a common concern and points to the need to foster counter-ideologies that emphasize the importance and potential of Anishinaabemowin as a communicative system that can compete with English in multiple domains and levels, as well as a way to preserve and transmit identity, culture, and ways of knowing.

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IS A JOURNEY

The birch bark canoe is still yet to be completed, after four years. The frame is almost done; just a few more pieces are needed to reinforce the bow and stern, and then it can be barked, sewn, and pitched. Because of its size, one of the difficulties was finding large enough sheets of bark that would be of the thickness and quality needed for a canoe. However, it remains a skeleton, weathering each winter and waiting for the community to come together with enough materials and knowledge to bring it to life. During a visit to the Lansing Indigenous community, Maori wood-carver and canoe builder Wikuki Kingi stated that canoes are the perfect metaphor for language as a carrier of culture and identity. While we did not build a canoe, or pass on much of the language during the process, that does not mean it was a failure. The fact that a group of Anishinaabe elders, teachers, and youth were together with the

language and creating something in this urban space was itself an act of persistence and resistance that defies assumptions and ideologies that fix indigeneity, Indigenous languages, culture, and identity to rural places, or in the past.

Language and language ideologies shape and inform Indigenous identity, belonging, and place for local Anishinaabe who no longer speak it and whose primary language is English, and the Anishinaabe who migrated from Manitoulin and who were fluent speakers of the language. They came into a space that had a long history as an Indigenous place and intersection. Each group carried their own sets of ideologies, practices, and relationships with the language. For those who were already here, language was an ideological marker and a symbol of the loss of culture and identity and the desire to reclaim them. For those who came from Manitoulin, the language was a communicative system, as well as a marker of identity and distinctiveness that highlighted the differences in history and experience between these two communities. Linguistic practices and ideological differences concerning language created barriers between these groups, but these differences were also fertile ground for building community, the development of language, and cultural revitalization programs that continue to this day.

Growing up in Lansing, I heard the language being used at events and gatherings. Usually an elder who was a fluent speaker was asked to say a prayer or blessing in Anishinaabemowin. This took place at pow-wows, and at feasts like the Ghost Super, at Clan Feasts, and anytime when what was being done was related to being and living as Anishinaabe. This was something I took for granted, assuming, like many that this was how the language was supposed to be used. The language belonged here, at these times and spaces. However, language ideologies and linguistic practices shape people's relationships to the language,

reinforcing beliefs and practices that also continue to marginalize Anishinaabemowin, creating divisions, disjunctures and boundaries that interfere with it being passed on as communicative system. However, these ideologies are also responsible for the persistence of the language here, why individuals continue to use, learn, and seek the language through revitalization programs that Paul Kroskirty (2009) states, are the sites of ideological struggle and that we need to recognize and resolve these ideological struggles.

This chapter explores some of these ideological struggles. These struggles are a result of experiences and histories of language loss, migration, and place-making that mark Lansing as an Indigenous space and as a space where language, culture and identity continue to persist and resist assimilation. It is a home for the language as a way of speaking and interacting for fluent speakers and a place where it is used as an ideological marker of belonging and identity for language learners. For many, it is important as a carrier of identity, culture, and traditional knowledge and the way those things should be passed on and maintained. Yet, these things are also being passed on without the language, and the awareness of this causes some to question its importance or relevance. It is a place where language used to frame discourse is contested and where the history of language loss and participation in language revitalization are just as important as a way of marking and performing identity as is the language itself. It is vital to point out these ideological struggles and highlight the need to resolve them and to create counter-narratives and ideologies that highlight Anishinaabemowin and its importance and place as a spoken language. However, the fact that these tensions continue to exist means that

the fight to revitalize the language remains strong. As community member and advocate Emily Sorroche stated during our interview: “We are still fighting over it, so it’s still important.”⁴³

⁴³ Appendix C; p. 187.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Throughout my research and writing I have sought to understand Lansing as Nkwejong, as a place of movement and flow. It has also been a journey to understand the role of Anishinaabemowin in everyday life, as an object, and as a living thing. My own feelings about language have not changed, as I believe that Anishinaabemowin is vital in maintaining culture, Identity, and worldview. However, through the stories and experiences of those who shared with me, I now understand that there is more to these things, and to the language than I knew, and more I have yet to understand. It has also been a way to explore my own Identity and place in the community as both a teacher and a student.

My goal throughout this dissertation has been to show how Nkwejong was and has always been an indigenous home and an intersection of movement and migration. The settler colonial history of Lansing describes this area as barely populated by wandering bands of Indians. It also focuses on Chief Okemos as an archetype and an icon of the vanishing Indian, erasing all other Indigenous history in the area. As in many other places, this icon and its narrative has erased the deep and complex history of this area, and how it has remained an Indigenous space despite Indian removal. It also erases the complex ways in which Indigenous women shaped the history of this area including their roles as leaders.

Anishinaabeg from multiple communities and other Indigenous peoples used this area as an intersection in their movements and migrations as a stopping place to gather resources, to trade, and also lived here in year round settlements. As settlers transformed the landscape Indigenous people continued to use this area, adapting to their changes, and becoming part of the fabric of Lansing's development into an industrial and political center. This adds to the

growing body of research on the roles of Indigenous people in the building of urban spaces, and challenges the areas historical narrative that has erased this history.

The development of the Auto Industry in Lansing, which began under R.E. Olds in 1898, saw the migration of Indigenous people to the area for employment. Indigenous men and Women came here from local communities and from tribal communities in the Dakota's, the Carolina's, Canada, and Indian Territory in Oklahoma and Kansas. Men and women worked on the assembly lines and in other jobs related to the auto Industry. Men also worked as general laborers and women worked as house keepers, secretaries, and stenographers. According to census records, many were marked as having had formal education. Some were "mixed blood" while many were marked as white, reflecting either the bias of census takers or the desires of individuals to blend into the larger white society.

Kinship seemed to have played an important role in the success of those who came here, and many were the decedents of those removed from Michigan in the 1830s. Many of them were also coming from the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial School and other Boarding Schools. This early migration of Anishinaabe and other Indigenous people was the foundation for later migrations of Indigenous people who came to find work in the 1960s and 1970s and has its roots in Anishinaabe traditions of movement and migration and the role that this space as played as an as an Indigenous intersection and place. What stands out here is the early migration of Indigenous people to the area to work in the auto industry. There were also a large number of women who were part of this migration. This changes later on when Indigenous migration to the area is dominated my Anishinaabe men from Manitoulin Island. I believe this is an important aspect that deserves further research.

The later migrations in the 1960s and 1970s were based on kinship connections and word of mouth. These migrations were dominated by men many of whom came from reservations in Canada on and around Manitoulin Island. The majority of these men were also fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin while most of the long time Indigenous residents of the area were English speaking. There were tensions as a result that centered on language as a marker of identity. Yet both communities worked together to create an Indian center, and to develop educational programs that focused on teaching youth and other community member's language, culture, and identity.

These spaces are important, and many people I spoke with described how important these were in helping them connect with their identities as Indigenous, this was particularly true for many of the women I interviewed and their families. These were the primary places where they learned Anishinaabemowin and connected with their culture and heritage. The women I spoke with felt disconnected from their identities, culture, and their reservation communities. Lansing and other urban spaces were their homes. Gender and gender roles also play a part in the creation of these spaces. Women are the ones making these places, events, and programs where language, culture, and identity are taught and passed down. However, it is mostly men who are the caretakers and teachers of Anishinaabemowin. Men have taken on some of the roles as caretakers of culture and community.

These spaces are also the sites of ideological tensions over language. While most agreed that language is important as a carrier of culture, identity, and worldview and that something would be lost if the language dies out, in practice, these things are continuing without the language, or with very little language. Some community members challenged certain linguistic

practices, such as marking discourse with language use, describing it as contrived or artificial. Others felt pressured to fit into a mold of indigeneity that was not part of who they were or what they wanted to be. I was also told how some used the discourse of language loss to mark their indigeneity and create a connection to their identities. Some felt that this was only one reason why language was shifting. For many what mattered most and how they marked identity, was their relationships to other people and a shared sense of identity that came from that.

In my conversations with community members, fluent teachers, and language learners is that the ideologies that connect language as a carrier of culture, identity, and worldview are important. Yet, most people don't live lives connected to many of the things that make up those aspects of indigeneity. These ideological connections that are used to mark identity and belonging are not working to revitalize the language or make it relevant for people in either urban areas or on reservations. Elders who were fluent expressed that this was just their language; the way they spoke. This research has shown me the need for ideologies and methods that support and teach the importance and relevance of Anishinaabemowin as a language of conversation and everyday life, as well as a vehicle for the transmission of culture and traditional knowledge.

This dissertation explores how Lansing was and continues to be an Indigenous space, and an intersection of both continuance and change. It is a homeland and an intersection of Indigenous movements and migrations where Anishinaabemowin persists and is reclaimed, and a place where Language ideologies and linguistic practices are challenged and negotiated. This research adds to the scholarship on Indigenous urban communities and their histories by

locating Anishinaabemowin in within urban spaces and modernity and the educational spaces created to pass on language, culture, and identity as vital spaces in the efforts to reclaim and reimagine Indigenous language and their roles as ideological markers of belonging and as the language of everyday life. It also examines how these language ideologies and linguistic practices are challenged; and the need to reevaluate language ideologies and the goals of language revitalization to focus on other important functions of language, as a part of everyday life and speech that may be more relevant to the needs and experiences of language learners, teachers, and advocates. Moving forward, I see the need to reevaluate these ideologies and to work on ideologies and pedagogies of teaching Anishinaabemowin that focus on the communicative aspects of language, as the language of everyday life and speech.

This research also highlights the need to rewrite and reclaim the Indigenous history of Lansing; to challenge the settler colonial narrative of vanishing and erasure that focuses on Chief Okemos. Okemos and his community were part of a larger network of communities that called this place home and who were connected by networks of kinship; and by the water and trails that went around and through this area. These Anishinaabe communities, and the land and water they claimed as home, were vital for the first settlers who came into this area and disrupted the political, social and kinship networks of Anishinaabeg. Despite being written and imagined out of existence and modernity, Anishinaabe and other Indigenous people continued to use this space and contributed to its development as an urban space and a center of industrialization. This part of my research adds to a small but growing body of Native Studies scholarship by bringing into focus the role of Indigenous communities in the history and development of small urban areas like Lansing.

Another aspect of this research that deserves further work is the role of Indigenous workers in the auto industry. From its beginnings in the late 1890s, Indigenous people have come here to work in assembly plants and in the various industries that grew around it. These early movements to this area by indigenous people needs further research because they hint at how identity and kinship were being maintained and transformed despite policies of assimilation that sought to erase and replace them. In the 1960s and 1970s the auto Industry, and the promise of jobs, brought large numbers of Anishinaabe from Manitoulin Island. The men who came here also brought Anishinaabemowin with them, and the area continues to have a large number of fluent speakers, some of whom became teachers of the language. This migration had a huge impact on local language revitalization efforts taking place in reservation and urban communities around the area. The importance of this cannot be overlooked as it brings forth many issues that need to be further explored. One such issue is the ongoing debate over authenticity, dialects, and authority. Another aspect that also should be researched is the role of gender, and gender roles in language revitalization. What makes this place unique is that because of differing histories of assimilation and language loss, women are the center of community and family, making sure that language, culture and identity are passed down. However, for the most part, men are the language bearers. this part of my research is important because it complicates and expands our understanding of gender roles, their flexibility, and the tensions they create that are important to understanding the intergenerational transmission of language and the disjunctures that inhibit it.

