

# Nineteenth Century Aboriginal Farmers of the Madawaska River

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## ABSTRACT

Early in the nineteenth century Aboriginal people were practising farming along the Madawaska River. The Madawaska is prominent in several ancient canoe routes between the Ottawa River Watershed and Georgian Bay Watershed so, not surprisingly, the evidence of Aboriginal farming lies at key points along these routes. In the third quarter of the century, as large scale timber operations pushed further into the interior in areas now part of Algonquin Park, Aboriginal farmers were among the first to clear land, plant crops and build homes and other structures. Recent archaeological evidence confirms locations noted in early survey maps and other primary documents and confirms the mutual support of farming and timbering. The evidence challenges us to accept the extent to which Algonquin families embraced farming in the period prior to the formation of Algonquin Park and the arrival of the railway. This paper provides background about Madawaska canoe routes and features as well as illustrations of Aboriginal farming development and the role of key people such as Algonquin Chief Peter Sharbot.

## RÉSUMÉ

*Au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les peuples autochtones pratiquaient l'agriculture sur les rives de la Madawaska. Cette rivière joue un rôle important comme ancienne voie de canotage entre le bassin hydrographique de la rivière des Outaouais et celui de la baie Georgienne; il n'est donc pas étonnant que les traces de cultures autochtones se retrouvent à des points clés le long de ces voies. Dans le troisième quart du siècle, avec l'expansion des exploitations de bois de sciage à l'intérieur du territoire, dans des régions faisant partie de l'actuel parc Algonquin, les fermiers autochtones ont été parmi les premiers à défricher la terre, à cultiver, et à construire des maisons et d'autres structures. Des découvertes archéologiques récentes confirment l'existence de peuplements révélés dans des relevés anciens et d'autres sources primaires, en plus de confirmer la relation de réciprocité entre agriculture et exploitation forestière. Les preuves nous invitent à accepter le fait que les familles algonquines ont adopté l'agriculture dans la période qui a précédé la formation du parc Algonquin et l'avènement du chemin de fer. La présente communication évoquera les parcours de canotage et les caractéristiques de ce genre de déplacements sur la rivière Madawaska. Elle illustrera aussi l'évolution de l'agriculture autochtone et le rôle de certains personnages importants tels que le chef algonquin Peter Sharbot.*

## Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the memory of two Algonquins, Mary Somogneche (1835-1884) and Moyees Wabasee (1853-1877). Both lived and worked at the Sharbot (Jobot) family farm on Long Lake, now Galeairy Lake, Algonquin Park. Moyees drowned in that lake in November, 1877. Mary was the daughter of Paul Somogneche, Grand High Chief of the Algonquins and Nipissings. Moyees was the grandson of Paul Somogneche. Mary and Moyees are buried beside one another at Brudenell Cemetery. Their headstones have the following inscriptions:

*Sacred To the Memory of MARY SOMOGNECHE beloved wife of Pierre Jobot who departed this life Jan.18, 1884 Ae. 48 yrs.*

*MOYEES WABASEE Grandson of Paul Somogneche Grand high chief of the Algonquins who was drowned in long lake on the Madawaska river Nov.3 1877 Ae. 24 Yrs. & 3 Mos.*

The Madawaska River, largest of the Ontario tributaries of the Ottawa River, rises from the eastern flank of the Algonquin Dome of current day Algonquin Park and flows to its mouth at Arnprior. The name *Madawaska* derives from *Mata*, the forks of a river, and *Aushka*, the sound of a rippling current (Burwash 1913:35). The western fork of the Upper Madawaska is characterized by three tributaries flowing to Rock Lake, each draining a series of lakes (Figure 1). The South Madawaska flows northward to Rock Lake via Clydegale Lake and Pen Lake. The main branch drains eastward from Manitou Mountain at the boundary of the Georgian Bay Watershed, via a series of small lakes, Head Creek, Lake Louisa and Louisa Creek to Rock Lake. The North Madawaska flows southward to Rock Lake from Source Lake via Cache Lake, Lake of Two Rivers and Whitefish Lake. Rock Lake and the next two lakes downriver, Galeairy Lake (Long Lake in earlier records) and Rapid Lake, form a natural occupation area because of the impediment of Long Rapids and a succession of other strong rapids and falls downriver on the Madawaska below Rapid Lake, features documented by several early surveyors (Briscoe 1827; McDonnell 1847; Murray 1963:lii & 51; Thompson 1837; Winearls 1991:153, 156, 158).

