

# *The Truth that Wampum Tells*

*My Debwewin on the Algonquin Land Claims Process*

Lynn Gehl

EXCERPT

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EXCERPT

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAFNA	Ardoch Algonquin First Nation and Allies
AEL	Algonquin Enrolment Law
AIP	Agreement in Principle
ANNND	Algonquin Nation Negotiations Directorate
ANR	Algonquin Negotiation Representative
ANTC	Algonquin Nation Tribal Council
BC	British Columbia
BCTC	British Columbia Treaty Commission
CNE	Canadian National Exhibition
DOJ	Department of Justice
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
JBNQA	James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement
MNR	Ministry of Natural Resources
NCC	National Capital Commission
ONAS	Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat
OPP	Ontario Provincial Police
RCAP	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
SCC	Supreme Court of Canada
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Committee
WHIMASAB	Whitney-Madawaska-Sabine Algonquin Nation

## Glossary of Anishinaabe Terms

Anishinaabe	Original man/Anishinaabe man
Anishinabeg/Anishinabek	Original people
Anishinaabe-kwe	Original woman/Anishinaabe woman
<i>chi-miigwetch</i>	thank you
<i>debwewin</i>	a truth that is rooted in both one's heart and mind
Debwewin Journey	A way of knowing that involves the heart and mind
Debwewin Miikan-Zhidchigewin	The Truth Road Art of Doing; Debwewin Journey
<i>gi-nwendaagininaanig dbaajimowinan giigdiyan wezhigeyan</i>	kinship stories speak with fork tongue/cheating with words
Gii-Zhigaate-Mnidoo-Kwe	Moonlight Spirit Woman
<i>gitchie chee-man</i>	big canoe
Ininwezi	We People Here Alone
Kiji Sibì	Ottawa River
Kitche Manitou	Creator/The Great Spirit
<i>kokomis</i>	grandmother (Algonquin)
Kokomis-Giizis	Grandmother Moon
<i>midewiwin</i>	The way of the heart/The good hearted people/The good hearted way
<i>mino-pimadiziwin</i>	the good life
<i>mnoomin/manomiin</i>	natural or Anishinaabe rice
Omàmiwinini	Algonquin Anishinabeg/Down River People
Omàmiwinini Pimwàdjowin	Algonquin way of life
Pikwàkanagàn	Beautiful hilly country covered in evergreens
Tanakiwin	Our homeland
<i>wiindigo</i>	a flesh eating man/a monster/a psychotic or greedy state/a potential contagion

Whether or not the goals can pragmatically be achieved,  
the pursuit of the ideal is often relentless and, to its victims,  
heartless.

(MOHAWK 2000: 13)

Emotionless, passionless, abstract, intellectual research is a  
goddamn lie, it does not exist.

(HAMPTON 1995: 52)

Church is in your heart.

(ANDRÉE MARIE MARTEL, VIA THE ORAL TRADITION)

The longest journey, Lynn, is the one between your heart  
and your head.

(DOUG WILLIAMS, VIA THE ORAL TRADITION)

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While I thank all of these wonderful people and institutions, the interpretations of events in the chapters that follow are solely mine.

A portion of the royalties received from the sale of this book will be donated to the science of behavioural optometry and vision therapy and the effort toward the elimination of blindness due to strabismic amblyopia.



# Foreword

It is an honour for me to write the foreword for Dr. Lynn Gehl's book — a first ever insider analysis of the contemporary land claims and self-government process. I met Lynn while working on the Algonquin land claims and self-government negotiation process in 2001 and since that time I have been a steadfast reader of her many community and academic publications. I very much value Lynn's contributions to my own learning process, and her observations offered in this book are no exception as they are disturbing, enlightening and resound with the need for a call to action. This work — offered the same year as the 250th anniversary of the Treaty at Niagara — examines the government policies and procedures that continue to restrain Indigenous nations such as the Algonquin Nation within a colonial paradigm. Her *Debwewin Journey* analysis is groundbreaking and inspirational to those of us who are still finding our way through the filthy waters of colonization.

My father is of mixed Algonquin ancestry and my mother of Irish and English ancestry. As an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe of mixed ancestry I grew up in Algonquin Anishinaabe traditional territory. We lived between Rideau and Otty Lakes in the southern part of what is now called the Ottawa River Valley. My Algonquin ancestors came from rural places and villages today referred to as the Townships of Lavant and Wilberforce, and the Village of Ompah. In remaining on the land as they did, my Algonquin ancestors were never affiliated with a First Nation community as defined by Canada and, as such, remained non-status Algonquin people. While traditional patterns of hunting and gathering as well as a close relationship to the land remained intact, tactical genocide and oppressive colonialism were major forces shaping my family's life ways as well our collective consciousness of who we were. Undoubtedly, the work of thinkers and scholars such as Lynn are crucial to my family's collective ability to decolonize our minds and hearts.

It was in 2000 when my family members first enrolled in Algonquin Enrolment Law, which entitled us to be consulted in the Algonquin negotiation process, and for a brief period of time in 2001 I worked with the Algonquin negotiating team. This was during a time of significant political division between the status and non-status Algonquin that resulted in a moratorium on the negotiation process. It was at this time that Lynn and I came to more fully understand that Canada did not respect the Algonquin Nation as sovereign. We also learned that land claims and self-government negotiation processes do not result in a treaty in an international context; rather, land claims are an application of domestic policy within the confines of the colonizing nation state.

While at the time I had a young daughter to care for and needed to focus my attention there, frustrated with the process, and despite a form of blindness that renders text material difficult, Lynn reluctantly dedicated many years

of her life to learning what happened to the Algonquin Nation. Through this book, which only offers some of what she learned, Lynn teases out the subtleties of state power in the Algonquin negotiation process. She courageously criticizes the process and captures a specific moment in time that allows the reader to examine and analyze critical incidents in the process. I am inclined to think that when Creator lowered Lynn to Mother Earth it was for her to complete this difficult task of bravery. Indeed, we can all learn from her, as she has fulfilled her responsibility.

