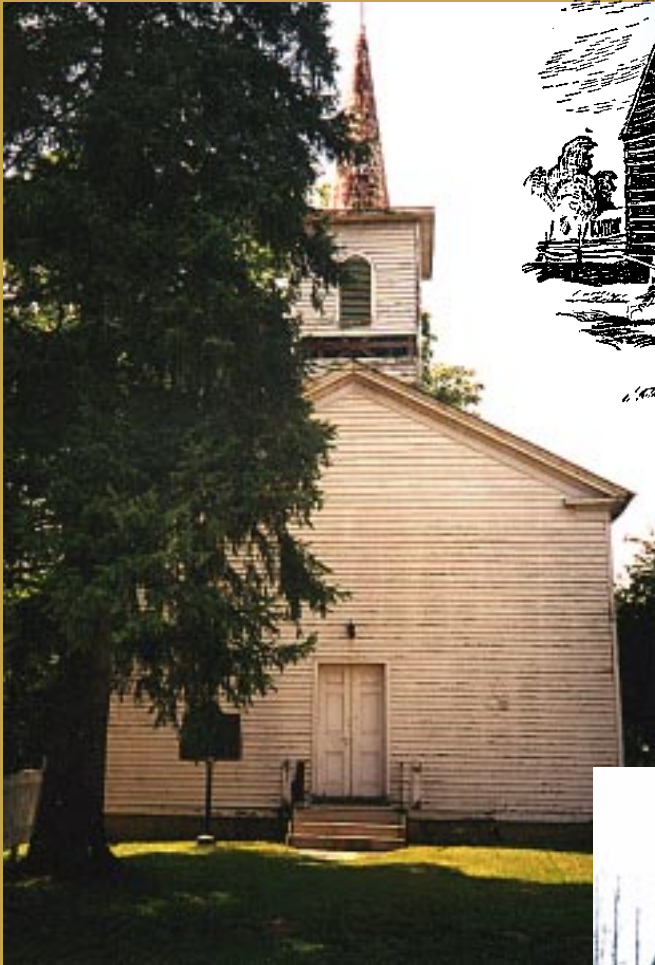


Part 2b - Human Heritage/First Nations: Thames River Watershed

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First Nation Heritage

For thousands of years, Aboriginal peoples have lived along the Thames River. In the past 400 years, four distinct First Nations have settled permanently along the banks of the river. They were attracted to the Thames because it offered an excellent means of transportation. As well, the surrounding area was largely uninhabited by Europeans and offered excellent hunting and fishing. Each nation is distinct in terms of culture, language, religion and history, not only to southwestern Ontario but to Canada as a whole. The four First Nations include the Chippewa of the Thames (Deshkan-Ziibi), the Oneida settlement (Onyota' a:ka), the Moraviantown Delaware and the Munsee Delaware. Figures 17.3 and 18.4 illustrate the historical and present locations of each First Nation along the Thames.

The First Nations that settled along the Thames are unique to Canada in terms of cultural and historical identity. The Chippewa people of the Thames are representative of the cultural group known as the Anishnaabe, a group which has influenced Southwestern Ontario history since the dispersal of the Huron people in the 1650s. The Chippewa people have lived along the Thames longer than the other First Nations. The Chippewa culture and language is different from the other Nations. The Oneida settlement is the largest concentration of Oneida people in Canada. Members of the Iroquois Confederacy, the people of Onyota' a:ka are significantly different from other Nations on the Thames in terms of culture, religion and language. The two Delaware Nations, Moraviantown and Munsee, are the only Delaware people in Canada, except for a few hundred residing on Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario. The Delaware, or Lenne Lenape, possess a distinct culture and language from the other Nations. The Moraviantown settlement was initiated by Moravian missionaries in the late 1700s, making it one of the earliest communities in Southwestern Ontario and one of the few Moravian missions in Canada.

Methodology

Regarding the First Nations component of Human Heritage, information was obtained through various resources. Significant information was detailed through personal conversation. These conversations supported the material which was obtained from secondary sources. Primary or secondary sources were useful but many older non native accounts were discarded in favour of First Nations or modern historical accounts. Information from area First Nations support organizations and Band offices proved immensely helpful in completing this component.

Chapter 16

Pre-contact Aboriginals and First Nations Peoples

This chapter presents a summary of the pre-European (pre-contact) human heritage of the Thames which preceded the arrival of the present day First Nations (Chapters 17-20). The Thames is unique among major rivers in Eastern Canada in terms of the length and continuity of pre-contact Aboriginal cultures. These date back over 11,000 years to the Palaeo Indian cultures, and were followed by cultures belonging to the Archaic, Initial and Terminal Woodland periods (see Table 16.1).

Table 16.1 Chronological Chart of Ontario Prehistory

Years Ago	Period	Southern Ontario
250	Terminal Woodland	Ontario Iroquois and St. Lawrence Iroquois Cultures
1000		
2000	Initial Woodland	Princess Point Culture Saugeen-Point Peninsula - Meadowood Cultures
3000		
4000		
5000	Archaic	Laurentian Culture
6000		
7000	Palaeo - Indian	Plano Culture
8000		
9000		
10,000		
11,000		

Occupance was continuous until about 1650 A.D., and included the first agricultural activity in what became Canada. Each culture used the Thames for a number of purposes, including hunting, gathering, fishing and transportation, and left evidence of their occupance and activity in a large number of archaeological sites along the main

branches and tributaries of the river and within the interfluves (see Figure 16.1). This makes the Thames watershed one of the most significant archaeological areas in Canada. The rest of this chapter reviews some of the more important aspects of this Aboriginal cultural heritage.

16.1 The Palaeo Indian Period (9,000 - 5,000 B.C.)

Up until about 14,000 B.C. almost all of southern Ontario was covered by the ice sheet of the last continental Wisconsin glaciation. Between 14,000 and 11,300 B.C. portions of what is now southwestern Ontario began to emerge. While the ice did not leave the whole of southern Ontario until about 8,500 B.C., the southwest was ice-free by 11,000 B.C. and gradually assumed its current landscape, including the Thames River. The latter developed first draining the Interlobate ice fronts into an earlier Lake Erie during the Holocene. As the ice retreated, climate gradually warmed and the area underwent a sequence of vegetation types: first tundra, then predominantly spruce and pine (boreal) forest, and then finally giving way to the mixed hardwoods by about 7000 B.C..

As the landscape emerged and was vegetated, it was occupied by Palaeo Indian hunters of the Clovis culture. These people were part of those Aboriginal migrants who invaded North America *via* the Bering land bridge and spread rapidly south. They were hunters of large mammals, including now extinct mammoths and mastodons. By 9,000 B.C. they had entered the Thames watershed. Evidence of remains of the mammoths and mastodons have been identified, as well as numerous locations with quantities of the characteristic fluted stone dart heads the hunters used. Sites include finds from both the Early and Late Palaeo Indian periods. These peoples were nomadic, but the wealth of evidence suggests that they were constantly in the Thames watershed for between 3,000 and 4,000 years. The evidence allows archaeologists to note the gradual transition in terms of tools and techniques which evolved into those of the Archaic period.

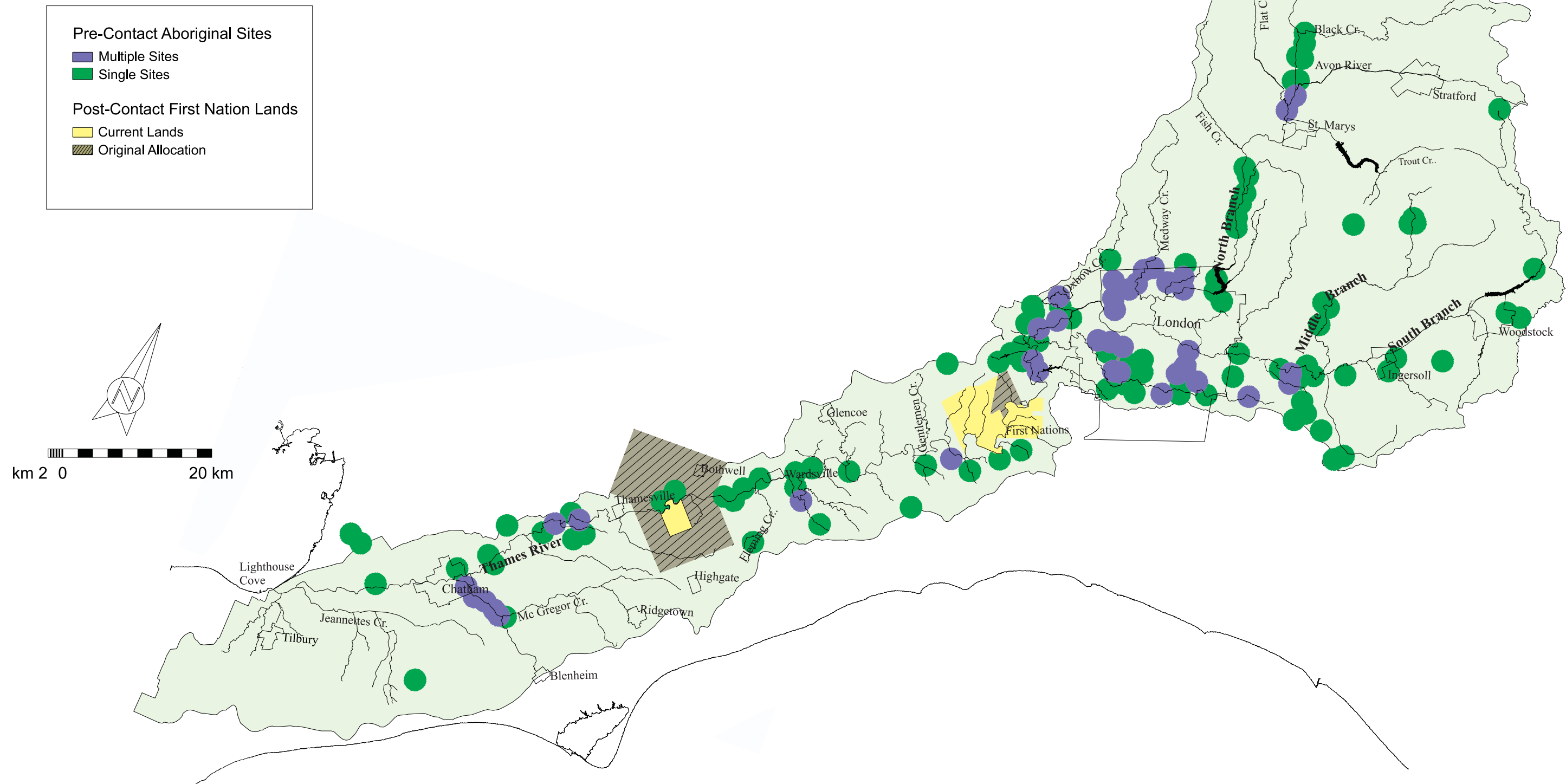
16.2 The Archaic Period, 6,000 - 1,000 B.C.