Nkwejong has a long history as an Indigenous intersection and space and challenges the local settler-colonial narratives of removal and erasure. It is a place that has remained an

Indigenous space through traditions of movement and migration that brought Anishinaabe and other Indigenous people here seeking work in the auto industry and to further their educations. The cultural tradition of movement and migration brought Anishinaabe from reservations in and around Manitoulin Island here in the 1960s and 1970s. These Anishinaabe were fluent speakers of Anishinaabemowin and their arrival reinvigorated local efforts to reclaim and revitalize Anishinaabe language and culture. Together Anishinaabeg from Canada and local Anishinaabeg who had lost the language sought to create community and belonging through educational programs and spaces for Indigenous youth, their families, and the community. Educational spaces are the focal points and intersections where community comes together and they are spaces where language, culture, and identity are reclaimed and passed on. These are also spaces of tension; where language ideologies and linguistic practices are challenged, negotiated, and reimagined in ways that speak for the need to evaluate language ideologies that focus on its role as a carrier of culture, identity and traditional knowledge and look to the role of Indigenous languages as urban languages, and the language of everyday life and experience.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: KATE

Recorded at the Michigan State University Library, 10-22-15

Sault Saint Marie Tribe of Chippewa

I recorded this interview at the Michigan State University library in a stairwell at the request of the participant. While it was a quiet space, the acoustics of the hallway amplified sounds, and students passing or opening doors interrupted the conversation. However, this is where the participant felt most comfortable, and the recording was still useable.

AH: How did you and your family get to Lansing from Sault Saint Marie?

KO: Yah know I am ashamed to say, I have probably forgotten exactly what the reason was, but it's my understanding that my grandfather didn't have any work up in Sault Saint Marie, things got really bad. So, he came down to Lansing because he thought there were a million factory jobs, that's what he heard, and there used to be, but not during the Depression, so there wasn't any work. I think he finally found a job as an insurance salesman, but nobody had money, so they paid him with chickens or whatever else they had. So, if he had a month when he didn't have any money, he said, "Well I got this stuff," but he got fired. But, basically, it was the bad economy that my grandpa came down, but he was the only one. He was the only one that didn't get sent to Indian school because he was in Detroit. So, him and my dad stayed there and went to school.

AH: So, he went to Detroit first?

KO: Yah, he went straight to Detroit. And that was like in the 30s, like 39? Yeah, well, I don't know; it was probably earlier. I'm not sure of the date.

AH: So, then he came to Lansing?

KO: No, my grandpa stayed there (Detroit), my dad grew up in Detroit; Went to Saint James, because they converted. I don't know who converted to Catholicism. I'm not sure my Grandpa was Catholic, but my Father was for sure. And then he went off to war as soon as he could. And then, when he came back, I don't know exactly how he ended up at Michigan State. I'm not sure of that. About what year was that? He started here in 48, I think I'm not exactly sure. But, I know that when he was in the war he and my mom somehow started writing, so he came back. And she was going to college in Jackson. But why he came here, I'm not sure. Maybe, I know he was going to school on

the GI Bill, so maybe that was the draw. They had ROTC and all that stuff here so maybe they had a program for returning military men. So, he started here, and then my mom transferred over.

AH: Did he know Della Ryan? Have you heard that name before?

KO: No, I haven't; he may have.

AH: She was an advocate around that time who was helping Native folks come to Lansing and work, find jobs but also help with going to school. She was active at that time. So then you were born in Lansing?

KO: Not me. I'm the only one I have ten siblings; I'm the only one who was not because about the time mom got pregnant my dad lost his job, and he was so embarrassed we had to move to Jackson and live with his in-laws. And so that's where we were when I was born. I don't know how long after. We came back here. And I think on my birth certificate it says my dad was an appliance salesman. So, he found a job doing that. I don't know how long that was; he did a bunch of different things. He went to college to be a high school teacher. And after a couple years of that, he realized that he just didn't have the patience to put up with kids. He had a bad temper and just said this is not for me, not for me. So, and then, we just stayed here ever since. He quit teaching, but he eventually started working for the state. He was in the Department of Education for a long time, and then he worked, I can't think of what it was, the Manpower Department, to help people find jobs and things like that.

AH: So being removed from Sault Saint Marie and the community there, what relationship did you have with the Tribe?

KO: Yeah, growing up, we really didn't have any relationship with them, except I remember once going up there as a little kid and visiting relatives. And they were all people I didn't know. It was kind of uncomfortable; I'm not an especially social person anyway. So, it was a little uncomfortable. They were friendly, and I remember crossing the straits and everything. I remember going to pow-wows, not that far north, but we would go sometimes; he would drive us up to the Petoskey area around there, only one. His older brother was somewhat involved in the community in Detroit, and so was one of his sisters, Joan Ojibway. The younger sister was not. So, I think we went up to Petoskey and to different pow-wows because she was dancing there. But she was a little odd; she had some mental health issues. She actually was the first one that helped me with the language because I always thought it would be interesting to try to learn that even as a kid. I asked did anybody know the language, and they said no; they don't want to do that, they just want to speak English. It would be good for you in schools. But Joan said she would teach me some stuff. And she tried to, but I didn't believe her because of her mental health issues. I thought she was making it up. And I only can remember one thing after all these years; I can only remember one thing she taught

me. And I had an epiphany in Helen's class because she taught us one on the first things was Kawabamin minwa. She said it very slowly, with all of the vowels, yah know, because sometimes, they don't. I listened to it, and I said Kawabamin minwa. Oh my God. Because Joan, maybe she said kawabamin minwa, but what I remember as a grown-up having learned as a child was "see you later my friend," and she told me to say Kewawabominwa. And I thought, if you said that really fast, it would sound like that, and then I realized that she may well have known some of the language, and I just misremembered it. And I didn't trust her enough at the time to pay attention. That was my only chance as a kid to learn it.

AH: Were you and your family then active in the Native community that was here?

KO: No, not really, we would always brighten up if we heard somebody. I don't know what happened to this boy, but there was this kid at school with me, and I saw he was not in any of my classes. But I saw his name, and it was Chippewa. Who is he: where is he? Because you are always looking for somebody else like that. And I never did meet him, never did see him. And there was another kid that I went to school with; I swear he told me he was Cherokee, and, later when I heard somebody said he is not Cherokee, he is Puerto Rican or something. I said really? I don't know if he was just trying to make a connection in school and made that up, or I don't know. So, we looked for people. I didn't really know where they were, and the only people that I did see is, and I don't know how they found out, maybe because dad helped people find jobs, but suddenly there would be, it was always men, young men would come to talk to my dad on the porch, because our house was always so messy. So, we would sit on the porch; there were so many kids in there. And I remember ah, you know, Jeff Sprague? He used to come over to talk to dad, and um, I don't remember all the guys, because they were not there to talk to us. It would have been unseemly to go out and say, hey. So, we just let them talk; they came to talk to dad. But they were probably doing the same thing, maybe new to town and wanted to make some connections and stuff, but I really didn't know many Indian people in town. And I don't remember there being pow-wows or anything when I was little in town to go and meet anybody.

AH: What time period was that?

KO: Well, we moved, I was born in 54, so, yah know, in the 60s. I graduated high school in 72. But then there started being more pow-wows, but they didn't really seem to be, the ones I like the little rural ones you might just come across where it was families. But the other ones at schools and universities and stuff seem like it was more of a performance venue, than getting together for a social fun time, yah know?

AH: That kind of coincides with the American Indian Movement in the 60s and people getting more in touch with identity and stuff. There would have been more of that going on at that time.

KO: Yah, because, before that, I only remember around Petoskey, Alpena and East Jordan, and up that way. If there were pow-wows down here, I don't know where they were. There were people around, but I never knew them. Bath is not that far away, but I only met them as grown-ups. Somebody here at the library suggested They wanted to have a bookcase made, and she said I know an Indian man that will do it. And I was surprised because it was like there were people hidden away. Surprised to meet them and then they say they live in Lansing and stuff. And they were surprised to meet me, and that I lived in Lansing. I don't know, it was not until I came back to town in 1990, I guess, when I went over to that little house over on Saginaw Street. It was like a little Indian Center there, but I don't know. There may have been when I moved away, but I got married when I was 21, stayed here till I was 23, and then I moved overseas. So, I don't know what was going on here then.

AH: That little house over there was on Walnut or Seymour?

KO: It was on Saginaw. On Saginaw, but over by that part of town. It was about three blocks east of Logan. Yeah, I think it was in one of the homes of the social workers that were in Lansing at that time, and they helped get services for Native families. Yeah, I was surprised to find out my little bothers, Francis and Paul, they said there was an Indian counselor in school. And I said, what? And they said Rosie Deland and her husband Ken were the counselors. And I said they didn't have anything like that when I went to school. Yeah, that was in the early 80s late 70s that started in Lansing.

AH: I think your dad probably knew all of them or had heard of them at least.

KO: Yeah I think he did, but, yah know, I didn't pay that much attention and, ironically, because he didn't speak the language, I always thought he sounded funny. And I didn't know: I thought my dad is kinda dumb, but, as a kid, that's what I was thinking. He sounds kinda dumb! Because he didn't talk normal, like Walter Cronkite or other people that we are told this is how a smart person, a smart white person, sounds. And later, I realized he picked up not the language but the intonation and the inflection from the elders and people in his family. I hear Native speakers now speak, and I think, that's why, that's why he said that. I can't even tell you what it was now. Because he has been gone now for a long time, and I don't remember, but I remember thinking something is not right here. Why does he say that? And now I know why. So, he was more connected, but I think he, like a lot of people, he thought it would not behoove us to get involved in that community. He thought we should do something else. And I don't know what else, he was not, neither of my parents were encouraging us to do well in school; they didn't say flunk, but they didn't encourage us to get good grades or do anything.

AH: So, when did you start getting involved? You said you were interested when you were young. When did you really start to learning more about the language?

KO: When I moved back here in the early 1990s and I asked, because they didn't have it before, (the language at the Indian Center). But there must have been something before I came back here, maybe when I came to visit family. I asked around, not really interested, just wondering. And that time, when I went back and asked is there an Indian Center anywhere, and they told me about that little house and I went there, and I can't remember their name, but they spoke the language, and they said that, I think there wasn't anything that year, maybe it was the next year but they said Helen Roy was teaching, and that was at Otto Middle School. And when I went there, I didn't think it was going to last very long, because it was three of Helen's kids: Joe, Jamie and Becky. Those three, me, and one other person. And so I thought, this can't go on forever. And then she told me they had cancelled the funding. There weren't enough people, so it was done for that year. Then, the next year, she started teaching on Center St. Maybe it was two years later, sometime after that. She began on Center St. again. And I went over there, that was more of, she had it set up like a class. This time, there were other people, and we had a coffee pot going, and anybody could come and go; you weren't just there for the language. Somebody might come sit down and listen for a while and then go. It wasn't intimidating; it was just a kind of drop-in kinda thing. But then the downside was, it was 6 to 9, as I remember, Monday through Thursday. That's a long time, that was a lot of hours to put in. And that's when Helen gave me my nickname. She started calling me zongoom "overslept" because, when I would come, I would have little blanket lines in my face because I had to sleep sometime, so I would get home from work at 5 pm and just grab a nap and then come to class with lines all over my face. But it was pretty nice. There was George Renfree. I don't remember Jeri's name; he calls himself Migizi, and he works up at CMU, Gerald something. Helen would know. I'm trying to think of who else; well, Meg was in that class. Later she came back, moved over here from Minnesota, and she was all into writing poetry and kept asking about that. Martin Rhienhart was there, and John Rhienhart. They weren't all there at the same time, but most of them stuck with it. George Renfree was good at it, but I don't know if he still does anything with it.