Whether you are an Algonquin, Indigenous from another nation, a descendant of settlers, a new immigrant or an ally, if you are curious about the Indigenous-settler relationship in Canada, this book is an important read. However, it remains to be seen what you, the reader, will do with the knowledge gained. In honour of Lynn's effort, I offer for you to take Lynn's story, "It's yours. Do with it what you will. Cry over it. Get angry. Forget it. But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now" (King 2003: 119).

*Heather Majaury*  
*Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe*

# Learning About the Algonquin Land Claims Through My Debwewin Journey

## My Journey to This Place

When I was in high school and in search of answers to what I was experiencing and why I was experiencing it I was drawn to the hard sciences of atoms and molecules. Eventually, I enrolled in a two-year chemical technology program. Although I was an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe, I relied on the Ontario Student Assistance Program because I am not entitled to the treaty rights that Indigenous people registered as status Indians are. After completing the program I worked in the environmental science field for twelve years as a chemical technologist. I was involved in a larger effort of monitoring Ontario's waterways for toxic organic pollutants such as polychlorinated biphenyls, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (or DDT) and resin and fatty acids such as dichlorodihydro-abietic acid and linoleic acid. While I was certainly impressed with the technology and the methods of obtaining knowledge, after some time I began to realize that regardless of the keen analytic skill involved, the technology and the process was not sophisticated enough to change human behaviour. I realized that the enlightenment intellectual project that focusses on rationality is not enough to change how humans engage with and relate to the world.

Eventually I returned to school, but this time to university. While wrestling with my reading and writing skills, I began in the discipline of psychology. Because of vision limitations with text and print materials — I am stereo-blind, meaning I only have the use of one eye for sight, while sometimes I have double vision — words seem to float up and off the page, so I only took two courses at a time. I moved at a turtle's pace. During my process of learning and seeking answers I required tutors, editors, disability services and academic skills personnel. Because I was seeking out the mindful knowledge that explained my existence, I took a broad range of courses where every crevice of knowledge placed before me was explored to the best of my ability.

It was in the discipline of anthropology, studying human culture and thus divergent human behaviours, where I was able to begin to make sense of many of my experiences. Through studying anthropology I was able to realize the fundamental role of culture and cultural learning in shaping who people are as human beings. It was here that I was able to understand the effects that cultural loss had on me as a human being and as an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe. I

learned that to remove culture is to remove one's very ability to be human. I learned that it is through cultural learning that humans learn to hunt, eat, care for children and live *mino-pimadiziwin* (the good life). Essentially, I learned that the very practice of processing knowledge, both feeling and thinking, is culturally shaped and structured.

After I completed my undergraduate degree I wanted to more consciously engage with Indigenous knowledge philosophy and, as a result, I completed both of my graduate degrees in Indigenous studies. My Master of Arts work examined more closely identity and the history of the sex discrimination in the *Indian Act* (Gehl 2013). The experience of personal identity and sex discrimination within the *Indian Act* was a topic that I continue to live. Understanding the colonial and legislative history is important, as generations of my ancestors had been denied who they were because of the racist and patriarchal assumptions codified in the various legislative acts and that have culminated in the current *Indian Act*. Gaining this knowledge was useful in helping me understand who I am and my own location in society. Despite the *Indian Act* amendments that took place in 1985 and 2011, much of the sex discrimination continues (Eberts 2010; Gehl 2006; Gehl 2012c). Indian and Northern Affairs Canada<sup>1</sup> (INAC) continues to deny status registration to many people, myself included. In my process of trying to become registered as an Indian, I initiated a section 15 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* challenge regarding the continued sex discrimination in the *Indian Act*. This process is ongoing and Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto are my legal representatives (Gehl 2006; Gehl 2012c).

My doctoral work, from which this book in part emerges, was a wholistic examination of my experience within the Algonquin land claims and self-government process,<sup>2</sup> a non-linear and politically dynamic rich context. In offering my story my choice of spelling is “wholistic” over “holistic” as my goal is to convey a “whole” story that encompasses both mind knowledge and heart knowledge where spirit knowledge is inherent, rather than “hole,” which for me signifies a void, or the term “holy,” which implies only the spiritual realm. During my doctoral studies I was feeling and experiencing the land claims and self-government process on the ground at the community level. In this way I did not have a traditional academic research context per se, nor did I have a clear research duration as most doctoral candidates normally do. Rather, before I entered the program I was living the process of chaos without the usual structures to guide me in my work. Through this work I was disappointed to learn that the contemporary Algonquin land claims and self-government process was not a viable road to nation re-building that offered the Algonquin Nation an opportunity to gain access to their land and resources as I so hoped it was. This book offers my story of disappointment and my ultimate decision to walk away from the Algonquin process.

## A Short Story About the Storyteller

In the Anishinaabe tradition, before a speaker offers their truth, protocol is followed. Letting people know who you are and how you know allows listeners — in this case readers — the opportunity to ground their thinking and begin their own interpretation of what they are hearing, reading and thus learning. Undoubtedly, who I am and how I have come to my truth on the Algonquin land claims and self-government process in Ontario, Canada, is such a fundamental aspect of this work that it is important for me to tell you a story about who I am. I am an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe from the Kiji Sibi Valley (Ottawa River Valley). As a result of colonization, I was not raised there.

My father, Rodney Peter Gagnon (also Gagne), was Algonquin Anishinaabe. It will be useful to know that the Algonquin are one nation in the larger cultural group called the Anishinaabeg. My father was known as a person who lived in the bush and who was a great fisherman. As such, when I was a child, fishing was a mainstay of my family's subsistence. It is no coincidence, for example, that my mother, Andrée Marie Martel, remembers and has told me that I was born when the smelts were running. This is my birth story and it was in the springtime that my birth was celebrated. Although my father was Algonquin Anishinaabe, he was also French — the Anishinaabeg valued genetic diversity, as I do. However, part of our biological family is unknown in that I do not know who his father, my grandfather, was.

