

Ojibwe miinawa Bwaanag Wijiigaabawitaadiwinan (Ojibwe and Dakota Relations) A Modern Ojibwe Perspective Through Oral History

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ABSTRACT

People have tried to write American Indian history as the history of relations between tribes and non-Indians. What is important is to have the history of the Ojibwe and Dakota relationships conveyed with their own thoughts. This is important because it shows the vitality of Ojibwe oral history conveyed in their language and expressing their own views. The stories and recollections offer a different lens to view the world of the Ojibwe. A place few people have looked at in order to understand the complicated web of relationships that Ojibwe and Dakota have with one another.

Niibowa bwaanag omaa gii-taawag. Miish igo gii-maajinzhikawaawaad iwidi mashkodeng. Mashkodeng gii-izhinaazhikawaad iniw bwaanag, akina. Miish akina imaa Minisooding gii-nagadamowaad mitigokaag, aanjigoziwaad. Mii sa naagaj, mii i'iw gaa-izhi-zagaswe'idiwaad ingiw bwaanag, ingiw anishinaabeg igaye. Gaawiin geyaabi wii-miigaadisiiwag, wijiikiwendiiwaad.

A lot of Sioux lived here. Then they chased them out to the prairies, all of them. They [were forced] to move and abandon the forests there in Minnesota. But later on, they had a [pipe] ceremony, the Sioux and Chippewa too. They didn't fight anymore, [and] made friends.¹

Introduction (Maadaajimo)

There is awareness of a long history, in more modern times, a playful lack of trust between the Ojibwe and Dakota. Historians like William Warren documented Ojibwe life while Samuel Pond did the same with the Dakota. Each shared similar views that the Dakota and Ojibwe were enemies. Warren states in his book, "The war club had lain buried but a few winters, when it was again violently dug up, and the ancient feud raged more fiercely than ever...Ill will was first created in the breasts of the two tribes against one another, through a quarrel which happened between an Ojibway and a Dakota gallant, respecting a woman whom they both courted. The woman was a Dakota and she preferred the Ojibway, and the rejected gallant, in revenge, took the life of his successful rival."²

Samuel Pond writes a story of a different kind. His writing exposes the lack of trust between the tribes due to the fact that the tribes always had to know where their enemies were located. He also passes on the Dakota perspective by the acknowledgement of the Ojibwe as the common enemy. Pond writes, "The Dakota were not averse to undertaking these excursions against their hereditary enemies, and if they had been so peacefully inclined as not to go in search of them, their restless and warlike neighbors would have made work for them at home."³

From a modern perspective, scholar Thomas Vennum writes, "Much strife between the Ojibway and the Dakota was over hunting territory, particularly the habitat of the Virginia deer, but the zone also included much of the wild rice range. Access to wild rice stands was important; as the product became an exchange commodity in the fur trade, both Ojibway and Dakota entered into production beyond their own needs."⁴ This statement lends credibility to the knowledge that accessibility and proximity were integral

¹ Anton Treuer, Ph.D., ed. Living Our Language: Ojibwe Tales & Oral Histories, 234

² William W. Warren, History of the Ojibway People, 158

³ Samuel W. Pond, Dakota Life in the Upper Midwest, 60

⁴ Thomas Vennum Jr., Wild Rice and the Ojibway People, 9

components of whether the tribes were going to be at war or not.

What do the Ojibwe think of the Dakota today? Present day traditional ceremonies and practices solidify the respect that the Ojibwe have for the Dakota and their co-existence has led to their perseverance. The relationships were based on trust, companionship, and common traditional ceremonies and social practices. This is evidenced by the stories that were documented by respected people of the Ojibwe-Anishinaabe.⁵ These stories reflect a long tumultuous relationship, but they are not completely ridden with warfare. The intent of the research is to capture the individual experiences and see how Ojibwe people understand that relationship.

This study is important because it will offer a modern view on a historical topic. Ultimately the study will portray the modern stories as evidence that oral history has been passed on to the next generation and the focus is not solely on the conflicts of two tribes, but rather on how the tribes co-existed and survived.