Archaeological evidence indicates that the Madawaska watershed, a portion of the vast area of Algonquia (Allen 2004a:39), was occupied long before European contact (Allen 2002; Hurley 1972:4). Wright asserts that of the six possible linguistic affiliations with the Shield Archaic, Algonkian seems the most logical (Wright 1972:87). Champlain recorded a report that the Algonquins of the Upper Madawaska were men of very great size (Burwash 1913:35) and called the area a “frightful and abandoned region” with “some things in their season for the refreshment of man and the inhabitants of these parts” (Biggar 1922-1936:3:38). Before colonizers and timber barons were familiar with the landscape, its inhabitants or the river’s sources far in the interior, they already had designs on the Madawaska. Joseph Bouchette, a surveyor in the Montreal region by 1788 (Boudreau and Lepine, 1988:95), described it as remarkable for its multiple branches and frequent lakes, peculiarly irregular and fantastic in their shapes (Bouchette 1831:74). In 1831 Bouchette noted that the river fertilized the land through which it meanders but also described it as offering convenient inland water communications and the capability of turning numerous grist, carding, fulling and saw mills (Bouchette 1831:74). Bouchette did not mention the First Peoples who lived there.

To date archaeological work in northeastern Ontario, including in the upper Madawaska watershed, has been neither extensive nor fully synthesized (Noble 1982:38). It is archaeology that holds the promise for unlocking some of the mysteries of the Algonquin People’s history of the region but archaeological practice must be grounded in an understanding of documentary evidence, oral tradition and of Algonquin lifeways and how those lifeways shifted over time. To be most effective this study must concentrate on the stories of known specific Algonquin personalities.

The 1871 Federal Census listed three families of Aboriginal origin living in the West Madawaska District in present day Algonquin Park (Library and Archives Canada 1871). All were Roman Catholics born in Quebec, apparently at or near Oka. The heads of these