On my mother's side I can trace my ancestry back to the very early French settlers who were amongst the first to arrive in New France. In the early 1600s many of the first settlers and officials did not bring their wives along with them. Despite this, in 1620, Pierre Desports brought his wife, Francois Langlois, to Quebec City with him. Shortly after their arrival Francois gave birth to a daughter that they named Helene. Helene, my mother's ancestor and thus mine too, is recorded as the first child born to both a French father and a French mother in New France (Edwards, personal communication). As well, my mother's mother, Yvonne Duncan, my grandmother, was Irish. In sum I am Algonquin, French and Irish, with parts unknown. Today my subjective identity is Algonquin Anishinaabe. For many reasons, such as the embodiment of Canada's colonial history, this makes sense to me, and this is how I engage with the world.

Through processes of colonization, such as the creation of the reserve system and the sex discrimination encoded in the *Indian Act*, past and present, my father, his mother — Mary Viola Gagne (my grandmother or, as I prefer to say it, my *kokomis*) — and his grandparents — Annie Jane Meness and Joseph Gagne Jr. (my great-grandparents) — were enfranchised as Indians and forced to leave the reserve community they lived in at Golden Lake, Ontario, in the 1930s. While many Canadians may understand enfranchisement as a good thing, in that, historically, an enfranchised person was set free and permitted the opportunity to vote, for an Indigenous person enfranchisement also meant

disenfranchisement, in that they were no longer a member of their Indigenous community. Although born Indians, my *kokomis*, my great-grandmother Annie Jane Meness and my great-great-grandmother Angeline Jocko (this is Joseph Gagne Jr.'s mother) were no longer considered Indians because they married men who were French (Joseph Gagnon Jr. and Joseph Gagnon Sr. respectively), or men who were considered French by colonial standards. Alternatively stated, in my father's lineage, my *kokomis*, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother and their sons were Algonquin Anishinaabe only through their motherlines (Gehl 2006; Gehl 2012c).

As a result of being driven out of the reserve community, I grew up in the city of Toronto with my numerous brothers and sisters. I am the fifth of eight children and, like many Algonquin Anishinaabe families, due to processes of colonization we were a family plagued with pressures imposed on us. In essence, I lived, and in many respects still live, on the edges of Western society; a part of society, but not entirely.

Despite the colonially constructed disenfranchising processes, I do recall the many long road trips my family took into Algonquin traditional territory and to the reserve community of Golden Lake. While at one time this reserve was called the Golden Lake Reserve Community, eventually this name was changed to Golden Lake First Nation and then again was changed to Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. Golden Lake is a reference to the town and also the lake that the First Nation is adjacent to. During these road trips, my father constantly taught us to look for and watch the animals; in particular the winged ones, such as the eagles and hawks, and the four legged ones, such as bear and deer. Today I appreciate that we were, through practice, observation and through what the Anishinaabeg call structured silence, learning the Anishinaabe clan system of governance.

Another memory I have is from the early 1970s. As often happened during this drive, one of my brothers, Dennis, and I went along. I remember this occasion well because this was the first time I was exposed to traditional historical Algonquin Anishinaabe dress and ceremony. Somehow we stumbled upon a small powwow of about twelve Algonquin people. Chief William Commanda was in full regalia, complete with headdress, and there were several young Algonquin girls also dressed in traditional clothing. They were singing and dancing to the sound of the drum. The girls were a few years younger than me and in my heart I danced with them. Through reflection and introspection, I now realize that this small powwow was part of the beginning of a Canada-wide Indigenous cultural revitalization and resistance movement spurred on by the federal government's re-assertion, in the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, more commonly known as the 1969 White Paper, of a strong assimilation agenda (Canada 1969). My extended Algonquin family, I have come to learn, were singing and dancing in celebration of the withdrawal of the White Paper. This memory left a lasting impression on me

and I sometimes feel in my heart and wonder in my mind if we really did just stumble upon this powwow. It is possible that my father was politically aware of what was happening, but I really don't know.

Through the practice and ritual of these many long road trips my Algonquin-ness was very much embodied and heart-felt. Despite this, and possibly due to colonization and Canada's national agenda of destroying Indigenous nations and their cultures, my parents never openly discussed who we were as Algonquin Anishinaabeg. Silence permeated everywhere. Regardless, I do have early

memories of my father incessantly relaying oral kinship stories of who I was related to at the reserve at Golden Lake and how I was related to them. I remember at one time thinking we were related to everyone in one way or another. It seemed like we had cousins everywhere. Language speaker and elder Shirley Williams told me that these oral kinship stories are best known as "*gi-nwendaagininaanig dbaajimowinan.*"

I found those moments of listening to kinship stories of who I was related to in the reserve community odd because, while through the oral tradition I was taught that I was amongst kin relations, my father never explicitly claimed that we were Algonquin Anishinaabeg. His carefully crafted silences on this matter left me puzzled to the core of my being. In some ways my ontology was an intellectual void or, better, I held in part an ontology of silence. As a result, although I knew through practice and thus in an embodied and heartfelt way that I was indeed an Algonquin, at the cognitive, or mindful knowledge level, I did not fully know I was an Algonquin. My Algonquin-ness was not completely known to me, and consequently I was unable to consciously and discursively express who I was as an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe. I now know that this was what my father consciously intended to do, to pass the silence on to me. This silence, or lack of mind knowledge, that I carried did not mean that I was not an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe. Rather, I have come to know that my experience as an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe speaks to the limitations of defining knowledge in human consciousness, cognitive and mindful terms alone. Sometimes knowledge, although incomplete in a mindful and thus



AUTHOR LYNN GEHL WITH HER TREATY AT NIAGARA WAMPUM BUNDLE, WHICH CONTAINS NEW EDITIONS OF THE THREE WAMPUM BELTS THAT CODIFY CANADA'S CONSTITUTIONAL BEGINNINGS (PHOTO BY N.K. GEHL)

discursively articulate way, resides in the very practices we undertake, such as how we walk on the Earth, and so sometimes that knowledge only resides in our hearts. This is what I know today.