Miigaadiwin Dibaajimowinan (War Stories)

Edward Benton-Banai is a full blood Ojibwe-Anishinaabe from the Lac Courte Oreilles band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. He is a respected educator, story-teller and spiritual leader. As a member of the Midewiwin, or Grand Medicine Society, Edward continues his work passing on the sacred rites of this ancient Ojibwe Religion.

There is a long story, longer than the wars. The wars are what are most often spoken about, but there was a period of co-existence between the Ojibwe and Dakota that nobody has ever written about because it has always been about the conflict.”⁶

This intriguing statement was made during a conversation that the researcher had with Edward Benton-Banai at his Round Lake home located on the Lac Courte Oreilles reservation. The story is about the personal relationship with the Dakota as people. The relationship of the Ojibwe and Dakota contains war, and war can be seen as an unfortunate way to solve disputes between tribes. War becomes an issue when people have exhausted all means of resolution. The bottom line is survival and removing the obstacle that is perceived to be in the way of that survival.

We cannot eliminate the conflicts because there were conflicts. However, they were not as savage as prior historians doing this research and writing about the conflicts have portrayed them. Ojibwe-Dakota warfare was never about total destruction or humiliation as each tribe holds a great deal of respect towards each other. There were territorial disputes and those disputes lasted a lot of years. The interesting thing is that every nation is proud of the battles that they have fought. They are proud of their war heroes, the ones that survived and honor the ones that lost their lives. The Ojibwe are no different from any country or nation that has participated in warfare. They honor the sacrifice of the people, so that they as a whole can continue to live.

Currently, Ojibwe people tend to remember and acknowledge the wars of the past between the Ojibwe and Dakota. The other topic that is passed between generations is the influence of the French fur trade and how that disrupted peace between the Ojibwe and Dakota. The French fur trade allowed the tribes to use their natural resources to gain trade goods. That alleviated the grind of a primitive lifestyle, but the competition for trade goods led to each group, whether it was Dakota or Ojibwe, to do to whatever it could in order to gain the most from the supplier. As the dependency on the fur trade increased so did the intensity of the battles between the tribes.

⁵ Ojibwe-Anishinaabe is the complete term that the author feels is appropriate to describe Ojibwe people. Ojibwe is a reference to the language that is spoken in that region inhabited by the Anishinaabe. Anishinaabe refers to the term “original or spontaneous man” or the “last beings lowered to Earth.” The word Chippewa is not part of the author’s vernacular and is only used when quoting someone else’s work.

⁶ Edward Benton-Banai interview, March 30, 2008

In one story, the Ojibwe were aligned with other tribes like the Cree and Assiniboine⁷ to protect land interests and their position in the fur trade. The Cree were aligned at one time with the Assiniboine and disguised as French men they attacked the Nakota⁸. The result was that some authentic French people were killed because the Nakota retaliated and this incident triggers a cycle of war that lasts a long time.

Anton Treuer is an Assistant Professor of Ojibwe Language at Bemidji State University. He is also the editor of *Living our Language: Ojibwe Tales & Oral Histories* and a leader of the current Ojibwe Language and Culture Revitalization Movement in the Great Lakes Region. He shares a fascinating story about La Vérendrye and his role in disrupting peace between the Ojibwe and the Dakota.

La Vérendrye is so upset about the loss of his son that he starts giving out tobacco to everyone saying, “Rub these people out, and wipe them off the face of the earth!”⁹

The French had the ability of persuasion because they had what the tribes needed which was guns. Guns were needed to gain an advantage on a tribal level to control their part of the fur trade. Some tribes played the role of middlemen because they were able to take advantage of both parties involved in the trade. As a result some tribes were sought out because of their position and relations with other tribes. Treuer continues with his recollection of early trade relations with tribes and the French.

