

# POLISHING THE CHAIN SEMINAR SERIES, PART 1: THE SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE OF WAMPUM DIPLOMACY

[Edited Transcript]

## SEMINAR VIDEO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFdxqLiAAk>

## DATE OF SEMINAR:

September 28, 2021

## SPEAKERS:

### Rick Hill

Writer, artist, historian, and curator from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory

**Dr. Alan Ojig Corbiere** Associate Professor, History, York University Canada Research Chair in Indigenous History of North America

### Ange Loft

Artist & Associate Director, Jumblies Theatre and Arts

## HOST:

**Dr. Martha Stiegman** Assistant Professor, Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change, York University



## MARTHA STIEGMAN:

Aanii, boozhoo, seigo, hello. My name is Martha Stiegman, I am an Assistant Professor here at York in the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change and I'd like to welcome you all to Polishing the Chain, this year's edition of our faculty's annual seminar series. It's a huge honour to be joined today by our very esteemed speakers: Rick Hill, who's a writer, an artist, a historian, and curator from Six Nations

of the Grand River Territory; Dr. Alan Ojig Corbiere, who's an Associate Professor of History at York and the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous History of North America; and Ange Loft, the Associate Director of Jumblies Theatre and Arts.

Rick, Al, and Ange are going to share with us some of their research, their knowledge and their artistic practice related to the visual and metaphoric language of Wampum diplomacy, and explore the context and symbolism represented in the Wampum belts associated with a number of treaties that are relevant to the lands now occupied by the City of Toronto.

The area known as Tkaronto has been caretaken by the Anishinaabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. I'd like to acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and I'd like to acknowledge that this territory is subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant – an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

There is a web of interconnected and sometimes conflicting historical treaties that have been negotiated on these lands; agreements that continue to hold continued relevance and possibility for the present. Central to treaty making within Indigenous diplomatic and legal traditions, is a commitment to return to council, to tend to our treaty relationships. As the talk associated with the Haudenosaunee-British Covenant Chain wampum goes, the chain must be revisited - it must be polished, or it will tarnish, rust and break. Our series, Polishing the Chain, aims to consider what it means to be a treaty person in Toronto. Today is the first of six public lectures that will be held over the coming year, that will explore the spirit and intent of Toronto treaties; the way Indigenous people have and continue to uphold them, the extent in which they are and are not reflected in contemporary Indigenous-state relations, and ask how we can better take up our treaty responsibilities, as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Torontonians.

There are many people and organizations that helped to make Polishing the Chain possible. So, I'd like take a minute to acknowledge the Toronto Biennial of Art, that's co-presenting today's public lecture, Jumblies Theatre and Arts Talking Treaties project, the Indigenous Environmental Justice project, and the York Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages, who along with the Faculty of Urban & Environmental Change, are co-presenting the

series as a whole. I would also like to thank Osgoode Hall Law School, York's Vice-President of Research and Innovation, and Lisa Myers', York Research Chair in Indigenous Art and Curatorial practice for their financial support.

I'd like to thank my colleagues Ange Loft and Victoria Freeman who I collaborate with as part of the Talking Treaties project. This series very much comes out of the work we have done together over the last few years, research and writing the forthcoming A Treaty Guide for Torontonians, that you'll hear a little bit about later today. And chi miigwech to my colleagues, Dr. Deborah McGregor and Lisa Myers, who've helped with conceptualization and fundraising for the series.

I'm going to pass the mic now, first to Dr. Deborah McGregor, who among many hats, now wears the hat for Director of York's new Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages. And then to Clare Butcher, of the Toronto Biennial of Art. They'll both say a few welcoming words. Then we're going to hear from Grandmother Kim Wheatley, who will offer an opening prayer so we can bring our hearts and minds together and start things off in a good way. After Grandmother Kim's words, I will introduce our speakers. And finally, just a few housekeeping notes – we've enabled live transcription, so for those of you who would like that feature, you can press the button that's labeled "cc" at the bottom of your zoom screens. And I encourage you all to use the chat, to have conversations with each other and also to post questions for our guests as they give their presentations today. And so, with that, I pass the mic to you, Deb.

**DR. DEBROAH MCGREGOR:**

Miigwech. So, I just wanted to say a few words to welcome everyone, cause really you didn't sign up for this to listen to me, but I just wanted to welcome everyone, and really a privilege to meet Rick, Ange and Al again, and Kim, who I hadn't met, but we have a mutual connection, so wonderful to see everyone. I just feel like this speaker series is just a perfect start for the Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages because one of the major focuses is to be able to establish those relations – how to be a good ancestor, and descendent in these lands and in these places. So I just wanted to just welcome you, and just so thrilled that Martha and everyone who's helping behind the scenes, like Tara whose doing all the technology, she's enabling us to all be here and others who made this happen. So, I'm going to leave it there but just wanted to welcome people in the chat to say where you are. I'm right now in my First Nation, so I'm really privileged to be looking outside at the nice

water on a sunny day, and again I'm just thrilled to welcome you and have you participate in this speaker series, in this section today and you're going to be as thrilled as I am when you hear these speakers, they are amazing people. And chi miigwech Martha, for working behind the scenes to make this happen.

**CLARE BUTCHER:**

Thank you so much everyone. I'm going to follow up, also trying to keep it short because I know there are so many wonderful voices here today. In that spirit of acknowledging relationships and thanks, I want to thank especially our esteemed guests today, as well as York University, and hosts and the team, for this partnership with TBA on the first event of this series, but also of our fall program this year, as we look forward to the second edition of the Biennial, which is going to open on March 26th, and run until June 5th in 2022, so what a way to begin. And I think shortly to kind of sum up what has been a very beautiful long relationship, just thinking to TBA's engagement with Ange Loft especially, and that continued collaboration, especially thinking of just a few examples of how that's shaped our work- with Ange's work with Victoria Freeman, which has resulted this year in an updated context brief which was started in 2018 and is really a living document that is now titled Indigenous Context and Concepts Brief for Toronto. Ange has been a member of the TBA advisory council in 2019 and a participating artist in both editions of the Biennial. And together with the Talking Treaties, which Martha mentioned and the Jumblies Theatre and Arts, we're especially looking forward to co-publishing the Treaty Guide for Torontonians which Martha mentioned is upcoming, and we'll also hear more about soon.

And I just wanted to take this moment to you know, welcome everyone here to continue to engage with these ongoing conversations, also with us. We have a wonderful upcoming conversation with Tanya Lukin Linklater and Karen Pheasant Neganigwane as part of Culture Days Ontario Fall festival on October 22nd, and we're looking forward to an upcoming digital publication release from TBA programs as well. But without further ado, I especially want to open the floor for a very important, also continued conversation, with Grandmother Kim Wheatley, who is an Anishinaabe Grandmother from Shawanaga First Nation reserve, has just really blessed so many with her generous knowledge keeping and sharing and I'm so honoured to be able to hand the floor to you, Grandmother Kim.

**GRANDMOTHER KIM:**

Aanii, boozhoo, seigo, Tansii, kwehkwwe, bonjour and greetings my relatives. I'm so honoured to be here this

morning to start us off in a good way, with a good heart and a good mind, and I acknowledge all of those beautiful words that have been spoken previous to my time. I have lit the smudge for you, and I am cyber-smudging each and every one of you, spirit knows no bounds. And so there's always room for smudging. That's the way we clear our minds, so we can hear things in a good way and we can clear our eyes, so we can see things in a good way, and we clear our ears so we can hear things in a good way, and of course, clear our mouths, so we can speak things in a good way. Sometimes we need a little extra smudging in that area, I think. And of course, I always take some to our hearts, because life can be really challenging and we've come through the last maybe 19 months or so in a very different and challenging time, so people are feeling a little heavy. So hopefully the cyber smudge will help lighten you today.

Mshiikenh n'doodem. Shkodeniigaam-waawaaskonyen ndi-zhinikaaz. Shawanaga ndoo'nji, kiiwetin zibii ndoon-jibaa. Anishinaabe kwe, Ojibway, Potawatomi n'daaw. I bring greetings in the language of my ancestors, as Anishinaabe life giver. I'm Turtle Clan, and I come from Shawanaga First Nations, and I hold an Ojibwe and Potawatomi blood lines that I'm very proud about, so I introduce myself in the language, because once we start the smudge, we open the door to spirit, and we want to make sure we are welcoming spirit in that good way and inviting our ancestors and our descendants to come and sit with us, as we bring our hearts and minds together on this day.

I am going to encourage each and every one of you to remember that life force that connects us all. In my language we call it nibi, water, and water is life. And we know that our bodies are over 85% water. So when we speak kind things for ourselves, that living, beautiful life force flows through us, is able to do the things that we ask of it on a daily basis. And on this day, I ask for peace of mind, good long life, and good health for each and every one of you.

I also want to acknowledge the four winds. Those beautiful beings, those powerful beings who come and clean the air for us on a daily basis, have returned for the fall change of seasons, and as we get ready for Binaakwe Giizis, I'm really happy to hear their beautiful songs, and I encourage you this day, to join me in giving them greetings and thanks. Of course, our mother, our first mother, our Earth mother, Shkakmigkwe, we always need give her thanks, for all the sacrifices she makes on a daily basis for our well-being. She never fails in her job, she's never too tired, or too unwell to take care of us, so on this day, I invite each and every one of

you to join us in acknowledging her continued care for us - each one of us - no matter or which kind of being we are, or which kind of person we choose to be on a daily basis. I also want to acknowledge Mishoomis, the grandfather fires, the beautiful one in the sky world, that lights up our days daily, and the one that we're able to create in our own right, to help connect us to those that have gone on before us and those that will come long after us. Also, it enables us to connect to our helpers, which are very important in our life walk. And so, we take time to acknowledge them with those tobacco offerings, that same oslo is the first medicine that was given to us to help us remember how to give thanks.

And then, you know, I want to bring our hearts and minds together and think about the first order of creation which is all the sands, the soils, the clays, the gravels, the rocks, the stone beings and the mountains, as the most ancient beings on Earth. They are the ones that hold our Earth Mother together, and they teach us about strength and resilience. When we are learning something new, like we will with Polishing the Chain here, we need to be ready to receive that in a good way. So I invite you to acknowledge those grandmothers and grandfathers on this day and offer greetings and thanks.

The second order of creation is all of the grasses, and the shrubs, and the trees, the bushes, the hardwoods, the softwoods, the berries, the hanging fruits and all the medicines. These beautiful beings nurture our bodies on a daily basis, so that we can attain a level of good health and well-being. They also sacrifice for us to be able to do that. They provide medicine for our bodies, and they also provide shelter from the elements and just endless beauty for our senses. And so on this day I invite each and every one of you to join me in giving them greetings and thanks.

I also want to acknowledge the swimmers, the crawlers, the flyers, the two-leggeds, the four-leggeds, those that live up in the sky world, and those that live beneath the Earth. These beings are elder brothers and sisters, they are clan members, they are food sources, they are companions, and they are profound teachers in our life walk. And so on this day, I invite you to join me in giving them greetings and thanks, for all of the things they do for us on a daily basis.