### My Approach: A Debwewin Journey

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2002) *Decolonizing Methodologies* called Indigenous people to upset the status quo in knowledge production. Smith advocated the need to return to Indigenous approaches. More recently, Shawn Wilson (2008) in *Research as Ceremony*, Margaret Kovach (2009) in *Indigenous Methodologies* and Kathleen E. Absolon (2011) in *Kaaandossiwin* explored Indigenous methodologies, as well as how Indigenous people are incorporating them into their research and scholarship. This book moves beyond this discussion and applies an Indigenous methodology to a very political context. More specifically, I rely on Debwewin Journey (Gehl 2012b) methodology as my way of knowing the Algonquin land claims and self-government process.<sup>3</sup> In this way, this book is not just about the Algonquin negotiations process, but also my experience within the Algonquin land claims and self-government process.

As I have stated above, the many road trips we took into Algonquin Anishinaabe traditional territory during my youth, and the inherent practices of observing and listening, as well as the time spent fishing, embodied within me a feeling of who I was, who my ancestors were and who the Algonquin of Golden Lake were, as well as embodying within me a deep relationship to the land and waterways. Although through these practices and through listening to kinship stories I was being socialized as an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe, the larger process of colonization and why and how my family was excluded from living at the reserve at Golden Lake, and further why the Algonquin did not have a treaty, was not a part of this learning process. Consequently, a mindful understanding of who I was as an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe was left incomplete. The process of completing the mind knowledge and of connecting it to what I felt in my heart — what I call my “heart knowledge” — was my responsibility.

Interestingly, in the Anishinaabe tradition, knowing through heart knowledge is a valid way of knowing. This is revealed through an analysis of Anishinaabe language. Language speaker Doug Williams explains that the Anishinaabe word “*debwewin*” translates to “a personal truth that is in one’s heart.” In addition, “*gdebwe na?*” is a truth-seeking question that translates to, “are you speaking from the heart?” The assumption inherent in this question is that mindful knowledge has been gained because one’s ability to express it discursively signifies it. While the response of “*gawiin*” to this question signifies “no,” the response of “*enh*” assures the listener, “yes, it is rooted in my heart” (Doug Williams, via the oral tradition).

As thought provoking as this Anishinaabe understanding of *debwewin* was, it was not until I had the opportunity to listen to Rainey Gaywish speak



that I more fully understood personal truth and knowledge according to the Anishinaabe worldview. Gaywish, having acquired a depth of knowledge of the *midewiwin* society, the teaching and healing society of the Anishinaabeg, relied on the ancient symbol of two connecting circles in her understanding of personal truths. While one of the two connecting circles represents heart knowledge, the other circle represents mind knowledge. Within this understanding of personal truths, heart knowledge refers to what a person feels and mind knowledge refers to what a person thinks. Gaywish (via the oral tradition) explained that in the event that both the circle of heart knowledge and the circle of mind knowledge are not working together in a connected sense, the knowing process is incomplete and there is no truth. Anishinaabe wisdom holder, traditional teacher and scholar James Dumont (2005: 2) echoes this wholistic understanding of *debwewin* and thus personal truth when he posits, “The intelligence of the mind, for instance, does not operate to its fullest creative, discriminating, and encompassing potential without its active partnership with the intelligence of the heart,” and further adds that, in an Anishinaabe sense, intelligence is not merely “cerebral activity.”

In sum, through these oral teachings offered by Williams and Gaywish, coupled with Dumont’s wisdom, it becomes apparent that the Anishinaabeg appreciate both the intelligence of the heart — what a person feels — and the intelligence of the mind — what a person thinks — as important sources or locations of knowledge. In this way, personal truth in an Anishinaabe sense is wholistic in that it includes the circle of heart knowledge and the circle of mind knowledge working together. It is in this way that two connecting circles serve well in representing the necessary relationship between the heart and mind.

Linguistic analysis and traditional wisdom informs us that this Anishinaabe approach to knowledge and personal truth predates European arrival. Shirley Williams (via the oral tradition) suggests that this way of knowing is referred to as “Debwewin Miikan-Zhidchigewin,” which translates to “The Truth Road Art of Doing.” I, though, have opted to call this scholarly Anishinaabe methodological approach “Debwewin Journey.” It would be an understatement for me to say I am grateful to the Anishinaabe teachers Doug Williams, Rainey Gaywish, Shirley Williams and Jim Dumont.

Located within the context of the Algonquin land claims and self-government process, and these important traditional teachings on the role of the heart, I realized that at the doctoral level of study I was completing the mindful understanding of what I felt in my heart. It was not that simple, though. I needed to understand the history of who my Algonquin ancestors were, and I needed to understand what I was feeling and experiencing more completely. Situated within the Algonquin context I had so many questions, such as, how did it come about that and why are the Algonquin a nation without a treaty? I also wondered if the land claims and self-government process was really

about nation re-building and jurisdictional expansion. My heart knowledge was inadequate, or had limitations, to address these questions. I felt that the knowledge was not enough or, as Dumont suggests, the cerebral knowledge was yet to be realized.

In my doctoral work I was venturing on a mind knowledge-seeking Debwewin Journey where the overarching guiding question was, “What is the mind knowledge that completes and connects with my heart knowledge embodied during my youth?” Furthermore, I was venturing on a mind knowledge-seeking Debwewin Journey where my primary purpose was to establish my *debwewin*, a personal and wholistic truth of the Algonquin land claims and self-government process. With the circle of heart knowledge already intact and embodied, during my Debwewin Journey I relied on three additional methods to gain the circle of mind knowledge: personal experience, an academic literature review and introspection. It was through these three methods that I was able to complete and connect the circle of mind knowledge with the circle of heart knowledge.

Learning through one’s personal experience — also referred to as experiential knowledge — is indeed an Anishinaabe method of knowing (Simpson 2001: 136). Learning through introspection, that is, a process of pondering and reflection that respects a person’s own process of making meaningful connections, is also a traditional method of knowing. For example, Anishinaabe author and language speaker Basil Johnston (1990: 70) explains that, in the Anishinaabe tradition, learners are encouraged to draw their own inferences through introspection where no attempt by other people is made to impose views.