AH: What do you think about the language in terms of its importance as part of identity? What do you think?

KO: I just really don't know. I thought about it after, before when I knew you were going to talk to me, and there was a time when it was so weird of me. I'm not really a religious person, but there was a time in my life when I was thinking, what if there is an afterlife and what if I run into ancestors? I don't know how to talk to them! And so I learned German, I took French, I took some Norwegian, and Swedish; I thought I will do the Ojibwa, and I'll have it all covered then. I was thinking, what the heck, if there is something like that, we'll be so past language that we won't have to worry about it. So, I, yah know, I'm not sure, because I used to be real picky about language. And I used to pick on my first husband, for grammar and different things, and, finally, he said, why don't you understand that it's not about prescriptive grammar, It's about communication, so you know what I'm getting at, and I thought, yah I do. So, I was

thinking, then is it really so critical? Because there are like hundreds of threatened languages, if you can't save them, and people kind of learning sometimes as a gimmick. I hate to say that; it's almost like that sometimes. I don't get this from everybody, but, from some people, it's like a secret handshake. Like, if I meet you, I can say such and such inkaz. Blah, blah, blah, and that's it. And you don't really get involved with anything else. But you feel like you have legitimized yourself, just throwing out that little bit. I don't see the point in that, but I do feel really sad about things, not just from Ojibwa language but pretty much all the Indigenous languages, where the people paid more attention to the land, and have words for things and they have. It's not just having a word for it; it's that they have a word for it because it was important to them. So, they have a word for the fact there is too much green, mossy stuff, growing on the side of maple trees that shouldn't be there. Native languages are almost the canary in the mine, where it's connected to the world; pay attention to that, because for millennium people were expressing those things, that people today don't pay attention to really. And I know it's being lost because I've asked other Native speakers about certain things that they talked to their Grandparents, and they say words for certain wood grain, or maybe the sound the rain makes, they might say hail is falling, but, maybe there is a word for the exact sound hail makes when it falls. We don't have a word for that. I don't know that Ojibwe does either; things like that that are lost. I think it would be great if it would all be here, but I just don't know if it's able to be saved, and I'm not sure exactly what you are losing when it's gone. But I feel like you are losing something just because that was: we are part of everything that went before us in terms of our ancestors. We are just like a little funnel of all those lives. We have some of them in us, and that was important to them and how they communicated. So, I think we are losing something, but it's so hard to describe. I'm not sure what it is. But I do know, if somebody will say thank you in the language, I know they are Native, and I say ahaw, and they smile. People like it that you make the effort, even if you're not good at it.

AH: Would you say, then, that there is a group of fluent speakers here in Lansing? How important is that in making Lansing sort of a Native Space? Where do they and the language fit in?

KO: Well, I'm not sure exactly. Like I said when I was a kid, I didn't know who was who; you just never knew, but, now, if you have that opportunity, if you make places where people can meet, you go there, you hear it, you can recognize people around town, you can talk to them, know that they are o.k. with that. It's not the kind of thing where somebody might have said earlier, "No, don't do that: just speak English, like generations before did." So, I'm not really sure because all over the place, like I never see them (fluent speakers) outside of the class, even though I've been to where they live way back when. So, I don't see them out in the community that much. I wish we had more kind of get-together things that weren't like performance-oriented, like pow-wows and stuff, because I don't dance, I'm not so great at dancing. I just wish we had more teas or something like that.

AH: You talked about one time when people didn't want to use the language. What do you think has changed?

KO: Well, to perfectly frank, what changed is that Native Americans are more visible, and I think before that there was such a concerted effort to just divide and conquer that the hope was everybody, from the government's point, that everybody would just fade away and that they were goners, and that they would die off. Nobody really wanted to kind of identify with that because you don't want to put your kids at a disadvantage, like they are not going to make it, so don't go there. I think that was it. I think the American Indian Movement was great with telling people to have pride and that they had so many little communities, and they said, "Look, we are still here." Then, I think the attitude changed; we are still here, we are going to be here, we might as well. I think a lot of Native bought into it, that they weren't going to make it, but then I think the attitude changed. I know a lot of people didn't approve of AIM and the things they did. I don't think they were awful or violent, as some people say, but I mean they were definitely in the cross hairs, so I don't blame them. Personally, I don't, but I know a lot of people who were upset with that, but I still think they had a lot to do with people saying "Yah, we don't have to take this anymore." We can stand up, we can have our own communities. So, then, I think they thought as long as we are going to be here, let's celebrate this, let's start learning how to be, not to constantly do it, or that you have to do this because you are Native, but to say this is your heritage, you're welcome to it. Would you like to participate? And then people were happy to come forward and say yah, like maybe the language. I would like to learn something about that. I never did go to anybody and say can you show me how to do those dance moves or show me how to play the flute, it just wasn't my thing, but the language was, can you show me how to talk like that? Can you show me how to say these different things? So, I really think it was the fact that people felt that they were, that the government was aiming for them and didn't appreciate them, and they were going to be gone. And I don't know what changed, but something changed to make people feel like we are entitled, just like everybody else is. I think that's what it was.

AH: Do you think that Lansing, when you think about home, is this where I come from. Is it Lansing or Bawating?

KO: I think of the lakes. That's what I think of, and I don't think of upper or lower. Well, I guess I do think mainly of the lower, because superior is way up there. But I just look kind of down here, and I see the little mitten with the water around it, and the upper, too, and the water around this place. This place that has lots of birch trees and maples and a lot of water and green. And when I went out to Fort Wachika, yeah, the desert has its own beauty, and I was so amazed by the little rain clouds, going around like on the cartoons, raining on people. I couldn't believe my eyes. I thought that was fake, fantasy. And the rainbows and flowers that came up a few hours after the rain. But, still, I looked around and said, "Wow, I can't stay here." But I knew I wasn't going to. I was just there for a certain amount of months and stuff. And then I just said, I got to go

where its green. Plus, you go someplace where its green a lot, but you don't see the sun come up, and you don't see the sun go down, because there are hills in the way. And then you just think, it's kinda claustrophobic. You just kinda feel it because you recognize the trees, the animals: its just kinda what you know. But in terms of towns, I don't think of that. I'm not patriotic at all in terms of country and things like that.

AH: I was thinking in terms of Sault Saint Marie being a member there.

KO: I know I'm a member of that tribe, but I don't really feel anything special when I go up there. And I gotta say, that I'm going to cry, I do it overtime, whenever I bring up this little girl. But Mary Clement, who was killed in the car accident. Do you remember her? But, anyway, I was very nervous going up to some big gathering up at The Sault; it was the first big thing they had in many, many, many years. And my aunt wanted to go because she knew she was dying of a heart thing. And I was thinking, I don't really belong here; I don't feel like I should be here because I don't travel as much as most Native people do, like some of them that just roam. Lot of people are just like that in their home range, like I was talking about this Michigan thing. The Great Lakes area, people roam around a lot. Never really have done that. But I know so many others do, but I shouldn't have felt so uncomfortable, but I was really thinking, I feel stupid. I feel coming up here just doesn't feel right to me. And all of the sudden Mary, hung out the car window, as she drove by, and said "Katie, hey Katie" And it was so nice to feel like, she is not even from up there, she was like me; she lived down here, and her family was from here. And there she was welcoming me, like I did come from there. So, that was really nice, but still when I think of my family there, it was better when they were still alive, but all the ones that lived up there are dead. Everybody who is alive is gone someplace else. Because their children and grandchildren, of my father's cousins, they stayed, but he didn't. I think somebody else must have gone, because their out in California, and different places, but, at the time that my grandfather left the rest of them stayed, and I still don't feel that. There was a lot of poverty, and no one specifically said anything about alcoholism, my dad never did, but he was kinda funny about it and thought people shouldn't do that. But, once a year, in the summer on a really, really hot day, my parents would go "ooo, we should have a beer!" And we would go over to Emile's Restaurant and get a beer. Probably not even a whole beer. So, I think there was something in the Indian community that my dad was trying get away from, and that he didn't want us to associate with. That's why he knew he had this connection, but he knew about a lot of bad stuff, like the aunt that was little off, who was a rape victim up there; different things he kind of just thought, don't do that. He was happy sitting on the porch when the guys would come and talk to him; that was kind of a touch stone for him. But we were not supposed to know or be a part of that. It wasn't really said; it was understood.

AH: This has been really helpful for me, helping me connect things I read in the archives, people, and events in the Lansing area. Thank you for speaking with me.

APPENDIX B: CHRISTINE

Recorded 3-15-15

Native American Programs Office at Michigan State University

Lac Seul First Nation and Sault Saint Marie

I interviewed Christine in her office at Michigan State University while she was the graduate fellow in American Indian Studies. Even though she was a recent arrival to the area my conversations with her revealed that she could provide interesting insights, as an outsider, to understand the role of language in this community and in her life as an Anishinaabe woman who grew up in urban areas and in a family with few connections to her Anishinaabe identity and culture. Her interview provided an opportunity to understand the importance of education and educational spaces in the transmission of Language, culture and identity.

AH: So, I am interested in your opinions and your personal views on the language and the importance of language and your views on the role it plays in creating Native space.

CS: Maybe I will tell you about my relationship to the language first, and then maybe that will head into more about space. Well, the interesting thing is I was raised with my Native father and mom, step-mom. My mom is a member of Lac Seul First Nation, so I was raised pretty much in a white family, with white extended family, in a white world, so the only thing I knew about myself was that I was Indian. And my dad gave me a few political messages, which were really powerful, but he also said, "I don't know your culture; that's something you are going to have to learn. You will learn, when you get older. There will be lots of people around to teach you." and he said things like that when I came home from school in grade 5, no kindergarten, I remember being 5 years old, and I came home and said that I hated being Indian. And he said, "Don't hate being Indian." He said, "All this land is yours, and it was taken from you by the government and by people but don't worry about that, because everything is going to work out in the end. Everything will come full circle." I was 5 years old and got this political message, but, yah know, when you are that age, you think your parents are, everything they say, is golden. So, of course I believed him and that really reassured me, "I just hated being Indian." He also did a lot to kind of build up my resilience because he knew I was dealing with a lot of racism and other things. Anyhow, I didn't learn that I actually had another language until I was in the university. It's so strange. I mean, it just tells you what an insular, powerful ruled white supremacist world this is right. The only thing I knew about Indianess was because we were living North of the city of Sault Saint Marie and we would go into town, and I would always see this building called the Indian friendship center, and I always wondered what that was, because I know that had

something to do with me. I thought, well, maybe when I get older, I will go into that building and see what they are doing in there.