By 6,000 B.C., both climate and vegetation were beginning to assume their present-day characteristics. Boreal forest had given way to mixed hardwood (Carolinian) forest and the remaining large game (caribou) had migrated northwards. In their place were deer and smaller game, including birds such as turkeys. The peoples who hunted in the watershed also engaged in fishing in the rich waters of the Thames.

The Early Archaic period overlapped with the Palaeo Indian period and both peoples had similar lifestyles. However, archaeological evidence from the Middle Archaic

Canadian Heritage Rivers System

Figure 16.1 Archeological Villages, Camps, and Finds of Artifacts within the Thames River Watershed



period includes new tools such as grooved axes and the use of rocks as fish net sinkers. The earliest evidence of fish weirs dates back to 3,000 B.C.. The Later Archaic culture also includes ritualistic burial in cemeteries, and the use of pipes.

Sites from the Late Archaic are particularly prominent in the Thames watershed. Early Archaic occupation also coincided with lower lake levels such that shoreline sites are now inundated. From the Middle Archaic period (3,500 B.C.) there is evidence of increasing population which produced larger and more permanent sites. This trend coincided with a warming period which extended the summer, and is most marked in the Late Archaic period. The latter period sees a great emphasis on grave goods which include items of copper and conch shells, evidence of trade extending from southwestern Ontario as far as Lake Superior and the Gulf of Mexico.

Although much remains to be determined about the Archaic cultures, there is no doubt that the Thames watershed contains significant evidence of continuous occupation and is among the areas upon which further archaeological investigations will focus. In addition, it may be a significant area in which to unravel the relationships between the Algonquian and Iroquoian speaking peoples.

16.3 The Woodland Period, 1,000 B.C. - 1650 A.D.

The most recent pre-contact era is termed the Woodland Period. The key distinction between Archaic and Woodland cultures is the adoption of pottery by the latter. Pottery was introduced from the south and became part of south-western Ontario culture between 700 and 1,000 B.C.. The Woodland period can be divided into three parts: the Early and Middle (together termed the Initial Woodland), and the Late or Terminal Woodland periods. The Early Woodland is the last period in which the Aboriginal inhabitants relied solely on hunting, gathering and fishing. The particular variant established in the Thames watershed has been called the Saugeen Culture or more recently the Meadowood (900-400 B.C.).

Numerous evidences along the Thames, and other streams emptying into Lake Erie, attest to the importance of fish in the diet. Large finds of sturgeon and drum bones suggest that the Thames was of major importance during the spring spawning runs. Fishing sites were occupied by large groups during spring and summer and have left the first substantial remains of the typical long houses. In the absence of a stored staple (e.g. corn) however, the houses were abandoned for more dispersed winter hunting camps.

About 500 A.D. the Meadowood culture was pushed north by migrant groups who entered along the Lake Erie shore and occupied the Thames. This transition to the Middle Woodland period is known as the Princess Point culture, which in turn was a locally developed example of

the Hopewell culture that is distinguished by its cord-malleated pottery. Most important, however, was the fact that the Princess Point culture marked the introduction of corn to southern Ontario (and Canada). Therefore, the Middle Woodland period is transitional as it marks the key shift from a non-agricultural to an agricultural regime based on the classic Meso-American maize (corn) culture. The latter was initiated with the domestication of corn about 6,000 B.C. in Mexico, but took over 6,000 years to spread this far north. Not only was this area of southern Ontario closest to the source, but was one of the few areas in Canada where the climate was suitable.

Figure 16.2 The Late Woodland Period -- Life Along the Thames River



(source: Finlayson, 1990)

Although corn was a valuable addition to the diet and led to a partially more sedentary lifestyle and larger villages, the Princess Point culture still relied heavily on fish and game. Gradually, however, there evolved a new culture which has been termed the Western Basin and which was to become that of the Ontario Iroquois. The Western Basin period is synonymous with the Terminal Woodland period (900 - 1600 A.D.). From about 900 A.D., a recognizable Iroquois culture began to emerge based on corn and supplemented by fish and game. Among its features were large palisaded villages with several longhouses, and bundle burials combined with ossuaries.

The Thames and its watershed emerged to occupy a prominent place in the evolving sequence of Iroquoian people. Initially the Princess Point gave way to the Glen Meyer culture, which was related to but separate from the Pickering culture, with whom there was periodic fighting. By 1300 A.D., the Glen Meyer culture was overrun by a branch of the Pickering. From this latter group there evolved the Neutral-Erie branch of the Iroquoian peoples. Several sub-stages are found in the Thames area, including

the Uren and Middleport. But, finally, around 1400 A.D. the group split and the Neutrals emerged as the independent tribal group that occupied the southwest. At this time, such elements of American agriculture as beans and squash made their appearance to provide a more complete agricultural food base which, in turn, allowed for larger concentrations of people in semi-permanent villages.

The archaeological evidence is most abundant from this late pre-contact era, and includes a number of village sites in the Thames watershed, including that at Lawson. These last centuries before and immediately after the European contacts in the early 17th century were, however, very tumultuous. Inter-tribal warfare and cannibalism were common and then, following contact with the French, came involvement in the fur trade, which finally led to warfare in which the Ontario Iroquois (Neutral, Erie, Petun and Huron) were defeated, dispersed or absorbed by the Iroquois League of Five Nations between 1649 and 1654. From 1654 until 1750, the Thames valley was greatly depopulated, but gradually became an integral part of the Indian territory centred in the Ohio Valley. Finally, in the 1790s the first of the groups who are the ancestors of the present First Nations along the Thames, the Moravian and Munsee Delawares, came to settle. Their history and cultural heritage is described in Chapters 17-20.

Summary

The significance of the pre-contact Aboriginal occupation of southwestern Ontario and especially the Thames valley and its watershed is fourfold, namely:

- **Occupance of a continuous nature over approximately 11,000 years, representing the first and longest sequence of Aboriginal occupation in Eastern Canada.**
- **The longterm accumulation of the archaeological record which allows archaeologists and historians to use the Thames and its watershed to document a continuously evolving pattern of cultures and their critical artifacts.**
- **Evidence of the long-term importance of the river Thames as a major source of fish and other food items, as well as an important pre-historic route for the key transition to an agricultural way-of-life.**
- **An extension of the human record and a link to both present-day First Nations and European occupants of the Thames watershed, who can increasingly appreciate that their contemporary occupation is only the latest stage in a very long history of human cultural heritage.**

Chapter 17

Delaware of Moraviantown

17.1 Origins of The Delaware People

When European explorers and settlers first reached North America, the Lenne Lenape or Delaware First Nation peoples were settled principally in what are now the states of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. The Lenne Lenape were known as the Grandfather tribe by other First Nations, a term of respect (Welsager, 8). Three divisions of Delaware people existed, primarily according to geographical location. The Delaware of Moraviantown are descendants of the Unami Delaware, or the “people down the river” (Weslager, 47). The Unami Delaware lived near the mouth of the Delaware River. These people were primarily of the turtle clan and spoke a slightly different dialect than the other two groups.

17.2 Relocation to the Thames River

Between first contact with the Europeans and the creation of a Delaware settlement on the Thames in 1792, the Delaware people were pushed from their original homelands by English settlers. Moravian missionaries from Germany began to convert the Delaware people to Christianity in the early 1700s. Driven from their homelands, the “Moravian Delaware” settled in what is now Ohio. Under Moravian influence, this group of Delaware neither took part in the Seven Years War (1756-1763) between the English and the French, nor did they actively participate in the American Revolution (1776-1783). Unfortunately in the latter conflict, the Americans viewed most First Nations as loyal to the British Crown. In 1781, an American army marched on Gnadenhutten, a large Moravian Delaware settlement near Sandusky Ohio. One hundred Delaware were executed (Weslager, 316). After the massacre, the Moravian Delaware settled close to the British military post at Detroit.

In 1792, the Moravians received permission to establish a mission post on the Thames River (Weslager, 46) from the Indian Department (Akwasasne, 82). In late 1792, the community of Fairfield was established with one hundred and fifty Christian Delaware inhabitants (see Figure 17.3) (Zeisberger, Dec 1792). The town was described as the “first European style town in southwestern Ontario” (Stonefish, 7). The site was chosen because the land was suitable for crops and there was abundant spring water and

trees to build canoes (Stonefish, 6). The Moravian Delaware traded extensively with settlements in Amherstberg and Detroit and the Thames River provided an excellent transport route in a region with few roads.