While many people will understand experiential knowledge and introspection as traditional ways of knowing, some people may puzzle over the large body of community-generated writing that I have relied upon in the chapters that follow when discussing my experience at the community level. While it may not be true of the earlier peace and friendship treaties, the Algonquin land claims and self-government process is very much reliant on community-generated written material in conveying information to the larger Algonquin community. Reading community newsletters was an important part of my experience. Having access to these written sources differs substantially from an outsider’s approach, which would not have direct access to the community-generated material and, as such, may solely rely on academic literature in their analysis of the Algonquin process.

The community-generated materials I read as part of my experience are many and included *The Moccasin Telegraph*, an Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation (again, formerly Golden Lake First Nation) community publication. As a member of the larger Algonquin community I also had access to six editions of the community publication, *Ininwezi*, which translates to “We People Here Alone.” I also had access to four editions of the *Tanakiwin*, which translates to “Our homeland.” There were also publications intended primarily

for non-status readership and as a non-status member I also had access to the *Sweetgrass Bulletin* and the *A.N.N.D. News Update*.

Furthermore, for the purpose of the land claims and self-government process, the larger Algonquin community has been organized through a collectivity of smaller communities. As a member of one of these non-status communities I had access to the *Greater Golden Lake Community News Letter*.<sup>4</sup> These community newsletters were much less formal than *Ininwezi*, *Tanakiwin* and, for that matter, the *Sweetgrass Bulletin*, and were rarely larger than one or two legal-size pages. Eager to keep informed, I also came across a few community newsletters from other non-status communities, such as an edition of *The Eagles Nest News*, out of Bancroft, Ontario, and the *Kichissippi Current*, which came out of the Pembroke, Ontario, area.

Along with reading the above Algonquin newsletters, it was in 2001 when Algonquin community representatives and Algonquin members such as Paula LaPierre and Ray Pappin began to communicate through the Internet via their personal websites. I also spent time reading articles found in public newspapers, such as *Anishinabek News*, *The Eganville Leader*, *Bancroft Times* and *Frontenac News*. Lastly, acting from the perspective of a community member seeking information, I was also reading the *Negotiation Bulletins* that the Ontario government — as the Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat (ONAS) — was generating and posting on their website. My goal in reading these community-generated publications was to remain informed and to understand the broader dynamics of the Algonquin land claims and self-government process. In this way, reading these sources was indeed a part of my very experience; that is, my experience includes these Algonquin newsletters, public newspapers and Internet sites. Interestingly, drawing on these bodies of community-generated materials brings several Algonquin voices into my story about the Algonquin land claims and self-government process.

Additionally, attending community meetings and having discussions with Algonquin people was also a large part of my experience. Although for the most part I have been an out-of-territory Algonquin person, during the time period from 1998 to 2005 I ventured many times on the long drive into Algonquin Anishinaabe territory to attend several of the non-status Algonquin community meetings. This was a time when Algonquin governance structure really began to change and take shape, in particular in 2004–05 during the Algonquin Negotiation Representative (ANR) elections. The community meetings I attended were usually held in municipal buildings such as the Golden Lake Post Office or the Pembroke Legion.

While this explains my use of community-generated written materials and the community meetings I attended as inherent in my lived experience, many people may continue to wonder and thus question my process of an academic literature review. People may ask how engaging the academic literature can be a traditional approach to gaining mindful knowledge. Here again the

answer is found in my experience. It was my experience that there were too few Algonquin people or elders who could provide me with the oral stories I needed to come to understand the history of the Algonquin, nor for that matter was there anyone who could tell me the entire history of the treaty, land claims and self-government process. As such, on the ground and at every turn, I encountered more and more unanswered questions. I felt I needed answers to the many questions that began to formulate through my experience, and for me it was the academic literature where some of the knowledge has been recorded on the history of colonization that provided some of these answers. In this way my process through the academic literature was both grounded and guided by my lived experience within the context of the Algonquin land claims and self-government process, rather than the linear rationality, objectivity or deductive process of an academic literature review.

While I drew on non-Indigenous scholars in my process of seeking out mindful knowledge in the academic literature, I also made a very conscious effort to engage the academic literature produced by Indigenous organizations, Indigenous scholars — both men and women — and traditional teachers. In addition, in my process of selection a priority was placed on Anishinaabe scholars and teachers. This process of moving through the academic literature was an instinctual process for me in that I was motivated to learn from Indigenous people and scholars. After all, I was certainly not interested in a colonial understanding. Moreover, as an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe, I made a very conscious effort while reviewing the academic literature to include Algonquin Anishinaabeg voices, such as Greg Sarazin, Paula Sherman and Kirby Whiteduck. As an Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe I was motivated to learn from these thinkers. In sum, in this way my experiential approach to the academic literature was different.

### The Algonquin Context

The Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation of the Ottawa River Valley in what is now known as Canada has occupied and straddled the Kiji Sibi since long before the arrival of European people. Through processes of colonization we have been divided by many nation state mechanisms: the construction of the Ontario/Quebec provincial border, English and French legal systems, language, religion and the reserve system. Furthermore, the registration requirements codified in the past and current *Indian Acts* have effectively divided the larger Algonquin Anishinaabeg into a false dichotomy of status versus non-status.

Many Canadians may not be aware of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation or that systems of colonization continue to divide us and, further, that the status/non-status differences imposed continue to be played out. Although a series of islands in the Kiji Sibi, now called Morrison's, Allumette and Grand Calumet, once served to centralize and unite the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation geographically, politically and economically, today one island, Morrison's, resides

in the province of Ontario while the other two, Allumette and Grand Calumet, reside in the province of Quebec. Through the establishment of this provincial border the provincial and federal governments of Canada are now negotiating a land claims and self-government agreement with the Algonquin Anishinaabe in Ontario separate and distinct from the Algonquin Anishinaabeg in Quebec. The mighty river and its islands that once stood at the geographic heart of who the Algonquin were are today a part of two different colonial provincial jurisdictions.