So, anyways, I went to high school, and there were other Anishinaabe kids there. I went to catholic school, not a public school, but I never really, I'm just, I'm still at this point I'm still an Indian, right. I didn't know what that means; there are lots of negative message coming. But, then, I go to University, and I don't even know how it is. I take a course, and there I learn that I have a language, our own language other than English, right, and French, because up until this point, I was learning English and French. So, my first year at the university, I take a Native studies course, and that kinda threw me for a whirl. I didn't know what to make sense of it. And I struggled in it, the teacher was kind, the proof was kind, he gave me a good grade, and I didn't submit my assignments. But, that threw me for a whirl, because also even though we weren't a religious family, Christianity was everywhere, and I did go through some of the Christian processes of baptismal, confession, and confirmation, and that was more because that was what everybody else was doing. And it was meaningful for me that I got baptized with my little brother when he was born. But, we never practiced, and I got strong messages about the church from my father. But I liked it because I was always a spiritual person. That's kinda what attracted me to it, but I never really believed in this God but I was still very afraid of God. So, when I took that Native studies course, they were talking about this spirit, and I was like what the hell are they talking about! I still remember sitting in that class thinking I don't know what the hell they are talking about. I was really mind-blown because, in my world, this white world, there was God, there was Catholicism, and that's it. I knew there were other religions, but it was all about God. And I just remember having like this, kinda like being afraid, thinking oh my god, God is going to find out that I'm taking this course that I am learning about this other being, and I'm going to go to hell. Seriously, like 19 years old right, and so I just never engaged with that, I didn't know what to do with that. I just left it alone and continued on with my studies in Phycology. But then what happened was, I ended up failing a course in my final year of my honors program, which required me to stay for a full year to take that course again. So, I thought, I'm going to go back. This is 4 years later. I am going to go back and try to take some of those Native studies courses, and I did. That is was when I took a course, which changed my life, on Native identity, behavior and culture. And right from the first class, was when my life changed; it was like, wow, like I got it. I understood it. He was Anishinaabe, and I think this other guy was Non-Native, and I also think the way he was teaching it was kinda weird for me. There were just a lot of things that were not making sense. But this guy, he thought us about, for the first time, I realized what it meant to be Indian, that you weren't Indian at all. You were Native, you have a culture, you have a history, you have values and philosophy, all these things. He added, he gave me Dignity. I became a human being in that moment. And I think it must have been there where I learned the language, scribbling in the language. So, I thought, up until that point, I wanted to become a child physiologist, so I was going to get my B.A. and then my master's, but I was just struggling with my Phycology. I really struggled, struggle, struggle all through my first degree. I skipped out of classes, got a 70, barely, failed courses. Oh my god.

AH: Yeah that was the same for me: 7/12 years of undergrad.

CS: It was just brutal. And I realized that it was because what I was learning wasn't our way; it was so alienating. There was such a distance between who I am and what was being taught was taught as being hegemonic knowledge, like this is everybody's knowledge. This applies to everybody in the world; It was so arrogant and ethnocentric, and I was angry actually. I was happy I was learning this and learning all this stuff but also felt very angry and deceived by the university and the program. And I thought, how arrogant are you? I even thought about going and asking for my money back because I thought how arrogant for you to teach Phycology like the way you teach it. And I take one course with an Indigenous professor and learn that it blows everything you have been teaching out of the water. But I never pursued it. I went home because I was done; I was exhausted with my BA I wanted to go home. So, I went back to the Sault, and I started working in the Friendship center, and I didn't even want to leave that class. I was scared to leave because I thought I don't know anybody back home; who's going to be able to keep me knowing this stuff? So, I immersed myself in the ISD culture, volunteering, and all kinds of participating in all the programs, and that's really where I was able to take that theory and that understanding of the world I learned in the university and actually apply it in my real life. So, I started taking language classes because I was also like, when I learned I had a language through my mom, that was like this old language from forever. I was like excited, and I wanted too, I was like a sponge, yah know, like a little baby. You are just a sponge, and I wanted to learn everything. So, I just did anything and everything I could, and I struggled though, too, because I was getting mixed messages from different people. And you quickly learn that, in our community, not everybody is healthy, and that makes it really difficult when you are brand new, and you are so excited about who you are. But then people are also know who they are, but they have been carrying these oppressive messages, too, right. Kind of see you in this light, of you are too naive or something.

AH: Yeah, but it takes time to figure that out.

AH: Which is understandable, I get that now. But I was so grateful for the Indian Friendship center; they really provide a space for all the limitations of any institution. And I learned so much, and I started going to these weekly language classes for free at the Friendship center, and I loved it. I loved it because it was Anishinaabe people but with all the same kind of sentiment, just community, friendship, being together. We had food and visiting and laughing. So, I started learning. The same things we were talking about back then; they are the same things we are talking about at the language table at Nokomis learning center. And it didn't matter to me; I don't get bored with it, just grateful to be with our people in that energy and that space. It's just so life-giving for me because we can easily become separated from who we are. We don't have our people. We don't have our land. We don't have even a connection. I don't have strong connections with my mother's family. I didn't know my mom; I have memories of her,

but, you know, our families are really destroyed. Different things have happened: residential schools, sanitariums, foster homes, poverty, a lot of my mom's family is still over there at Lac Seul First Nation and in that area; you know, she left, she went around here and there, and then she ended up in the Sault, and she ended up passing away. I think she went home a few times, but I don't know how close those relationships are. I think some of them are probably close. But, anyhow, I'm just starting to learn, starting to connect back with some of those relationships, but I haven't yet made a trip back there. I have some anxieties.

AH: Do you consider yourself connected to your home community?

CS: So, my community has always been urban community or different people I connect with, different elders, knowledge holders, but the language is really life- giving. Then what happened, I met in 1996, I met my aunt, my mom's sister. I went to Winnipeg. I found my brother; he had been adopted, and he actually put an ad in the paper looking for family. It wasn't me he was looking for, but someone knew that I had a brother, and they knew that last name, and so they contacted me. And they said there is an ad in the paper with your mom, naming your mom, so they said check it out. And I knew I had a brother, so I called that number; I knew it was him. And I had decided years ago that I wasn't going to search for him. I thought that if the creator wants that to happen, it will happen. Because I didn't know about that situation; you don't know whose life you are walking into when you go looking for them or whether they want you in their life or not. I just let that settle, let that be, and let it fall where it needs to be. He found me, so to speak. So, I ended up going to Winnipeg and met my aunt out there. He had reconnected with a number of people because that's where he was living. My aunt told me a story about my mom, and that story was that she was taken to residential school three times, her, my mom, and another sister. And three times, the first time those girls went, they all ran away. They went back up the trail to the trap line where their step dad was, and RCMP came and got them and brought them back to residential school, Pelican Falls, I believe. Those three girls ran away again, up the trap line to where their step dad was, and RCMP came and got them and brought them back. And the third time those girls ran away RCMP, never came, they let them be. So, I thought that was an amazing story, but my aunt said your mom got TB and was in the sanitarium for a number of years and she went in, she spoke the language, and when she came out, she never spoke Anishinaabe anymore. So, something happened there. And I don't know how long she was in there; I don't have all the details of that story, but that made me angry. Because, of course, at this point, I have an analysis of colonization, and I know what colonization is doing to us, what it has done to us, and I'm angry. And then the anger kinda fuels me to fight anytime I've learned what colonization has taken away from us, my approach or my response is to go and try to reclaim that. Its pretty basic; I have no method.

CS: So, I did that. Yah know, I was just really motivated to learn the language because I was like, I just don't want to recreate what my mother, what was taken away from my

mom. I don't have the details; like, I don't know what happened to her in the sanitarium. I don't know what her decision was; to stop speaking was. There are lots of people who say that residential schools stopped us from speaking the language, but I never stopped speaking the language. I continue to speak it; there are people like that to right. So, I don't really don't know what that nuance was for my mom's decision-making, but, obviously, something happened, and it wasn't that she just stopped speaking the language when they started speaking English on her own accord.

CS: Anyhow, as I am going along, I'm kinda into my mid-twenties, late-twenties. I thought, I'm going to go back to school. I was lucky where I was living, in Sault Saint Marie, my home; at the university, they have a degree in Anishinaabemowin. And so, I thought, I was working full time as a counselor, I said, I'm going to go back and do language, and I did. And that was just amazing; it was another layer of insight for me because I learned how our language holds our worldview, and it was like the language made me more human, made me know who and where I was and had that camaraderie, community connections, and then it was that act of resistance to reclaim that language that was taken from my mom. Now, it was more like, wow, there is a lot of knowledge in this, through language is our theory; it can explain the world. It can explain things that are happening that English can't. And that was mid blowing for me, I was once more so grateful. So that kept fueling me, fueling me, and so I did that. I did that degree, but I still don't speak the language, I still can't even put a sentence together. But I feel like my relationship to the language is something altogether different. I don't know if I'm ever going to be fluent. I don't know if that's for me if that is what the goal is. Maybe when I am eighty, if I am still around, I will be able to answer that question.

AH: A lot of people talk about being fluent, and that's really important, and I'm not trying to minimize that, but I think there are spaces for other people to do different things with the language.

CS: That's an important thing to think about because I have thought about that a lot. We get caught up into this pattern where those fluent speakers are revered, and that's good, and we should take care of them. But, everyone else, we place at the opposite, they are non-fluent and there is all this grey in between. And you have to lookout for that because even the person that just knows one word, their part of the speaking community. The community of speech, of this language and they need to be included somehow. And those who can listen in the language, but lack the confidence to speak it, and those like us, who have been working at it for a long time, who know stuff about the language. I always feel that, if I could just do this, I could go over that edge and use the language the way I want to.

AH: Yeah, I keep waiting too for that magical moment, maybe like osmosis finally I will just wake up and be like talking, (laughter). I don't know if thats going to happen. I remember the first time I heard an elder telling a story in the language and I

understood what he was talking about. Not word for word, but I knew what he was talking about, and I could follow along, it felt so good. It's taken me twenty something years. What do you think about though, people talk about the language a lot, about how important it is, how important revitalization is, for identity, worldview, and these things. But, in my own studies and observations, and I don't want to minimize those things, but, at the same time, there doesn't seem to be the drive to grab a hold of it and claim it. This is what we are saying, but not necessarily what we are doing with the language. What are your observations on that?

CS: Yeah, I agree with that 100 percent. And there is a lot of rhetoric around revitalization, reclamation, yadda, yadda, yadda. And that can be very, that can create a lot of apathy in a person. I kind of let that go; I didn't want to go down that road of apathy because I love the language too much, and my life is my life. So, I have a responsibility to follow my heart, and as long as there are people around who are willing to teach, then I want to go. And I've done that with my daughter, and when I've gotten nowhere, even when I've been afraid to go to a language place because it's always nerve-racking to go to a new place. I forced myself to go because I know that's what is for me. But, there is that gap between rhetoric and practice I notice, and, ya know, I had to. I remember I had to make a conscious choice around, like, am I going to be upset about this? Or am I going to just do what I can do? I decided to just do what I can do.