17.3 Riparian Settlement

The first Moravian mission at Fairfield existed from October 1792 until October 1813. This original mission was

Figure 17.1 New Fairfield: Church



(source: Ian McCallum, 1997)

Figure 17.2 New Fairfield: Mission House



(source: Ian McCallum, 1997)

Figure 17.3 Historical and Present locations of the Delaware of Moraviantown First Nation

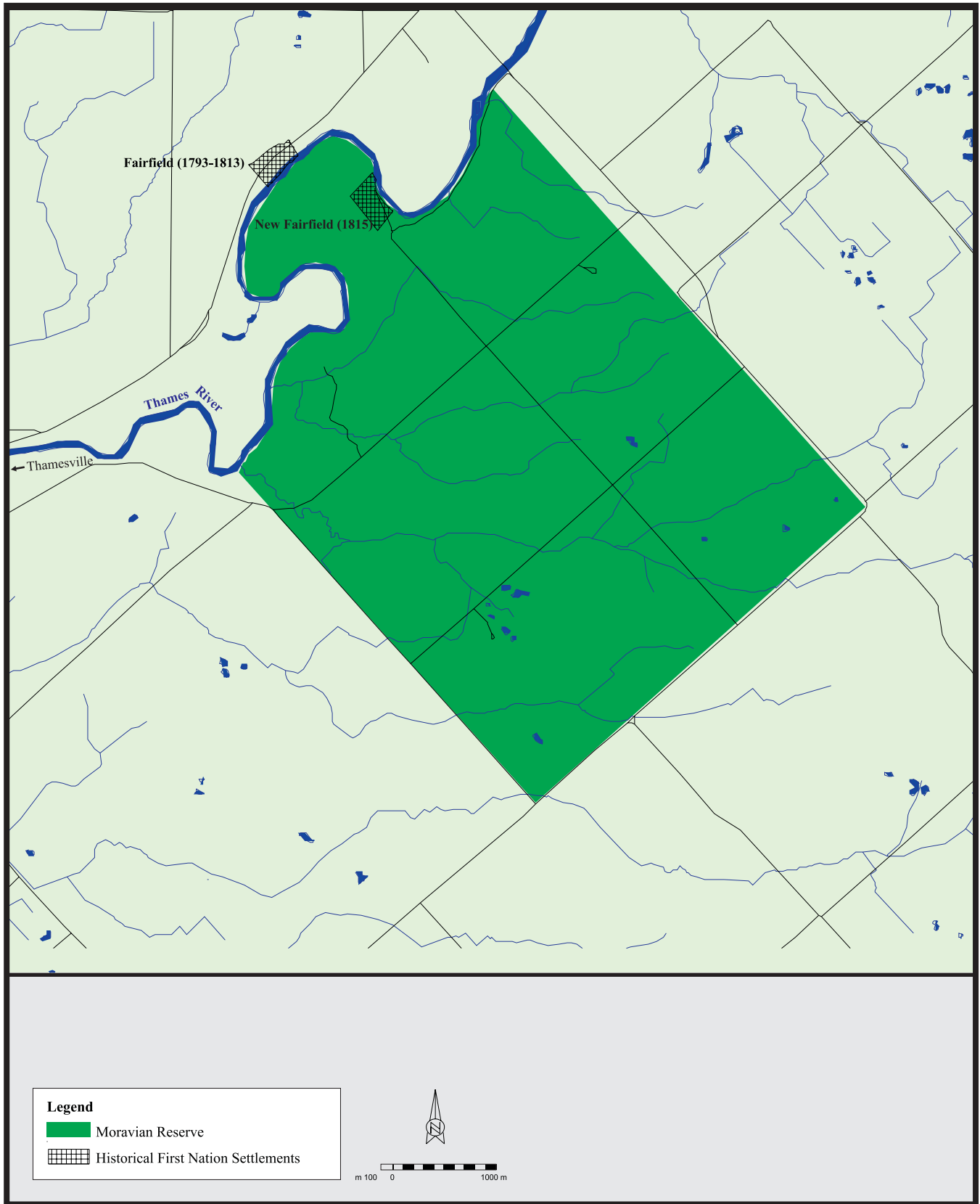
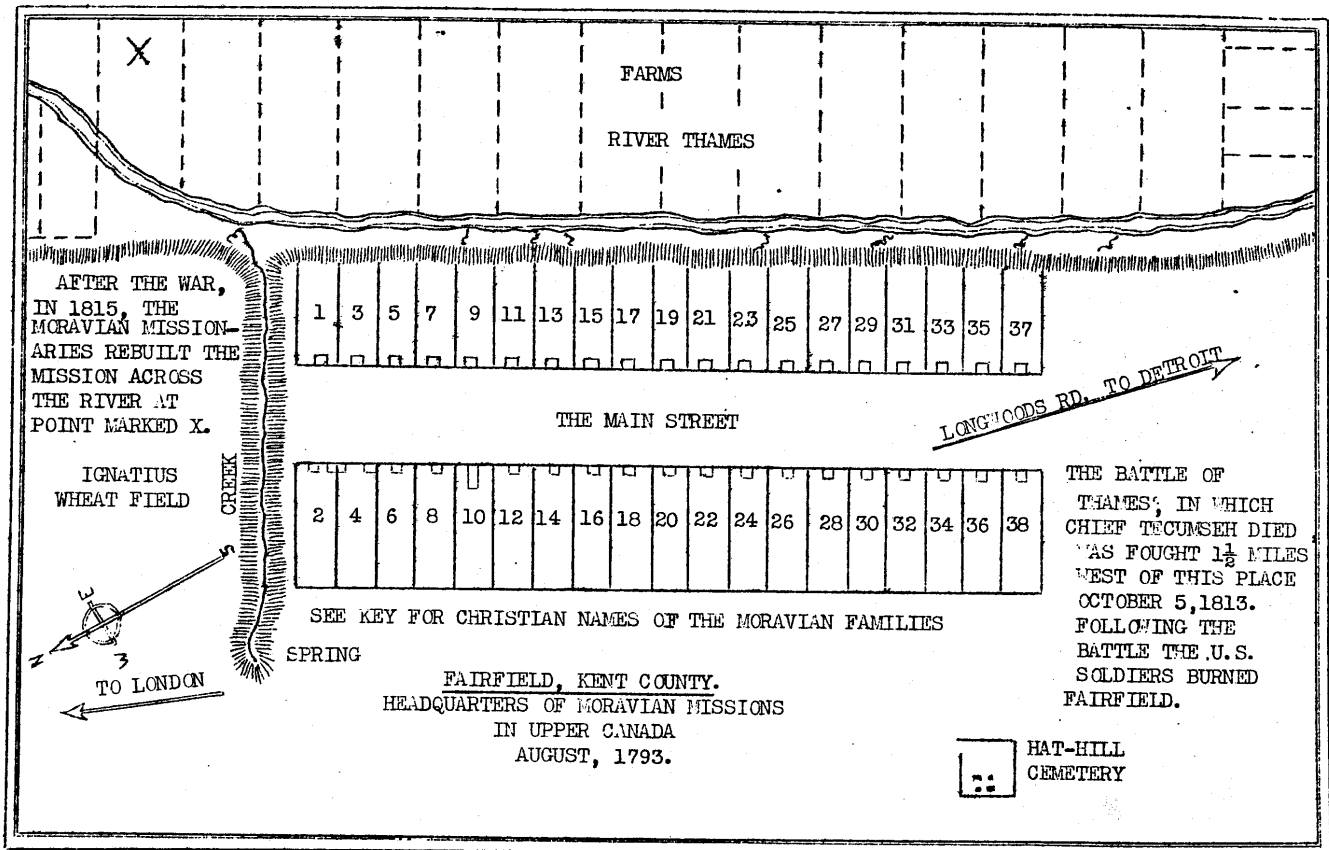


Figure 17.4 Fairfield, 1793

(Source: W. Jury, *Fairfield on the Thames*)

destroyed by an American army during the War of 1812. A subsequent mission was constructed opposite this site in 1815 and named New Fairfield. Considerable archaeological study was conducted in the 1940s by Dr. Wilfred Jury on the original Fairfield site.

Between 1942 and 1946, Jury made four excavations on the site and determined the location of the houses of the missionaries and the Delaware. They were aided by Patrick McNiff's survey which was completed in 1795. The cellars of the buildings were excavated and the physical size of the buildings was ascertained. Jury concluded that Fairfield was a planned settlement (Jury, 14) with buildings located on the north and south side of the Longwoods Road.

In September 1943, archaeologists further excavated the Fairfield site. The homes of two Moravian missionaries, Brother Sensman and Brother Jung were distinguished from the McNiff survey and also from artefacts from the site. German coins, the remains of a clerical coat and broken dishes (Jury, 21) distinguished these homes from the homes of the Delaware. Archeologists concluded that the Delaware homes were built of logs and had fireplaces in the centre. The Delaware homes were devoid of fancy European items but yielded earthen pottery, iron pots and axe heads (Jury, 28). The cemetery in which Delaware converts and Moravian missionaries were buried was also rediscovered.

The last two excavations on the Fairfield site in 1945 and 1946 determined the location of the bridge which connected the village with the Longwoods Road to the east. It was built in July/August 1797 (Zeisberger, journal) and was a major trade link for the mission and surrounding settlers. The position of the church was also discovered as were old corn fields which existed on both sides of the river (see Figure, 17.4). Interesting items found during the excavations included a pair of oil burning betty lamps (Jury, 5). This suggested that the Moravians may have been burning domestic oil that may have been found on the Delaware territory (Gray, 299).