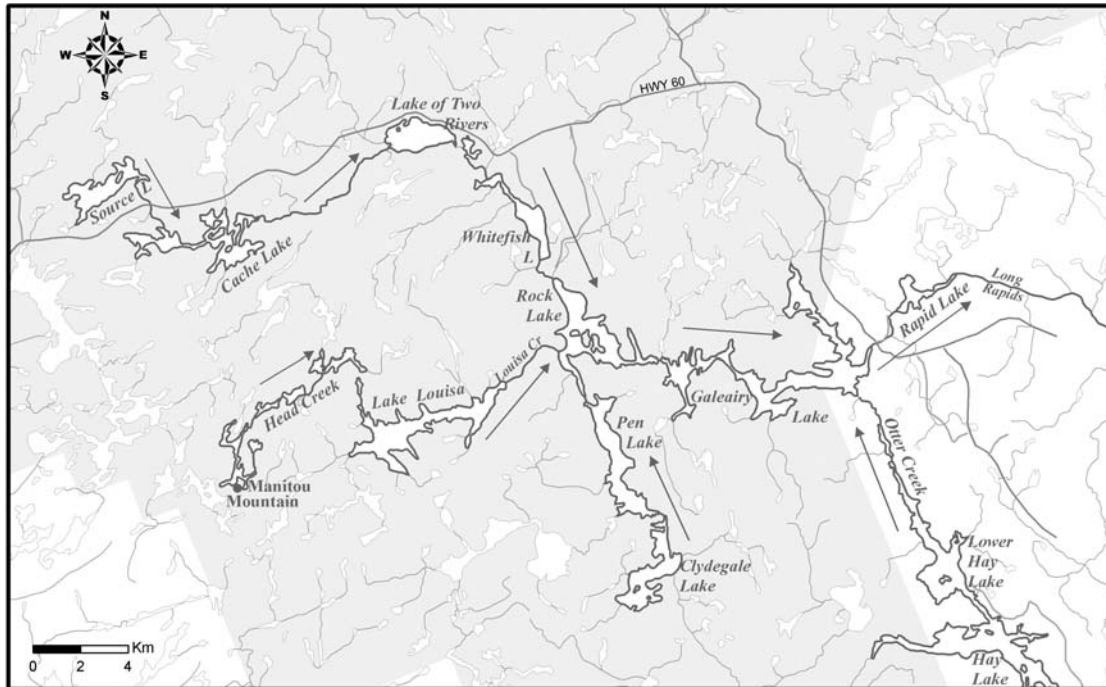


Figure 1. Map of the Madawaska River watershed in present day Algonquin Park. Arrows indicate the direction of water flow.

families were listed as Paul Meganish age 60, Peter Charbut age 44, and Joseph Francis age 30. Meganish was none other than Paul Somogneche, Grand High Chief of the Algonquins and Nipissings (Somogneche 1868). Somogneche's daughter, Mary, married Peter Charbut, later spelled Sharbot, a man who later became an Algonquin Chief as well (Reed 1894). The name *Somogneche* derives from *jimaganish* meaning *warrior* (Baraga 1878:282).

As early as Snow's 1854 survey via Hay Lake and Otter Creek, Paul Somogoneche was living in a fixed abode at the head of a portage at the outlet of Long Lake, now Galeairy Lake (Snow 1854; Winearls 1991:162). The house shows clearly on the survey map. Snow, dropping some syllables from the name, called the occupant "Indian McCann". The name is spelled Chomanagish in church records (Maderak 1994). Chomanagish, Paul Somogneche, Paul Meganish and Indian McCann at Galeairy Lake were one and the same man.

Peter Charbut's name is spelled at least eight ways in the public record (Chabot, Charbot, Charbut, Chobotte, Jabot, Jobot, Sarbot and Sharbot). The spelling on his 1911 death certificate is "Chabot". He reportedly was a member of the Francis Charbut family who, about 1826, moved from Oka to Charbut Lake, now spelled Sharbot Lake (Goadsby, 2005). Chief Sharbot's community lived in upper Madawaska country from 1849 (Reed 1894).

I wondered where I might find evidence of the three Algonquin families. 1870's maps gave me leads. William Bell's 1871 timber map labelled what Bell called an "Indian

Clearing” at the head of Galeairy Lake (Bell, 1871). An Indian clearing? Members of the Algonquin Nations of this period were not usually depicted as farmers who cleared land or lived in fixed abodes. Alexander Niven’s 1878 survey of the new Township of Nightingale was much more specific about this clearing. Niven’s map shows that, before the lake was flooded by a water control dam at Whitney, the head of the lake was formed by a series of islands where the Madawaska River entered the lake (Niven, 1878:149). The clearing was immediately west of these islands. Niven mapped the irregular shape of the clearing, recorded its size as 12 acres and labelled it *Chobotte’s Clearing* (Niven 1878:149). This was the same Peter Charbut listed in the 1871 census, the same Chief Peter Sharbot who had issued multiple requests to officialdom on behalf of his people (Bennett 1894, 1895; Reed 1894, 1895). Niven reported that Chobotte’s clearing was only one of two “Indian” Clearings in the township, the other belonging to a man recorded as Franceway, an anglicization of François (Niven 1878:131). This was the property of the same Joseph Francis noted in the 1871 census, a property that Niven mapped at Rock Lake, one lake upstream on the Madawaska River from Chief Sharbot’s homestead. Niven’s map labeled Franceways’s homestead as a 10 acre clearing (Niven 1878:131). Peter Sharbot was not the only Algonquin farmer in the watershed.