CS: One of the things I learned as a counselor is that whoever shows up is meant to be there. There is an emphasis when you do programing, an emphasis on how many numbers because it's always attached to funding, and that, to me, is an oppressive kind of thing. We need to create this space for people to come, make it warm and welcoming and accountable and safe, and who cares about the numbers. I always say, if one person shows up, then that's who was meant to be there today.

CS: I think we should either step up and do it or quit talking about it. Just quit talking about it and let the people who are actually doing it do the talking.

AH: Yeah, sometimes, people talk about it, they use involvement in revitalization as sort of a badge of identity without going that set further. Using the language as a marker of identity, and some people have told me how much they hate that, that it seems contrived or fake. And that was the first time I heard somebody say that.

AH: So, In looking at Lansing as a Native space, how important is language in making spaces?

CS: I think it's so important; it's so vital. I feel that were inundated with white supremacy and western economics. We are inundated; we can't get away from it. We are in this world of capitalism; like, the Borg is a comparison. It's something that a professor in Indigenous studies compares it to, and I like that comparison. It's a Borg

right, and it's really meaningful to me because it really helped me understand that we are part of this Borg. None of us is better than the other. I can't say I'm good at something more than you because I am learning the language or I'm on the land. That's just not true; it just so happens that I have these little spaces that I can access, and I am willing to do it. The fact is, I'm still here having to pay bills, drive my car. So, I think language is so important, so important because it's who we are. It reflects our relationship with the land and how we perceive the world. And it reflects our relationship with each other. My ex-husband, who is also important to me in learning the language. He speaks five languages. When he came to Canada, he came to the states first and lived with his sister for a while but didn't feel safe in Washington, so he came to Montreal. And he was learning language, and I met him and I was like, here, he came to this country with four or five languages, and here he is learning English. Of the two of his indigenous languages he knows, he knows French, Arabic, and he was picking up English. And I was amazed by him. I said, how do you have the courage to come to a new country and speak a language you don't even know? You go out in the world, get on the subway, get gas, go do your paperwork in a language. It was nothing to him; he just had to do it. People will help you if they know you are learning their language; English people love it when you are trying to learn their language. They will do anything to get you to learn their language. And it is true! French, too. But he said, the French they speak in Quebec, I can't even stand listening to them speak French. So, he really taught me not to be afraid to speak the language; I don't know how I got onto that point because I was talking about what the importance of language is. He helped me overcome my fear of it, speaking it. Because I think that holds people back, too.

CS: So, he also taught me about English. I said what are the differences in general in what the language means; you speak five languages. He said, yah know, in Arabic, you get this sense, and in French and Pulongwa. English, he said, really clearly, English, is a money making language; that's all it is. To make things objects, and ownership. Property and stuff. And that's what I'm afraid; of what happens if we lose our language? Because our language isn't about that. Our language is about action and animate and inanimate; I asked some of my teachers what they think our language is about. it's about relationships and movement.

CS: The language in urban spaces, our language gives us a lot. It keeps how we see the world alive. Like, this little nugget of medicine into this big ball of Borg (laughter). Maybe if we get enough of these little nuggets going, we can maybe stop the wheels from grinding a bit. I'm so sad when an elder dies, I think (sighs). I just think those old, old words, I would have to do a project of just reclaiming those, talking to the old ones and just reclaiming those old, old words. There are philosophical words; what is the philosophy of the world from Anishinaabe point of view.

AH: There are a lot of things that go on in this area, especially with the youth, to create these opportunities for them to learn the language and culture. So, those elders are always there and invited, but language seems to take a second or even third in terms of

importance. It's there, and those elders are there, and I feel sometimes it gives these programs legitimacy, but where is the language?

CS: Yeah, over the course of years that I have been working with elders and stuff, and people who have language and stuff, that's what I've come to learn, is that much as the classroom, or the friendship centers, and the cultural centers is important; being on the land, and learning the language that way, actually, when you are doing that, is for me key. It's a whole thing, and you have to put it all together, sing on the land, and doing it, speaking the language with your tobacco, with the ceremony or song. So, that's a good question; how come that language isn't being even to have those elders talk in the language and explaining what they are doing the whole time somebody is recording. At least you have an archive, and you can come back and get somebody to translate that. Because kids will hear that language, and it's bubbling, it's bubbling, it's bubbling.

AH: Yeah, because, even if they only learned that one word, they would see the language being used and in action. They would see how the language was being used.

CS: Use it or lose it.

AH: Yeah, one of the projects I am looking at is to create those opportunities to use the language on the land, with these elders. So, why don't more people get involved?

CS: Well, I was pretty impressed with the number of people who showed up at the language table at Nokomis. There were a lot of people. Not a lot of young people. My daughter doesn't come to them anymore. Whether it's her age or because she's become jaded as well. She's seen some things in our community, and she's been treated in certain ways by elders in our community. But she's also been treated well by one of my close friends, so, maybe, I can't use that as an excuse. Yah know why is it that my daughter, why is it that she does not want to learn the language? And we have those conversations, and I just think that for her, there is no relevance for her. She doesn't see how it will be relevant in her future. She doesn't, so how it is relevant today in her peer world, and the social media world? It's just no relevance.

AH: Yeah, because, for so long, it's been relevant for things like ceremonies and other places, around here anyway, and it's relevant in terms of like that connection to world view, and the past, but, like you said, there is no relevance. How do you make that relevant for today?

CS: That's one of the things that I think about, too. Because, as much as I say or focus on myself, I do worry about this problem of how do we make it relevant. And I have come to the conclusion that it must be that it's not relevant enough for people because I go over my own journey and what was it that made it important for me. Why do I keep going back to that group, trying to make linkages and theorize other people's experiences? I think, once I am done with my dissertation, my work over the long haul will be spending time with language and trying to figure out how do we make it more

relevant to people. How do we tell people, this is your language, this is a gift, please come and learn it? I think also it would be great if we had, yah know, how you make it relevant? You give a budget! In this world you give a budget, and you say, ok school, you are going to start teaching Anishinaabemowin; you are going to learn Anishinaabemowin, this is the language of this land, and, you are going to learn it. Yah know, my daughter speaks French, right, because I put her in French immersion because that was a resource that was available to us. Because I wanted her in it, her dad speaks French, Canada's dual language, so wherever she goes in the world, she will be bilingual. And, in two or three years she is speaking French! She's like this big, and we're going around, and she would hear an adult speak French, and she's translating what they're saying. And I think, if our children had that opportunity with Anishinaabemowin, all of our kids would be speaking. It would be no problem to revitalize our language. None! It's just there is, where is the will to make it happen?

AH: That's the thing, the will. Why isn't the will there? Because we talk about it. People talk about it; everybody talks about how important language is for identity and sovereignty, but where is the will? Either social, political, or economic?

CS: It can happen. I often think, when my daughter was at school, one of the things I want to do, what I think, and I don't know what the law is here in Michigan or in the states, but, in Canada there is an avenue where I would like to think about pursuing is filing a human rights lawsuit against the Federal Government and provincial. So, we would have a federal human rights and a provincial human rights, both Canada and Ontario; you have a responsibility to revive our languages in our schools. Not just one rural school because, in the Peterborough area, we have one rural school that teaches the language.

AH: Way, way away from the urban area.

CS: Yeah, so that doesn't even make sense because why would I ship my kid half an hour outside of the city to go learn the language, when she lives, her school is right across the bridge?

AH: I think in the minds of people in the dominant culture and in Native communities themselves, that is where the language is. It's way over there! In the bush. They speak it on the reserves; they speak it over there, so it's ok. That's the belief people have; that's where it belongs.

CS: It's everywhere, and I don't know the stats here again, but, I think they are relatively on par, our populations we have more people living in the cities than in rural areas anyways; there ought to be Anishinaabe programs in every school.

AH: There are more fluent speakers in some cities than there are on the reserves; at least, that's what I have learned and have seen. Some only have a few speakers, and many have none.

CS: You could have a Lansing language conference here; there is so much to do here.

AH: I almost think they should just create a space somewhere here where only the language is spoken, no English, and people could go. You couldn't make them, but that would be where the language is spoken.

CS: Yah know, in Sagamuk, which is a First-Nation community, an Anishinaabe community along Lake Huron, they have a school right on the rez, and that's one of the strongest language-speaking communities along the shore, other than Manitoulin. And Manitoulin started a school, I think, as well, in the language, and the Mohawks, there's a Mohawk school where you are not allowed to speak English in that school; you speak Mohawk, and that is it. And they are creating, they in that school, year, after year, after year, those kids are going to that school, and their coming out speaking their language. They are keeping their language alive. It's called the freedom school. It can happen.

AH: It can, but, again, where is the will?

CS: And the resources, right?

AH: A lot of communities have immersion schools, but I don't think there is enough criticism of how they do things. Not that what they do is bad, but are they doing what they want them to do? And, if they are, that's good, but, if not, they need to take a serious look at them. Because they need that community support and not just people saying we have immersion, so we are good. Our kids will learn the language. You have to pay attention to that.

CS: Yeah and I think, I know the limitation of just saying schools though, too, is the kids who go to school learn the language. If they come home to just speak English, if their parents and aunties and uncles and cousins are not speaking it or even encouraging them to keep it up.

AH: Then, it becomes the language of school.

CS: Yeah, it becomes an institutionalized thing. The language is a living language; it has to breathe and infuse everything and live in people, in interactions with the world.

AH: So, where is the money?

CS: Well, I think, you don't have to have masses of people to have the will. You just have to have a number of interested people committed. What you have a Nokomis is a good group of people to get something going. You see those people come every week, those core group of language speakers and somebody like you who's young can carry it right. Keep it going. And we can't let our spirits get tempered when we come against barriers. There is just going to always be people who nip away. There's a woman who got a PhD in education, and she is Anishinaabe, and she's over there in the Peterborough area. She started a freedom school, an Anishinaabe school, and that was her dissertation, and she put it into practice. She got the funding. I don't know how long that school went, and I never had a conversation with her. I looked at documents. But what I heard was that what happened is that people in the community in our loving community came down on her and started criticizing and nipping and doing things and making accusations about different things and it just became too much and it ended. That's what I've heard. Is that the truth? I don't know, but we also know those things do happen.

CS: So, again, I've never had the conversation with her, but I know people keep trying, and something happens where it gets shut down or gets squashed. And so, now, she still does that work but in the university as a professor, with university-aged adults, not young people, right? So, I mean, that's the thing; if you're going to take on a project like that, a life work, then you got to be ready for the beggars to come.

AH: Thank you for your time and knowledge; you have given me a great deal to talk about.

APPENDIX C: EMILY AND JULIE

Recorded 9-13-15

Cayuga Nation

I interviewed Emily and her mom at the Michigan State University Union, in the lower level, in a study area. I wasn't expecting Emily's mother to come along and take part in the interview, but both of them together provided details to each other's story that was very informative and insightful. Both her mother and sister came here when Emily went to MSU. All of them became Lansing residents and take part in community activities.

AH: Where are you from, and why did you come to Lansing?

JS: Well, I came to Lansing mainly to be with my daughter and to be closer to family. I had lost my husband and didn't have any people where I was living. So, both my daughters were here, so that's why I thought I would come here, for family reasons.

AH: Where you from there originally?