While a specific land claims is a process an Indigenous nation moves through when Canada is not living up to its responsibilities regarding a particular treaty or settlement, a comprehensive land claims is the process of jurisdictional expansion an Indigenous nation moves through when no historical treaty exists. The Algonquin land claims is comprehensive and began in 1991–92. Although the process started with the federally recognized Algonquin band existing in Ontario, the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation near the Town of Golden Lake, eventually the parameters were broadened to include the non-status or non-registered Algonquin Anishinaabeg. In addition, eventually the mandate was also expanded to include self-government negotiations (Gehl 2004).

### My Place Within the Larger Algonquin Community

In an Anishinaabe worldview, locating oneself is fundamental when telling a story, as the self, and in this case the heart, is a legitimate source of knowledge and truth. In the academy it was critical and feminist research approaches that first created the space for insider methodologies. Smith (2002: 137), though, argues that Indigenous research offers additional insight into insider knowledge in that within Indigenous contexts there are multiple ways of being an insider. I agree with Smith as this was certainly my experience as an Algonquin community member. Within my process my marginal insider status shifted. I was, and remain, marginal in that I am a non-status, out-of-territory Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe, however I am indeed a member of the larger Algonquin community. It is in this way that I am a marginal insider. Despite this, at one point within the Algonquin land claims and self-government process my location shifted within the collectivity when I ran in an ANR election. During this time I became more centrally located in my ability to know the Algonquin process, at least in terms of this election. Despite this shift, for the most part throughout my Debwewin Journey I remained marginal.

It is important to appreciate that while I was and remain marginal, I do have family relations who are members of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. It is Pikwàkanagàn First Nation that my father considered his home, as did his mother (my *kokomis*) and grandmothers before, and thus at moments so do I. While I am not an official band member, in a liminal way I am indeed emotionally and socially invested in my ancestral community.

## The Language I Use in Telling My Story

Throughout this book I use the term “Indigenous” to refer to the First Nations, both status and non-status, here on Turtle Island who existed prior to European arrival and who continue to exist today. I also refer to the Algonquin Anishinaabeg Nation. Anishinaabe refers to “original man” and consists of a much larger group of nations of similar language and culture who have inhabited and continue to inhabit the Great Lakes region. These Anishinaabe Nations include the Algonquin, Chippewa, Delaware, Mississauga, Nipissing, Odawa, Ojibwa and Potawatomi. For my story, Algonquin Anishinaabe specifically refers to the Algonquin Anishinaabeg of the Ottawa River Valley in Ontario.

The spelling of the word “Algonquin” itself requires clarity. Often times Algonquin is presented as “Algonkin.” In this book I rely on the more common spelling, “Algonquin.” In addition, confounding an easy understanding of who the Algonquin Anishinaabeg of the Ottawa River Valley were and are, is the larger linguistic family of “Algonquian speakers,” of which the Algonquin people are merely a single nation, along with the Blackfoot, Cree, Micmac, Ojibwa and Shawnee. Adding to this conundrum, “Algonquian” is spelled interchangeably with “Algonkian.” But again, I rely on the word “Algonquin” consistently.

Furthermore, “Algonquin,” “Algonkin,” “Algonquian” and for that matter “Algonkian” are not names that the Algonquin Anishinaabeg of the Ottawa River Valley historically or traditionally employed. The word Algonquin emerges from the Malecite word “*elekomokwik*,” which translates to “they are our relatives (or allies)” (qtd. in *Algonkin* 1993: 40). It is also stated that the word “Algonquin” emerges from the Micmac word “*algoomeaking*,” which translates to “at the place of spearing fish and eels (from the bow of a canoe)” (qtd. in *Algonkin* 1993: 40). Apparently it was in 1603 when Champlain first recorded the people of the Ottawa River Valley as the “Algoomequian,” and it was in 1632 when “Algonquian” first appeared in the Jesuit Relations (*Algonkin* 1993: 40; Gordon M. Day 1972: 226).

What is more, it is also suggested that Weskarini, Matouweskarini, Kichesipirini (Big River People) and Omàmiwinini (Down River People) are more appropriate terms to describe the people living in the Ottawa River Valley (*Algonkin* 1993: 40–41; Ottawa River Heritage Designation Committee 2005: 26). Although I am aware of this, I have opted to remain with the term “Algonquin” because I feel its common and widespread use will serve me in terms of my contribution, as many people are emotionally invested in the word. This reasoning also explains, in part, why I identify myself as Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe.

It is also important for me to explain and provide clarity to what I mean by the larger Algonquin Anishinaabeg collective of which I am a member. This larger collective includes several groups of people and consists of band members and non-band members, status and non-status, registered and non-

registered, on-reserve and off-reserve and in-territory and out-of-territory people. In moments where I am specifically referring to Algonquin who are registered with the Department of Indian Affairs and who are both members of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation and living there, I use the terms “band member,” as well as “status,” “registered” and/or “on-reserve.” When I am referring to Algonquin who are not registered with the Department of Indian Affairs I use the terms “non-status” and “non-registered.” When referring to Algonquin Anishinaabeg who live inside and outside of traditional Algonquin territory, I use the terms “in-territory” and “out-of-territory” respectively. Having explained this it must be appreciated that a person could very well be a registered status band member while living off-reserve and/or out-of-territory. In offering this discussion of terms, it may be useful to know that as per the Pikwàkanagàn First Nation’s membership code, a person has to be registered with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to be a member of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation.

For me, “treaty” means a process that involves parties negotiating a relationship on a nation-to-nation basis of equal partnership, and I differentiate and define the land claims and self-government process as one in which Indigenous nations engage in negotiating an agreement through federal and provincial colonial policies. Understanding the history and shift from negotiating on a nation-to-nation basis to negotiating through provincial and federal colonial policies is central to my Debwewin Journey story.