The Cree are going around and come to the Ojibwe and they say, “We’re going to war, we have the full support of the French government, we have guns and all this tobacco and you can choose to be allies with us, the Assiniboine, Potawatomie, Odawa, and the French or you can be our enemy.” The Ojibwe thought about it because they had been friendly with the Dakota for a long time. They decided to attack and there was this big change in the Ojibwe and Dakota alliance.¹⁰

One of the other factors in trade relations was the effects of disease on the tribes. Contact between tribes and the French not only brought a boom to the economy, but it also decimated the numbers of the indigenous people. Diseases were introduced that the French people may have had a natural immunity too. The impact of disease took its toll on the tribes and reduced their ability to wage war.

A major smallpox epidemic hits the Assiniboine and the Cree especially hard so the two tribes never came on their counter attack, but here come the Ojibwe. The full vengeance of the Dakota was vented on them, they forced all of the Ojibwe out of Northern Wisconsin except for Madeline Island, and they started settling in the arrowhead as war refugees.¹¹

That story illustrates just how much power the Fur trade had by persuading a group of people to enact war on each other for the ultimate goal of gaining material wealth. It also shows the advantage that one group has over the other, with the strength of their alliances with other nations. The Ojibwe were

⁷ The word *Assiniboine* is a corrupted form of the Ojibwe word Asinii (stone) -bwaan (roasters) “Stone Roasters.” They would cook with stones by dropping hot stones into water, bringing the water to a boil and then proceed to cook their food.

⁸ Nakota or Yankton are called Ihanktowan-Ihanktowana (“Village-at-the-end” and “little village-at-the-end”) residing in the Minnesota River area, they are considered to be the middle Sioux.

⁹ Anton Treuer interview, March 23, 2008

¹⁰ Anton Treuer interview, March 23, 2008

¹¹ Anton Treuer interview, March 23, 2008

reeling the first couple years of the attacks, but through the power of their trade alliance with the French, they were able to regain the territory and so much more.

Tobasonakwut Kinew is a well respected leader and elder in Anishinaabe society across Canada and the United States. He has spearheaded action to strengthen treaty rights, language and culture, and to improve the socio-economic situation of First Nations people and communities. Tobasonakwut is a fluent speaker of Ojibwemowin, a pipe carrier, a member of the Midewiwin, and a Sun Dancer for many years in the Anishinaabe and Lakota traditions. He reflects on the impact of the fur trade and the relationship between the Ojibwe and Dakota.

The fur traders not only pushed the Dakotas backwards into the prairies, they also pushed some Anishinaabe into the prairies as well. The fights that took place between the Ojibwe and Dakota came as a result of people wanting to live and fend for themselves as well as feed their families.¹²

In the past, society was not as accelerated as it is in the present day. The Ojibwe would tell stories and some of the stories were recounting old battles and remembering the brave ones that gave up their lives. It was also a time to share sacred stories about their creation and the ancient ways of the Midewiwin. To some people the Midewiwin is where the history of the Ojibwe people is contained.

Edward Benton-Banai shares a story that was passed on to him orally that centers on ancestral Dakota Territory that transitioned to sanctified ground, only to be abandoned when war broke out between the Ojibwe and Dakota. The story centers on the two tribes and how religion, land, and warfare were all part of the lives of the Ojibwe and Dakota.

Shell Lake Village (Gaa-esagag Odenawens)

The Dakota had a village on the southwest shore of what is now called Shell Lake located in Wisconsin. During some period, a midewiwin shell came to the surface. They tried for a number of years to have a peaceful settlement that the Ojibwe should have that land and that they should be the caretakers of that lake. Many years of negotiating led to many disagreements and it eventually led to conflict.¹³

Samuel Pond elaborates more on the issue of tribal conflict by stating that Indians did not make war on each other because they were Indians, but because they were men and like other men, their wars were necessary as wars generally are. If they were to live at all, they must have a country to live in; and if they were to live by hunting, they must have a very large country, from which all others were excluded. Such a country they had, not because their enemies were willing to let them occupy it, but because they were able and determined to defend it by a force of arms. If they had not resisted the encroachments of their enemies, they would soon have been deprived of the means of subsistence and would have perished. If they would have game to kill, they must kill men too.¹⁴ Regardless of the situation there was a conflict. The interesting thing about the Ojibwe and Dakota is their impressive cultural awareness.