The last order of creation is the one that we all belong to, the human family, no matter what colour, what faith-based practice, what area of the Earth you come from, I acknowledge you, your ancestors, and your descendants on this day. As we come together, I encourage you to greet each

other and to treat each other with respect, with kindness, with patience, with openness. There is something to learn from everybody who crosses your life path. And as we listen to the esteemed speakers today, I'm quite sure we're going to learn something very deep and propound - hopefully life-changing in some ways, so that we can renew and restore our relationships into that place of balance and harmony, that our people, our ancestors, always intended and continue to nurture and support. When we come together in these ways, I always encourage you - and I know you're all technical minds - but to come from that space and go down to your heart space, and open that up to receive today, to listen in that good way, to listen without judgement or ego, but to try and learn, to try and hold, and then to try and share what you have come to learn, with those who are in your life circles.

Those are the words that I wanted to speak on this day to start us off in a good way, to slow us down to prepare us to receive, but also to offer respect and to offer gratitude for the wisdom and knowledge that continues to be passed down in all of the sacred ways that make up our teachings and our way of life, as First Nations, Métis and Inuit people as we're called in this country today. As an Anishinaabekwe, head or leader of the Fire Flowers, the name that I carry, it's my honour to start us off in that way. And I certainly hope those words and those nudges encourage you to remember who you are, what your responsibilities are and to be able to receive in a good way today.

Those are the final things that I will say, wishing you all a very, very enjoyable next couple of hours. I will be with you throughout making sure that the smudge is lit, and that I'm holding that space for you as we move forward. Best of luck to all of the speakers, I can't wait to hear you all. It's been an honour, to open us up, chi miigwech.

**MARTHA STIEGMAN:**

Chi miigwech Grandmother Kim. Chi miigwech for your beautiful words, that bring our hearts and minds together, that help us to acknowledge all of our relatives, and all of our relations on this territory, and that prepare us for the conversations that we're going to have today, as we consider our relationships with each other, that are of course anchored in our relationships with all of creation, and all of the relatives and all the relations that you've reminded us of and helped us to greet in this beautiful way. So chi miigwech.

It is now my great pleasure and honour to introduce our first speaker, Richard W. Hill. Rick is Beaver Clan of the

Tuscarora Nation. He is a historian, an artist, a writer, and a curator, who lives at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in so-called Ontario. Rick has served as the manager of the Indian Arts Centre in Ottawa, as the Director of the Museum at the Institute of American Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as the Assistant Director for Public Programs



Photo 1 - Map of the Extent of Settlements (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

Okay do I have your attention? We're going to talk about Wampum and its meaning, and how it came about, but we got to understand back in about 1609 the French came attacking. If you can see on this map [see photo 1], look how much of the area we used to control, have jurisdiction over. And then these four colonizing cultures show up, the French, the Dutch, the English and even the Swedish. A lot of people aren't familiar with them. Our territory, the Haudenosaunee territory, as you see was kind of around the Lake Erie, Lake Ontario. Anyway, the French came down from their communities and for whatever reason, decided to attack us as you can see in the Champlain's drawing that was published in 1613.

Now what the Dutch brought to us was a different kind of consciousness, in their ships. They brought all of these trade goods, but these goods revolutionized our life, and

not necessarily for the good. So we have to understand that treaty making as we're going to talk about it today, comes about when these different cultures come together. Our tradition was, you have to make an agreement with people. You got to find a way to seek peace. And so treaty making is not so much about the individual documents, or even the



Photo 2 - "What is the Two Row Wampum?" (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

We should all be familiar with this by now, there are two rows [see Photo 2]- it's aptly named - the two dark lines represent then the two paths of these vessels that met. The white represents the goodness of the river of life, upon which we meet. And it's these two paths we are going to talk about today. So the symbolism of that, is that the Dutch ship and the Mohawk canoe were put into the water side by side. And inside the Dutch ship were all of its laws, its traditions, its beliefs, its way of doing things, and inside the canoe was all of ours. And when they were negotiating this agreement, they said something very interesting. The Dutch man said, "What happens when the day comes, when people from the ship want to get into the canoe?" The Mohawk man thought about that for a while and said "Well, yep that's true. But it's also true that sometimes people from the canoe are going to want to get into the ship. So how about this? Whatever vessel you find yourself in, you will be governed by its laws."

That creates a dilemma for us within universities because well, whose law applies to us when we're in the 'university ship'? But the other thing the Mohawk man said is, "I don't think your people are going to find it very comfortable in the canoe, because the canoe is very narrow, goes down the river swiftly, and takes a great balance in order to maintain your presence in the canoe. Where if you're going to be in

a ship, loaded with hundreds of people, all kinds of cargo, you could be having a whole pow wow on the ship and really not be involved in where it's going." So there's two different ideologies at work here.

The thing that the Dutch also brought with them are this chain. They had a chain that they used for their anchor, but they also used chains like this to measure distances. That's how they mapped the whole of North America. So by measuring and stretching these chains out, they would define their turf. So, what happened when the Dutch and the Mohawk put their vessels together, they tied them together with first a rope. But then they started thinking about that, and you got to understand that the oral tradition of the Two Row is cumulative - it starts with what happened then, and continues on. But what they said was, "you know what's going to happen is that the rope's going to wear thin, it's going to break". So the Dutch said, "let's use this iron chain". So they say they made a three-link chain to tie those two lines together. The first link will represent that we're here in the spirit of friendship. We want friendship to continue. In order for friendship to continue, we have to have a good mind. In other words, we have to treat each other fairly, we've got to treat each other as if we're members of the same family, we have to have compassion for each other. We're also not going to deceive one another. And if we do those things, we have friendship, we use a good mind, we will always have peace. So think of this, this was the intention of treaty making with the newcomers, with the people on the ship. It was their intention, it was always our intention.

And it's based upon the old concept that we have. In many ways, treaty making is extending our concept of law and family to the newcomers. So this is a wampum belt that was made with the formation of the confederacy, we say about 1000 years ago, and it had these three principles. Again the good mind, so that's what kind it comes from, we have this strength, when two sides make an agreement it forms this bond, it strengthens the ties, and if you do all of that, you will then live in peace, in our word, Sken'no, means both peace and healthiness. That when you're at peace, you're at your primary healthy state. And if you're in the primary healthy state, you can't help but want peace.

We mentioned the Dish with the One Spoon, or as I'd like to say, the Dish with the Shared Spoon because there is this Wampum belt that has this little figure you can see, in the middle of this bowl. And it talks about our mutual responsibility to share what's in that dish. This is a concept we tried to share with the Dutch, the French, the English, the



Americans and the Canadians, that it's about sharing, it's not about possessing. You know one of the problems with the land acknowledgement is that it implies a possessiveness, and we got to get back to the sharing part. The land is here on purpose for use to share all the things that Kim shared with us this morning. We have a responsibility to share what's in the dish. So when our ancestors took that spoon shared within the dish that white rectangle represents a beaver tail, supposedly one of the most nutritious foods that you can have, the dark figure represents the dish, the dish is nature. There could be many dishes, the Great Lakes Dish, there's probably the Northern Plains Dish, the West Coast Dish, but the idea is that everything is in there, that you need to be healthy and well fed, and that we have this obligation to share.

So when the colonists arrived though, they brought some very different ideas in that ship, about land, women, religion, about law. We tried to negotiate the difference between these two. So there are many reasons why we would make a treaty, this is just some of them. Primarily to perpetuate that peace, to help one another, we're going to settle differences using our good mind, we're going to provide aid and comfort to each other. Sometimes it was to acquire land, but what I mean by that is they would say, "we need a place to live", and we'd say "of course, so you can live over here." I don't think our ancestors said "here's the title of that land, you keep it, don't ever give it back to us", they're saying "no, here you can live here for a little while."

And treaties were made, at least among the Haudenosaunee, but I think it's also true with the Anishinaabek and the Huron-Wendat and all along the eastern corridor, a way in which treaties were made. First of all, you have to kindle the sacred council fire because the fire is supposed to purify your words over it. You do this wiping of the tears ceremony to uplift the minds of the people who are carrying some grief, so they can, as Kim mentioned, hear you well, see you well and speak well. You have to bury the tomahawk, and I'll get to that a little more in a minute, but in other words, you put all the weapons aside and eventually, what you're doing is you're replanting this tree of peace, which comes from the Great Law. By making peace, by sitting or talking about peace, we are perpetuating what the great Peacemaker brought to our people 1000 years ago. And as was mentioned every now and then, you've got to polish the chain because, you know, things get in the way, sometimes neglect that causes rust on the chain.

But another tradition was to cover the grave. And we have to think about that, especially with what's going on with the

residential school children. And even the memory of some of these folks on these statues. The old thinking was, yes, crimes are committed, children and adults would be killed or hurt, so we have to atone for that. And once you atone for that, you cover the grave with a wampum belt, and you never mention it again. Otherwise, the wounds of history keep festering, and your mind gets attached to the wound rather than looking forward to the future. This is why then we would spoke this pipe at the end of the ceremony, to carry our words up to the sky world, where all of those beings are paying attention to us, and then we'd have this great feast, and cover over the fire in order to enjoy another treaty down the road.



Photo 3 - "Treaty Making Icon" (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

This [see photo 3] is an icon from one of Sir William Johnson's documents, it'd give you like a passport for safe passage, and it was very intriguing to me. Now this is probably May in the early 1700s, but it shows a treaty council meeting. But let's take a look at, kind of breaking down what it looks like, what it means. So we see the tree? It can be a treaty tree, it can be a pine tree or an oak tree, or an elm tree. We see the chain attached to it, to the both sides, the heart in the middle - you're bringing people together. We speak with one heart. We see the peace medal being offered, that the Crown would always provide presents to the people attending the conference, both as a customary gift as one of the signs of friendship. We see the pipe on the ground ready to be smoked, we see the council fire there. And then what intrigued me is the grass growing here, I was like, why would they put it down there? But then I recalled in the Two Row and subsequent treaties, when it was asked, how long should this last? The Mohawk man said "this agreement will last as long as the sun rises in the East, and sun sets in the West. As long as grass turns green at a certain time of year, as long as rivers flow downstream, downhill." So, it was really meant to last forever.



Photo 4 - "Assiduity: to Pay Constant Attention to What One is Doing"  
(screen capture from

The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

Outside of Albany, where this agreement was originally made, is this statue. So we see the Dutchman and we see this Mohawk man with a very small loincloth, and on it is "assiduity", and I didn't know what that word meant. I had to go back and look. And it says to pay constant attention to what one is doing. That is also the charge for treaty making. You have to pay attention to it, you can't just say "well it happened in 1710, and it's done with" - no, it's an agreement, it's a relationship that's ongoing. And that's what unfortunately we've suffered from, we haven't paid attention to this agreement. Notice what's missing in this icon [see Photo 4], we've got the ship on the top, but the canoe's gone.