In my story that follows I use words from the Anishinaabe language. I have come to appreciate that the Anishinaabe language is best understood as consisting of a series of geographically contiguous dialects of which Algonquin Anishinaabe is one. I have used several Anishinaabe words and I employ Shirley Williams’ (Ojibwa) standardization of the Anishinaabe written language. Outside of the word *kokomis*, two of the words I incorporate are “*mino-pimadiziwin*” and, of course, “*debwewin*.” Where I employ direct quotes and titles of books I rely upon these original authors’ spelling.<sup>5</sup>

### Important Background on the Algonquin Land Claims and Self-Government Process

It was in 1974 when Dan Tennesco, then Chief of the Golden Lake Reserve, approached the Union of Ontario Indians to initiate the research necessary to remove a railway right-of-way that cut through the community. Through this research the 1857 Algonquin petition requesting a reserve for the Golden Lake community was discovered (Greg Sarazin 1989: 191). With the discovery of this 1857 petition it became clearer that the Algonquin Anishinaabeg were a nation without a treaty. Alternatively stated, finding this petition pushed the knowledge of colonial subjugation into mindful knowledge and consequently into concrete action. In 1983, almost a decade after this research was initiated

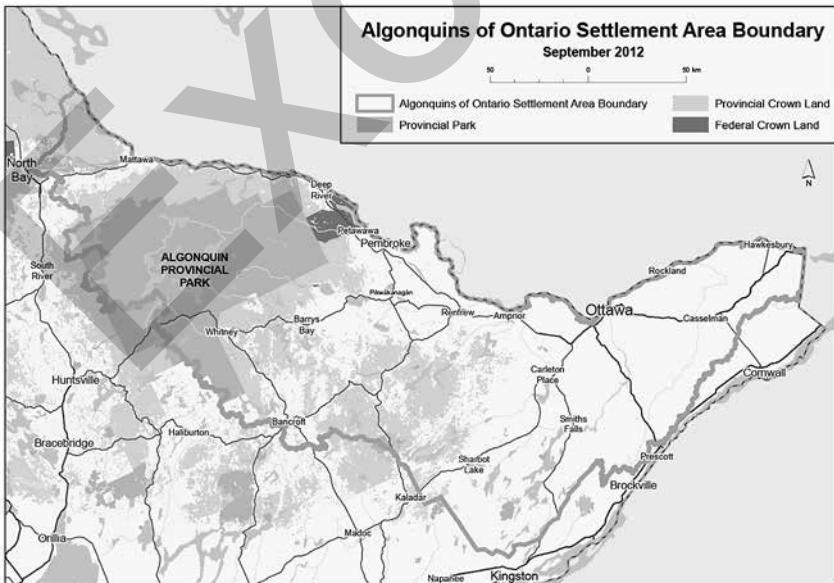
and guided by government policy, the Algonquin of Golden Lake, as they were then known, added to their long list of Algonquin petitions for their land. Writing this more recent petition was not difficult in that most of the knowledge came directly from the previous petitions that our Algonquin ancestors had submitted. In part, this 1983 petition (qtd. in Greg Sarazin 1989: 192–93) read:

Innumerable squatters and lumberers, authorized by your governments, have taken possession of and established themselves on the most fertile parts of our lands, destroyed our magnificent forests, abused our ancestors, and forced them into pitifully small tracts of land in abject poverty ...

The Crown's governments have participated in these attacks on our just rights, gaining profit from the sale of our lands and resources. We have seen our people stripped of their nationality in violation of all laws. We have seen them jailed or fined for seeking game or fish for food. These attacks on our rights continue in our woods and lakes and your courts to this day ...

In violation of your laws and ours, your governments took purchases of our lands from Indians who never lived on them and claimed no title to them.

This petition (qtd. in Greg Sarazin 1989: 192–93) also requested:



THE ALGONQUIN LAND CLAIM (PERMISSION COURTESY ONTARIO MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS)



All lands in the province of Ontario which form part of the watershed of the Ottawa River below the Mattawa River that are now in the possession of the Crown be immediately confirmed and recognized as belonging to our Nation; that the governments of Canada and of the province of Ontario make no use or disposition of these lands or any parts of them or any resources appertaining to them, without the consent of our Nation; that discussions begin with your governments under your personal auspices and direction to settle the questions of compensation for their past use and occupation of our lands and resources, and of compensation for the taking of those lands which have been patented.

Although at the time the federal government's land claims policy indicated that a response would be provided within twelve months, four years went by and Canada failed to follow through. In 1987, the Ontario government indicated it would respond by June 1988. This date came and went with no response. During this time the dispossession of Algonquin land increased at an accelerated rate. In fact, the Ontario government argued that it intended to continue to engage with the relinquishment of Crown lands as they saw fit. As such, Algonquin land was sold to potential developers at a new subsidized rate (Greg Sarazin 1989: 194). Furthermore, four new provincial parks were created within Algonquin territory: Opeongo Provincial Park in 1985; Lower Madawaska River Provincial Park in 1989; Ottawa River Provincial Park in 1989; and Upper Madawaska River Provincial Park in 1989 (Ministry of Natural Resources, personal communication).

In an effort to raise awareness of the Algonquin claims, and thus move the claims forward, on September 2, 1988, band members staged a friendly demonstration outside the eastern gate of Algonquin Provincial Park. Largely due to this demonstration, in October of that year federal and provincial government representatives took the figurative long trek from Ottawa to the reserve at Golden Lake.<sup>6</sup> During this meeting, the Algonquin inquired as to when they could expect a response to their land claims as they were eager to move on to the negotiation process. At this meeting they also expressed their concern with the practice of the provincial government selling off Algonquin land; in claiming their jurisdiction, they stated that their subsistence strategy of hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering would continue over their entire territory according to Algonquin Law. The Algonquin were assured that the federal and provincial cabinets would review the land claims by the end of 1988 and that we could expect a response by the end of January 1989 (Greg Sarazin 1989: 197). In addition, the Ontario government agreed to establish an interim agreement regarding some of the issues at hand. In the meantime the Algonquin were told they needed to prepare a Land Use Report documenting and explaining traditional Algonquin practices for the entire territory under claim.