JS: I'm from New York. I grew up on a Six Nations reservation, and I wanted to be a nurse, but I was a nurse until I had my first daughter, and, after that, I stayed home and raised her, with my husband. He worked in a hospital. He tended to move around a lot because of the job situation; we kind of went with him, where he went. We've been all over the place, including Michigan. We moved around quite a bit.

ES: I came to Lansing for school purposes. That's when I moved here, and I don't know how I chose Michigan State. I visited here one time for band, and I liked it. I did not like Central; I remember that. I didn't like the campus or the people I came into contact with. They weren't friendly or warm; it was a different atmosphere. I have been here ever since I finished school, and I worked in the Lansing area, and I grew to like it here. I like the atmosphere and the culture, and I was very involved as an undergrad with the pow-wow and the Native group here on campus, and it really brought a sense of belonging for me. It brought the cultural ties that existed, and I didn't know they existed inside me until I came here and acted. I was an active participant in my culture, and I met a pretty diverse group of Native students here. We went to school together, and we learned a lot about each other, and we motivated each other, and we then graduated together. We all managed to get through it, and I don't think I would have made it through if I did not have that support.

AH: What is it about the Lansing community that keeps you here?

ES: So, when I graduated with my second degree, I always imagined living in a big city, Chicago, New York. I always wanted to go and live in a big city. I started visiting and interviewing for jobs in those cities. And I would walk around and just feel so displaced; I didn't feel connected. As much as I have been to the big city and created friends and a network, I still didn't feel like I belonged. I realized then that it was a city I liked to visit and not so much live because I would have to change so much of my lifestyle and adapt. So, I finally moved outside of the big city to the suburbs, and it was such a different feel. It was very business. People said it was a family atmosphere, but I didn't experience that. I didn't see any of that. It just seemed that people went to work, went home, and did their own thing. I didn't see any participation in cultural events, nothing outside of just going home, being with the family, and shopping because there is tons of shopping in that area. So, I felt a loss. I found myself coming back to Lansing to attend different events and to be with the circle of friends that I have. I felt so much more connected here and still keeping up with news about what's happening in the area and looking for different activities to get, different opportunities to get back involved in, and then I found myself wanting to move back because of the work politics that I was coming up against in my job there. And so, I said, you know what, I want to go back to where I enjoy life, and so that's what I did. I came back to Lansing. You don't realize what you have until it's not there anymore, and that's what it was for me. I was looking for those Native outlets there, and there wasn't really any support. I was working at a university, and what they were looking for, too me, was building a Native Community there, to bring students to campus, and make it an environment where they would want to come. And I said, honestly, it's kind of hard for me to want to stay because I didn't feel those connections. I said to them, that's going to be your challenge in bringing students to a campus like this. So, that's what brought me back, it was the connectedness that I had here to the circle of friends that I have, to the community that I have here.

AH: What about those connections; what do those mean?

JS: I will let you answer that first (to daughter), so I can think about that.

ES: Well, I think your answer would be your connectedness to me, because I am bringing you down and introducing you to people who are in the community. For one, in my last job in Lansing, I worked to get more ingrained in the community through my connections, the circle of friends that I have, they are kind of all over the place within the Native community. Teachers, community organizers, grass roots efforts I would say, and that's what I mean when I say connections. And, I think, this is building on that more, getting to know them and listening to their stories.

JS: Your work has been like that, where you help with the dinners, the Christmas dinners, where you meet people. It's always good to see Indians you know. You live

around this big town. It's mostly a lot of white people, and I always feel at home when I see Indians, like we did at the pow-wow. It's a big city to get used to.

AH: Do you go to the elder's Luncheons?

JS: No, I haven't yet. I tend to stay home a lot. It's kind of hard for me to get out as much as I should. But I have met some people through my daughter. I see some people at the coffee shop.

AH: What do you think makes Lansing a Native space?

ES: For me, when I used to work in my last job, it's always the desire to want to continue to participate at different venues, whether it's the MSU pow-wow, or the Elders' Luncheon, or the school districts' Native events, or things that Nokomis Center has that make me want to still participate in it. That's what I found in a lot of my conversations and complaining. I would hear a lot of complaining that "oh this should have been done this way" or "we used to do it that way," and the fact that they are complaining means that they are still invested. So, I would always try to get them to come, and they started, they started to come to the Elders' Luncheon, and want to be an active participant more. So, that's what kind of made and still motivates me, to fight to have the big events, even though it's stressful on our budgets, it's stressful, putting all of the pieces together because not everyone is an equal contributor at the table. So, it's either the job comes first, or they have families that come first, and so everything is kind of put on your shoulders at one point or another, but I usually lean on other people also to help. What makes this a native space I think, then, is the people, the people I know.

JS: And you see all of them at the community events; they come together.

ES: Ya because (to Mother), when you were living up north (Saginaw), you didn't see a lot of Native, did you?

JS: No. No, not very many.

ES: But when you started coming here, you saw more on a regular basis.

AH: That's funny because that place has a large population of Native people.

ES: Yeah, that's where a lot of people used to be! That's what others would say. And I said no, not that we knew of. Ya know, because maybe we would see somebody at the store or something.

JS: There was that one that used to help try to find a job. She was Native.

ES: She was here, though.

JS: There was one up there, too.

ES: Oh, what was her name? She works for the state. I can't remember her name, though.

AH: What about language? People say that language is identity. How do you feel about language and how it connects people to each other to culture and the land?

JS: Well, my language, where I grew up, we had an elder come into the class. But we had a lot of trouble with behavior, like people wouldn't listen. It lasted for a short time, and then it went away. But they used to come in and teach culture; they had the elders come in and teach culture and that. We just knew small words, and things.

ES: How old were you?

JS: Probably grade school. That was my brother-in-law's Grandma that came in to do that. She used to come in and talk. She knew the language. You would have little notebooks and write things down in, like days of the week and all the months, and we had our own notebook to say things. And we learned, but it didn't last.

AH: Would you say that language is a part of your identity?

JS: Ya, probably more people would speak it than myself. More of the traditional Indians that follow the traditions.

ES: Ya, because we are Cayuga, and I think the language is the same as the other ones, and the reason they were learning that is because it was predominantly that group's reservation. Our rez wasn't ours; there were people inhabiting it, and we have been in the court systems trying to get it back as long as I have been living to get the land back. So, right now, a lot of our people are dispersed to the other reservations.

JS: They are trying to get the lands, slowly trying to buy it back and put it into trust. But it's taking time.

ES: But I see a lot of, in your family, the one person that does is my aunt. I see her children speaking it a lot! A lot on Facebook. They will say little things here or there, and it's so different to me to see children speaking it in a very open forum, outside of ceremonial places. Because did any of the relatives, Grandpa or Grandma, speak it?

JS: Oh, not that I remember. They may have, but I don't remember it. My mother, she was more with the church. So, she raised me with the church. It was around.

ES: But not too much in the house.

JS: My father did some.

ES: He was from Seneca.

JS: He would say some things, like, "Go get the eggs, or go get the bread." He would substitute words in there, and that's how you picked it up.

AH: So, do you think language is important to maintain identity and Native space?

JS: Oh, yes. I think it's part of the culture; growing up, they should have that.

ES: When I was going to school here, people kept encouraging me: go learn Anishinaabemowin, go learn it. And I said, that's not my language. That's not me!

AH: It's the enemy's language? (laughing).

ES: Yeah, right! That's what I would say. I almost felt like they were trying to mesh me with another culture, and it was outside of me. So, I said no, and now I find myself learning more Anishinaabemowin than my own language. Because I remember looking at your notes (to Mother) because you showed them to me. From what you learned, and I didn't know how to say any of that. Like, I need to hear them. So, sooner than later, that's one of my things I want to learn. I want to hear how it's spoken, but I'm not going to get that here in Michigan. I would have to go back to our home community.

AH: So, what do you think would happen if these languages stop being used as spoken languages, if people stop using them? What happens to people's identities? And how they create spaces in urban areas like Lansing?

JS: Hopefully, there will always be small communities where traditions are taught and they are carrying them on. My sister and her husband, they teach the language to their kids, and they are teaching it to their kids. But when they go to learn their education into the cities, when they come back, they are still the same. They have that in them now. They take it with them.

ES: I guess, in looking at my cousins and learning, if it were ever just to die off, I feel like there would be a loss, there would be something missing. I think they would feel incomplete. Because of that tradition and the ancestors that spoke it then, they wouldn't be able to understand what that meant. I don't think they would understand the value and the worth, how meaning-full it is to be able to speak in the Native tongue. Because I feel that sense of something else missing because I don't have that and they do, and they are younger than me. And I should be the older one who knows it, who can lead by example. So, I think there would be a void, a hole missing, if the

language were to die out. But, in our communities I feel that our cultures are strong, being a participant and knowing, being traditional is a very strong force keeping them going. So, I don't foresee that happening as long as the young ones keep it up. As long as they understand how valuable that is. And I think me trying to emulate that, I, at least, try to teach that, how important and how lucky they are to have something like that, to know a few words and continue to build on them.

JS: My best friend, she was in junior high, we had in the library we had these tapes in Indian, stories and songs. You could go in there and listen to them. That's what my friend used to do, go in there and listen to them all the time. We would be reading, and she would have her headphones on listening to Indian music. That's what she liked to do. She would have that music in her ears.

ES: I wonder if they are still there, those tapes.

JS: I don't know; that's when I was growing up. In junior high.

ES: What percentage of Native kids would go to your school? Would you say, like, 25%?

JS: Oh, not many, maybe not even that.

ES: Where would they go? I feel like there would be a lot because it's so close to the reserve.

JS: Maybe different ages, but not a lot in my class.

ES: Well, I mean all together.

JS: Well, then, probably about 25%

ES: That's a lot, more than I have seen.

AH: What's Lansing's population?

ES: Maybe point-something percentage. They don't even break the one-percent barrier. And even at MSU, it's like .24 percent. 25 percent is a lot, but you are right by the reservation.

AH: Was that up in Canada?

JS: No, that was down by our reserve. But we used to go up to another reserve by the border and fish. We would rent land from them to fish.

ES: I didn't know that; when was that?

JS: My mother would go looking for bait, and she would accidentally cross the border and sirens would go off.

(laughter)

ES: How old were you?

JS: I was little.

ES: Did she walk?

JS: No, she drove her car, accidentally went over the border, and they would stop her.

ES: So, that's where I get my rebel from? She's the one.

AH: So, what events or activities do you do around here to help you maintain your connections to your identity?

JS: Activities with her, what she does with the kids.

ES: I think that's the biggest thing, being with the kids, because we saw them yesterday. Being able to have that connection with them. Because I will get irritated, feel displaced if I don't, or if I am not able to get to work with those kids. I get to work with kids all over the school system, but I feel I need to spend time with and work with those kids that no one else is focusing on which is the Native students. And that's when I start to feel disconnected. So, they are very integral to me maintaining my identity and continuing to be their person of support and their cheerleader. That's one of the things. Also, staying in contact with the people I have, I kinda grew up here with. Staying in contact with my mentors and the MSU Native community. I like being on planning committees and helping out like that. I need to feel needed, and that's one of the things a really enjoy doing. Going to different crafting venues, not just Native but other types of things I really like, and doing those types of things. And, then, seeing my friends getting together for dinners and going to parties, That's what keeps me going and keeps my emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing.

AH: So, you would say, then, that what makes Lansing a Native space is the people and the community, not so much the physical landscape?