There was a huge battle, but it did not happen at Shell Lake because there was a midewiwin lodge set up there that both the Ojibwe and the Dakota participated in. Taylors Falls was the place where the battle for Shell Lake took place. The body count was so great that when things settled down they both decided to bury their dead at Shell

¹² Tobasonkwut Kinew interview, April 16, 2008

¹³ Edward Benton-Banai interview, March 30, 2008

¹⁴ Samuel W Pond, *Dakota Life in the Upper Midwest* (1986), 60

Lake and both agreed that they would never desecrate that land. That is the reason that the Ojibwe and the Dakota never went back and settled at Shell Lake.¹⁵

Taylor's Falls was the last of the major conflicts between the Ojibwe and the Dakota but skirmishes over trapping territories remained and eventually the Dakota moved to the other side of the St. Croix River and westward to adopt the horse culture.

The ancient rite of storytelling is common amongst all people. The exploits of war were shared in the ancient communities maybe in the hopes that the stories of the heroes will be passed on for many generations with lessons to be learned from them. Paul DeMain (Oneida/Ojibwe) is a well-known newspaperman and CEO of Indian Country Communications, Inc., publisher of News from Indian Country. He shares a story that was told to him by his mentor, Pipe.¹⁶

This is an example of oral history and how one person doesn't know the whole story, but many people know a little bit about the whole story. In conversations, it is clear, that while we may have several different versions of the story, or perhaps a story that merged more than one battle, the story of the Hay Creek/Horse Fly Battle is one that the elders wanted to live on, the story of the burial site of the warriors from both nations that stood up for the land and principles they believed in.

Hay Creek/Horse Fly Battle

My recollection comes from picking up bits and pieces of the story. I remember Pipe saying that the Ojibwe were outnumbered two to one. I remember he said that they had sent runners down the Chippewa River and that they found this group of Dakotas. If you look at history, the Fox may have assisted the Dakota at this time. Pipe said that after the battle the Ojibwe sent a bunch of canoes back with the survivors as a reminder to the Dakotas not to send their warriors back into Ojibwe country. They filled the canoes with wild rice, maple sugar, deer hides and other things because the Ojibwe knew that the Dakota warriors were not coming back home to provide for their families.¹⁷

The whole idea that the Ojibwe had better send some food and clothes to the women and children as compensation for the fact that their men aren't coming home is a common tale spun in the traditional communities of the Ojibwe. In a similar account shared about the Ojibwe victory over the Iroquois at what is now called Iroquois Point, Michigan, the aspect of retaining a life to relay the message of not trying to retaliate is told. The message is, "Don't come back here again because your men won't be coming back and you will end up starving." While there is a certain amount of compassion there, there is also a very sharp message, "Don't mess with us or you will be depending on us for your livelihood."¹⁸

According to Pond, the Ojibwe had the advantage over the Dakota because the Ojibwe, who lived in close proximity of the river, could use the current to float down the river, and not expending all their energy leaving them fresh and fit for action when they arrive. On the other hand, the Dakota had to go against the current, walk long distances on foot and were exhausted by the time it was time to fight. Demain tells a similar story of the exhaustion of battle and the different strategies applied by the Ojibwe versus the Dakota.

The Dakota would have to be paddling ferociously to get up the stream or help the rest by guiding canoes along the shore. The attention would be in guiding the canoes and checking the status of the men and supplies so they would not have been set up militarily. They are not going to try to do a flank or an ambush because they are concerned about

¹⁵ Edward Benton-Banai interview, March 30, 2008

¹⁶ Paul Demain interview, July 12, 2008

¹⁷ Paul Demain interview, July 12, 2008

¹⁸ Paul Demain interview, July 12, 2008

getting their men through the narrows and could be distracted. This in turn allows the Ojibwe to set up an ambush.¹⁹

The concept of mutual respect is huge when it comes to tribal warfare. When broken down to the simple compound it comes down to survival. The act of conducting ceremonies to honor the casualties of war is a commendable act. Demain continues with the story of Hay Creek and the battle that happened there in 1790.