New Fairfield was established in 1815 directly across the river from the old village. The new mission was located on the south bank of the river flats. The church and the mission house of this village still exist (see Figures 17.1 & 17.2). The church and the mission house were built in 1848 to replace older structures (see Figure 17.5). The pattern of the village was most likely similar to that of the original mission as noted in a water colour of the site as it appeared in 1838 (see Figure 17.6). The Delaware were forced to move south of the river as Moravian lands north of the Thames were surrendered in October 1836. The Delaware gradually moved from the central village to other parts of the reserve. The church, cemetery and mission

house, are three visible remains of New Fairfield. The current settlement incorporates 1266 hectares (Akwesasne, 82).

17.4 Religion

The Delaware of Moraviantown have, since their arrival in Canada, followed two forms of religion. Throughout the 1700s Moravian or German missionaries converted many of the Delaware nation to a Protestant form of Christianity. Other Delaware followed the traditional teaching and religion of the people.

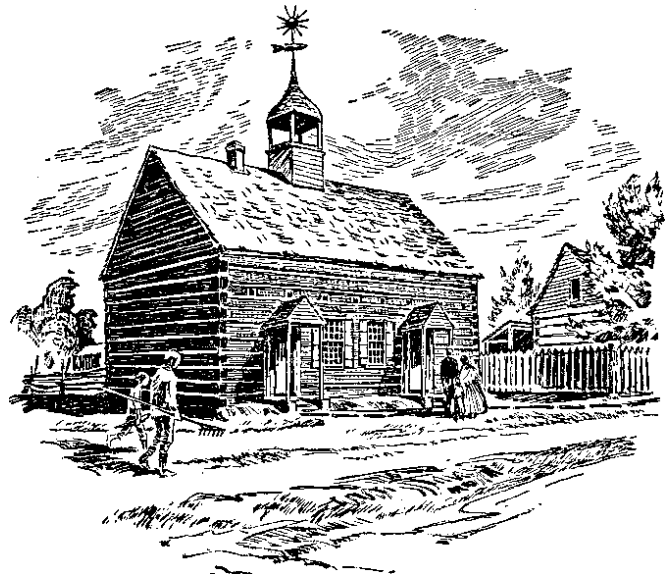
The Moraviantown settlement on the Thames followed Protestant preachings. Until 1902 when the mission was sold to the Methodist church, the Moraviantown people to some degree, practised the Moravian faith that was taught by the missionaries. With the close proximity to the Munsee people, many people of Moraviantown practised the First Nations religion of their kinsfolk, albeit in secret (Stonefish, 7). Moravian teachings stressed spiritual unity, daily meetings and daily prayer. The Moravian missionaries held various feasts throughout the year, the most notable being the “love feast” which occurred after baptisms. The Moravian mission was fairly unique to southern Ontario and Canada. No other Moravian missions existed in Canada except for those on the Atlantic coast of Labrador (Nain, 1771).

Delaware religion was practised by both the Moraviantown and the Munsee people. In traditional Delaware religion there is a Great Spirit often referred to as the Creator (Weslager, 66). There are lesser spirits which are present in the different forms of nature. These spirits controlled everything that occurred in the Delaware world. Response to prayer to these spirits is “seen in the sunrise and sunset, the stars, the winds, the snows and in the spring rains that nourished the corn” (Weslager, 66). The Creator gave power to four spirits known as the Grandfathers. They take care of the four regions of the earth, cause the wind to blow in different directions and determine the weather (Weslager, 67).

Other aspects of Delaware religion include the importance of visions and the existence of guardian spirits. The guardian spirit would appear to a Delaware person in a dream. These visions may come at all stages in life. The guardian spirit took interest in the personal affairs of the individual, comforting the person in times of trouble (Weslager, 68). Dreams came to those who were chosen to prepare and administer medicine (Tantaquidgeon, 8). Usually the dreams came to chosen individuals when they attained maturity and were considered by the spirit forces to be “spiritually and morally pure” (Tantaquidgeon, 8).

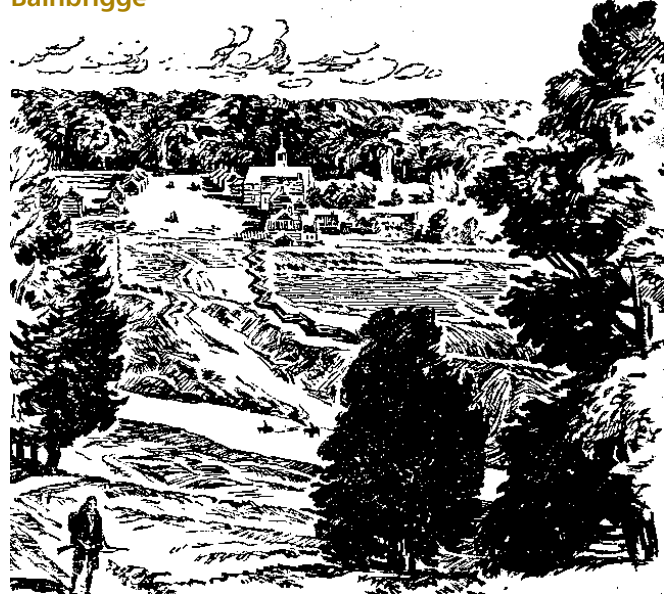
Different ceremonies were held throughout the year, usually accompanied by feasting and dancing. Many of these ceremonies were for social purposes as contrary to the belief of “missionaries who tended to consider all Indian

Figure 17.5 Sketch of Original Church and Mission House (built in 1827) in New Fairfield. By L.F. Kampmann, 1842.



(source: Gray, 1956)

Figure 17.6 Watercolour of Fairfield, 1838. By P. J. Bainbrigge



(source: Gray, 1956)

ceremonies as pagan worship” (Weslager, 68). Other ceremonies were performed in honour of the spirits and to ask for help or protection. Any traditional ceremonies or forms of religion were practised far from view of the missionaries.

Delaware people have practised the use of sweat lodges for centuries. Heated rocks were placed inside small lodges with cold water poured over the rocks. Individuals or people entered the sweat lodge for hours, sometimes days. This was and still is practised in order to prevent ailments and as a religious purification rite (Weslager, 51).

17.5 Resource Harvesting

Every spring on the Thames River, the pickerel return from the lakes to spawn. The pickerel and other fish species have provided the Delaware with a food source for the past 200 years. The pickerel run in spring remains an important food resource for the Moraviantown people. In the past, Delaware people built fish weirs across the river in order to catch pickerel (Weslager, 60). These weirs were described as “stone dams laid across the Thames in the shape of a V with an opening in the middle” (Weslager, 60). Men and boys waded into the river and drove the fish to the dam where other people speared them or caught them in nets made of plaited grass (Weslager, 60). The Delaware people today use “dip nets and roll nets” (Stonefish, 68). Besides pickerel, the Delaware caught pike, catfish, Broad Mullet and Black Bass (Jury, 31).

To supplement the diet of fish, the Delaware people ate turtles (Zeisberger, 6) as well as a variety of wild game. Archaeological excavations at the Fairfield site found the bones of several animals and fowl including deer, crows, ducks, cranes, partridge, woodcock and quail (Jury, 31). Other animals that were hunted include raccoons, squirrels, muskrats, wild turkey, ground hogs and bears (Stonefish, 67). Clams were used as food and as pot scrapers (Jury, 31).

Wild fruit, nuts and plants also supplemented the Delaware diet. Women picked and dried wild berries (Hamil, 37). Archaeological evidence suggests that the Delaware ate butternuts, chestnuts, hazelnuts, hickory nuts, beechnuts, apples, plums and cherries (Jury, 31). They also made maple sugar in the spring, tapping the trees and boiling the sap to sugar (Jury, 31). Sugar maples were and still are an abundant species on the Delaware reserve.

Oil and salt were other resources which were used by the Moravians and the Delaware alike. The 1945 excavation of Fairfield unearthed two oil burning lamps (Jury, 5). Oil was known to exist in the area before 1800. Major oil recovery began in the 1860s so it may be possible that the people used oil as early as 1792. A salt spring was located on the bank of the river approximately ½ kilometre from the site of old Fairfield (Hamil, 34). The discovery of these two resources provided some independence in terms of these two commodities.

The Delaware at Moraviantown and Munsee used various indigenous tree species for herbal and medicinal purposes. For example, white pine twigs were used in a medicine for the kidneys, and the pitch was used to reduce pain. Sumac berries were used to treat diarrhea. Ironwood, juniper, white oak, wild cherry and hickory were used for various tonics (Tantaquidgeon, 108). Bark from both the red oak and elm tree was used in a tea for coughs. Bark from the sycamore was used in a tea for sore throats and the dogwood was used for body pains (Tantaquidgeon, 107).

Many plant species found along the Thames were also used for medicinal purposes. The root, the stem leaves or

the whole plant were often used. There were specific times to pick the plant or root. The golden aster was used in a tea as a tonic for sick infants. Wild Carrot or Queen Anne’s Lace was used for diabetics. Burdock and Blue Flag were used for rheumatism and as a blood purifier. Bloodroot was used for “general debility”, blood purifier and face paint (Tantaquidgeon, 107). The various species of milkweed were used to cure epileptic fits and the jack-in-the-pulpit formed a liniment. Cattails were used in a tea to dissolve kidney stones and skunk cabbage was used to cure whooping cough and as a pain reliever (Tantaquidgeon, 108).

