

THE ANICINABE GRAPHIC HERITAGE

In early written sources

The patterns and symbols on the clothing and objects of our people, strange as they may have seemed to Europeans, were ways for us to differentiate ourselves, to mark our belonging to a territory, to a nation rather than any other.

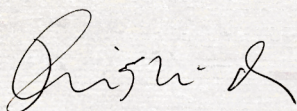
Since its foundation, Minwashin's mission has been to promote Anicinabe culture. To do so, we felt it was essential to gather all the elements that would allow us to preserve and transmit our heritage. This is why Minwashin has undertaken a major research and documentation project.

The research carried out by Guillaume Marcotte, in collaboration with the Corporation Dumulon, is therefore of significant importance, in that it helps us to find the plant and animal designs and geometric motifs used by our ancestors. They are parts of our culture, our identity and our territory that are intertwined in the graphic symbols that you will find in this research. Since the making of objects and clothes was inspired by the nature that surrounds us, it depicted in a way the territory to which they had to adapt every day and of which we are still part today.

To rediscover these motifs is therefore to rediscover an important part of our past, but also of our present identity. This is why this study, which is only the beginning of a great process of reappropriation, must be read, used by the craftsmen and artists of today, transmitted and, above all, pursued through other research, through discussions with the Elders and between families.

However, it must be kept in mind that the descriptions and illustrations in the document were made by outsiders from the nation. Their observations are external and influenced by their lack of understanding of our way of life, our values and our relationship with nature. It is therefore necessary to look at them with a sense of humour, always aware of the distance between what was seen, described, and what was actually there.

I wish you a pleasant reading, full of discoveries.



Richard Kistabish,
President of Minwashin



Report prepared by:
Guillaume Marcotte, M.A.
Corporation de La maison Dumulon
Rouyn-Noranda, QC

English translation by:
Doris St-Pierre

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Minwashin
Rouyn-Noranda, QC

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1 – Presentation


This report is part of a project led by the Minwashin organization, which aims to promote the reappropriation of the Anicinabe people's cultural heritage. More specifically, I was commissioned at the beginning of 2020 to undertake exploratory research on the Anicinabe graphic heritage described in ancient written sources. These sources consist mainly of archives related to fur trade companies or Catholic missionary activities, various travel reports, as well as scientific studies from the first half of the 20th century. A few more recent scientific sources have also been used, when necessary and to provide a specific point of clarification.

Although the written sources do not always include images that allow the graphic elements of Anicinabe culture to be visualised concretely, the sometimes detailed descriptions they contain enhance the information that can be gathered from other types of sources. Thus, it is very important to stress that the content presented in this report should ideally be complemented by other types of research which could include, among others: 1) Anicinabe artefacts in museums; 2) archaeological data on artefacts from Anicinabe territory; 3) ancient artefacts kept by Anicinabek families; and 4) oral tradition related to these artefacts and their interpretation by the Anicinabek themselves. Only when all these elements are put together can this report be fully relevant.

I did not elaborate much in this report on the interpretation of the patterns, colours or reasons why the Anicinabek used a particular graphic technique. However, I have sometimes included certain hypotheses formulated by anthropologists or observers of these past times, in order to allow the readers to become acquainted with this information. They are included as food for thought, not as a sign of my validation of their value. I leave it to the Anicinabek to determine the relevance of these interpretations, which are beyond the scope of the present research primarily focused on the technical and descriptive aspect of any graphic element found in the written sources. In the very few cases where an interpretive suggestion comes from me, it is also from a perspective of comparing sources and questioning, rather than from a desire to “explain” a cultural practice.

For similar reasons, I have refrained from presenting a particular cultural expression as “typically Anicinabe” or “traditionally Anicinabe”. The notions of tradition and cultural exclusivity are particularly difficult to define, especially when one considers the numerous cultural exchanges that took place between the various Indigenous peoples, on the one hand, and between these peoples and the European peoples who arrived in the Americas, on the other hand. Some external influences, that seem to have caused changes in Anicinabe graphic expression, are presented in this report. But again, their mention does not imply, on my part, that these elements do not typically

belong to the Anicinabe graphic heritage. It is up to the bearers of this culture to judge. In this respect, I have merely presented the elements mentioned in the literature consulted.