It took days for people to clean up the site. There were families to come up and mourn, there were funerals to conduct. They would clean up the Dakotas because there was a lot of respect for the enemy. So there were a lot of respectful things done for them. For instance, they would probably clean them up and have a ceremony. In a military battle there are many dynamics of loss like family, friends, husbands, and brothers so if you treat the enemy well, the enemy treats you well, there is that mutual respect.²⁰

It seems logical that the Dakota would mount an attack at this time because the Ojibwe were harvesting wild rice and gathering for Midewiwin ceremonies before breaking for their winter camps. Warfare seems to be most effective when done with deception or a surprise attack therefore leaving the Ojibwe unprepared for an attack. What worked for the Ojibwe was the constant paranoia that they were going to be attacked by the Dakota so their scouts were on high alert.

Local oral histories influence the lives of the young ones. Anton Treuer shares a story that he read about Maude Kegg. Her Ojibwe name was *Naawakamigookwe*, meaning "Centered upon the Ground Woman" and she was a writer, folk artist, and cultural interpreter. She was a member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (*Misi zaaga'iganing*), located in east-central Minnesota. In the early editions of the *Oshkaabewis Native Journal*, *Nookomis Gaa-Inaajimotawid (What my Grandmother told me)* Kegg was telling stories about when she was a kid, Mille Lacs was attacked by the Dakota and they had to run to Leech Lake for safety. The people of Mille Lacs came back and everyone was dead. There were piles of maggots where the bodies were laying and she's describing all this stuff. It raises some interesting things besides from the anecdotal evidence of what it must have been like.²¹

Indinawemaaganaanig (Our Relatives)

Most communities that border Dakota country have some Dakota ancestry and I think that is very common. The clan system was central to Ojibwe society until the United States started forcing assimilation policies, boarding schools, and allotting reservation land therefore, destroying the structure of Ojibwe society and their communal way of life. Clans are still active today and are used as a way to form bonds within Ojibwe societies, but they no longer fill a governmental role in tribal politics.²² Anton Treuer talks about a story of how clans were introduced to Ojibwe society by inter-marriage with the Dakota.

Doodemag (Clans)

This guy named Vernon Whitefeather from Ponemah, MN (Red Lake Ojibwe) talks about the Kingfisher clan and how it was introduced by a Dakota boy who had been abandoned and adopted by the Ojibwe. You don't see that clan east of Red Lake except that it's very

¹⁹ Paul Demain interview , July 12, 2008

²⁰ Paul Demain interview , July 12, 2008

²¹ Anton Treuer interview , March 23, 2008

²² Information is the researcher's knowledge of Ojibwe culture

prevalent on the Turtle Mountain reservation. There's also Warren's account of the Wolf clan being introduced by marriage to the Dakota.²³

The idea of marriage between the Ojibwe and Dakota was a strong indicator that there was peace. In the old days, the ritual of adoption was done when a family lost someone to battle. Currently, the process of adoption is still in place that was common in Ojibwe society. The meanings are more general since warfare no longer exists. It also is that way for the Dakota/Lakota/Nakota. Tobasonakwut Kinew shares a story of how an inter-tribal adoption saved his life.

Nepiji-ganawenimaawasowinan (Adoptions)

I was adopted by Steve Charging Eagle and have traveled to many pow-wows across North America with the Charging Eagle Family. They are the ones that healed me after I lost my sons and this is how Steve and Tommy became my brother and son respectively. Our relationship has always been filled with great love and respect towards each other, never adversarial... I am also the adopted father of John Paul Roy, who is from Flandreau (Santee Dakota), and we danced together for many years. I have gone into many ceremonies, the Peyote way, and so I'm very close to him.²⁴

On a personal note, I asked my brothers and sisters about traditionally adopting our uncle Neil Kmiecik who is Lakota from Standing Rock, ND. The feeling was unanimous and we had a pipe ceremony to officially ask him to be a part of the family. I told him that I would Sun Dance²⁵ as a way to show my commitment and also asked him to become part of the Midewiwin Society, so that we could always be family and there would be no restrictions us when we are in ceremony.