17.6 Conflict

The Delaware as a whole did not join the other First Nations in conflicts although the Chippewa and Munsees often attempted to coerce them into joining the battle against the Americans (Weslager, 345). Throughout the War of 1812, twenty-two warriors from Moraviantown fought in various battles on the Detroit and Niagara frontiers (Stonefish, 36), and British troops were garrisoned at Moraviantown (Weslager, 345). The town was strategic because “it was the only sizeable community between Niagara and Amherstberg and it guarded the main road (Longwoods Road)” (Weslager, 346). The Moravian schoolhouse served as a British hospital. After the Battle of the Thames on October 5, 1813, victorious American infantry burned the Moravian mission forcing the Delaware converts and the missionaries to flee to Burlington Heights where they lived for the balance of the war under British protection (Weslager, 22).

Chapter 18

Munsee Delaware

18.1 Origins of the Munsee Delaware People

Like the people from Moraviantown, the Munsee people lived primarily in southern New York state and northern New Jersey. They were known as the people of the stoney country (Weslager, 46). The Munsees were also part of the Lenne Lenape. They differed from the people at Moraviantown because their principal clans were wolf and turkey. The language spoken by the Munsees differed slightly from that spoken by the Moraviantown Delaware.

18.2 Relocation to the Thames River

The Munsee people arrived on the Thames River in 1782. Much like the Moravian Delaware, the Munsees were

pushed west by increasing white settlement. Prior to settling on the Thames, this group of Munsees had settled near Buffalo and at the Six Nations reserve near Brantford (Miskokomon, 4). The Munsees settled near the Chippewa people, already living on the Thames. Much like at Six Nations, the Munsees were only to be “overnight guests” (Riley, 10). Land settlements were promised by the Indian Department in the 1790s to the Munsee people. David Zeisberger records that “the Munceys went to see the Indian agent in Detroit to get assistance. The Chippewa claim that the Munsees are living on land which is not theirs and keep telling them to move on” (Zeisberger). The Munsee people were attracted to the Thames river area because of water transportation, plentiful game, and the region was largely devoid of white settlement.

18.3 Riparian Settlement

The Munsee people originally lived close to the Thames River (see Figure 18.4). They had villages on either side of the river as is substantiated by the survey of the area by Patrick McNiff in 1793 (see Figure 18.1) and Mahlon

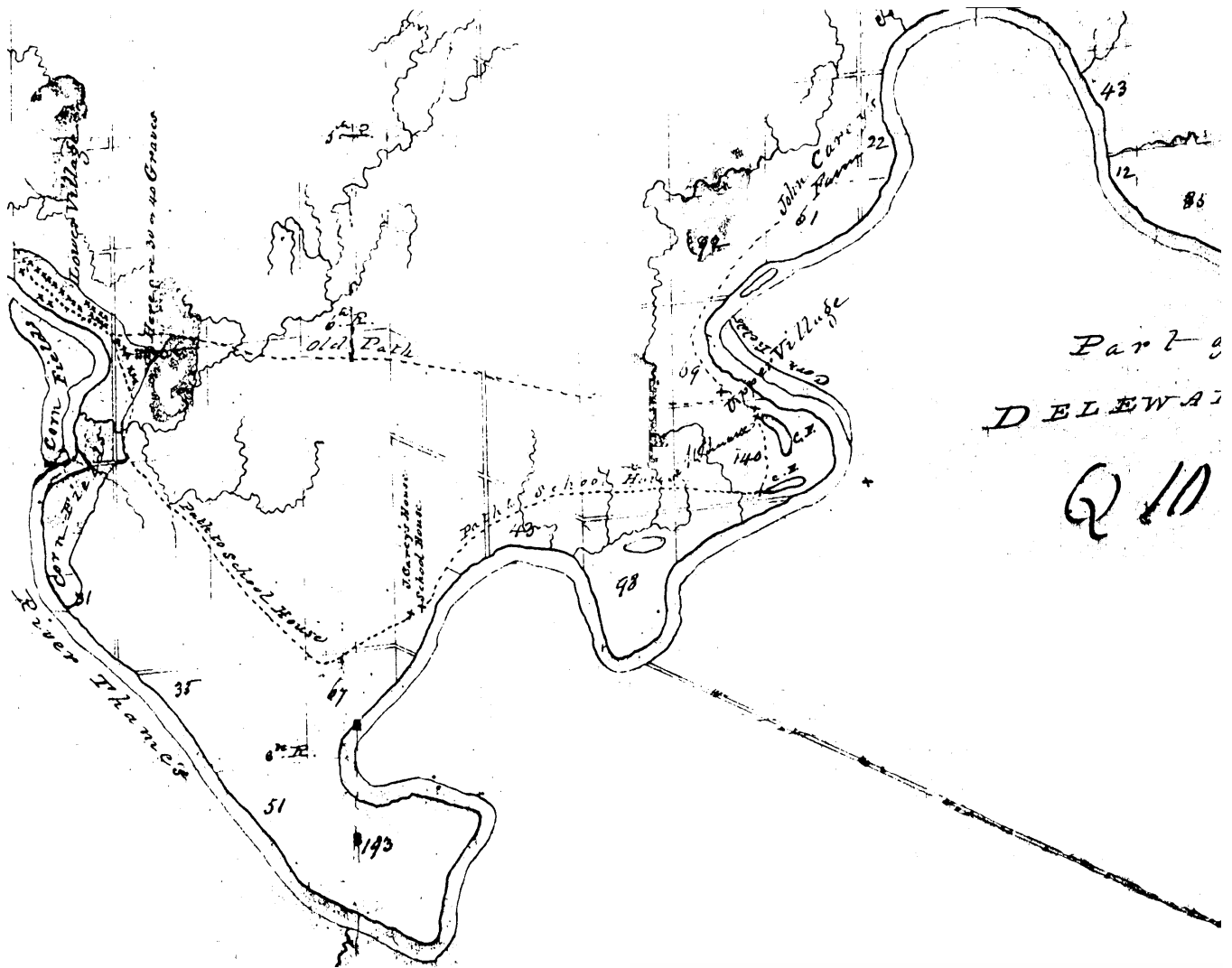
Figure 18.1 Delaware Settlement in 1793

(McNiff Survey, 1793)



Figure 18.2 Munsee Settlement, 1826

(Source: Burwell Seerum)



Burwell's survey in 1826 (see Figure 18.2). Crops primarily were grown on the floodplain on both sides of the river. Because the Munsees were unconverted to Christianity, it can be assumed that they lived much differently than the Moravian in their planned village. Prior to 1820, the Munsee people probably lived in one room bark huts (Weslager, 50). These huts had a "gaping hole in the roof which served as a chimney" (Weslager, 50). There were no windows in the hut, only a door which would have been covered by animal skins. Beds consisted of platforms above the floor of the hut (Weslager, 51). The central fire provided for both heat and for cooking. Most likely a large extended family of ten to fifteen people lived in one hut.

After about 1840, the Munsee people had obtained their own land. For the most part, the people moved away from the river into parts of the newly created reserve. Subsequently, the Munsees began living in log cabins, a design typical to the other area reserves (see Figure 18.3). The cabins are one and a half story in size. The main floor of

Figure 18.3 Munsee Log Cabin

the cabin would have been where cooking and daily activities occurred. The upper floor would have been sleeping quarters. Many of these log cabins were still in use in the 1950s.

18.4 Religion, Visions, Burial Sites

Up until the late 1850s, the Munsee people practised native religious ceremonies. The Delaware people practised the Big House religion. This was fairly unique to Canada as only the Delaware at Six Nations practised it other than the Munsees on the Thames. The Big House Ceremony was held each fall for a twelve day period. The ceremony took place inside a large building. All aspects of the building or the “Big House” represented important aspects in Delaware religion and culture. The floor of the Big House represented the tortoise, upon whose back the earth was created. The Big House ceremony lasted for twelve days and twelve nights, symbolizing the transit of a year. In 1798, missionaries en route to Moraviantown noted disapprovingly of the “heathen ritual” (Weslager, 23). The Big House was located somewhere close to the present day village of Muncy (Weslager, 23). The Big House was still standing in 1846 but was taken down some time after.

At several times in the 1800s, several Christian churches were established on or near the reserve. The Moravians attempted to convert the Munsee people but failed in their efforts. The Methodist church and the Anglican church were established on the reserve in the mid 1800s. These churches continued with modest membership until the 1970s.

18.5 Resource Harvesting

The Munsee people used many resources similar to the Moraviantown people. Like the Delaware at Moraviantown, the Munsee people relied on the pickerel as a major food source. Every spring, the Munsees built fish dams similar to those built in Moraviantown. These dams were made of logs and large rocks in the shape of a “V” (Weslager, 60). Fish were speared or caught with bare hands. Maple sugar supplemented the Munsee diet. Today, Munsees continue to make maple sugar.