This report is divided into several parts, each covering a different type of medium for graphic expression. I have tried to include just about every form of intervention by the Anicinabek on the materials around them, which in some way involved a visually evocative aspect. I have thus included all facets of these expressions, even if it means going beyond the strict definition of what might constitute a visual artistic expression. That being said, it was necessary to set limits on the scope of the research. For example, the technique of making birch bark baskets is not covered. Only the decorative practices related to these baskets are described. In the same sense, the types of garments, as well as the  tailoring techniques or the materials used to make them, are not detailed. But the colours of dyes and the types of patterns appearing in them are included in this study. After dealing with colours and the general processes of creation in Part 2, subsequent parts deal with the human body, animal bodies, clothing, shell beads (wampum), trees and their derivatives (wood and bark), and finally the mineral supports of stone and earth. In conclusion, a number of suggestions for further research are made in the event that this project continues over time.

I have used the term “Anicinabe” throughout this report to refer only to those communities that are also referred to as “Algonquin”. However, in order to avoid in some cases a possible confusion between these and other peoples who also call themselves “Anicinabe” (including the different variants), I have sometimes used the formulation “Anicinabe called Algonquin”, or “Anicinabe called Ojibwe”. This was necessary in cases of comparison between two techniques or decorative aspects, for example.

Finally, I would like to mention that some excerpts from ancient documents contain pejorative expressions to describe the Anicinabek. The authors of those times often used only these terms, and therefore it becomes difficult, when quoting a relevant excerpt from an archive, for example, to avoid them.

2 – Colours, pattern creation and generalities

In this section, we will discuss the colours used historically by the Anicinabek, as well as their fabrication using the materials that were available. We will then look at the symbolism of the colours, as found in certain sources, before concluding with some generalities, such as the process of creating the figures or motifs present in the Anicinabe graphic heritage.

2.1 – Use of colours

In the old days, the colours used were (in order of importance): red and black, followed by blue, and more rarely yellow and brown¹. The anthropologist J. T. MacPherson mentions that the preferred colours of the Abitibiwinnik were a combination of red and blue, or red and black (MacPherson, 1930, p. 56).

2.2 – The preparation of the colours

The making of dyes and paints is documented in some sources and gives a general idea of the processes used, although details of how to reproduce these techniques are often missing. Anicinabe women from the Upper Gatineau region described in the following way the importance of dyes to their people in the old day:

Blue, black and red were the most difficult colours to obtain. These dyes were carefully preserved and only used on very special occasions such as ceremonial feasts. [...] Some dyes were kept in small birch bark containers in the shape of an envelope; others, in powder form, in small leather pouches. Brushes were made of deer or moose hair attached to a small stick. Small twigs were also used to apply the colours. [...] It was the women who went in search of the dye plants, never the men, and no one was told where the dyes had been found. [Translation]

Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 79

Several sources mention plants used to make vegetable dyes. Speck and Butler (1947, p. 26) refer to information from Mrs. Buckshot of Kitigan Zibi, who boiled some roots to make an “ink” for decorating leather with wood stamps (see Parts 5 and 7). She used trifoliate coptide, or savoyana (*Coptis trifolia*) to obtain yellow; spruce roots to obtain dark blue; alder, butternut or hemlock to

¹ This is a classification based on the number of mentions of the colours used found in the following sources: Clément and Martin (1993, p. 79); Leroux (2003, vol. 1, p. 196); MacPherson (1930, pp. 16-17, 22-23, 25-26, 41, 49, 56, 59, 69-70); Morrison (2002, p. 53); Petrullo (1929, p. 228); Poiré (1840, p. 45); Speck (1915, pp. 25-26); Speck and Butler (1947, p. 26). This classification does not include objects made from wampum beads, which were always white and purple (see Part 6).

obtain dark brown; and bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) to make red (Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 28). Another recipe, recorded at Lake Abitibi, involved boiling black willow roots and then mixing soot into the liquid. The colour obtained is not specified, but was apparently used on birch bark (MacPherson, 1930, p. 49). Still among the people of Lake Abitibi, MacPherson details a few other recipes for plant dyes: a decoction of black willow roots was made to obtain a yellow colour; a decoction of spruce cones to obtain a dark red colour; a decoction of larch bark to obtain an ordinary red colour; and finally, a decoction of rotten wood to produce a brown dye (MacPherson, 1930, p. 56). These dyes, either vegetable or mineral, could be used to colour porcupine quills used in the decoration of bark baskets or leather goods. The quills had to be immersed in the cooled dye to avoid damage (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 80). The Abitibiwinnik usually dyed porcupine quills red or blue. They also sometimes dyed the fringes of men's leggings, made of leather. The sleeve cuffs of women's dresses, made of leather, were regularly dyed blue (MacPherson, 1930, pp. 22-23).