With the Niven maps in hand I undertook initial field inspection on the upper Madawaska River between Galeairy Lake and Rock Lake. I tried to keep focus on my objective, even as I located many other sites, including two that yielded fine quartz bifaces (Figure 2) typical of a much earlier period. Niven’s 1878 mapping was accurate and specific so I soon rediscovered both the Sharbot and Franceway clearings, now long overgrown but with multiple cultural features. I had them registered as archaeological sites BiGn-03 (Peter Sharbot Homestead) and BjGo-16 (Franceway’s Clearing). In both cases there was a terrace at a saddle between high wooded hills above the lake and a good view eastward to the canoe route passing the front door. In both cases birch have risen in the former clearings. In both cases large panels of birch bark have been removed from some trees that have scarred over (Figure 3). In both clearings fieldstones were piled to one side, much as one finds in farms of the 1870’s elsewhere. However, unlike 1870’s farms elsewhere there has not been continuous occupation of the land, so the land is overgrown with mature trees. Historical records show that soon after Algonquin Park was formed in 1893 all 46 of Chief Peter Sharbot’s community were evicted from Nightingale and Lawrence, the two townships they had occupied since 1849 (Bennett 1895; Reed 1894; Reed 1895, White 1895).

At the Sharbot Homestead, I found many of the field stones piled on flat-topped glacial erratics (Figure 4), ostensibly to maximize the planting area in the clearing. Peter Decontie, Algonquin Sacred Firekeeper from Kitigan Zibi, Quebec, has begun initial analysis of these stone piles, noting alignments, shapes, number patterns and possible effigy outlines. It may be inappropriate to use the term “cairns” to describe such piles of stones in a farming setting with potential spiritual use. Hunting activity is evident in the former clearing too. Some erratics appear to have played a role in hiding hunters, channeling game or being a platform for steadying rifles. Attracted by hunters’ calls, large game may have moved through the saddle between the two hills and on downhill to the clearing where there were fewer obstructions. A test pit beside one flat topped erratic



Figure 2. Quartz biface from BiGn-10. Photo by the author.



Figure 3. Trees at BiGn-3 that show where sections of birch bark were removed many years ago. Photo by the author.



Figure 4. Stones on glacial erratic at BiGn-3. Photo by the author.



Figure 5. .44 calibre Henry rifle cartridge from BiGn-3. Photo by the author.



Figure 6. BiGn-3 stovepipe damper handle fragment before conservation. Photo by the author.



Figure 7. Cast iron stove front from Peter Sharbot Homestead site. Photo by the author.

yielded a rare .44 calibre Henry rim-fired cartridge (Figure 5), a shell that was only manufactured between 1860 and 1872 (Allen 2005a).

Test pits at both the Sharbot house and barn were rich in artifacts of the period (Allen 2006). At the house there was broken windowpane glass, furniture hardware, clothing remnants and a fragment of stovepipe damper handle (Figure 6). Stove parts abounded. Some stove parts (Figure 7) were quite elaborate. These artifacts required conservation and students of the Collections Conservation and Management program at Sir Sanford Fleming College in Peterborough, Ontario undertook some of that work, thanks to Gayle McIntyre. The Fleming students determined that one stove was from the E. & C. Gurney Company of Hamilton, Ontario and was manufactured between 1863 and 1893 (Government of Canada n.d.). The other stove was from Fuller & Warren of Troy, New York. The trees growing within the Sharbot foundation were dated using an incremental



Figure 8. A tree 30 metres from the lake's edge at BiGn-3 marks the approved shoreline perimeter beyond which selection cutting occurs during forestry operations in Algonquin Park. The Park's Forest Management Plan assumes that no archaeological potential exists further inland until a site is found and registered. Photo by the author.

bore and found to be 95 and 105 years old, a date consistent with the eviction of Chief Sharbot and a total of 32 Algonquins from Nightingale Township (White 1895). The Sharbot house has a bermed stone foundation. A test pit of the inner berm revealed the stone wall construction. Apparently there were two different buildings at the house site during two periods of occupation since melted glass and heat damaged stove parts were found scattered along the very base of the berm at depths ranging from 45 to 85 centimetres. It is not clear whether the earlier building was related to the camp of John Baptiste reported in 1854 to be at the head of Long (Galeairy) Lake and described as an "Indian farm" (Hudson 1854).