18.6 Conflict

The Munsee Delaware most likely accompanied the Chippewa warriors in the battles with the Americans in Ohio in the 1790s. During the War of 1812, Munsees took part in the British siege of Detroit as well as several skirmishes leading up to the fall of Detroit. A regular soldier in the British army recorded that at the formal surrender of Detroit “Munsees were present” (Casselman, 72). Munsee

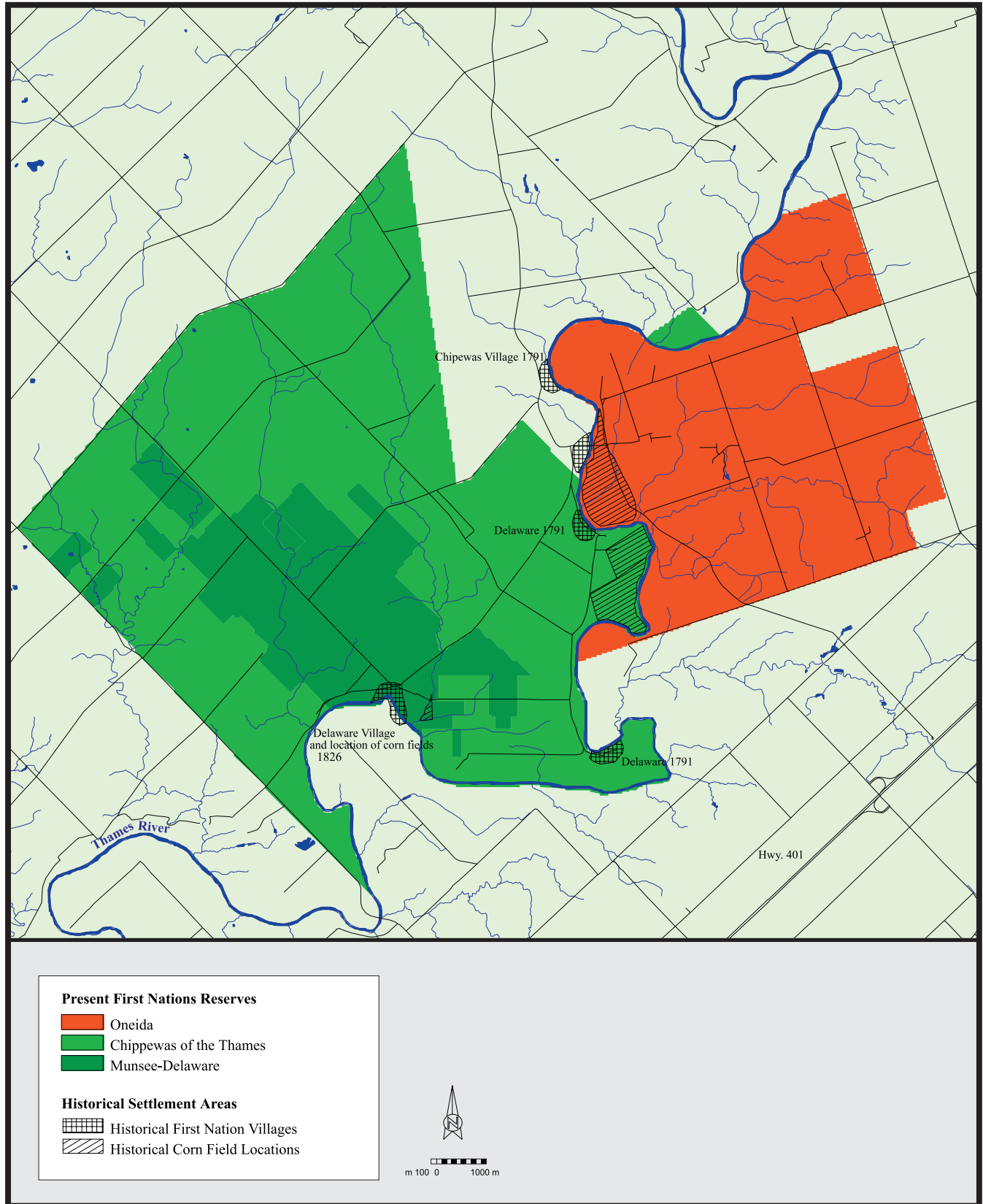
warriors were also present at the Battle of Moraviantown. Private John Richardson, of the British 41st regiment, noted that many Delaware protected the flanks of the British army during the battle (Casselman, 209 and Berton, 201). Munsee warriors took part in many battles during the war, many of which were in defence of the western part of the province.

18.7 Land Claims

The present Munsee reserve was created in 1840 when the Chippewas “allotted them a tract of 1,000 acres.” The reserve is encompassed by the Chippewa reserve and totals 1,054 hectares (Akwesasne, 148). However, disputes between the Munsee and the Chippewa over land have occurred since 1782, when the Munsee first arrived. These disputes were taken before Indian agents at Detroit in the 1790s. The Chippewa people contended that the Munsees were simply overnight guests and had no right to the land. Discussions between the two parties continued into the 1840s with delegations from both reserves going to England to present their cases to the crown.

Current research suggests that land settlements may have been agreed upon in 1793 and that the Munsee people were granted a large tract of land on the south side of the Thames River, opposite the present reserve. This was in accordance with British policy of the time as they sought to secure loyal allies against the United States.

Figure 18.4 Historical and Present locations of the Oneida and Chippewas of the Thames, Munsee-Delaware, First Nations



(sources: McNiff Survey, 1791)

Chapter 19

Oneida of the Thames (Onyota a:ka)

19.1 Origins of the Oneida of the Thames

The Oneida homelands were originally in New York state, in the Finger Lakes District. They inhabited the eastern part of the Finger Lakes near Utica. The Oneida along with the Mohawk, Tuscarora, Cayuga, Seneca and Onondaga are members of the Iroquois Confederacy. The Oneida people have similar customs and language with the other Iroquoian Nations.

19.2 Relocation to the Thames River.

In 1840, a large group of Oneida left their homelands in Upper New York State and settled along the Thames River. The Oneida people purchased 5200 acres from the Baby family having failed to purchase land from the Chippewa or Munsee people. In late 1840, 241 people arrived, crossing

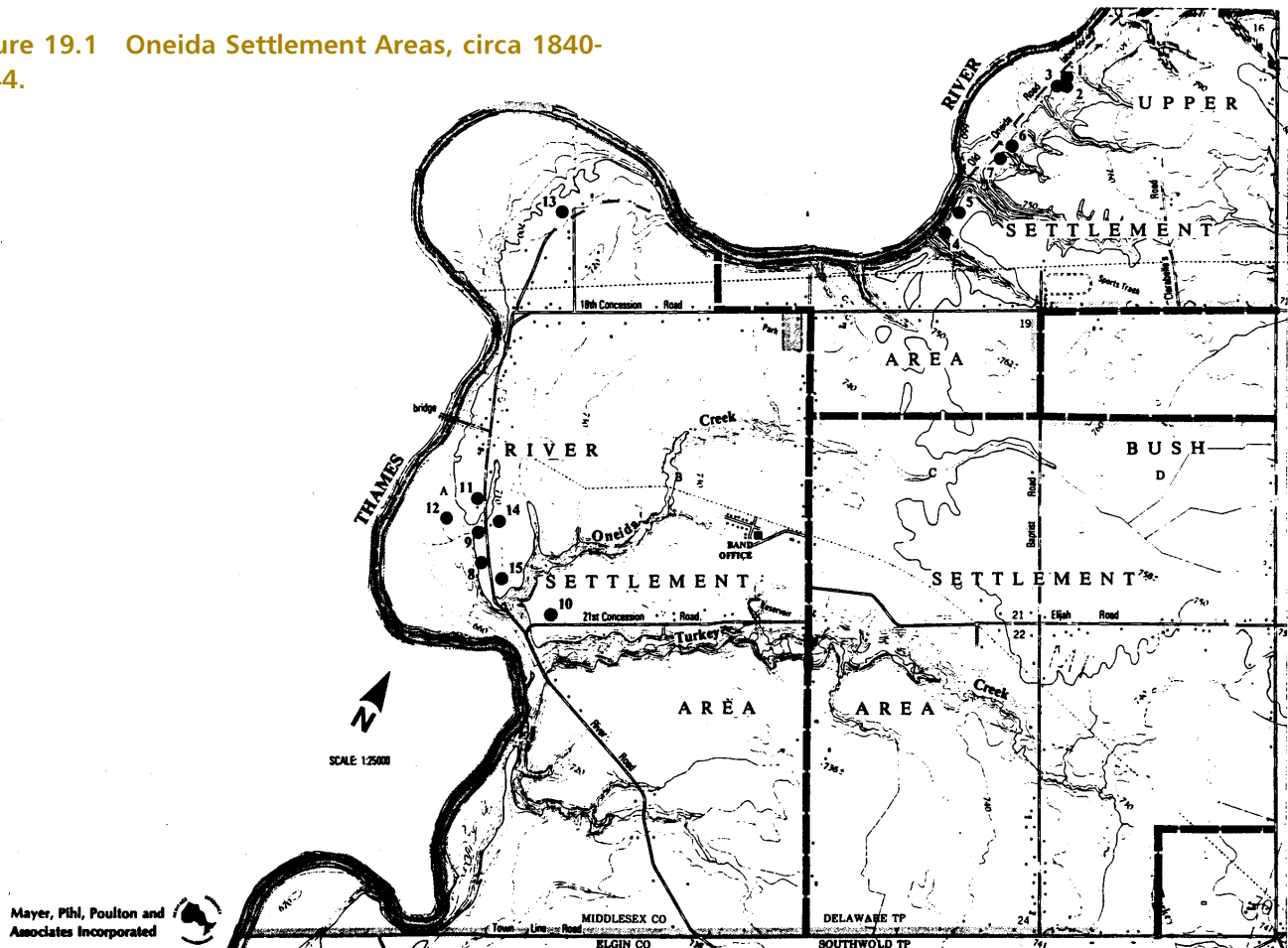
Lake Erie, landing near Port Stanley and then on to the present location. Other groups arrived in 1841 (120 people) and 1845 (30 people) (Secretariat, 1).

There were several reasons as to the movement of the Oneida people to Canada. Having served the American cause in the American Revolution, the Oneida were promised land concessions (London Archaeology, 5). These promises were not kept and the Oneida were pressured to leave by the approaching white settlement. Religious differences among the Oneida caused the nation to split into three parties (Secretariat, 2). As a result, two groups went in search of land while a third maintained the traditional homelands. In 1839, Chief Moses Schuyler and August Cornelius purchased the land along the Thames for \$15,000.00 (Lawrence, 36). This purchase was unique in that it is one of the few territories that were bought rather than set aside specifically as a reserve. The Oneida were primarily attracted to the Thames because it offered water transportation, fishing and excellent farm land (Campisi, 267).