So when we did gather together, we'd have a short ceremony. And we'd use wampum strings or we'd use whatever we have to basically wipe the tears, to unburden your mind, because you know, death and particular death and trauma can cloud your vision of the future. We would clean out people's ears, to uplift their spirit so that they feel like we can connect on a different kind of level. And then we will clear their throat which strengthens their voice, but also that strengthens their body. But by doing that, that very small but important ceremony, we healed each other, before we even spoke the words of treaty making. And I think that was very important. This is what also has come to an

end. So now, people with devious minds, people who are carrying unresolved trauma, people who have hard feelings about us, come to negotiate, but they don't really come to negotiate, they come to dominate the meeting. That's because their wounds have not been healed.

So remember this "Covering the Grave" I talked about? It's very interesting. Joseph Brant said: "We have forms and Ancient Customs which we look upon as Necessary to be gone through as the Proceedings in any Court of Justice." John Graves Simcoe was one of the first administrators of Canada, he said however "the King's justice must flow impartially to every person living under his protection - all men have a right to avail themselves of his Justice, and by the laws of the Land he can refuse it to no one." So we have two different kinds of concepts about law, and that's where treaty making was important to try to navigate. Between those two. If you have a strong relationship, you can do it. If you have a weak relationship, then one side tries to dominate the other.



Photo 5 - "Linking Arms" (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar).

The whole concept done at wampum making, or wampum and treaty making is to link our arms together [see Photo 5]. This is the way in which we show this friendship, and that's how we're going to seal this. So in this belt made here by Simcoe, it was interesting, see these two figures? They're holding hands, but look at the space between them. I was thinking about that, Alan is actually the one that reminded me that, some of the speeches, they talk about this love that is supposed to exist between us, where there's this heart that we share. Well in this wampum belt, I saw that heart between us. Now I don't if that's what he meant, but to me, that's what I'm going to say it means.

So when the British defeated the Dutch, they turned that iron chain into a silver Covenant Chain. You have to examine what the word covenant means, and how it has kind of





Photo 6 – Covenant Chain Wampum (screen capture from “The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy” Seminar)

a religious overtone both for the Dutch and the English, but here’s what they said when the Two Row was made: “The reason why we’re making this story, so that in the future, we can tell our ancestors and it will put their minds at ease that we still remember these words.” And I thought that was actually quite prophetic, that we need to know what our ancestors agreed to, what their intention was. So here we see the two parties of the chain, I’ll show that in just a minute, but it starts with that handshake, that friendliness, that openness, to want to join together. Then we tie these ships together, like I said, originally with a rope, which is replaced by an iron chain, becomes a silver chain. So that’s the concept - we are linked together. And in fact, in the narration of the turtle, it says, “one day, the children of the ship are going to be related to the children of the canoe”. We are going to become one family. And boy look at us today, isn’t that true? We have the blood of many people flowing through our veins on all sides. So really, we are one people, we just have to learn how to control our governments.

And this is probably one of the longest words in Mohawk, and it talks about the covenant chain, the thing by which we link our arms together, and we did it a long time ago, and it was meant to continue onward. Which is why you can see it’s such a long word (theontatenentshonteronhtáhkwa). But the Covenant Chain then has three principles as well. And these become an important part. We must have respect for one another. That’s sorely lacking in our relationship with Indigenous affairs through Ottawa. We have to learn to trust one another - oh man that’s really difficult given our history. But if we don’t have those two things, we can’t have the ongoing friendships. So we have to look at how do we built respect, how do we develop trust in order to get to that friendship? Well maybe we need to do that among ourselves first. And maybe our government will never be able to do that. But on a people-to-people level, I think we can.

So when you look at the Covenant Chain [see Photo 6], it’s the same thing. There’s that chain - it’s both that line down the middle of this belt, that represents this path of peace, is supposed to speak truthfully to one another. We have Indigenous people on one side and then the Crown or the allied people on the other side, holding that chain, and it represents those things we’re talking about. So in the old days, when the Crown wanted our attention, they would shake the Chain and reverberate across the Atlantic Ocean, onto Sir William, and then to our Council Fire. When we had an issue, we’d also shake that chain, but often times, all we ever got was a busy signal.

So here are some of the metaphors for treaty making. We’ll talk about the linking of the arms again and think about that, what that means, pre-COVID when you actually could get close enough to somebody to link their arm, or to shake their hand, or embrace them. This path has to be safe passage, we have to know that it’s ok for us to go and have difficult conversations. The hatchet becomes a metaphor because it’s used again as a weapon of war, and often times we would say “we have a hatchet stuck in our head because of what you’ve done, you have to remove that, ceremonially, you have to bury that hatchet.” Replant the tree, that I mentioned and then, then knowing again that the Chain is what holds us together, but when it becomes rusty we have to polish it, or when things begin to get a little weird, we got to shake the Chain, because we’ve got to renew our relationship.

So in 1701 they made the Nanfan Treaty to protect our hunting lands. But here’s our dilemma. You got to be careful about what you agreed to. Did our ancestors understand clearly in 1701 what these words in English represented? They talk about it, and about recalling what



happened between our people and developing this chain and renewing it ever year, but there's different language involved in that.

In 1710, what they call the Four Indian Kings, went over to meet with Queen Anne. She was the first female monarch that we made a treaty relationship with. We see this Mohawk man holding this Wampum belt. Unfortunately, we don't have the belt anymore. It really was just a gathering, of mutual admiration. She, however, gave us this silver chalice that's in the Mohawk chapel. Silver becomes a very important part of this connection, back and forth between our people. We used to give out these silver peace medals, out to our people who would gather at these. And look what it says: "Let us look to the most high who blessed our fathers with peace."

Treaty making is also a sacred function. Both sides believe the Creator, our god, was overlooking that symbolized by the sun, you can see this in this old medal. We see the tree again, we see the pipe, the council fire, and the men are sitting on two rows. I'm sure that's not what the artist had in mind but again, in my thinking, that's what it represents.

Joseph Brant in 1776 said this, and I'm kind of leading up because Alan's going to carry on from here: "The Mohawks have on all occasions shown their zeal and loyalty to the Great King; yet they have been very badly treated by his people." Now you've got to remember, Brant was one of the strongest allies the Crown ever had. "Indeed, it is very hard, when we have let the King's subjects have so much of our lands for so little value. We are tired out in making complaints and getting no redress." 1776. We're tired of making complaints and getting no redress. The Covenant Chain had fallowed. We're doing the same thing today. We're shaking that chain, we're trying to make out complaints and get these addressed, done- but it started very early.

And as we can see in this treaty council, both the British, this one shows a council that took place where there's a British, you can see them in their red coats, and the Natives sitting around there smoking a pipe. You see the Americans sitting in chairs, because they thought it was not proper for them to sit on the ground. And then behind them, are these men with big hats, the Quakers. The Quakers were there, just much like the Mennonites, believed in peace. They were there to give us some assurance that the words spoken by the Americans and the British were true. What they said, what they wrote to be true, because we learned to be very careful about that.

So, what do we do now? Now that the Chain has grown very rusty, and has the opportunity to break apart, we have to think about how do we restore this relationship? And unfortunately, there are two different ways of looking at that. There're the words on paper that get contested in court, and there's the intention of the Wampum belt. There's this one here, held by this guy, the one who went over to Geneva in the 1920s, trying to get the Haudenosaunee into the United Nations. We need both sides, both stories, both understandings of what that treaty relationship is.

But to review then, the Covenant Chain concept, and the reason why we have this Wampum, it teaches us about this format, these things we need to do. So we have to acknowledge each other as allies and friends, we have to help each other understand the nature of the issues, we've got to make amends for any transgressions that took place, we have to offer these expressions of condolence, and really mean that, "we're really sorry what happened to your people." And we have to seek justice on a whole variety of matters. But if we do so, we'll renew this peaceful and prosperous relationship. And then we can agree on a mutually beneficial course. We're kind of just now at the top, right, the first part. The Truth and Reconciliation, the Murdered and Missing Women, the Royal Commission, we're just kind of starting that, we're beginning maybe to move into the inform stage, we've got a long way to go. And I'm not sure we can get there, because well, you elected him, so the question is, can this man (Justin Trudeau) help lead Canada to recover the kind of relationship we had with Indigenous people that's based upon a profound Wampum diplomacy? Can we recover a way in which we can become true allies of one another? I'm not sure, but that's the next part of this story. So that's what I had to share with you today, to give you some ideas to think about, and we're going to turn it over I guess for Alan to continue on, to talk about what happened since the time that I presented with you. So, thank you very much.

**ALAN OJIG CORBIERE:**

Nanaboozhoo Anishinaabedowag. Niins Ojiig. Bne n'doodem. M'chigiing, maampii M'chigiing ndi-ndaa miinwaa ndoo-njibaa. N'chinendam dash kii-wiikjiw ngo aw wii-bi-dbaademaa gaa-zhiwebag maampii mshiikenh-minising nga-kid ggweji Anishinaabe ntam. So I always try to speak a bit of Ojibwe at the beginning. It took me a long time to learn that bit that I could say. I just worked hard at learning a bit, I can speak a bit of Anishinaabek but you have to use it and keep using it and practicing.

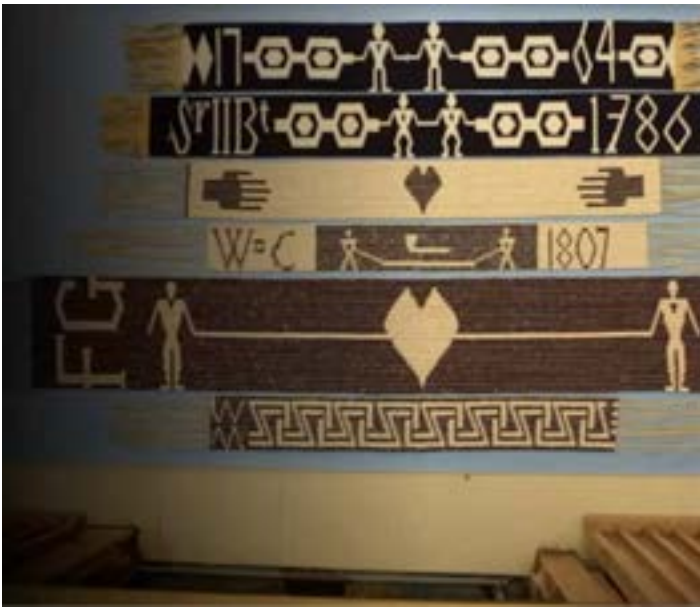


Photo 7 - "Evolving Symbols" (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" seminar)

These [see Photo 7] are, on the screen here, these are various iterations of the Covenant Chain, as given to the Western Confederacy. I didn't put the initial one up there, that was given to the Huron, who are considered the uncle of the Confederacy. We have a number of different belts, and they used to keep this at a place called Brownstown, southwest of Detroit. And that's where a lot of these Wampum belts were kept by the Huron, as the uncles of the Western Confederacy. But a number of these were also kept with the Odawa as the elder brothers of the Three Fires Confederacy. So those top two belts are the ones kept by the Odawa and those eventually made their way to Mnidoo-Minising, or Manitoulin Island, what is called Manitoulin.