Fortunately officials from Algonquin Park and the Algonquin Forestry Authority recognized the importance of the Peter Sharbot Homestead site soon after the discovery and greatly extended the usual 30 metre forestry "no-cut" zone along the shoreline reserve (Figure 8) to a 150 metre radiant reserve from the datum point near the barn. The datum point is over 100 metres from the shoreline. This decision effectively suspended the scheduled 2005 forestry operations in the immediate vicinity of the Sharbot Homestead property. The responsiveness of these officials is to be commended since

they previously depended on the Ministry of Natural Resources Archaeological Site Potential model which, in my opinion, has faulty logic since it does not recognize many wetlands or water courses as water so timbering can occur right to the shorelines of some lakes, beaver ponds and creek banks. Obviously the MNR model is largely inconsistent with provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act. Interestingly the majority of the Sharbot Homestead is in a zone well back from the shoreline in an area considered until now by Ontario Parks to have no archaeological potential so forestry operations had been planned there. Within two metres of Chief Sharbot's barn foundation, a structure 7 by 10 metres, tree markers had marked trees for cutting without recognizing the foundation. Trees also were marked for cutting within three metres of several of the stones piled on glacial erratics, some of which had metal vessels in the stone piles. In contrast all 8 of my test pits at the barn were positive. One test pit even had to be extended from a 50 centimetre square to a 50 x 200 cm square to retrieve a cross cut saw buried there, a test pit within 2 metres of a tree marked by tree harvesters.

It will take much more work to determine the boundaries, scope and life span of Peter Sharbot's extensive homestead property and its possible associations with the 120 acre farm and depot subsequently developed by Pattee and Perley just two kilometers away. William Perley was the lumber baron who established extensive mills in Ottawa at the head of Chaudière Falls and whose facilities extended to nearby Victoria Island, a traditional Aboriginal gathering location prior to industrialization (BiFw-87), long known for its significance as the sacred spiritual meeting ground of many Aboriginal Nations and a sacred site where tobacco offerings were placed in the bedrock potholes created by the swirling water (Allen 2004a:41; Gillis 1982:681; Thumbadoo 2005:15). Perley was described as a leading man of the Dominion and was involved in such activities as service on the Executive Committee for a lavish ball held for the Governor General in the Senate Chamber (Leggo 1878:206, 207). Before Perley died in 1890 his influence as a railroad builder, financier, lumber tycoon, Vice President of the Liberal Conservative Association of Ottawa and Conservative Member of Parliament in Sir John A. MacDonald's Government, may well have had a direct impact on Chief Peter Sharbot, his neighbour across Farm Bay at Galeairy Lake (Gemmill 1887:152; Mackintosh 1879:470).

Franceway's clearing (BjGo-16), at Rock Lake, is a more complex site. The site was documented as a 10 acre clearing labelled "Franceway's Clearing" in field notes of the initial survey of Nightingale Township (Niven 1878). In 1939 at the Rock Lake site (BjGo-1) about 300 metres away, Ken Kidd recovered 392 pot sherds as well as lithics of slate, chert and white quartz (Kidd 1948:99, 104). That site also is noteworthy since a very young Norm Emerson was part of Kidd's pre World War 2 crew as he received what Bill Noble calls "his introductory experiences in Ontario archaeology" (Noble 1968:47; 1998:46). In 2005 Kidd's site yielded a range of artifacts. One of Joanne Lea's test pits at the site revealed a hearth. Also in 2005, Kidd's site yielded a Late Archaic narrow stemmed biface of Gordon Lake chert (Figure 9) that would seem to fit comfortably with a Lamoka assemblage (Ritchie 1965:51 #31; Ritchie 1971:29, 83). However, being Lamokoid does not necessarily denote a Lamoka type and the site may not necessarily represent the northern perimeter of distribution of that style (Justice 1987:129).