19.3 Riparian Settlement

When the Oneida people arrived in late 1840, three principal settlements were established according to their religion (see Figure 19.1). The river area was settled first, primarily

Figure 19.1 Oneida Settlement Areas, circa 1840-1844.



by people who followed the Methodist faith (Campisi, 267). The “Upper settlement” was established by people who were Episcopalian (Campisi, 267). The Bush settlement was settled by people who did not follow either one of the two religions. The territory had to be cleared of virgin forest cover (Campisi, 288). In 1844, a government report stated that there were six frame and 48 log houses and a total of 335 acres under cultivation (Campisi, 267). The Oneida people were living in log homes similar to those found on the other reserves (see figure 18.3). Like those found on Munsee or Chippewa, these houses were one and a half storey.

In 1985, an archaeological survey was completed of several small areas of the Oneida reserve. Initial conclusions concerning artifacts found on the sites stated that the Oneida people maintained a “material culture which was very similar to that of neighbouring rural communities” (Archaeological Survey, 52). The Oneida settlement was “established with houses facing roads in a linear pattern in the three separate areas” (Archaeological Survey, 9). The people owned small lots, no more than 10 to 15 acres (Campisi, 268).

19.4 Religion, Visions

Many of the Oneida people who came to Canada in the 1840s had been converted to Christianity. As previously mentioned, the settlement along the Thames reflected the various religious beliefs. While in New York State, many Oneida people were converted to the Methodist or Episcopalian faith (Archaeological Survey, 9). Those who practised the Iroquoian religions lived primarily in the bush settlement. In 1904, the traditional Longhouse religion was revived by “a segment of Oneida society who believed that cultural traditions were being forsaken in favour of white practices” (Archaeological Survey, 9).

In traditional Oneida religion, the world was created “through the fall of Sky Woman from the Sky World” (Campisi, 283). In the world, there is a precarious balance between good and evil. The Great Spirit or the Creator sends a messenger to maintain the balance if it is disrupted. There are two societies in Oneida culture which are called upon to cure ailments, the False Face and Little Water societies. Ailments are classified in three categories: natural, witchcraft and mind (Campisi, 53). People go to “seers” or “dreamers” who determine the cause of specific ailments and refer them to the appropriate society for healing.

Traditional Oneida ceremonies were held at various times of the year: Mid winter (January-February), Strawberry (June), Green Corn (September), Thanksgiving and the Death Feast. These ceremonies are part of the Longhouse religion. These ceremonies were performed “emphasizing two themes; giving thanks and the promotion of physical and spiritual well being” (Campisi, 284).

19.5 Resource Harvesting

Resources used by the Oneida people were similar to those of the other nations. Deer were the principal game as well as bear, rabbit and porcupine (London Archaeology, 4). Turkeys, Canada geese and grouse were also hunted (London Archaeology, 4). Nets were strung between trees to trap passenger pigeons and other birds (Campisi, 37). Fish were either caught with nets or speared. The most prized fish species were pike, walleye, pickerel, and sturgeon (London Arch., 4).

19.6 Conflict

The Oneida people of the Thames arrived too late to take part in the War of 1812. During the war the Oneida people lived in New York state and large numbers fought on the American side. This placed them in suspicion with the Munsee and Chippewa people who fought for the British. (London Archaeology, 8).

19.7 Land Claims

The Oneida reserve today encompasses 2 134 hectares of land (Akwesasne, 176) and is shown in Figure 17.2. Most land claims by the Oneida people involve land in the State of New York.

Chapter 20

Chippewa of the Thames (Deskan-Ziibi)

20.1 Origins of the Chippewa of the Thames

According to Oral History, the Chippewa people originally lived on the Atlantic seaboard (IEC, 1). The Chippewa are Algonkian peoples and they share similar language structures and customs with other Algonkian people. A nomadic people, the Chippewas arrived in southern Ontario after a long period of migrations (IEC, 1).

20.2 Relocation to the Thames

The Chippewa settled at the present location on the Thames sometime prior to 1700 (IEC, 1). They settled the area that had previously been occupied by the Neutral and Petun peoples. These people were dispersed by the Iroquois in the 1650s leaving southwestern Ontario open to Chippewa settlement. They came primarily from Michigan and Western Ontario. The “abundance of game and fish along the Thames river” (IEC, 1) was one of the main reasons for settlement. Chippewa lifestyle, by the 1700s, included agriculture indicating that good farming land was also a factor in settlement (Riley, 3).

20.3 Riparian Settlement

The Chippewa people settled on both sides of the Thames river near the present village of Muncey. Because the Chippewa people moved to various hunting grounds in southern Ontario, their lodging was probably non permanent. They likely used wigwams until the late 1700’s. British policy towards the tribes in the 1820s and 30s reflected a need to establish the Indian nations with a permanent land base. Once their nomadic lifestyle curtailed, the Chippewa people lived in log houses similar to those found on Munsee and Oneida (see figure 18.3). The village of Muncey was established on the reserve and provided several services to the area First Nations such as a general store and post office. With the reserve established in 1832, the people moved to all parts of the land. When the Bear Creek people were forced to move to the Thames reserve in 1832, they settled the western part of the land. This area is still known as Bear Creek.

20.4 Religion, Vision Sites

In Chippewa or Anishinaabe religion, there is a Great Spirit which is often referred to as Manitou. There are four spirits which care for the four directions. They are known as the Grandfathers. Lesser spirits exist in the various forms of nature. Feasting is important in the Chippewa religion as it is a means of giving thanks to Manitou and the other spirits. Fasting is also important as it provides the clarity and insight so that a person can obtain answers.

Like the Delaware, Chippewa people use the sweat lodge ritual as a method of maintaining spiritual, mental, physical and emotional balance. Sweat lodges are constructed mainly of willow and use rocks heated up to provide the warmth inside the lodge. Before European contact, sweats occurred periodically throughout the year but now occur very commonly in modern Anishnaabe culture. There are healing societies in Chippewa culture known as the midewewan. There are eight levels of midewewan. Healers in the midewewan society are obligated to help their people as they have been entrusted with secret traditional methods.

20.5 Resource Harvesting

The Chippewa people hunted and fished for similar resources as the other nations (see resources- Moraviantown Delaware). Spring pickerel run was and still is an important food resource.

The Chippewa people use various plants and trees, found along the Thames for herbal, medicinal and food purposes. Like the Munsees, the Chippewa people historically made maple syrup every spring. The needles of the cedar tree were used to make tea for colds and to clean the body. Butternut bark is used to help the skin stay healthy and willow bark can be used to induce vomiting.

Plants that are important to the Chippewa include wild ginger or wiikenh which is used to help breathing and the heart. Milkweed is used to cure warts and sumac is used to remedy colds. Yarrow is used to help against rheumatism and joint pain. Queen Anne’s Lace and goldenrod are also important in various medicines

20.6 Conflict

The Chippewa people of the Thames have been established along the river for more than 300 years. Accordingly, they have been involved in the most conflict concerning southern Ontario and the Thames River. In the 1600s, Chippewa warriors fought against the Iroquois Confederacy for control of southern Ontario. In 1793, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe noted descriptions of these battle sites in his journal: “We went to the mouth of the Thames and, about twelve miles on, we saw the remains of a considerable town...where it is reported that a desperate battle was fought

between the Chippewas and the Senecas, the latter were totally vanquished and abandoned their dominions to the conquerors” (Schmalz, 23). Simcoe also noted that “human bones were scattered in abundance” (Schmalz, 23).

In the 1700s, the Chippewa of the Thames were allied with the French. This alliance was constructed mostly for the benefit of the fur trade. As a result, the Chippewa became embroiled in the various wars between the French and English. Chippewa warriors fought with the French during the Seven Years War. The majority of their involvement centred on the Detroit frontier (Schmalz, 91). After the French were defeated in North America, First Nations people continued to fight the British. In 1763, warriors from Chippewa led by Chief Sekahos “strongly assisted in the movement against the British” during Pontiac’s War (Schmalz, 91). They participated in the siege of Detroit and captured traders at the mouth of the Grand River (Schmalz, 72). Although the war was finally won by the British, Chippewa warriors succeeded in disrupting communication and were a considerable force throughout the war.

In the late 1790s, the Chippewa people again became embroiled in conflict. An American army entered the Ohio valley with the sole purpose of driving the First Nations out and to open the land to settlers. The Ohio valley was considered the “extended hunting grounds of the Chippewa of the Thames” (Riley, 7). Chippewa warriors fought alongside other First Nations defeating an American army under General St. Clair in 1791. The Americans succeeded in defeating the First Nations at the decisive battle at Fallen Timbers in 1794.

Chippewa warriors allied with Tecumseh in the War of 1812 in an attempt to protect the territory on the Thames. This alliance placed the Chippewa on the British side. Chippewa warriors contributed to British victories around Detroit at the battles of Brownstown (Aug 5, 1812), Magauaga (Aug 9, 1812) and Detroit (Aug 16, 1812) (Schmalz, 111). They also fought at several battles in Ohio (Ft. Meigs, Sandusky). Chippewa warriors were present in the defence of the Thames River at the Battle of Moraviantown in October 1813 (Riley, 8). With the death of Tecumseh during the battle, the hope of a united First Nations Confederacy was gone. First Nations involvement from the Thames in the war was sporadic after Moraviantown.