This handsome fella is Jean Batiste Assiginack, and Assiginack was an Odawa war chief who fought during the war of 1812, but he actually became a keeper of the Wampum belts, and he also was an interpreter for the Indian department after the war of 1812 and leading up to a number of treaties in our area he actually also acted as an interpreter at the annual delivery of presents. The annual delivery of presents is actually part and parcel of the Covenant Chain, and the annual delivery of those presents all those cloths, those guns, that ammunition, that tobacco, and the net thread and the cod lines, all these different implements that were used, given to us to get our livelihood off the land, which we would call, now, Aboriginal rights to hunt and fish, that the Crown was actually supporting that by giving us all of these means to do so.

So anyway, that's part and parcel of this Wampum belt, but

that's a bit of a different talk. One of the things that I like that he said, this is in 1851, this particular quote - although he was also influential in getting the 1836 Manitoulin Treaty signed - and in 1851, they announced that the presence would be discontinued. So by this time, it was like 80 years old plus, so somebody took down his testimony, he says, he's quoting what Sir William Johnson had said, "My children, I clothe your land, you see that wampum before me, the body of my words, in this the spirit of my words shall remain, it shall never be removed, [...] the Indians being my adopted children, their life shall never sink in poverty." One of the things I learned from Rick a while ago, and this quote actually confirms that, I guess for our Anishinaabe people, is that we believe that the words spoken over Wampum, that Wampum actually acts as a recording device, in our telling of it. And if somebody is gifted enough, they're able to be inspired by that or transmit those words that were spoken over that original belt.

So that's why it's important to get the original belts back into their communities, and to have our people keeping them. And to re-establish that connection, even though we talk about reconciliation in different arenas, I think that's one of the ways we're trying to reconcile, is a lot of these pipes, Wampum belts and other implements that were given as diplomatic gifts to Sir William Johnson, but also other commanding officers, at various posts throughout the Great Lakes area, that these were actually given as gifts of unity and alliance. And the words that were spoken there are what I'm going to try and talk about here as well. So, I like the phrase "I clothe your land", it's just very evocative. And the Treaty of Niagara and the Covenant Chain, as well as the Wampum belt that we colloquially call the 24 Nations, but I actually would like to call it the "Eternal Promises of Presents".

In Detroit in 1761, Sir William Johnson actually came to the Western Confederacy, and actually extended the Covenant Chain at that time. And according to different scholars, he kind of upset the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, because they wanted to be the ones to broker that. Anyway, he kind of overstepped them, in that sense. But this is a Chief from the Toronto area called Wabbicomicot, and this is his speech at 1761, after of course, 1760, the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. "Brethren of the Mohawks - [...] our brother Warraghiyagey who has now brought peace to our country, which was a tremor and has [fixed our hearts] in their proper places which before his arrival were fluttering and knew not where to settle. We now take him by the hand as all the Nations have done, with a certainty that nothing can separate us, we give him now this bunch of green wam-

pum, which has the power to dispel all darkness by night or by day, and will lead him through any part of our Country without stumbling or hurting his feet; and this pipe which is known by all the Nations here, I give to you Brethren of the Mohawks, to smoak [sic] out of it in your councils with your brother Warraghiyagey, the smoak of which shall be seen and shall reach to the most remote Nations.” Delivered a bunch of Green Wampum to Sir William and a calumet of Peace to the Mohawks.

So these days, a pipe, you see a lot of pipes that Anishinaabe people carry and other people carry, and the actual pipe stem is from your fingertip to your elbow. But these pipe stems that we’re talking about came from your heart to the end of your fingertips, these calumet pipe stems. And this is one thing that I’m researching, is how were they able to distinguish, because a number of different nations, when they come to the Treaty of Niagara, they deposit their calumet pipe, and they all make this similar proclamation that all the Nations know this pipe and know this pipe to belong to our nation, so they know that we are allied with the British. Now Green Wampum, I used to think it actually meant literally green wampum, and there are belts, some belts that have been painted green, and then of course there are these fake wampum beads that are green. But I was told by a colleague of Rick and I, named Marge Bruchac, that she says that green wampum means that it’s unprocessed, that it’s not formed into beads yet.

one by it is actually his heart. And the Anishinaabe quite often say in their speeches ‘give me a heart’, meaning I want to be allied with you, and they were actually referring to a medal. So here I think in the dodem, in the Eagle dodem, this chief was of the Eagle Clan at the Toronto area, and he actually has that medal, that the medal actually would be referred to as a heart sometimes.

So anyways, “Wabibicomot, Chief of the Chippaweighs living near Toronto and six others of his people came in, handed him a calumet to smoke out of, and after handing it to all the officers present,... - that for his part, he was determined to hold the English fast by the hand.” So on the previous slide I had actually highlighted as well, this phrase, “hold the English by the Hand” and Rick mentioned this linking arms, as well as taking people by the hand. So this is what I wanted to actually talk about here, as one of the metaphors for treaty relationships. “And not forget what he heard Sir William say to him, and the other Nations at 1761 at Detroit, - that he was very poor and hoped his Brother would consider it. Gave a black Belt with five circles of white.” Of course, back in those days, they would call that deep, deep purple, they would call it a black belt, but it was actually of course, deep purple, not the rock band of course. It was actually, apparently the environmental conditions preclude the Quayog shell from growing to its former age, and is no longer able to produce that deep, deep purple. Anyways so Wabibicomot gives this belt



Photo 8 - “Saturday July 28th, at Niagara, Sir Wm Greeted Wabibicomot a Chief of the Chippaweighs living near Toronto” (screen capture from “The Symbolic Language of Wampum Discovery” Seminar)

So again, this [see Photo 8] is Wabibicomot, the Chief of the Chippewas living near Toronto, and you see here he’s got his medal that Rick explained, he’s wearing his medal. A colleague of mine says he’s wearing two medals, but actually I think that’s the medal (what he’s wearing), and the

with five circles of white on it, so this is a belt - you can’t get a perfect circle on a wampum belt, you can get hexagons and others, octagons as well. So this was just to show what this belt might have looked like, this isn’t the original belt. And then of course, this is Sir William Johnson, and this is the Treaty of Niagara, and he actually, his secretary wrote down these words that he had actually said at Niagara.

One of the things when I actually served as- the lawyers in our area actually got me to be an expert witness about the Covenant Chain at our court case on the Robinson-Huron Treaty. Anyway, what my report was about was the Covenant Chain. So one of the things is the Government of Canada and the provincial Government of Ontario both deny that the Treaty of Niagara is a treaty. They don't say it's a treaty, they just say it's a congress. And when you read Sir William Johnson's papers, it'll say the Congress of Niagara. But he refers to it earlier as a treaty in February when he writes to his superiors that he's going to engage in a treaty and that he's going to deliver a Wampum belt with intelligible figures thereon. So anyway he says: "You have now been here for several days, during which time we have frequently met to Renew and strengthen our Engagements, and you have made so many Promises of your Friendship and Attachment to the English that there now only remains for us to exchange the great Belt of the Covenant Chain that we may not forget our Mutual Engagements." So again, the use of the term engagements is used instead of clauses and later on as Rick mentioned, you see that the treaties don't become talked about as mutual engagements, the treaties actually have specific clauses of seeding and surrendering and abrogating and derogating. Our earlier formulation of this was more in line with Indigenous forms of entering into a treaty.

Niagara. And they wrote a petition in the 1880s, saying that all they would have to do to restore the presents, was to visit the successor, at the throne of England, with the medal and the treaty, meaning the Wampum belt. In our language we call this miigis, wampum is called miigis and apikan is a thump line. And in our language, gchi-miigis-apikan means a thump line of wampum. The way I understand this, I should say is why we call it that, actually it does resemble what the English called a Wampum belt, the French called it collar, and that it was a collar, but the Anishinaabe called it apikan, a thump line. But now this word actually means a harness for a horse, but to me why it's important, the cultural understanding of that is when we refer to this as a thump line of wampum, the burden strap, where actually the burden is the message, or the talk thereon. So if we actually look at this as embodying the spirit of the words, that Wampum belt actually can be pretty heavy.

So again, returning back to the Treaty of Niagara, Wab-bicomicot and Johnson then actually have somewhat of a private exchange, cause that previous belt is called the Covenant Chain that was given to the Western Confederacy. And initially, Johnson wanted to give it to an Ojibwe chief but the Odawa ended up being entrusted with it. Anyways he says: "Then Sir William, produced a large Belt with a Figure representing Niagara's large House and Fort, with

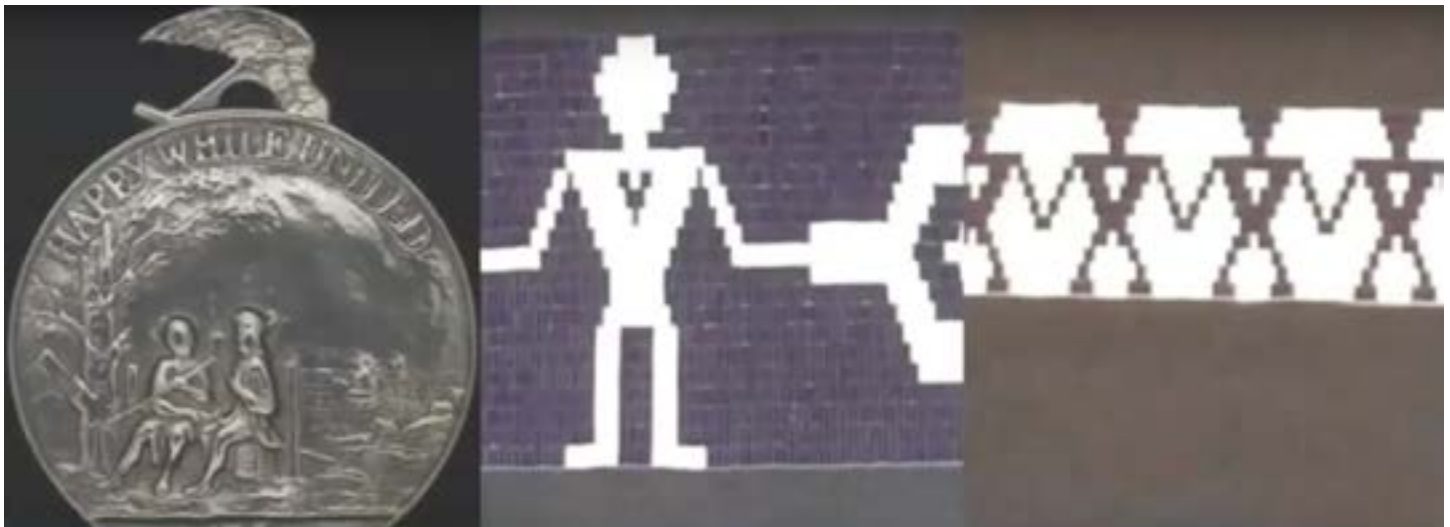


Photo 9 - "Happy While United" Medal (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

So of course, Rick showed this medal [see Photo 9] as well and about the linking hands and here, this is the medal, 'Happy While United'. This was the successor medal to 'Let us look to that who is most up high'. The Quaker medal they called that one. But this medal was also used as a mnemonic device, and the chiefs later in our area, on the North shore side of Lake Huron, actually looked at the medal and the Wampum belt as the two components of the Treaty of

two Men holding it fast on each side, and a Road through it, and desired that he, Wab-bicomicot and his People would come, and settle at their old Place of Abode near Toronto, and have a careful eye always over said Fort, and Carrying Place and see that nothing should hurt either, as they must feel the Loss as well as the English and gave a Belt."