On June 16, 2008 I headed out to Pine Ridge, SD for the Sun Dance. I was going to be dancing with the relatives of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, the great Lakota chiefs that everybody remembers. On June 20, 2008, I pierced my chest while holding my daughter's and my midewayaan²⁶ in my hands. The ceremony allowed me a chance to grieve for my Dad and also experience a new culture and gain a different perspective on life. I now know that I am welcome with the Lakota people from Pine Ridge, but I also remain devoted to my Ojibwe life and culture as well.

Zagaswe`iweyag (Ceremonies)

Ceremonial articles like drums, songs, pipes, and feathers are shared freely between the Ojibwe and Dakota. The water drum is an integral part of the Midewiwin, but the big drum was given to the Ojibwe by the Dakota as a way to promote peace between the tribes and is organized around four seasonal rites.

The tribes have always exchanged songs with each other to conduct sacred rituals and celebrations. Anton Treuer tells a story that was told to him by Archie Mosay. Mosay (St. Croix Ojibwe) was born in 1901 and was a spiritual leader in the Minnesota and Wisconsin area in which he conducted ceremonies until his death in 1996. The Ojibwe honor and respect the use of eagle feathers. They are honored with great care and shown the deepest respect. They represent honesty, truth, strength, courage, wisdom, power and freedom. It is within the sacred oral history and believed that eagles are to have a special connection to the Creator.²⁷

²³ Anton Treuer interview , March 23, 2008

²⁴ Tobasonkwut Kinew interview, April 16, 2008

²⁵ Sun Dance is a ceremonial dance conducted by the Lakota living on the prairies, held annually in honor of the Sun.

²⁶ Midewayaan is an Ojibwe word that is a reference to an animal pelt used to conduct the rituals of the Midewiwin.

²⁷ Information is the researcher's knowledge of Ojibwe culture

Archie showed me his feather war bonnet and he said, “This is not an Ojibwe feather war bonnet, this is a Dakota feather war bonnet and this is passed on to the traditional chiefs, but the style of the headdress and the usage of the feathers in terms of chieftainship all came from the Dakota.” It’s not that we got our idea of Chieftainship from them, but that this was a gift bestowed and often times Ojibwe and Dakota leaders would exchange ceremonial items like pipes and such to ensure peace.²⁸

The same holds true in story that was told to Paul Demain. The teaching of the importance of eagle feathers is passed on to influence and teach the next generation about what may be needed to live in a good way.

The enemy came upon the site and noticed that an eagle feather was lying on the ground. If these warriors are true warriors and they respect their feathers the way we do all we have to do is wait here and they’ll come back looking for that feather. Sure enough, that warrior came back for his feather and he was captured. They brought him into camp and teased, harassed, and tortured him a little bit. They say they were getting ready to take him to his execution and the chief came up there and made a big, long speech. The chief said that the enemy is an honorable enemy because the things that he holds in high regard are the same things that we hold in high regard. He said we knew that if this warrior held the eagle in high regard, as a symbol of warrior hood that he would come back and he did. Therefore, what we are going to do today is let him go because we honor his bravery and his knowledge and respect for the same traditions that we have in common.²⁹

The significance of eagle feathers is also to honor people who have done something great and may also be done for healing too. Tobasonakwut narrates the story of how he was gifted feathers from the Lakota.

I was given by Richard Charging Eagle, an eagle staff with 24 black tip feathers, which is a great honor and the family has honored me in that way. The feathers that I have on my headdress are golden eagle feathers and they came from the Dakotas from communities like Dakota Tipi and Sioux Valley. I have been treated with great respect.³⁰

Songs are used as teaching tools and as a form of communication in prayer. Some people often are told that the Anishinaabe are to use articles to convey the message of prayer like: medicines, pipes, and feathers. What if someone doesn’t have those articles for prayer? Some people believe that the breath of the Anishinaabe is good enough to convey the message to the Creator. That teaching goes back to the origin of man in traditional story telling. When the Creator made Anishinaabe he used his breath to breathe life into the humble being.³¹ Tobasonakwut talks about how he has learned songs from the Lakota and that exchanging songs is still a common practice among the Ojibwe and Dakota.