20.7 Land Claims

Over the two centuries of European contact in southern Ontario, the Chippewa people lost large proportions of land through treaty negotiations. The first treaty was signed in 1790 and 1796 in which several First Nations including the Chippewa sold over 2 million acres of land in southern Ontario (IEC, 1). In 1812 and 1819, two treaties were signed which created the present reserve (Riley, 9). These agree-

ments created two reserves, one at the present location (15,360 acres) and one at Bear Creek (5,120 acres). In 1819, the Chippewa of the Thames sold 552,000 acres to the British government. In 1832, the Bear Creek Chippewa were moved to the present reserve. This was part of the “Colborne Plan”, an attempt by the British to “civilize and permanently settle the nomadic Chippewa” (IEC, 1). A people based on agriculture would require less land than nomadic people (Riley, 9). The Bear Creek land was sold in 1837 and much of the money was used fraudulently by the Indian agent (Riley, 10). In 1834, a further 3,000 acres was sold to the government. Between 1834 and 1885, various smaller parts of the reserve were either “ceded, sold or leased.” Present research into land claims involves the Bear Creek surrender and land sold by the Indian agent. The present reserve encompasses 3,334 hectares (Akwasasne, 70).

Conclusion to Human Heritage, Parts A & B

The preceding chapters within Part Two have documented the numerous elements that are part of the Human Heritage of the Thames River. In the process, however, of seeking to address each section in the *Human/Cultural Heritage Framework* provided by the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, the detail tends to obscure the overall picture of the Thames and its watershed. The objective of this *Conclusion* is to sketch the composite Human/Cultural landscapes that derive from the many details and which are the essence of the Thames' Heritage.

A temporal sequence of three landscapes can be identified within the Thames watershed, each with a strong riverine focus. The first, the Aboriginal, is present today through relic features plus the cultural identity of the First Nations. The second and third are two European landscapes, one rural and agricultural and the other urban, which overlap to create today's rich composite.

The Thames River formed the main avenues in the Aboriginal landscape which emerged with the post-glacial landforms and came to be dominated by the dense deciduous forest. Within this landscape, which gradually evolved in response to changes in climate and lake water levels, there lived representatives of each stage in the sequence of Aboriginal peoples and cultures who occupied Eastern Canada between 11,000 B.P. and European contact. For each group the river and its tributaries provided food, shelter, and routes for travel and exchange. Food included the rich fishing resources of the river, as well as game, while the well-watered terrain offered sites for both permanent villages and temporary or seasonal camps. Water travel was an important means of contact and integration, including trade. For most of the time, the economy was that of hunting, gathering and fishing. Evidence of this economy is sufficient to attest to the Thames as an important locus of settlement over many millennia.

The evidence from the last stages of pre-European Aboriginal occupation is the most abundant and, in many ways, the most culturally significant. Around 500 A.D. the hunting and gathering economy was modified by the introduction of corn (maize) based agriculture (or horticulture) which had finally reached this area from its roots in Meso (Central) America by way of the Ohio valley. The significance is twofold: first, farming based on corn (and later squash, beans, sunflowers, and tobacco) provided for a more sedentary lifestyle and supported larger numbers of the region's Iroquoian peoples, who, in turn, created the large villages that form the majority of present day aboriginal sites; second, the native agricultural crops grown in this area were joined by the array of European crop and livestock transfers in the 18th and 19th centuries, contributing to the most diverse agricultural landscape in Canada.

In consequence, the Thames River was the heart of one of the most significant pre-historic landscapes in Canada, providing evidence not only of the long sequence of early forest dwellers, but of the first Canadian farmers and the initiation of a predominantly farm economy stretching back nearly 1500 years. The continued presence of four First Nations located on the Thames provides for cultural continuity and an important contrast to the present European dominated landscape.

The second landscape is that created by the first European settlers and enhanced by successive generations of farmers and village dwellers. This is the predominantly agricultural rural landscape or countryside of southern Ontario, of which the Thames watershed offers the most varied, yet typical, example. This landscape, with the Thames as its arteries, has evolved continuously while retaining key elements from each period of its 170-200 year history. While the earliest settlers included trappers and traders who relied on the river for fish and game, the flow soon became that of pioneer farmers, moving up the stream and creating early nucleations including Chatham, where the first ships were built and the first saw and grist mills were constructed. On the other hand, by 1810 surveyed settlement along roads and within townships already began to create the main framework for land take-up.

Although the survey was somewhat independent of all but the main branch of the river, within it, the major economic and social foci were the sites of the numerous water-powered mills. Hydraulic power had been the basis of European agricultural and industrial expansion from as early as the 11th century. Here the technology was applied to the new frontier and supported the rapid development of the land and its staple-based industries. The saw mills facilitated the conversion of the forest into timber for both local construction of houses, barns, and ships, and as an early export via the river. The grist (flour and feed) mills recreated the agricultural revolution of Europe, supporting production of the wheat staple for domestic use and as the first commercial farm export. In addition, distilling and brewing, and early textile manufacture (wool and flax) were often found at the same mill site.

The War of 1812 provided a brief hiatus, including the destruction of many early mills. However, both their destruction and their subsequent rapid rebuilding and proliferation attested to their importance. After 1820, a major influx of settlers created an agrarian landscape throughout the watershed. The combination of wheat production and processing allowed early capital accumulation which gave Ontario a commercial advantage that it has never relinquished. Although the number of saw mills declined as the majority of the land was cleared before Confederation, grist and textile mills continued to operate well into the 20th century, using water power directly or for steam.

The evolution of the rural countryside throughout the

Thames watershed has taken place within the surveyed landscape created by early surveyors (e.g. Burwell), and retains the mixture of thousands of dispersed family farmsteads and the nucleated villages and hamlets that have serviced agriculture. Over time, the farms have become fewer and larger, but the region has maintained itself as the pre-eminent commercial farming region of Eastern Canada and, in relative terms, the most productive in Canada. Despite many innovations involving mechanization and capitalization, farms retain much of the character that developed in the 19th century. This includes the vernacular built-heritage of numerous neo-gothic and Queen Anne brick farmhouses and substantial wooden barns.

One of the most significant factors underlying the continued prosperity has been the intricate farm and township drainage systems which began to be constructed in the 1880s. These systems link virtually every farm to the Thames and its tributaries. The integrated drainage system has enhanced the productivity of the prime farmlands that dominate the watershed. Management of these lands through watershed-based institutions which began locally, notably the Upper and Lower Thames Conservation Authorities, attest to the symbiotic relationships between the land and water systems in this rural landscape.

The villages and small towns also retain much of the built-heritage of commercial prosperity established in the late 19th century from their riverine mill-site beginnings. To these beginnings, after Confederation, were added other activities linked to the farm hinterland, including butter and cheese production and early farm implement manufacturing. Today, many linkages remain, both economic and social. In places such as the mill-villages of Thamesville, Wardsville, Thamesford, Embro, and Tavistock, one may view examples of how the juxtaposition of the mill-site and the fertile hinterland created classic rural settlements.

While the rural-agricultural landscape was the first to be generally established, it was soon joined by the third, urban landscape, building initially on the raw materials and commercial activity of the farming hinterland. Within the watershed there emerged a series of towns and cities, all located on the Thames and using the location and resources to good advantage. Other non-river related activity and industry may now support the majority of inhabitants, yet each of the urban places retains a riverine focus. Although river transport has long since given way to rail and road, the early development also owed much to sites being strategic river crossings and/or transshipment points.

Chatham has the distinction of being the first major centre to develop on the Thames. Close to the points of entry at the river mouth and accessible by both the lake and river vessels of the day, it became an important destination for goods and people (the success of the Thames as an underground railway cannot be overstated), and developed a significant ship building industry. Improvements to naviga-

tion in the Lower Thames supported these functions.

Chatham's unique heritage is that of an important river port within the water-based transportation system of the 19th century. Today, the river is still a major focus and supports important tourist traffic.

Several other medium-sized towns and cities also capitalized on the river focus. In the case of Woodstock this led to the considerable importance of textile manufacturing. Stratford was an important mill site (saw, grist, woollen) which was then enhanced by the addition of the railway. Today the Avon River is a key attraction of the city as the setting for Canada's premier Shakespearean Festival. Several towns along the South Branch also owe much to the river, including Ingersoll which was an early mill site and later a centre of cheese manufacturing. Likewise, the development of both St. Marys and Mitchell on the North Branch was heavily influenced by the opportunities afforded by the river; in the case of St. Marys the combination of mill sites and the quarrying of the limestone bedrock have provided for a unique built-heritage.

Finally, London, as the major city on the Thames, can trace its origins to Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe's identification of "the Forks" as a prime site at which to establish a city, and to the initial realization of the administrative function, aided by Thomas Talbot's courthouse building. London's early industrial development focussed on the several mill sites along both the north and south branches of the river, with the availability of water and water power contributing not only to grist mills but to the establishment of brewing which provided the basis of what remains a major local industry and a nationally significant company. The Thames has remained a key element in London from a recreational point of view; river floods have been both major events and, finally, a catalyst for the development of Conservation Authorities and the multipurpose Fanshawe Dam and reservoir. Over the last year, through the community-based "Celebrate the Thames" events, London has reaffirmed its links with the river and the river's importance to the city.

While each town and city is unique, they are all tied together by their riverine origins. Each is in the process of rediscovering these common roots, including a new focus on redeveloping the river lands to realize and enhance the amenity values afforded by the river.

Human and cultural heritage is a many faceted concept, and the reality is just as complex. The Human Heritage of the Thames and its watershed is epitomized by the composite human landscapes created in close relation to the river and in which the river is inextricably a major part.

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