So this belt actually has a pretty good description. So I wanted to try and get it restruck, or made, and this is kind of where I mentioned earlier that I like to show these kind



of things to Rick to see what he would think is how we ended up coming up with some of this stuff. So Wabbicomicot, the speaker, “holding the belt which Sir William gave them last year.” Of course, this is 1765. “Brother – Ever since you first took me by the hand after you had taken Niagara, I profited by your advice” (He repeated all that had been said to him in 1759, 1761 and 1764). It’s regrettable that they actually didn’t write that all down. I’m really curious to see what Wabbicomicot actually said when he reiterated all of those promises that were made in those subsequent years - 1759, 61 and 1764. “Brother – You are at one side of the great house at Niagara & we are at the other side, we shall therefore on our side take particular care of that great house as you recommended it to us. Then picked up the Sir William belt. Brother – I saw with pleasure the happiness which reigns around the posts, the sky is now clear and the sun shines bright at Niagara and the Lake being smooth I resolved upon coming down with these my people to enquire into your health, to repeat former engagements...we are now settled near Niagara as you recommended to us on a long [River].” So this long river is often on the West side of the Niagara river, and it’s referred to as the Great River being the Mississauga territory.

So here I wanted to look at extant examples that depicted a house, and of course this top belt that’s wrapped around there was given to the Haudenosaunee by the 13 Colonies, the Americans and it depicts a house. And the one that’s in the middle is a crop of the one that’s below. This one below is at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC, and it’s called the Belt of the Great Union and it’s attributed to Tecumseh, but the research that I’ve done I think, it’s actually a belt that was given to the Odawa at Michilimackinac after the Jay’s Treaty, and after Michilimackinac was awarded to the Americans. And this is then a belt to say that the garrison and the British Council Fire would be moved to Saint Joseph’s Island, that’s what I believe this belt is, and this is forthcoming. Anyways, so this is how they depicted a fort and their store houses on a belt here.

So I asked my buddy, Brian Charles, Anishinaabe from Georgina Island Shoonyang jibaa maaba Anishinaabe ntaa zhitooon miigis apikanan, ntaa miigis apikanike maaba Anishinaabe. this guy he’s good at making these Wampum belts now, he just more or less taught himself and started making looms and getting different things together. Anyways, he used graph paper to come up with some preliminary designs and so this first one with the graph paper is two men on either side of the fort, and I told them I like this, that’s actually a topographical view of the fort at Ni-

agara, the outer perimeter and then the house inside is to him, to represent the storehouse. I said that’s too elaborate I don’t think they made them like that. Anyway, then he re-read the description of the belt and he said that he interprets it, that there’s the fort at Niagara and the storehouse so that’s why the second drawing has the two men on either side of the fort and then the big storehouses on the other side. Anyway, his supplier of Wampum beads in the states ended up going out of business, so he never got around to making his design, and then a fella named Richard Hamell, we had discussions and he ended up coming up with this design, and he made the bottom one. And that’s the Wabbicomicot belt as imagined by Richard Hamell. And he asked my opinion, but there is an argument to be made that the road would be down here on there that they would be standing on. But these are all of course just conjecture.

So I would put these words together in our language to see how they actually would talk about that. Gii-dkoninjibnidzimi ezhi-wiijkiwending – “we tied our hands in friendship.” And dkonjibnidzimi is actually, a police officer in Ojibwe is called dkonwewinini and that means he grabs him, and then dkonaa means you tie somebody. And then the word under it there, gii-zgininjiiipnidimi ezhi-wiijkiwending is a synonym basically, but ‘ninjii’, our language is agglutinative and it works like Latin, where Latin incorporates a lot of morphemes and you just stick in initial morphemes, and medial morphemes and final morphemes to get different words. So you’ll notice here, the ‘zgi’ on the second word, and the top word, with the ‘dko’ are the two initial morphemes that change. And then in the middle is ‘ninjii’, and ninj means my hand. And then ‘pnidimi’ is actually the morpheme that we tied ourselves together. Anyway, the other word, the other synonym, instead of the tying literally our hands, ‘zginkenaa’ - I hold hands with him. But to me, the way I see that, ‘ngii’ is our arm, and “zginkenaa” I take him by the arm. But now actually, instead of saying I hold hands with, it’s no longer translated literally “I take him by the arm”, link him by the arm. So why I put this ‘zginkenaa’ follows by ‘zagaswaa’ to me, the initial morpheme of zagaswaa is ‘z’ and zginkenaa is the same thing, ‘z’ and it means it’s attached or the fixes. But when you smoke a pipe, or you smoke tobacco, zagaswaa - I’m going out on a limb here but I’m actually saying that you make a connection with the spirit when you smoke that tobacco. That’s what I would say, but I could be challenged on that and I don’t mind being challenged on that.

So our other word is ‘zagaswe’idiwin’ and that’s a word for council, but it actually, ‘zagazwe-o’ if I say to Deb \*Ojibwe\*, I’m saying to her, give your mum a smoke or give her

tobacco. So that's what the Anishinaabek say to each other, especially when they're referring in ceremony, give him a smoke, or give him a pipe. And then that's when you're actually taking on a bigger obligation there. So 'zagaswe'id-iwin' means a word for council, but it literally means mutual smoking. Where everyone is smoking a pipe together. So again, 'zagataagan', that is a word for tinder, and when you start these fires, with that striker, then that's what actually the spark falls on there and then zagataagan then it means it catches that, the flame attaches to that.

naabeg pane kidowag "Aanii nijii/ Aanii n'wiiikiwenh". "hello my friend", n'wiiikiwenh means my friend, and in the older times it actually meant also my brother, and when I started off this talk, I said nijii-bmaadzig my fellow earth dweller here. Nij means accompanying. Anyway, that's the words that they used.

So here of course, everyone wants to be associated with Tecumseh, but in 1810, he came to Amherstberg, and he had by that time removed his belt that the Shawnee had,

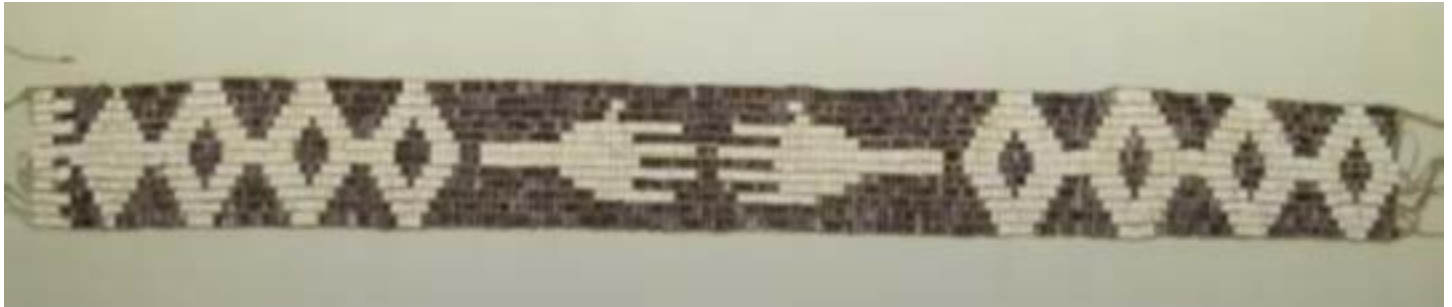


Photo 10 - Belt from the McCord Museum in Montreal, Quebec (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy")

So, this is a belt [see Photo 10] at the bottom that's actually at the McCord Museum in Montreal, Quebec. Gi-zaginin-jiinigoo dash aapji gichi-weweni gakina go Anishinaabeg 1868. This is actually an actual phrase from one of the petitions from Manitoulin Island that was written in Ojibwe. So I was using some of these words, I asked the elders, and others came from archival documents.

This is A.E. Williams papers, at the Archives of Ontario, actually contains many papers from a movement from the United Indian Bands, and this was in around 1890s and early 1900s, and they were trying to get a lot of their treaty rights recognized and they wanted to send in documents and stuff and a fellow was collecting all this, to try and argue their case. Anyway, this thing is written in Ojibwe, this document, it's not signed or anything, but it's in Ojibwe, and it's written in what I would call the Methodist or Anglican way of writing Ojibwe. So you see that second line there, this had no English translation, and I had to sort this out, and then once I started writing it out, and figuring what the words were, then I was like 'oh this is the treaty of 1836'. So that's what it says at the bottom: "aw gi-gichi-kooswaa, gichi-ogmaa, gaa-dazhi-zagininjiinaneg giinawaa endanakiiyeg imma N.A. iw dash gii-ozjitooyeg iw wiiikiwendiw in iw go gii-aabiji'ag aw miigis." So it said: "at which time and place, your great father the king and the Indians of North America tied their hands together by the wampum of friendship". So 'wiiikiwendiw in', sometimes you'll hear people if you're in Toronto, the Anishinaabek, usually say to each other "Aanii n'wiiikiwenh". Anish-

and he says that "Father - we have a Belt to show you which was given to our Kings when you laid the French on their back. Here it is Father, on one end is your hand, and on the other that of the red people (both hands in black wampum but the Indian end of the white belt darker than the other) and in the middle the hearts of both. This Belt Father, our Great Chiefs have been sitting upon ever since, keeping it concealed and [ruining] our country [...] He ordered the Belt to be passed round and handled and run by every person present saying they would never quit their Father or let go his hand." So this is another process that they would do in these council meetings, to show that they agreed with the treaty, as they actually to touch the Wampum belt, or run their hands through it. So this was a Shawnee one, but I've got examples where Anishinaabe people also did the same.

So I want to say, at the bottom here, this belt was made again by my maaba n'wiiikiwenh gii-zhiitoo maanda miigis apikan. my buddy there Brian Charles made this one at the bottom. So he took it that their heart is in the middle and listening to again, like I said, I learned this from Rick Hill, sometimes what I think this actual heart would be, Rick has said that sometimes, two overlapping diamonds on a belt will represent a heart. That is the two chambers of the heart. So sometimes I think this belt, actually, instead of the valentine, it actually would have two diamonds over it. But you know, it was valentines, maybe they gave it to them for that too. And this belt shows the hands, and that's the thing as well, so this was kept with the Shawnee.

And this of course is Tecumseh's brother, the prophet, Tenskwatawa. And he was painted by George Catlin here.