Figure 9. Narrow stemmed biface from BjGo-1. Photo by the author.



Figure 10: Clear quartz multi-purpose tool from BjGo-18. Photo by the author.

Significantly, Gordon Lake chert comes from north of Algonquin Park. Chris Ellis points out that impressionistic typologies do not work very well for Late Archaic types and warns of being prisoners of Ritchie's New York typology when lesser known distinctive regional styles from Eastern Ontario may shed light on this artifact (Ellis to Allen pers. comm.). Jean-Luc Pilon notes that we must also look beyond the Ontario side of the Ottawa River for comparable material, noting that Clermont and Chapdelaine have written on the what they term the "post-Laurentian" period in the Montréal area and they see there Lamokoid material, suggesting influence but not presence of New York derived populations (Pilon to Allen pers. comm.). Simple inclusion of an earlier biface in a later archaeological assemblage is also a possibility to explain the presence of the Rock Lake narrow stemmed point (Bill Fox to Allen pers. comm.). Indeed, the greater the distance between chert source and site of discovery, the greater the possibility that the artifact in question was not manufactured by the site inhabitants, and the greater the possibility that the manufacturers were not part of an identical cultural system as the end users (Bill Fox to Allen pers. comm.).

I also located and registered two new nearby sites, (BjGo-15 and -18), both further down the shoreline from Kidd's site but within view of Franceway's Clearing. Both new sites have yielded white and clear quartz tools (Figure 10). At BjGo-15 Bob Pearce found a potsherd in association with some fire cracked rock.

At the northern edge of Franceway's Clearing, in dense swampy thickets of coniferous trees, is a cluster of small stony depressions, some naturally formed from the many tree falls in the boulder-strewn ground, and others apparently culturally altered at such tree falls. In 1939 Kidd documented reports of nineteenth century Algonquin presence on the property but apparently did not know that the occupier was Joseph Franceway. Kidd said of the depressions, "It is conceivable that if they were of human origin, they may have been hollows made for the purpose of storing food, such as potatoes, turnips or the like" (Kidd 1939:6). Kidd's comment certainly is consistent with Franceway's farming operation where a root-house (*opiniwigamig*) may have been required (Baraga 1880:333). However, a quarter century later, in 1962, enamoured by his so-called intuitive archaeology and his work in pits at Red Sucker Point on Lake Superior, Emerson returned to the Rock Lake depressions for a day (Noble 1968:47; 1998:46). The result of that trip was a follow-up, later in 1962, by Bill Noble who measured and mapped 31

depressions, (29 circular and 2 rectangular), excavated two of the depressions and collected nineteenth century clay pipes, 2 iron fragments, a glass trade bead and a 2 inch whetstone (Noble 1968:50). Writing in Ontario Archaeology 11 in 1968, Noble, who apparently did not know about Franceway's Clearing, declared that "suggestions such as hunting pits, storage repositories, snares or fish traps all prove unintelligible" and that "one plausible interpretation is that the rock-lined structures represent vision pits constructed and utilized during aboriginal socio-religious ritual" (Noble 1968:62). This was a stark contrast to Kidd's analysis. Meanwhile Algonquin Elder Peter Decontie, after examining the rock piles among the maple hardwoods further up the hill at Franceway's Clearing and noting the many tree falls in the coniferous thickets closer to the shoreline, wondered if the round pits in the stony ground, if attributable to human intervention, were simply locations where small amounts of sand were extracted to put on wet parts of the trail leading to the higher elevations of Franceway's clearing and wondered further if the two rectangular vertically walled rectangular pits were Franceway's root cellars or equipment caches since no buildings were indicated on Niven's 1878 map of the 10 acre clearing (Decontie to Allen pers. comm.). The offshore area at Franceway's clearing is sandy and shallow but is at the mouth of the north branch of the Madawaska River where it enters Rock Lake. The location may have been a suitable area for setting nets in winter because of a naturally occurring ice-free area. In contrast, the shoreline stone pits at Werewolf Pits (CbGs-13) on the Mattawa River, which seem to have been used for fish cleaning, drying or fish smoking (Allen 2004b), are on a steep cobble beach. Lenore Keeshig-Tobias reports that shoreline pits similar to Werewolf Pits occur at Cape Croker on the Bruce Peninsula where they were used for containment of freshly caught flopping fish (Keeshig-Tobias to Allen, pers. comm.). Keeshig-Tobias also reports that the meaning of the word "Pukaskwa" is associated with fish cleaning (Keeshig-Tobias to Allen), perhaps an adaptation of *opikwad* meaning "gut" (Baraga 1878:123). The function of Werewolf and Rock Lake stone pits needs to be analysed in relation to the report of Kushick who conducted interviews of Lake Superior local residents familiar with the shoreline stone pits there (Wright 1975:66). Those Aboriginal residents reported that the stone pits were created for smoking lake trout which spawn at night in the fall along those cobble beaches.