ES: Hmm, ah no. When we were up in Mt. Pleasant (talking to mother), we were talking about how developed they are; I was showing you where the community center was, and Ziibiwing, and you were surprised that they had their own police and their court system and their own fire department, and we saw Native firemen there!

JS: Indian Policemen!

ES: Yeah, things that you don't see on a regular basis. And their own health place, too, behavioral health. But where was I going with this, oh yeah. I think if you have the physical space, I'm wondering if just having that vision, if people will want more of those things because, well, one thing if that is created, then they might say, well what else can we do? If the physical was there, it would carry on, but because it's not, people have had to adapt, had to learn how to continue without a lot of other supportive means.

AH: Yeah, because there used to be an Indian center here.

ES: And I wasn't around during those times. We were still living up north. When I was growing up, our rez wasn't as developed as it is now. We had, like maybe one or two gas stations, but now there is a lot. They have franchises, restaurants; a lot of people would go there for that. And through developing economics, they started getting more and more money in, and now the businesses have flourished. We're not as developed as Mt. Pleasant. I can't believe sometimes; my mind is blown by what they have.

AH: So, the physical is important?

ES: Hmm, yes and no. I think it would be more organized if we had a place. It wouldn't be, oh, I didn't hear about the Elders' Luncheon. Where is it? I went to the place, and it wasn't there. So, I think you would have more people coming because you have a place, a certain time at the same place. You could organize and bring people together.

JS: If you had a community center or something like that.

ES: I think it could build on that, having health services, having legal services, having social services. Creating a space where people could feel comfortable seeking services. Because people don't always want others to come to their homes, for these things. A place for people to receive support. So, yah, I think it would be important, but not; I guess the no part would be it's not integral for survival. I think we have maintained more in a quiet way, I'd say. Maybe too quiet! Because some people feel that there isn't the support because they don't get to see one another every so often.

JS: I grew up with, we had a community building on our reservation where we had the health services and just a general place where everybody comes and have activities. I didn't go to that much, but I know my sister did; they would have Halloween parties there. It was more of a community thing where everybody comes in, sees everyone, and plays sports or whatever. It was just a big building were you could do things, and they would have events.

AH: So, do you feel a closer connection to Lansing and the community here? Or your home community?

JS: Getting to know people, little by little; it takes a while for me to fit in places. I go home now and again. But everything changes; it's not the same there as it was when I grew up. There are more businesses. But it's always good to see friendly faces. That's what I like.

ES: No, I feel more connected here. We grew up; we went out to visit family like grandpa and aunties almost every weekend. We would drive up there when I was growing, up so I felt connected then. At that point, I was too young to realize, but now that I have been here, it's outgrown where I grew up. So, now, this is my home. And I don't feel too connected to them, to my family.

JS: You changed a lot when you went to school. You got more settled here.

ES: Yeah. So, even when I am talking to them from afar, and when we visit them, I know them, but it's like I don't know them. Because they have grown up so much. Like I have seen my cousin from a baby, and now she is going to community college. So, it's neat to see them doing really well, but I don't have a relationship with them because I was growing up still and figuring my stuff out.

JS: I think the distances from where we were to them, I think it played; everybody grows up and grows apart. It's hard to keep the connections there.

ES: Yeah, I have trouble with that. Some friendships I have kept, like my best friends; they have moved, and we still connect. And other friends who moved, we still make time to get together, but those friends, they were my other foundations because I had different pockets of friends when I came here and learning my identity because I am mixed. So, they played an important role in understanding that side of me and learning what that meant. They were my other group of support here at school. By the relationships that I have built here, they were my family. They were my extended family. And I got to get to know their families, so that's where I feel more connected to the Lansing community. But, when I go home, I don't feel like an outsider; I've never felt that way. I can't be as boisterous as I want to be when things are going on because I don't want to be perceived as being that one with degrees; I've been called that, those two, with degrees, (oh please!). I don't want to come across as bossy or a know-it-all, so I can't be as heavy toughened as I normally am.

AH: Is there a lot of animosity for those who come back? For those with educations?

JS AND ES: Oh, yes!

ES: I've gotten it from my cousins, they always had comments; both of them went back to school! So, it's, yah know, now they can't say nothing.

JS: I think they think you are better than them because you went off to college.

ES: It's just something people don't do there. It's not discouraged, but it's almost, I feel, because its not talked about or not emphasized on, is subconsciously being discouraged by not saying anything. I don't know what motivated them to go to school, both my cousins who kinda gave me or kinda talked about me more or less or talked about other people who went to school. When they had no choice but to go to school to earn their keep, then they had a different tune. It brought something more to their lives, and I think they changed, and I don't hear anything anymore. But they talk about how more cultural I have become outside of the rez because I think that's the next piece when we go back that's the next piece I'm going to hear about. Because I'm not of this culture here in Michigan; I'm participating as though I am, so that's going to be the next thing making fun of debauchery.

AH: Well, you can tell them that this part of Michigan was under the control of the Six Nations for a time.

ES: Well there you go. I will tell them that; sock it to them.

AH: Well, I can't think of another question at this time. Thank you for speaking with me.

APPENDIX D: GROUP INTERVIEW

Group interview with women community members of the Parent Advisory Committee,
5-12-16

Mona Henry, Saginaw Chippewa
Cindy Dine, Dine
Keli Marie Corwin, Sault Saint Marie Tribe of Chippewa
Zhaashko Giizhigo Kwe, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
Amber Swampy, Mohawk
Carla Swampy, Mohawk
Jessica Taylor, Mohawk
Aja Wheatly-Medwayosh, Burt Lake Band
Lucy Jackson, Saginaw Chippewa

This group interview was held at the office of Mona Henry the Native American Advocate for the Lansing School District. I originally thought I was only going to interview her, but it became a group interview as she scheduled it the same time as the parent advisory committee meeting. I had not met any of the other women personally before this meeting but it was one of my better interview sessions. Not all the women present spoke during this interview, and two came after the interview started and joined in.

AH: Thank you for all for coming in and meeting with me. Why don't you go around and introduce yourselves and tell me about your families and how they came to Lansing?

AJW: My family was born and raised here; we've never left Lansing. I lived in Mt. Pleasant for about a month; I really need to get out of Lansing more! My family is all from Lansing, too. My mom painted that picture up there (pointing to a painting in the office of an Indian woman surrounded by fire and shadows). Before that, they all lived up north; do you mean my tribal affiliation? Well, my Grandmother's family was all from Burt Lake. My Grandfather's side, he was all Grand Traverse and Little Traverse, and I believe there is some Canadian on my grandfather's side, too. They came here migrating, moving along, following whatever they needed to do. But I'm not sure why they chose Lansing. I know part of it was my mom's family was all from Burt Lake, from what she remembers, my Grandmother is one of the many shadows there (referring to the painting), of people that were burned out from there, from their homes. One of the biggest reasons why there will never be a federally recognized Burt Lake Band is because so many of our members are diminished in those fires. It was just, there was nothing left. When my Grandmother passed away, she is actually buried up there in the cemetery at Burt Lake. We all went up there and spent four or five days up there, staying at a little trailer park, but now it's an actual hotel. We had a lot of fun there.

KMC: I was born and raised in Lansing. My father's family is Native, but I've never met my grandmother, so I don't know what tribe I am from. My daughters grandfather is Sault Tribe and also from Canada, a Chippewa Tribe. When they are asked, my daughters, what tribe they are, they just go off their grandfather's tribe because I don't know anything about my tribal affiliation. All I know is my grandmother was Native and that she left my dad when he was five. So, I don't know much about my family. But my daughter's family is from the Sault Tribe.

JT: I was born and raised here in Lansing. My dad is from New York. He is Mohawk, and yes I'm nice! My dad came here from New York with my grandpa because there was work. They used to work on those sky scrapers and all that, but when that was done, they came here. They moved around to where ever there was work, and they came here because they were iron workers. So, my dad came here and stayed here and had a family.

MH: I came here from Mt. Pleasant eight years ago. Supposed to be here for two years; I never left. I know my grandfather came from Lansing, but he passed away before I met him; it's something I want to know more about, why he was here. He actually helped start the Indian Center in the 60s, so I want to know more about why he chose Lansing and how did he get here, how long he was here?

LJ: I'm from Mt.Pleasant, from the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe. Both sides of my family are pretty much from there. I know my dad is from Canada, from a Chippewa and Potawatomi tribe there. I have a lot of family throughout Michigan and Canada that I didn't know that I had. My kid's father is from Grand Traverse, so they are from there and from Mt.Pleasant. I moved here when I was about thirteen, and I have been here since, I like it, and my kids like it. We pretty much do everything we can do for our community that we are here for.

AH: In terms of Native language use, is there anybody in your families that you know or can think of that are speakers of the language?

LJ: My aunt Cecilia is; she is really fluent. My Grandpa used to teach us when I, was like, younger and everything, like little things like pass the salt on the table and other things. But, my aunt, she is into that a lot.

MH: She learned that; she relearned that. She is pretty fluent for having, she grew up around here; she went back to school and is still going to school for that, so she's pretty fluent and that.

LJ: She teaches the grandkids. And they know a lot. Little kids, they know a lot. My niece, actually, she came over to sing me a song one day because I used to live in

Mount Pleasant. I stay down here. She was like, "I can sing a song in Ojibwe," and she sang it to me, and it was the cutest thing ever.

JT: My dad, I don't know. He knows some stuff.

KMC: My daughter's grandfather, he has Chippewa and Cherokee in him, and he speaks Ojibwe and Cherokee. That language, I don't know.

AH: So, why is language important?

LJ: I think it's important, just to have it carried on in the family and generations. Like I said, my grandpa would sit down and teach us at the table or just joking around, talking with us, and, like that was a pretty important moment. Just to have one moment, or even when the kids say goodbye, Baa-maampi. Ya know, so it's just nice to hear and say it.

MH: It gives you an identity.

LJ: Yeah.

AJW: I think, too, a lot of culture is learned from the language. There are some words that are, can't be, translated into English, so in order to know, like, a lot of the stories, you have to know this word. Does that make sense?

All Present: Ah hum, yes (in Agreement).

AJW: Also if you don't know the language, you don't understand why. Oh, what's the word I'm looking for? The accents they have or the tone of it. You don't get it unless you learn the vowel sounds. Like, ahh! I get it. I used to think, "Are you making fun of us?" We don't all talk like that. But, then you hear the vowels, and you're like ah, ok. And I never noticed all of that lip thing either.

Everyone: (Laughter).

AH: So, why do you think it's all women sitting at this table?

KMC: We're patient; we're head strong.

LJ: I think we're just used to running stuff (Laughter).

AJW: If you think about it, like, the men would go off and hunt, and the women were the ones who handled everything, made sure the kids were there, the food was done, the clothing was done, that things were clean. We did all that. My house is run very traditional; I never realized that.

AS: My house is nothing but women now (Everyone laughs)!

KMC: Because we get stuff done, that's why.

AS: I think, too, that, in my experience with like, working with the school's stuff, that I realized that the men are more, like, hands-on when it comes to being involved in things. They more want to get their hands dirty and do work, working with kids and being involved. They will share their opinions and stuff, but mainly they leave the organization and planning and stuff to the women.