Charcoal, mixed with animal fat, was also used to make black paint (MacPherson, 1930, p. 56). Charcoal could also be used to write messages on birch bark (MacPherson 1930, pp. 69-70). Another paint could be made from red ochre. MacPherson (1930, pp. 49, 56) mentions the early use of this paint by the people of Lake Abitibi, but does not specify whether other materials were used in its composition.

Red ochre, also known as hematite, or *wanaman*² in the Anicinabe language, was present in many deposits along the rivers. It could be burnt to give it a brighter colour (Lemaitre, 2013, pp. 146-148). Some red ochre deposits are known in Anicinabe country. For example, there were many legends surrounding the Mattawa River Cave, including stories about a man-eating monster that lived there (Harmon, 1820, pp. 31-32). This deposit was an important source of red ochre (Lemaitre, 2013, p. 147). Lake Nominigou also takes its name from the word *onaman* (Cuoq, 1886, p. 300). In addition to red ochre paint, which was available in nature, the Anicinabek used bright red vermilion paint since the arrival of the Europeans. The fur traders residing with the Anicinabek kept vermilion in their posts for trade purposes. It was still found in 1835, for example, at the Grand Lake Victoria post (HBCA, B.82/d/7). A few sources mention vermilion paint being used by the Anicinabek. MacPherson (1930, p. 41) reports that the paint applied to bear skulls by the Abitibiwinnik was made of vermilion (see Part 4). Earlier, in the mid-19th century, the missionary Charles-Édouard Poiré made a similar observation at Lake Opasatica (Poiré, 1840, p. 45). However,

² The Algonquin lexicon of Father Cuoq (1886, p. 300), gives the form “*onaman*” instead.

it remains unclear whether the term vermilion was always used to refer to the paint sold by traders, or whether it could also refer to the red ochre extracted from the earth by the Anicinabek.

2.3 – The symbolism associated with colours

In general, the symbolism associated with colours seems to have been forgotten by the Anicinabe informants who worked with anthropologists in the early twentieth century, unless the former deliberately withheld this information. Only one colour is associated with a particular symbolism in the sources consulted, namely black, which sometimes seems to be linked to the idea of death, mourning, famine or fasting (AAM, 1863, fo 2d; Leroux, 2003, vol. 1, p. 196; MacPherson, 1939, pp. 69-70; Morrison, 2002, p. 53). For the other colours, the sources remain vague. For example, the anthropologist F. G. Speck (1915, p. 26), in his description of the bear feast (see Part 4), mentions the use of the colour black on the skulls, but states that his questions about the meaning of the different stages of the ritual have received few answers. MacPherson, at Lake Abitibi, mentions several uses of the colours red, black and blue, stating that these colours could play a spiritual role, without giving further details. Sometimes he specifies that this meaning had been forgotten by his informants (MacPherson, 1930, pp. 16-17, 59, 70). In one case (the body painting of shamans, see Part 3), he even points out that some of the red and black marks had no particular spiritual symbolism, and served only to enhance the individual's personality and maintain his / her reputation (MacPherson 1930, p. 26). Finally, the white of the wampum beads, introduced to the Anicinabek by the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), was generally associated with peace or friendship, whereas the purple beads were more closely associated with the colour black, which was itself linked to death, mourning or war (Lainey, 2004, p. 167). Whether or not this symbolism was retained by the Anicinabek who adopted the use of wampum remains an open question (see Part 6).

2.4 – The creation of motifs and figures

The inspiration for creating the motifs or figures represented in Anicinabe art is mentioned in several sources. First of all, the missionary Poiré, during his visit to Lake Témiscamingue, reported that the Anicinabek of the area were not inspired by their dreams to create their figures: “They never mark what they have seen in a dream, quite different from the Assinibwan and the Red River Cree who depict, on their lodges or huts, what struck them more in their sleep” [Translation] (Poiré, 1841, p. 11). This curious remark, however, seems to contradict general observations in the literature (see Leroux, 2003, vol. 1, pp. 197-198).

In Lake Abitibi, MacPherson refers instead to the concept of animal spirits as spiritual guardians to explain the choice of a particular figure: “Each individual had one or more guardian spirits in the form of an animal, bird or fish. In supplication to the spirit a representation of the animal was painted on many of the material possessions of the native” (MacPherson, 1930, p. 70).