Although I can sing some Sun Dance songs, I only sing them when a Lakota/Dakota is present and during special occasions. I always acknowledge that those songs are theirs and I am always very respectful in that way.³²

²⁸ Anton Treuer interview, March 23, 2008

²⁹ Paul Demain interview, July 12, 2008

³⁰ Tobasonakwut Kinew interview, April 16, 2008

³¹ Information is the researcher’s knowledge of Ojibwe culture.

³² Tobasonkwut Kinew interview, April 16, 2008

Pipes are a sacred symbol for the Ojibwe. The use of a pipe had great significance because it could seal a political agreement and is used in every ceremony. A pipe is a huge responsibility because it is one of the sacred articles used in ceremony. The health and wellbeing of the people depend on the people that carry pipes and they are viewed to be an animate object to the Ojibwe people. They are afforded every luxury that a living person would receive. Tobasonakwut continues with his story about the significance of the pipes that he has and the relationship he has with the Lakota and how the ceremonial aspect of the two tribes are blended together to help people who may have been suffering.

I am the keeper of Steve Charging Eagle's pipes, which he passed on to me. I am now in the process of returning those pipes back to the Charging Eagle family...I am a pipe maker and the pipe that I received from an old man Fort Thompson, SD³³ told me to give it away after four years and so I gave it to a man named Roger Jones from Georgian Bay. That pipe helped him bring some people back to the traditions like the Midewiwin and other ceremonies like the Sun Dance.³⁴

Certain ceremonies are for healing and helping people that are in mourning. This is usually done right away or within a year of suffering a loss of a loved one. It is not uncommon for this ceremony to be after a year period also because there might be a situation where the people may have lost knowledge about the ceremony or maybe the ceremony may have been prohibited at some point. Tobasonakwut describes how the Lakota saved his life by conducting ceremonies for him during his time of grieving.

I have the greatest respect accorded to me by all the nations in Ontario, which includes the Haudenosaunee people. So I speak with integrity and honesty when I say that I have great love and respect for the Dakota people...I was the recipient of many of their feasts many great honors have been given to me by the Lakotas. They are the ones who put me back together when I lost my children by performing a "wiping away of the tears" ceremony.³⁵

Anton Treuer recalls an account of a ceremony being performed after a battle between the Ojibwe and Dakota. Certain rituals were done out of respect for the enemy because the Ojibwe were aware of the toll that it took on the community to lose a provider. What Treuer explains are the intricate things done to help people deal with the casualties of war.

When somebody was killed in conflict it was believed that their soul was offended and that offense could be relieved in many ways by offering up a payment like blankets, food, tobacco and having a ceremony. There could also be an adoption of somebody to take their place and it could even be an enemy or a captive.³⁶

The Ojibwe shared many things with the Dakota. There are the songs, ceremonies, sacred ceremonial items like pipes, and feathers, but they also shared language. The Ojibwe language is from a different linguistic group than the Dakota so the same language use would be unique. Ojibwe is from the Algonquin language while Dakota is a 3-way division of the Dakotan branch of the Siouan family identified as *Lakota*, *Dakota*, and *Nakota*.

The word *ogichidaa* and *akicita* both mean "brave warrior" and represent the Ojibwe and Dakota respectively. There is no evidence to prove who borrows from whom in accordance to language. The one

³³ Fort Thompson is the location of the Crow Creek Lakota Reservation

³⁴ Tobasonkwut Kinew interview, April 16, 2008

³⁵ Tobasonkwut Kinew interview, April 16, 2008

³⁶ Anton Treuer interview, March 23, 2008

thing that is clear and transcends this whole paper is that these ancient rivals respected each other on the battlefield.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the intent of the research is to capture the individual experiences and see how Ojibwe people currently understand their relationship with the Dakota. What is clear is that the stories and recollections share a deep bond that dates back centuries ago when relationships were a bit more violent. Through time and the different changes in culture, the Ojibwe view of the relationship with the Dakota remains connected through blood, memories, and ceremonies.

Acknowledgements (Naanaagadawendaagoziwag)

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