The Land Use Report was submitted on April 25, 1989. The Algonquin were then presented with another request for more details on land use. They were also informed that the comprehensive claims branch of the federal government, the arm responsible for addressing claims put forward by Indigenous nations, was not prepared to submit the Algonquin land claims because in their opinion it would be rejected. Furthermore, they were also told the provincial government would not move forward without the federal government's participation (Greg Sarazin 1989: 198–200). Contradicting this latter statement, it was on June 15, 1991, when the provincial government committed to negotiating with the Algonquin, and on December 7, 1992, the federal government announced they too would join the process (see Gehl 2004). However, the Ontario government only committed to negotiating after qualifying that acceptance of the claims did not mean that Ontario was admitting to legal liability (Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs, n.d.). Regardless, the Algonquin land claims was accepted 220 years after the first Algonquin petition was submitted in 1772 and a total of 230 years after the Algonquin Nation facilitated the Treaty at Niagara of 1764 where the *Royal Proclamation* of 1763 was ratified.

On August 25, 1994, the Algonquin, the Canadian federal government and the Ontario provincial government signed a framework to guide the negotiation process (Canada 1994). An ONAS *Negotiation Bulletin* noted this day as a historic moment (ONAS 1994: 1). When reading this ONAS publication, it became clear to me that the Algonquin referred to were the band members of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, my *kokomis'* community. Non-status Algonquin were yet to be officially involved.

The Ontario Algonquin claims area is described as 36,000 square kilometres (8.9 million acres) that falls between the Ottawa and Mattawa River watersheds and includes most of Algonquin Park as well as the Canadian Forces Base in Petawawa and the National Capital Region including Parliament Hill (ONAS 2001). Within this claims area, “59 percent is privately held patented land, 21 percent of the land mass is within Algonquin Park, 16 percent is land held by Ontario as public lands and by provincial Crown corporations, and 4 percent is federal Crown land” (ONAS 2001: n.p.). Lastly, it has been argued that the Algonquin land claims is the largest, geographically speaking, and the most complex, in that more than one million people reside and work within Algonquin territory (ONAS 2001).

After more than twenty years since the provincial and federal government accepted the Algonquin land claims, Canada's offer was tabled in March of 2013. The date of ratification has not yet been established.

### How My Story Unfolds

The story of my truth that follows is organized around my Debwewin Journey, which consists of the two circles of knowledge. I begin each chapter with a heartfelt element of my story. I then move on offering mind knowledge, which

includes my experiential knowledge and a review of the academic literature. I end each part of my story with an introspection of what I learned. This process of learning is non-linear, but is rather circular and somewhat chaotic. This way of offering my story is unlike most Western analyses, which have clear beginnings and endings.

Chapter Two is about Algonquin contact history, as I wanted to know more about where the Algonquin were located. I begin with a heartfelt story of my family's many long drives into Algonquin territory. Next, I discuss my experience with Algonquin Enrolment Law (AEL), the process used to identify and enroll Algonquin for consultation purposes, and its many controversies. As I experienced it, "enrolment" is specific as it did not include a process of defining citizenship. I also address the emergence of a new principal negotiator for the Algonquin. Several questions came to my mind and after turning to the academic literature and through introspection I learned that before European people arrived and before colonization the Algonquin were once a strong and independent nation.

Chapter Three explores the treaty, land claims and self-government process. I begin with a heartfelt story about the time I received my traditional name, which offered me guidance in my learning process. Afterwards, drawing on my experience, I begin with discussing the Algonquin hunt, the subject of which seemed to forever dominate far too many of our community meetings and newsletters. Surely, I thought, the land claims process was more than about hunting. Drawing from my experience I also discuss the lack of unity between the status and non-status Algonquin and our relationship with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), who interfered with our process of jurisdictional expansion when allowing certain people access to the distribution process of hunting tags. I also discuss the poor attendance at community meetings. Once again, through this experience several questions came to mind and I turned to the academic literature to help me learn. I needed to understand how it was that the Algonquin were denied a treaty. In my search for knowledge I also turned to the federal government's 1987 *Comprehensive Land Claims Policy* as it guides the current land claims process. In my process I learned that Canada continues to deny Algonquin people their rightful share of land and resources.

In Chapter Four, on the Algonquin Negotiation Representative election process, I begin with offering a heartfelt story of my family's visit to the Canadian National Exhibition and my father's godfather. A key part of the Algonquin land claims and self-government process was the ANR election, which was intended to establish Algonquin leaders to sit at the main negotiation table with the federal and provincial governments. From my not-so-pleasant experience with this election process many things came to my mind and I was drawn to the strength and guidance of the Anishinaabe creation and migration stories, which are fundamental teachings for the Anishinaabeg. These stories taught me more about Algonquin land and waterscapes, such as our sacred

places, and this made me curious about the amount of money Canada was gaining from Algonquin land and waterscapes. Through my learning process I discovered that Canada has extracted very large amounts of money from Algonquin land and resources through, for example, the mining industry.

I begin Chapter Five with a heartfelt story about the moccasins my *kokomis* made for me. She told me that they would guide me to important knowledge. Then, drawing from my experience, I outline the various stages of evolution that Algonquin governance moved through since the land claims process began in 1992. I also provide an in-depth discussion of the ANR election because it was an important element of the evolution. Unfortunately, good governance and government practices were lacking in this election. For example, there was a lack of gender equality and the mechanisms necessary to assure accountability. In turning to the academic literature, I learned more about traditional forms of good governance, such as the seven grandfather teachings. In this process I learned that the Algonquin land claims and self-government process has been, and remains to be, constrained by the federal government's *Inherent Right Policy*, something that other academics have written about. I end this chapter with my *debwewin*.

## Notes

1. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is now called Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. This is a recent name change and I will remain with INAC.
2. Throughout I employ “Algonquin land claims and self-government process,” “Algonquin process” and “Algonquin context” interchangeably.
3. In this book, I rely on the term “methodology” when discussing my theory on knowledge production, and the term “method/s” when discussing the practice/s I use to carry out my methodology. For a broader discussion see Gehl 2012b.
4. The Greater Golden Lake Community is a separate and distinct entity from Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. Many people, Algonquin and non-Algonquin, conflate and confuse the two. Regardless, they are two distinct entities.
5. A glossary of Anishinaabe terms is provided in the beginning of this book.
6. In Ontario, Pikwàkanagàn First Nation is the closest First Nation to Ottawa.