But him and the Shawnee King, they called him their great Chief, the King. Anyway, they came to Amherstburg, and they brought that belt again and the Shawnee King rose, and this was after the war of 1812, holding a belt of Wampum, all white, except at each end, representing hands stretched out and in the centre, a heart of black Wampum. “Father – this Belt represents your hand extended to ours and a heart in the centre meaning that our hearts and hands be one. Now father, we give you this belt in token of our Friendship and that our hearts & hands, is at our Great Father’s command, as it has always been. We hope and trust you will not abandon us in our present distress.” So again, that belt actually was kept by the Shawnee and then they extended one again.

So here, I got this from an older book, and I’ve always found it very instructive but I’ve never found the belt itself. But this was by Jonathan Long, a fur trader and travel writer. He says the British Confederacy, kept a belt and what the Delaware entered into a treaty with- the “Delawars, Mingoes, Wyandots, Miamies, Chipeways, Ottawas, and Pottawatimies offensive and defensive are members of the council fire. The first nation of Indians who joined were the Shawanoes and Delewars, and the other nations fell in or joined afterwards. The British as the head of the confederacy have the large belt of white wampum, of 6 or 8 inches wide, at the head of which is wrought in blue greens of a diamond shape, which means the British nation.” So that’s the important part that I wanted to convey here, is that the older system of indicating a nation was a diamond. “The next diamond in the belt is the first Indian Nation who joined in alliance with the British by drawing the belt through their hands at the council fire and so on, each nation of the confederacy has their diamond in the belt, those diamonds are all of the same size and are placed in the belt at equal distances from each other.” So here, I don’t know how long this belt is or how many diamonds were in this belt, but of course here you see that they got the Delawares - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 - and the Shawnee - eight - so it would have been at least 8 diamonds on there, but it’s likely more.



Photo 11 – The 24 Nations Belt (screen capture from “the Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy” Seminar)

So later on, this gets converted into what we now, like I mentioned earlier, what we call this 24 Nations belt [see Photo 11]. And now they actually use men with white

hearts, tied together by the strong cord of friendship that Rick talked about. And here this is the Rock of Quebec some say, other say it’s all of North America. But all these 24 nations, 12 are representative of the Western Confederacy, and 12 are representative of the Eastern Confederacy, meaning the Haudenosaunee people, Mi’kmaq and Maliseet and Abenaki people, and others. Whereas the Western Confederacy is Odawa, Ojibwe, Menominee and others. And then of course, that ship, or the promise was that that ship would never be empty, that would always be full, whatever we required. And that of course, why I began this presentation with the Assiginack excerpt, he says “I clothe your land, and that you will never sink into poverty. And that’s what this belt represents. But I want to just show again that the diamond then becomes an anthropomorphic figure.

So here this is 1770, and these are the Mississageys from La Bay Quinte, Shanneyon is Georgina Island or Lake Simcoe, and the River Pemidashkoudayan is Rice Lake. So those are Mississauga people. And he says, they came down to visit Sir William Johnson, and he says “Father – We beg you will hear our two towns Pemidashkondayan and Shanneyon. We cannot enough express our joy in seeing you the head chief of all Indians and to come and light our pipe at the great council fire, which you keep always burning at your house, where all Indian Nations assemble and smoke the pipe of peace and address you as their father, laying our petitions and grievances before you.” So again, Rick mentioned and touched upon the importance of the council fire and the importance of meeting together, as well as the importance of smoking the pipe. What I didn’t mention is, part of that 24 Nations eternal promises of presents, every year that the British came and delivered those presents into the various posts, they had to and they did bring tobacco. They always brought tobacco. In all those lists, they always knew enough to bring tobacco. And that’s the thing that Rick mentioned, when he showed that picture of the Prime Minister. If he actually comes and brings that tobacco, to our pipe carriers and our keepers of knowledge. So then they gave a white belt of beads representing two figures,

the one Sir William Johnson, the other their Nation, taking a firm hold of one another’s hands, with the assistance of the Providence, which is represented in the cross.

So of course, this belt is one that belonged to Mohawk people. And it’s often called a two-dog belt, and you see

there's a big cross there. But on the actual Covenant Chain Wampum belt that was delivered to the Western Confederacy, and into the hands of the Odawa, you see these two, the Anishinaabe and Jaganash [British], that they tied their hands together in friendship, but there's a little cross there. And I often wonder if this is what that belt looked like, because I don't know what that, I'm talking about this previous belt here, I don't know where the original is and I've never seen it. And whether or not that is how it was represented is something to research further.



Photo 12 - "Miigisaabiigan/Miigis-apikan" (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

So here, again, this is another version of the Covenant Chain [see Photo 12] and this is, we believe, William Klaus, who is the grandson of Sir William Johnson, and they gave a belt to the Western Confederacy in 1807. And you see there, he puts that wagon, on top of that, and then the cord of friendship between the two, tying their hands together. But here, I found this sketch in the Klaus papers, and it says "FG" meaning Francis Gore, and it's two men on either side and then the belt on the other hand says 1808, and then it says black, white, black, and a white heart. So, I showed again, my buddy Brian Charles, and then I got him to, we discussed how to try and make this because we actually knew the number of beads that were used, and there was like 11,000 beads. So this thing really ended up becoming a big monster belt. And this was prior to the war of 1812. And this is one of the last instances of the British delivering Wampum belts to the Western Confederacy. And we haven't found the original yet but this is what Gore had said: "Children - it has been my wish and desire for a considerable time part to meet you in a General Council of all the Nations...to renew at this Fire place the antient [sic] friendship, which has subsisted for so long a space of time, between your Great Father, your ancestors and yourself and [even]tually and freely to communicate to each other in conformity to the engagements entered into by your Forefathers, and the English Nation...With this Belt I therefore renew all our ancient friendship and those ancient customs, which have been so wisely framed and agreed to by the general consent of all the Nations in the Country [...]" So again here, and Rick mentioned that heart in the belt that Simcoe delivered to the Western nations as well, but it was obliquely referenced in the so-called negative space.

So, I'm nearing the end, but I just wanted to talk about after the war of 1812. They're still using strings of wampum, and this is chief now from L'Arbre Croche, and then his descendants live on Sheshegwaning First Nation on Manitoulin Island, but he says: "Father - my chiefs now present and the village in general present their best wishes to you. The last time we saw you was at our island of Michilimackinac there you tied our hands and hearts with yours (made peace) - we remain still tied and united as one and since that time have not an opportunity of addressing you." And then it says delivered strings of Wampum. So, these are strings of Wampum that are currently held at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany. And they come from Emmet County in Michigan, which is where the Odawa had lived there.



Photo 13 - "Noosinaa: Our Father" (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

So, this [see Photo 13] is kind of the roll call of the belts, that were given to the Western Confederacy. And you see here, this bottom one, there's two diamonds, and on the other side of that, if you wrap this belt around in a circle, then you get two, the British and the Anishinaabe here, and then when you wrap it together you get the British and Anishinaabe here, in the older system. So I see it as a merging of two communicative systems and this belt is actually an effective way that they've done that. There's not much more time for me to talk about this but look at those hexagons as the chain links as well that are actually part of council fires.

So there's of course a lot more that Rick and I could share, but I think I went over time, and I apologize for that, but I ended up cutting out quite a bit. Miigwech gii-bzindameg ina'enchiieyeg maa Zooming Thank you all for signing up and logging in and participating and giving me time to explain a bit of what I've been thinking about lately.

#### MARTHA STIEGMAN:

Chi miigwech Alan, and niá:wen Rick for those just incredible overviews of treaty making between the Crown and the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabek, and for this history of the Covenant Chain over a couple of centuries. And for sharing with us your research and your under-



standing about some of the ceremony and the diplomatic traditions and the metaphoric language of Wampum diplomacy and the ways that those connect to the Indigenous laws that treaties are anchored in.

I'm going to introduce our final speaker now, Ange Loft. Ange Loft is an interdisciplinary performing artist and initiator from Kahnawà:ke Kanien'kehá:ka Territory, working in Tsi Tkarón:to. She is an ardent collaborator, consultant, facilitator and mentor working in story weaving, arts-based research, wearable sculpture and Haudenosaunee history. Ange is also a vocalist with the Juno and Polaris nominated band, Yamantaka // Sonic Titan. Ange is the associate director of Jumblies Theatre and Arts, where she directs the Talking Treaties project, and her current projects include A Treaty Guide for Torontonians, which is being co-created with Victoria Freeman and myself, and Dish Dances both of which will feature in the 2022 edition of the Toronto Biennial of Art. So please join me in welcoming Ange Loft.

**ANGE LOFT:**

Hi guys, thank you. Wahienhawi Iontiats. Kahnawake nitewakenon. Tsi tkaronto kenakere, Okwari niwakitaroten. So my name is Ange Loft, I'm from Kahnawà:ke Kanien'kehá:ka territory, I've been in Toronto since 2018. I've taken some Mohawk lessons so I've realized that I can't talk about these things without connecting up language! And over this pandemic time, I got a chance to do that, and so great to have you all together. Recognize a lot of names who are in the zoom room with us, so it's just really nice to have you all in one place. And I thank you all for the teaching you guys give me over the years, because I can't do this without the accumulation of all of your work together. My clan is Bear, so the clay that I'm made of is Bear, it comes with that little symbol, because, I'm going to return back to that because there's a bit of the embodied world of this agreement making, understandings I'm going to talk you through. I have a whole bunch of images and what I want to do with this is essentially let those images tell me what to talk about. Jumping off some of the things that Rick and Alan mentioned, and I hope I could kind of purposefully step on some of your toes, because we have some overlapping ideas. So I just want to see what it tells me to talk about. I'm going to share screen now.

I've been thinking a ton about mnemonic devices, what we need to do, let me just make this bigger for myself. What we need to do to be able to remember. Who we need to talk to, who we need to bring into the understandings. So I work at Centre for Indigenous Theatre, I teach, people coming

in from other territories who want to come here and learn about theatre and about making performances together. So one of the experiences I had this past two weeks ago actually, we got to bring a whole group of Native students, mostly Cree students, to this place on the Credit River. And this is one still, well just process imagery from the work we're creating called Dish Dances. And it's just so funny to me because I feel like I'm a filter for historians, where I'm like, I just want a little bit of information, and I'm going to pump it out in a bit of a surrealist movement image kind of thing for a larger audience to try and dissect and get their own meaning from, so let's see what's in there.

I'll tell you a little bit about some of the images I was thinking about when making this work. I just wanted to show you my beautiful cast and some of my crew. Some of these people have been with me for many years. When I started working on this project, I was thinking, how long does it take to make a piece of work that means something. You know, I get tired of this six-week turnover with theatre and creation and that's it, you're done. You know, so I work with Jumblies Theatre because they kind of accepted my long-term vision of how I wanted to work, and kind of coming back to a conversation over and over for years, and so a lot of these performers are people that have been a part of the work for a long time. I've been working with kind of the ineffable things that are hard to say, we interviewed a lot of people early on, and I kept getting back these really beautiful concepts, things like the water always remembers where it goes, and ideas about sacred and the spirit and I kind of was a little off-centre from getting that, what do I do with this? So, I started talking with dancers and people who can help me think through it.