Inspiration to create could also come from techniques that produced a wide variety of geometric patterns. One such technique was the biting of thin sheets of birch bark with the teeth to produce various patterns (see Figure 4, Part 5). MacPherson reported that this art form was still practised by the Abitibiwinnik in 1930 (MacPherson, 1930, pp. 70-71). Another source even states that these fine barks could then be used as patterns to decorate bark baskets or moccasins (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 78). According to an unnamed Gatineau River Anicinabe, similar results to those produced by biting the thin bark could also be obtained, but this time using a “kind of long leaf that looks like a corn husk. The indented part appeared green and the underside silvery” [Translation] (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 79). Mostly used for play, these leaves could probably inspire the creation of patterns. Finally, other techniques were used to create decorative patterns, like string games with fingers or cat's cradle, or even simply by hanging a garland of maple leaves which, when exposed to the sun, created effects of light and shadow, and thus random patterns (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 78; MacPherson, 1930, p. 64).

3 – The human body

This third part is about body ornaments such as tattoos and body paint. Not much information has been found on this subject, although more general sources could help to complete the picture.

3.1 – Tattoos

Very few references to tattoos have been found. The contemporary anthropologist Jacques Leroux mentions this practice among the Anicinabek, but without giving any sources (Leroux, 2003, vol. 1, p. 198). The most precise source found comes from MacPherson's report from Lake Abitibi:

The members of Abitibi Band claim that tattooing or scarification was never practised among them. It is said that sometimes a man would bring home a Cree wife who was tattooed, but that the members of the band generally frowned on this sort of personal ornamentation. Michael Eagle, a man who claims to be the oldest living member of the band, remembers a famous conjuror who advocated tattooing the wrists in order to ward off rheumatism.

MacPherson, 1930, p. 26

Although other sources mention “tattoos”, they obviously refer to body paint.

3.2 – Body painting

Mentions related to body painting are sometimes only descriptive, but sometimes also linked to specific functions.

Oblate missionary Jean-Nicolas Laverlochère, in the 1840s, described body painting among the Anicinabek, a practice still alive at that time. He states that only the face was painted, and that two types of paint were used: one made of fish or mammal fat, and the other of “copper-red earth”, probably red ochre (see Part 2) (AAOMI, 1844, p. 20; Carrière, n.d., p. 28). The fat mentioned must surely have been coloured in some way, although Laverlochère does not specify this. More generalized ancient sources, concerning the Algonquians of the Northeast, specify that a first layer of grease or oil was normally applied to the skin, followed by a second layer that had been previously coloured (Laberge and Girard, 1998, pp. 81-82).



Figure 1. Algonquin couple. Watercolour. Circa 1750-1780.

This illustration highlights the body paint on the face. It is also consistent with sources describing blue and red as the colours most commonly used by the Anicinabek. Credit: Archives de la Ville de Montréal. CA M001 BM007-2-D27-P004.

Among the specific functions attributed to body paint is the painting of the face in black as a sign of mourning or fasting (Leroux, 2003, vol. 1, p. 196; Morrison, 2002, p. 53). The blackened face and hands were used in a healing ritual called *Makatekewin*, in which fasting was practiced (AAM, 1863, fo 2d). Michael Eagle, at Lake Abitibi, reported that in the past men painted red and black spots on their faces to attract the attention of women. Shamans may also have covered their bodies with such stains (MacPherson, 1930, p. 26). In the Gatineau River Valley, the colours blue, black, red, ochre and yellow are mentioned as body paints, and the important role of women in this practice is noted: “The face and body were painted; the coloured dyes served as secret marks. It

was the women who were in charge of this form of embellishment. Sometimes they could work a whole day on one body” [Translation] (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 79).



Figure 2. Michel Mikizi. Watercolour by Charles-Alfred-Marie Paradis. 1884.

Michel Mikizi (or Michael Eagle) was one of anthropologist John MacPherson's Anicinabe informants at Lake Abitibi. Credit: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. P134, S1, D1.

4 – The body of animals

The bodies of animals were frequently used to support various graphic practices. In this section, deer skins for drums, ceremonial headdresses and decorated bear skulls are discussed. The skins used for clothing will be discussed in the following section on clothing in general.

4.1 – Drum skins

Few details are reported about the decoration of the drum skins. MacPherson states that the most common drums were double-sided, with realistic figures painted in blue, black and red on the skins. He also adds that these figures often depicted animals, such as moose, ducks or other representations of the guardian spirits (MacPherson, 1930, pp. 5, 70).