Noble labeled the Rock Lake depressions site "Vision Pits" and it eventually was registered with the Ontario Ministry of Culture by that name as BjGo-2. The Algonquin Park Management Plan has accepted the vision pit diagnosis, assuming an association between the pits site and a pictograph site (BjGo-3) a kilometer away (Ontario Parks 1998:70). Believing that the pits site might be considered sacred, Park officials have prohibited test pitting at the site so the gathering of information about the possible farming or fish processing associations there is problematic. Meanwhile, in 2005 I registered other rectangular root cellars of dimensions and style similar to the two measured by Noble. Rock Lake Root Cellar (BiGo-19) yielded a horseshoe nail. A different root cellar at the Purcell Site (BiGn-7) at Galeairy Lake is beside a depression caused by a fallen tree. A horse tooth was located in the stony ground among the upturned roots. The apparent root cellar at the Sharbot Homestead has yet to be tested. Although there may be sacred components in the stone piles in the hardwoods above the upper part of Franceway's Clearing, these features are well away from the stony

depressions. Franceway's Clearing is a clear case where the expertise of Algonquin leaders is required. Without dialogue with Algonquin experts in traditional lifeways the conflicting archaeological interpretations offered to date will leave the understanding of details of Franceway's 1870's farming operation a mystery.

In terms of broader context Sharbot and Franceway, like Algonquian farmers elsewhere, did not depend solely on farming (Rogers and Tobobondung 1975:253). Algonquin lifeways used the products of their plantings in association with the collection of cranberries and other naturally growing foods and medicines (Erichsen-Brown 1979; Jacobs 2000). For instance, valued kinickinick, the plant used for pipe smoking in the north, adorns many Algonquin landscapes so trade in cultivated tobacco grown by southern neighbours was not necessary. The Sharbot and Franceway farms also were near prime fishing locations, as were occupation focal points elsewhere on the Canadian Shield. In fact, Algonquian lifeways were heavily dependent on a fishing economy and examples abound of the fishing expertise of Algonquian speaking people (Cassavoy 1995; Douglas 2003; Hawkins 1836, Lovisek 1991:179-182, 316-320, 332-342; Shilling 2001; Wrong 1939:185, 186). In describing the Algonquins who dwelt in the Ottawa Valley, Champlain noted that they lived by catching fish in the rivers, ponds and lakes with which the country is well provided (Biggar 1922-1936:3:38). The dependence on fish was widespread across Algonquia but was practised in concert with horticulture (Lovisek 1991:383). In the 1640's Bressani noted that nine Algonkian Nations of Lake Huron "cultivate the soil, although but little" (Thwaites 1896-1901:38:235). A map of the St. Mary's River surviving from 1796 labels the Plantation River. After 1796 the description of a plantation was downgraded by European authors to a garden. Garden River First Nation is still there, a community built on the combination of fishing and farming. Kitigan Zibi, the community at Manwaki, Quebec means "river of gardens", proof that the Algonquin language preserves the priority given to gardening in nineteenth century Algonquin lifeways (McGregor 2004:159).