And I just welcome you to take a little scoop of let's say, space matter, from where you are, and just kind of think about what you consider when making choices, and just let it kind of grow in your hand. I just want to give you that image so you can actually do it, I'm going to lead you through a couple things as we're going along. But just to let you know kind of what we're working with here, this world of literal responsibility for stuff, you know this idea that we have to actually care for and carry these objects and things that we really want to see in the future, and we have a responsibility for them.

So we've been thinking about this working embodied way for a long time. And I really get a kick out of the images that keep coming back with different audiences because as we talk about this, people pop up different visuals all the time and they tend to work in the same way, and I've been super

interested in some of the returning images, and what do they mean. I throw history at people sometimes and just see what comes back. And I think those things are really important. I was thinking a lot about this idea connected to what you were mentioning, and I wanted to encourage everybody to try this as a chance to shake up your body a little bit in space. So, this is how it goes. Talking about your arms, connection by your arms. So we know we can't touch other people, but maybe if you do, gently grasp both of your arms together, and I would love for you to use this as an excuse to give yourself a little warm up. Lead with one shoulder, see what happens if you lead with one elbow. What happens when you lead with the other elbow? You kind of have to hold on really tight you know? You have to hold on and try to pull it apart now, like see if you can slip and get to the fingers, like oh, god, I have to hold one, oh my god, my fingers are going to slip apart! It feels very like, lots of tension, lots of holding really strong. Now I'd love for you to shake that off and come back to it, but this time I want you to come back into it gently, and I want you to hold and move from that centre space between your wrists. But kind of use that hold between your arms to move around. Nothing's leading. Neither side is leading, it feels a little bit more chill, it feels like you've got something you really care for in there. I see the way some of you are moving, and it looks like you got a baby in there. So I just, I really love this kind of visual, this way of visual that helps you feel what it means to travel together, what it means to move together in a connected way, and then carrying some of that, we don't know what that looks like, right? That they held each other by the arms, and called each other brother. We have Peter Jones mention that later on in Toronto, that we have this connection. This is the way our forefathers sealed their pact together they held each other by the arm, and they did something you know, sealed that connection between each other. That's an old, old, old concept.

So I wanted to play with that a little bit, that's just only one aspect of this weird work I'm doing. This is a replica belt, we mentioned a little bit about this belt. Some people call it the Yellowhead Belt, I heard Alan mention just the day before, the preference to call it the Eternal Council Fires belt. And I was just struck by the idea of a place where we're supposed to meet on the Credit River. I don't know too much about this belt, but I do know that, kind of this responsibility of different clans and what their roles are, so I'm going to return to this conversation of what could have happened at the Credit River, what kind of stopped happening there, and where now, you know, what happens now.

So I got these great students to interact with each other. I actually divided them up so some of the kids, some students, some professionals, they're all from the east side, from Wiilwemkoong over to the east. And then the other group of students are from the other side, so they're all Cree kids, mostly, and people from - some Blackfoot children- they're not children, they're adults, they're students at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre, my students. But we were talking about that idea, how hard it is to tell people what to do when you're not in your territory. Like there's rules for your own house, there's rules for how you want to share, there's rules. I love the quote that I got here, which is just like, extending our idea of law and family to others. And you know, when we think about extending those practices to each other, working with dancers is a really great way, because we get all of that nice imagery, that imagery about coming clean, coming clean to an agreement, kind of acknowledging all the grief, and the trauma and all the problems that happened before, knowing that people, when they come into a new territory, are carrying a lot of baggage. They're carrying a lot of grief, they have a lot to clear out, they have a lot to kind of move through before they can make good choices and good communications, in a place.

So thinking about that with movers, it's interesting cause I think about beavers all the time, and this is a conversation I'm really intrigued by, this idea that you know, when we talk about the extension of the Dish in 1701 sometimes as part of the great piece of Montreal, it's really to clear a way for the French to you know, be able to get into the Great Lakes without being disturbed by other Indigenous nations, right? It's this way that they helped to secure peace between us, but I just...this is a beaver factory, this is how we make props, invite community members to come in and build things with us, this is way back in 2017 for the first version of the Talking Treaties spectacle.

This is just some beavers in action, this is what some of my shows look like so it's a little bit abstract but that's how I roll. We've been playing with this idea for a long time, I love this visual. This visual of the dish in Toronto, this visual of bringing people in and they're fighting over a beaver tail in this image here, the inevitable problem that people will take too much and that we will have to remind people of their duties. So, what does reminding look like in a good way? What does that look like to remind somebody and not feel like you're being too heavy handed? How do we decentralize who does the reminding? How do we feel like we know these understandings really inside our bodies?

This is some visual from some of the Dish Dance stills so yeah, we talk about beavers again here. You know, the inevitable problem that people will take a lot. So by 1701, we already decimated the beaver populations in around this area which kind of drove our reason to expand into the west a little bit more too, you know, to get the beavers with the good furs, and the beavers from the north. So I wanted to think about this image of that clear path between our nations, this visual, this connecting line that draws our two maps to be connected. And what does that look like? The journey between your place and this place, the journey between your home and another territory, like what does it feel like to be safe, secure, comfortable? What do you need to have in place to be able to feel like you can be in a location? Like you can be there safely. Some of that I will point to, I mean this is a bit of a roundabout narrative.



Photo 14 - Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

But I keep coming back to this visual of the Eagle [see Photo 14], and the duty of those jobs, of what was placed along the credit in that Eternal Fires belt. And the Eagle was placed at the council of the Credit, there's definitely somebody you know, the people of the Mississauga, now the Credit, now the New Credit And below I see again that tomahawk with the pipe attached to it. And there they are protecting essentially the peace between us, you know, upholding that, because if anyone shakes that tree they're standing on, on the credit, then their job is to swiftly go and warn all the people and call them all together for a council. So I have questions about that job. Who has that job now? To pull people together for counsel. What happens when you're not in a like a physical location that we can return to.

And I mentioned, but I just wanted to, this image is just something I just keep calling warning hand. And it's a large backpack puppet, but it's this, kind of like, it's a call to council, it's a call to stop, it's a call for help, it's a call for wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, we have something to talk about first! Before this gets out of hand, because we all know that agreements between our nations have had some trouble before. But we need to come back together to make it happen.

Just the location of where I shot this film would have been down the road a bit, or down the river a bit from the Credit River site, where the Mississaugas used to live, a long time ago. And I just get a kick out of, I just love this image here, it's now a golf course, but what happens when you're not in the physical locations that are connected to making agreements, that's the reason I brought people back to that location.



Photo 15 -The 1701 Great Peace of Montreal (screen capture from "The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy" Seminar)

I just wanted to point to image 13 here [see Photo 15], the mark of the Mississaugas: it's a bird, it's a large bird, might be an Eagle, probably an Eagle. But signed on the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, I sometimes wonder you know, what business do I have talking about this stuff? And then I'm like, actually my community would have been one of the people just above there, like the little Deer or the Bear, you know, the representation of people from Kahnawà:ke, we are connected, up and down St. Lawrence region. Thinking about what business do I have talking about the Great Peace? What business do I have talking about the Dish with One Spoon? Well, because my people were involved, heavily involved. And yeah, so I like drawing those connections down the river to and down into the past to my own home. And knowing that my home was the place where people camped on the shore you know, before going to this agreement in Montreal.



Photo 16 – (screen capture from “The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy” Seminar)



Photo 17 – (screen capture from “The Symbolic Language of Wampum Diplomacy” Seminar)

So just really interested in those kind of ideas, of also the layering of imagery we have for these territories [see Photo 16], the Eagle on the top of the tree, right? That’s a very Haudenosaunee idea, this thing that makes sure that the peace isn’t disrupted, that the tree won’t waiver, that our job as a people and a confederacy, people connected to each other is to hold our arms out to the side and to keep that tree standing up in case it starts shaking too much, right? The strength is holding up the side, onto each other, and holding hands, and maybe not holding hands, maybe holding arms.

So, these responsibilities of animals, responsibilities of different people that are in this area. So whose responsibility is it now, you know, when we talk about Toronto? Who has to remember, who has to be able to re-tell stories? My casts are really big, pretty diverse, pretty flexible. I just wanted to show you them and say they’ve learned a lot about this work. I’m glad to see a couple of you back on this call today, so nice to return to that talk. Same thing with my participants, my performers, I love bringing them back to remember something. I get a kick out of that idea that Rick and Al are saying like wow we’ve done this talk like quite a few times, I’m like there’s a reason why, because we need to hear it a million times, right? Like we need to be able to return to the information and bring it back.

So, I just wanted to bring you back to this visual of the thing in your hand [see Photo 17], that little question of when you’re making choices for Toronto, when you’re making choices for a place, what you take into consideration, what’s that first thing that pops into your mind, you know? Is it my seven daughters, is it my dog, is it my relationship to the thunders, what’s that first thing that pops up when you go “ah hah! I have to have that”. Is it the view from the top of my condo apartment out into the late? I just think about these connections. So, we ask this to some people at the Biennial in 2019, got a lot of responses, and they’ve kind of been made into these quilted tapestries, thinking about so how do we wear them, literally? You know, what do we do with them, they’re, how do we carry some of these responsibilities? And so, just thinking about some textile, wearable sculptures I’ve made for this presentation, and then working also with that same world of - so now how do we honour someone else’s cares, you know? Taking those images and using them as inspiration for choreography, working with dancers to look at those embroidery patches actually, of the answer to that question, what do you take into consideration before all else? And then you know, emerging them, pulling them out, working as, using those as material for choreographic explorations.



I just wanted to point to - we've been working on the water for quite a long time at Talking Treaties, we've been doing some film work, and some excuses to get closer to actual physical places, so bringing people to the locations. There's been a lot of historical narratives of protection of these waters, and they're not kind of like, they aren't just out of nowhere, and they aren't going away, so if you want a little thing to dig your teeth into, go check out the Water Claim, as part of the Mississauga's current Water Claim. They're thinking about those responsibilities and I owe a debt of knowledge to, actually just listening to the videos that you've had around and recordings from Rick, thinking about those ideas, you know, take what you need, keep it clean, make sure there's something for the future. Those ideas are, I like to imagine - what do people want out of these Water Claims? Well, you want to be able to put those rules in place in a tangible way, you know, you want to be able to not just be consulted but be invited to an earnest conversation. And as Al mentioned, these locations of where we were supposed to have these conversations are a little bit screwy right now, we don't know where to go to talk to the British government, we don't know where to go with the Canadian government. There's nobody inviting us to ongoing consultations, there's nobody asking us to meet together for council, and where do we go? Where are the physical locations? Even if it's outside of the actual you know, federal government's reach.