MH: I see what you're saying. If I say there is a parent meeting, this is who shows up! But, if I say hey we got an event going on and we need some help, then the guys and everybody else shows up.

LJ: Moving tables and other things.

CS: Yeah, it's like you (talking about guys). I'm doing all this cooking; you are coming to do this.

LJ: Yeah, it's just us because we're just used to doing it.

MH: Yeah, I think cooking and that stuff in other cultures, they would say that's being sexist, but, for us, it's traditional.

LJ: Yeah, to be the mother and the head of the household and to make sure that things are in order. That's our job, as mother, as Native American mothers. Every mother that I have known has been like that.

AJW: Yeah, even if you think about it, the men were the warriors. They had to protect. Like, when you think about football, the whole defensive line protects the quarterback and everybody else. Women are the brains of the operation; we make everything happen. We are the quarterbacks (Laughter).

AJW: Some of us are the kickers, but most of us are quarterbacks. And they all (the guys) need to get up there and protect that line.

AH: So, our job as men is not to mess that up?

AJW: Pretty much, yeah (Laughter).

AJW: Catch the ball when we tell you to!

CS: No, but, I mean, it does, yeah, you know; they were sent out to protect. The younger ones were there to look after the sisters, the aunts, the mothers, grandmothers, while all the older ones were off getting the food. And who was in charge of cooking the food? Yeah know. All of us kids, the boy cousins, they went off fishing, and all of us girls would sit around the table with our spoons cleaning off all the fish, gutting them, everything else. My husband and my son, I had to teach them how to clean a catfish; they were both squeamish. I thought they were going to pass out on my deck (Laughter).

AH: So, what more needs to be done, or would you like to see done, about language?

AS: It would be nice to see an actual language class in our high school, just the same as they have for others. The last meeting, I was at with the school district, they were talking about how they had enrichment programs for Philippine, Asian, for all of these other groups. And I was like, excuse me, you are, like, all on borrowed land. Why is there no culture, nobody sticking up for Native Americans or any cultural studies for us?

LJ: I know, it was like the school on the rez, when my kids were there, they learned so much in the Native culture and language. And then when they moved down here to the Lansing School district, they had no idea what they were doing. To me it was alright that they understood; they knew (Anishinaabemowin) and they learned that but it's not going to apply to them in the real world. It was ok for them to have that knowledge of their history and language and everything, but when they moved down here they were completely lost; they had no idea because they were taught so much and everything in Ojibwa in school on the rez, everything was taught in the language before it was taught in English.

MH: They didn't even ban English from being spoken to them (at that time), but it's like, right now, that's how the school is run (no English).

LJ: See, yeah, and when I, I mean my brother, was telling me things like it's so cool. And I said I understand that, but what's that going to do for her in real life? Like, it's ok to, yah know, go to a pow-wow and go to, like, a meeting, and, yeah I can speak my language and that to others down the road and everything. But, that's not going to help their life out here unless that's what you're going to do is to be like a national Native speaker or something. But it would be cool to see more language, like she said, classes here or something.

AJW: Yeah, would be from preschool all the way to high school and into college. I know LCC has some type of program, and I know MSU does. But it got taken away this year (Ojibwa at MSU).

AH: Yes, because Helen retired, and they haven't replaced her yet. But the director of American Indian Studies and others are working on that.

CS: I think a lot of that falls to how, back in the day, when they were taking the kids and trying to put them in (the previous LSD Indian Education program), I don't know. Maybe it's just, I don't know why, but I feel like they never brought it back because they are still stuck on that whole trying to make everyone the way they want to learn. They don't want wanna, I guess; I think it's part of the whole thing where they were taking kids away from their families and putting them in the school to take that away, and maybe they're, too. Like, they don't look at the fact that this would be one of the first languages we should bring back. It's their own ignorance. Now, that Barack Obama is finally recognizing Native people, now maybe he will, and if we got enough people to petition, saying we want the language in the schools. Yah know, there are different languages for different tribes.

MH: Initially, he did. They just launched "Revitalize Native Languages."

CS: Yeah, maybe at the same time because, with Natives, there are different languages for different tribes and where they are from and everything. And, like, when you get into the Native languages and they are all different, you would kind of have to pick and choose what you would have to teach, and you may have someone who's from a different tribe. So, maybe that is the reason why they haven't brought it back to the schools. Because it's, I mean I don't know all the differences between the languages. That's the only justifiable reason I can see for them coming up with as to why they haven't brought it back.

LJ: I always felt like, because there is always like a Hispanic club, a kind of club where they have, like, in the middle of the school where, during school hours, those kids can go there and discuss their culture and everything. In Mt. Pleasant where I was going to school, there we always had like our own Native American club, and they would let us out for an hour and help us with our homework and did language with us and arts and crafts. We did a lot of stuff. But, here, they don't do that at all except for the after-school program. We have been fighting for that little two hours for a long time.

AH: We used to have that; when I was art Eastern, we had a club. We did things during the day and had stuff at lunch time. Helen would come in and teach the language classes and activities at school and after school.

LJ: Because I knew in Mount Pleasant that they had to have a certain amount of kids in order for them to have that, now tutor over there. At my kid's school there's, like five kids, my four and that other girl. And, like, all the other schools around here that these kids are at, and they don't have anything for them at the school.

AH: It used to be that they had, at each of the high schools, an advocate that worked with those kids and, at each of the elementary and middle schools, advocates that went

around and kept track of those kids and did stuff with them. I can't remember how many they had.

MH: 15. They had 15 at one time.

AJW: Yeah, and a budget to; it was a big budget.

KMC: Yeah, and we used to have kids go to a camp, at somewhere.

MH: Ebersole. They used to have it at Ebersole back then.

KMC: Yeah, those were the days.

CS: I remember those. The Indian Center when they were doing the senior lunches. I did most of the cooking, and it was nice to hear, like my sons, and my cousin's daughters. They would all be going around with the elders and the elders teaching them the language. And if they wanted something to eat, I think, for the first six months, my son heard half of all his language there.

AH: Well, I think that's it, thank you all for your help and everything.

APPENDIX E: JENESSA

Jenessa August 12, 2015

Came here to study from Detroit

Walpole First Nation and Mexican

I interviewed Jenessa at the MSU union outside on a nice day. It was windy, which interfered with the recording and some of it was unusable. She took language classes while a student at MSU and participated in the Indigenous Youth Empowerment program as a mentor to local youth. Jenessa is from Detroit and grew up there in a multi-ethnic family with many linguistic backgrounds.

AH: What brought you to Lansing?

JE: I came here for the program at MSU in vet school. But, after a few experiences in school and working at a clinic and doing research, I decided that wasn't for me. But, through my time here at MSU, I grew to love Lansing. I stayed here five years; that's how long my undergrad was. Most of my family is from Detroit. I had two aunts that came here for school, which influenced me coming here as well. Some of my family is from Mexico, and I have extended family living in Canada. When I go home, I feel home is everywhere, the Detroit area and Lansing. I don't consider Mexico or the reservation a place I would call home; it a place where family is and a place I visit.

AH: How did you begin to learn the language and culture?

JE: When I was younger, my grandmother took care of me a lot. She would take me to lots of powwow's and participated in youth programs. That's when I was in elementary school. When I was older, I got involved with sports more, and I lived with my mom and stepdad more, and they don't really have much culture, haven't chose to embrace that, and so that's when I started to lose out on a lot of stuff, and I did not pick it back up till I got to college. When I got here, I started participating with the undergrad student organization and was involved with their e-board. I also did the AISP program and took classes and did PSLP and IYEP and the community events like the ghost supper and just being involved with the community in different ways. I think that's why this feels like a home to me.

AH: Did you use the language in your family, or does anyone speak it in your family?

JE: I used the language with my grandma, but I only know a few words like waboose and megwetch. I remember, when I was young, I would be driving with my grandma, and she would see an eagle. She would stop and say megwetch and put tobacco out and say a prayer. Those are things that I remember, but she would just kind of mumble the

words, so I don't remember what she said. But not really; I call my Grandma Nokum, Nokomis. I feel that she knows some words here and there, and my Grandpa does, too, because he hangs out on the Rez a lot. But, overall not a lot. My great grandmother went to a boarding school. I lost both Spanish and Ojibwe because my grandma's father came from Texas and was fluent in Spanish, but his wife was fluent in Ojibwe. It would have been wonderful for their 18 kids to be trilingual. But, because it was so frowned upon to speak, because we're in America, and we have to speak English. No one really shared their cultural values or language; they didn't really pass any of that down.

AH: How do you feel about language revitalization and the push to get people to use it more?

JE: You've been to these events where they champion language. It's language, language, language. They are there because that's their job, but are they going to say otherwise?

AH: Did they have a lot of language education when you were taking part in events like that?

JE: I don't remember them having a language program at the camp. We learned some words, some basic elementary words in the language.

AH: Do you think there is a connection between language and culture?

JE: I feel that the language is very beautiful, after I learned about it. It's really complex but simple too. It's an interesting language. I decided I wanted to take the class here at MSU; I took it for a year. I wanted to take more classes, but it did not work out with my class schedule. I'm glad I took it here because no one has ever taught me the language that way, so, for me, it was really helpful, especially just knowing, like, Spanish, learning the significance of the sounds. It is really an awesome language, but, at the same time, I also feel I don't have anyone to speak it with, and it's hard when you're in school to make time to go to all these language nights when you're in clubs, and you have a job and you are studying. It's just a lot, and it's almost like taking another 4-5-credit course on top of your other stuff if you really want to learn the language. So, I feel like I just know some words and stuff, but I don't feel comfortable speaking it, and I can't understand what anyone says, I feel.

AH: Do you think if the language is lost that we lose other things as well, like identity and culture?

JE: I personally, from growing up with my mom mostly, who doesn't speak Spanish or have really any culture at all, I was a bit frustrated; so, every time I would go with my dad on the weekends or with them, I would try so hard to learn Spanish because I felt like I had no culture if I didn't know Spanish. I felt like I didn't have an identity because my family is from here and there, and my grandmother was from the Rez, so I really

tried hard to learn it. But, with Ojibwe, there was no one to try with, and I think, for that reason, I came to peace with that. There are other things I can learn, about the ceremonies, or the four medicines, and things like that. But, ultimately, I didn't feel that it was as important because I kinda lost hope. I didn't know who I would learn the language with.

AH: Is it important for you to learn the language?

JE: I do want to learn, but I feel, if you don't have anyone to speak it with you, will lose it. That is something I need to learn is that, if I learn this, will there be people I can continue talking to? Moving around so much, working with different tribes, I feel that it's hard to find a place and others to speak the language with. But, the opportunity is here; it's whether or not you want to pursue it. But, in Lansing, I feel there are a lot of opportunities to learn the language. And Detroit, to, maybe, but I don't know if they have any language night around that area. But, I feel that there are a lot of speakers there and others who can get by from the vibe I've gotten. I hope that, wherever I am, when I have kids I want to pass on the culture to them. I don't think I will be fluent, but I would want to put them in similar programs that I went through, and language too. I feel that this language should be mine. But I don't know it, and it's frustrating because I know my great grandma did know it, but she would only speak it when she was drunk. Ya know, its kinda sad, the boarding schools. But I can't hold that resentment because that's not healthy for me. I can just only try and pass on whatever I know.

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