Nineteenth century surveyors sometimes left valuable insights about cultivation patches that were precursors to the larger farming operations practised by Sharbot and Franceway. William Hawkins' 1837 survey from Georgian Bay to the Ottawa River via the Magnetawan and Petawawa Rivers has several examples. On the Naiscoutang River he illustrated "Indian corn and potatoes planted here" (Hawkins 1838; Winearls 1991:156). The location now is Shawanaga First Nation Territory, Zone B, indication of the pre 1840 farming value of this plot. Hawkins also documented how the spring flood replenished the generally rocky land so that the annual planting could occur – a veritable Nile of the North. On the Magnetawan River Hawkins recorded an "Indian Sugar Bush" at Lake Cecebe (Hawkins 1836; Winearls 1991:155). In the nineteenth century maple sugar was recorded as an agricultural product in each Canadian census of farm properties. Hawkins also documented planting areas on the Petawawa River. Ever efficient, here the planters in traditional Algonquin territory chose a portage for their garden and used stony ground typical of the landscape at both Sharbot and Franceway farms. In true Algonquin sharing fashion the harvesters and planters of these potatoes would likely have been different people.



Figure 11: Pig jaw with wire attached: In situ at BiGn-9. Photo by the author.



Figure 12: 92 year old Elder Dr. William Commanda chats with Bill Allen at BIGp-30 (Ajidimo Nendowangang) after flying by float plane to this remote location in Algonquin Park. Photo by Sheryl Smith.

As efficient users of the land, the Sharbot and Franceway families also were hunters and trappers. Such care was taken by the Algonquins in keeping account of the abundance of each animal species and in regulating the kill regime that Frank Speck, in 1915, used the term “careful farming” to describe decisions to cull beaver populations (Speck 1915:5). An example of such efficiency is within view of Peter Sharbot’s Homestead at a shanty marked on Bell’s 1871 map, a place occupied by an unknown person, possibly one of the 46 people listed in Chief Sharbot’s 1895 list of community members, 32 of whom lived in Nightingale Township (Bennett 1895). A test pit there resulted in registration of Site BiGn-09 (Galeairy Shanty). The test pit revealed a pig skull with wire still connected to the base of the jaw (Figure 11). The pig head may have been hung in a tree at the time in hopes of attracting and ambushing an unsuspecting bear.

From the time before timbering the Algonquin people have practiced farming as part of an efficient food procurement process involving fishing, hunting and collecting. Living in harmony with the land the efficient Algonquin occupiers of the landscape made little impact on their environment. As timbering operations moved further into the Madawaska Valley interior by the mid nineteenth century, Algonquin farms grew to 10 to 12 acres. Farming and timbering became mutually supporting endeavours. Fixed houses and barns were built to support the Algonquin farming enterprise. Algonquin Park was created in 1893 largely in response to the timber lobby to prohibit farming there so that timbering could continue on a longterm basis. Creation of the Park allowed the implementation of a long advocated policy, based on fear of risk of fire in the forest, to “permit no isolated scattered settlers to locate amidst the pine forests” (Burke 1855:623). Despite a report early in 1895 from Peter Thomson, first Superintendent of Algonquin National Park, as it was then known, that “there is no open and flagrant violation of those provisions which forbid hunting and trapping in the Park” (Thompson 1895), Algonquins who lived in Lawrence and Nightingale Townships were evicted on the pretext that “the presence of the Indians might be a great danger to the preservation of the game in the Park” (White 1895). Chief Peter Sharbot was one of the people affected. His story and that of his people are becoming better understood as researchers study their now overgrown farms through the science of archaeology, as advice from Algonquin spiritual leaders is respectfully considered and as documentary sources are revisited. Now, at the Algonquins’ revered time of the seventh and final prophecy, the time of choice, it is time for archaeologists and Ontario Parks to build and extend relationships of trust with Algonquin spiritual leaders, to share resources and information, and to go forward with a commitment to meaningful partnerships with the Algonquin people, a commitment to the Circle of All Nations (Figure 12).

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