I wanted to point back to this visual, and I'm glad that you guys mentioned it before, but 'Happy While United', that's the promise made in 1764 to the Mississaugas. So when the Mississaugas went ahead and finished their dealings with the Toronto Purchase, they had this in mind still, you know, this idea that we'd be able to return to a conversation, we'd probably be able to return certain specific places that meant something to us, and I just wanted to point out on top there, I think that's an Eagle wing? I think so. So, under that same idea that there could be somebody warning us, there could be somebody whose job it is to make sure that this union also can't be shaken. So whose duty is that? Is it Toronto, you know the location of the leftover the I don't know, just thinking about those duties of the city, and people that are smart, who are living in the city, and remembering these things in a good way. Like what responsibility do we have to remind our governments that we're supposed to be united in a specific fashion, you know? Places like Fort York, physical locations that have a lot of space, I just think about the capacity of places like this for letting us come together in a good way and try to, you know, actually talk and figure it out. Like, I would love it if that would happen. I'm just really intrigued by these

places that kind of are remnants of British history, but that can bring us back together, and bring our conversations to a bit of, you know, a new generation.

So I just wanted to break this in because it's fun, thinking about the power of, I don't know, our non-human relatives. The conversations that we have to breach generations, to get through to different generations, the different visuals we need to bring people into the conversation. I'll just point out, this is Martha's son in one of these images, I just I see her smiling. This is from 2017, so this kid has grown up with this visual of the beaver, so what is that going to mean for when they get older, you know? What conversations will they be able to have about being in someone else's territory, about feeling like it could be your own territory, about making choices that are solid.

So the last thing I wanted to point to is some of this communication I started in the beginning. There's a visual that I really love, because I started thinking about Oneida sign language and really spent a little bit of time looking at the great YouTube videos that are available in Oneida sign language. And two of the symbols that I popped out were this idea of territory, this flat hand, this hand over it, and asking somebody like, what's your territory, where are you from? Like how useful that is to ask somebody in that way? And I could say I'm Mohawk, got three feathers here. I'm Mohawk, my territory's over there but this is where I am, I'm here right now. There's also this question I asked you, also, of what clan are you, what clay are you made of? And I just love that kind of way of talking about who we are and how we're connected and including - because it provides that white road. It provides that knowledge that we are actually kin, that we have a long history, that we have relatives in various places. And that we're supposed to keep talking about these things and it's a way to introduce ourselves. I asked this group of guys from Cree territory and Blackfoot territory, is anybody Bear? And these two guys are Bear. So I'm Bear, there's a lot of Bears in Toronto. But I just love that, you know, I said that, like that's you know, that is part of it. If you guys run out of places to live, come call me because I could probably have to put you up and give you some food! So those are kind of responsibilities to our, you know, distant relations, or things that can still be played out these days, and they really are. And how much importance it is to be able to have access and team up with the right partners and communities that have these waterfront properties, that have these places where we can go and sit together and have council and just discuss, and dance and be weird and talk about things that we can do in private, between ourselves you know. I just love that Naivelt gave us

this version, this is Camp Naivelt, a Jewish kind of socialist camp community. They like gave us this place, gave us a bunch of cabins and said go ahead, nobody bugged us. And I just like that kind of approach to sharing places. So, I'm gonna leave it there but thank you, that was just a look at Dish Dances, and kind of what's kicking in my brain, but I have so many questions that I would like to talk about, but thank you guys.

## Q&A

### MARTHA STIEGMAN:

Wow Ange niá:wen, thank you, that was incredible. It's just so exciting to see this overview of your incredible body of work exploring this. Thank you for that. We have about 10 minutes left for questions and before I give the floor to our audience for questions to the speakers, I wanted to see if Rick, Al, Ange, if you had questions for each other.

### ANGE:

I have a question for both of you, I mean thinking about bringing all of these other Native students into conversation in Toronto, what's, I guess it's kind of my own hesitancy around having these conversations as somebody who's not even from here. So, if you can just give some, I don't know, whose job is it to talk about these things? That's a question I have.

### RICK:

Well, I've been employed at doing this for quite some time, but our responsibility to talk about it is everybody. Even when you have questions and consternation, its only in conversation that you're going to get to work them out. You know, in that 1701 Treaty in Montreal, the Senecas arrived there earlier. And there was a Miami leader at the time there when he arrived - but he died before the rest of the Miamis arrived. So when the Miami delegation arrived, the Senecas had to say we're sorry to tell you but your old chief passed away. But don't worry, we've buried him according to your custom because we know it so well.

And that's kind of amazing when you think about it, the Haudenosaunee knowing Anishinaabek ceremony and able to do it. And there was a time when I dare say, we knew each other so well it was hard to tell us apart. That's why the Mohawks had to wear 3 feathers. So, I think the sharing of knowledge is meant to bring us together to get that thing that we're really one people, one heart, one mind, one spirit and now, one dance.

### ALAN:

I just like what you're doing Ange, and getting people dressed up as beavers and running around Toronto is a great idea and a big hand chasing them down Yonge St. is even better! And if people give you shit, or give you hell, then show them the hand. Tell them to talk to the hand.

### ANGE:

I think about that though, what images are too out there, and then I see the stuff on the belts, and I'm like it's not out, it's all there. You know I get a kick out of that, you know you have to just pull the visuals out and let people try to figure out what they mean when they're moving around. I'll let you take that, but I just wanted to see if there's any, it's not a second follow up question, but working on the Credit, working on places... where would you want people to meet and talk these days? How could that look? For both of you, if you wanted to meet and talk about these things, what would that look for you right now?

### ALAN:

We tried this in 2014, Rick invited me to Niagara and we had the honourable David Onley attend. So we went to the American side, to Fort Niagara in Lewiston, and the following day we went down to Fort George and gathered there as well. So, we were trying to use the forts as places of gathering as well, because they historically were. But what we wanted to do was to research more and some community people asked me but I don't actually know where, specifically. I'm glad you brought up that Eternal Council Fires Belt. But they talk about where those were ignited, in different places, but I don't know the specific place where it actually was. So, what I encourage you to do and what I like that you are doing, is basically fumbling around there along the Credit and trying to find where that actually is.

And like what Rick's talking about as well, of building and fostering and growing a relationship with the land and the river and the waters, like what Kim mentioned at the beginning, in the opening. Just building that and fortifying that relationship, and that means us getting out there. And when I see you and your troupe and your students, along the banks of that Credit River, I think that something's going to happen, something's going to reveal where and when, and then you'll know the why kind of thing. You kind of know the why, but things start to fall in place there, I believe.

### RICK:

Yeah, you know that's a good point, when you think about it, the Earth, the old trees, the rocks and the waters, they

heard all those words that were put into the wampum. And they hold the wampum memory. So by getting back on the land and getting connected to it, removing all of that crap that invades your life, you go right to the original teacher, right to the original memory. But you also have to be careful because some people will try to bring other things into it or try to disrupt that.

But we're also building, I think the perfect place for you Ange, down at Fort George, we found out where the original council house was built, back in the 1700s. That's where our people used to gather, Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee people, and we're making a metal space frame to show the volume of that with no walls, or ceiling. But we're working with the Shaw Festival to create it, an outdoor/indoor creation space. So we're working on that with a guy named Tim Johnson and the Landscape of Nations, I look forward to that for next year. Because there's something about returning to where our ancestors went specifically to make peace. And hopefully we can make peace among our young people.

Another thing about the Cree students, a lot of Cree students went to the Mohawk institute but they have been kind of left out of it, everyone assumes it was kids from Six Nations. And the Cree's story and connection to the Mohawk institute also has to be told. So, think about that there, about gathering them back there again, now it's going to be a very emotional journey, but I think an important one. When the Cree students first came there, they only spoke Cree and French, so the Mohawk institute actually had to hire French speaking teachers in order to try to re-educate those Cree kids. So the memory of what happened, both at the residential school, the memory what happened in the treaty council, and the memory of what happened in our ceremonies is still right there on the land. So I agree with Alan just get back on the land and let it speak to you.

**ANGE:**

Yeah, I'm like just invite me! Just invite me! I'll go anywhere and do anything. I'll go to wherever! Thank you so much for meeting up and having this chat with me too. I love to, we can't have these conversations with having many, many voices in the same space, to connect up across a bunch of different places, so I just really want to thank you both for getting a chance to talk with me today.

**MARTHA:**

And I want to thank you as well, thank you Ange, thank you Alan, thank you Rick, and thank you everyone for joining

us and for sharing this space with us, to consider these really fundamental questions of what it means to be here together and in relation and what our responsibilities and obligations are to each other and to the land.

In closing, Grandmother Kim, can I ask if you would offer a few words that we can close the event in a good way?

**GRANDMOTHER KIM:**

It would be my honour. Congratulations on a very successful event by the way, great speakers, great wisdom sharing, great inspiration at a time when we seem to be lacking inspiration. So in closing in a good way, in the same way we opened in a good way, we want to thank all of those ancestors that came to sit with us and that medicine that carried us through so that the words we spoke were the truth as we've come to know it.

Over time we learn more and more and more, learning is ongoing. We will never know everything that is to be learned, but we do our best to work at that every day of our life walk. I'm thinking about our ways of knowing as Indigenous people. We're all Indigenous from somewhere on the planet, and you know, we're connected in very similar ways, but the most important way, and the way I want to remind you about as we come to a close is the idea of relationships, and how integral, how important, how foundational they are to who we are as human beings in right relationship with all the beings that share the planet with us. Now there were many references made of memory keeping abilities of other beings, who bear witness to what we do, what we witness, how we act and those seeds can be retrieved in various ways. And so my challenge to every one of you is to work on your relationships with the natural world, not just with human beings, and to see what messages may arise for you from them. They're waiting for you to open that door of opportunity where we can communicate in all the ways that go beyond words.

Ange talked a lot about creativity and using other senses to send messages along. Of course, Alan and Rick reminded us about the specifics that were encompassed in beautiful works of art that we call Wampum belts or covenant treaties, and things of that nature. But these are all visual narratives that creation has shown us how to communicate effectively in all the different ways that we can learn. There are so many ways. We have five senses, and then we have all of the spiritual senses and the intuitions and the blood memory that is passed down from generation to generation. You are your living ancestors. You are the embodiment of that and you are responsible for that. And so I

encourage you to remember that, to honour that, to respect that and to share that, to the best of your ability.

It is not just one individual's job or responsibility to learn and hold knowledge. On our relationships that propel us forward to connect us to the past and give a gift to those that will come after us. And so I want to nudge you. I want to nudge each and every one of you in remembering that it is important to remember, it is important to be able to recite, but it's also important to feel the wisdom, the breath and the depth of the knowledge as we move forward. The orality of the way that we have always shared, includes the spirit of those words, includes the spirit of our ancestors, and imbues the spirit of our descendants when we do that in a good way, with a good heart and a good mind. I think we've done that today here in small part.

"A grain of sand on a beach of change" is an analogy I use a lot and that's what we all are. And I want to congratulate you for staying the course or for staying as long as you could stay, and for becoming one of those carriers of knowledge perhaps you're going to be inspired now to work on that further. And collectively we can come together and find all the missing bits and restore the balance and harmony of a relationship that we should have always had. All of our teachings are based on that relationship is the foundation of all true learning and teachings. So I wish you well.

Three things I'm going to wish you before I let you all go. Peace of mind, good long life, and good health. A whole miigwech everybody.

**MARTHA STIEGMAN:**

Good. Chi miigwetch Grandmother Kim. And again, niá:weh, miigwech, thank you to all of our speakers and to everyone for joining us today. Thank you again.