4.2 – Ceremonial headdresses

A unique description of ceremonial headdresses made from animal skulls comes from local historian Kermot Moore in his history of the people of the Kipawa region. Although he does not mention a specific source, it can be assumed that he is reporting the oral tradition of the area:

Skulls of moose, deer, and bear were fashioned into crown caps, sometimes with horns remaining, to create ceremonial headdress. The skins of different animals were sewn over this skull form to create a variety of colors and to make individual designs of each one.

Moore, 1982, p. 39

It is interesting to note that these antlered headdresses are reminiscent of the horned figures painted on certain rocks (see Part 8). The graphic aspect of these headdresses relates here to the juxtaposition of different furs, apparently to create various patterns. This practice of using skulls or antlers for headdresses was widespread among the Northeastern Algonquian peoples in general (Laberge and Girard, 1998, pp. 58-59).

4.3 – Decorated skulls

The skulls and other bones of hunted animals were often hung from trees or wooden poles in accordance with an Anicinabe rite³ called *Akotowin* (AAM, 1863, fo. 3a), and several sources mention that the skulls were often decorated in some way. The Oblate missionary Charles-Alfred-

³ To remain within the scope of this report, these rites will not be described in detail here. Only the decorations will be mentioned. For a description of the rites, see the sources cited in this subsection.

Marie Paradis, in the 1880s, mentions “skulls of bears, deer, beavers and others” hanging from trees, but without specifying the decorations (Paradis, 1882a, p. 352). The missionary Poiré, for his part, evokes a similar phenomenon at Lake Opasatica, but this time with the addition of paint and even symbols:

[...] we arrived at the Cedar Strait, where we saw hanging from trees the heads of wild beasts coloured with vermilion and marked with several hieroglyphs which we could not understand. It seems that the Indians use these signs to give news to those of their nation who must pass through the places where they are in sight. [Translation]

Poiré, 1840, p. 45

Symbols used specifically to communicate specific messages will be discussed in Part 7. The Jesuit missionary Dominique Du Ranquet, at the same time as Poiré, also speaks of “bear heads sometimes painted red” [Translation] hanging from trees (Ouellet and Dionne, 2000, p. 221), and the missionary Laverlochère, of bear and wolf skulls coated with vermilion paint, attached to wooden poles (Laverlochère, 1849, p. 65).

Bear skulls, in particular, were subject to a complex ritual, which Speck (1915, pp. 25-26) describes in detail. After the feast and appropriate rite following the hunting of a bear, its skull was decorated with painted black bands, before it was tied to the branch of a tree facing the water. Speck's Anicinabe informants gave him little information about the exact meaning of these decorations and the rite of which they were a part, other than that it was all a mark of respect for the bear and for the abundant food it provided. Another anthropologist similarly mentions the application of black or red bands to the top of the skull (Cooper, 1927, in Jenkins, 1939, p. 20). The decoration of the bear skull does not seem to have been always the same, since MacPherson reports instead dots or irregularly painted bands, sometimes forming geometric figures with unspecified spiritual significance. He mentions the colours red (vermilion paint) and black. Each hunter would have had his own way of decorating the bear skulls (MacPherson, 1930, pp. 41, 70).



Figure 3. More portages. Watercolour by Charles-Alfred-Marie Paradis. 1884.

Here we see skulls and other animal bones hanging from trees. They are not decorated with paint as in some historical descriptions. Credit: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. P134,S1,D1.

5 – Leather and fabrics

This section focuses on various materials that have little in common, other than that they were associated with the making of clothing, and which therefore form a continuum in terms of the type of decoration they wore. The ancient techniques of decoration are first presented, followed by explanations of the various groups that influenced the evolution of designs on Anicinabe clothing. Finally, a technique unique to the community of Kitigan Zibi is discussed.

5.1 – Ancient motifs and porcupine quills

Very little information has been found in written sources about the decorative forms used on clothing in ancient times, before the introduction of European materials that have become popular (glass beads, woollen cloth, silk ribbons, etc.). This information would probably be found in greater quantity through the artefacts kept in museums. Concerning the geometric patterns used to decorate clothing or leather accessories, Daniel Clément and Noeline Martin (1993, p. 78) mention information from the Gatineau River valley, where the marking of teeth on thin sheets of bark was used to make patterns.



Figure 4. NA-SA-MA, tobacco plant. Teeth marking pattern on birch bark. Work by Madeleine Clément.

Marking the bark with teeth could be used to create various floral or geometric patterns. Credit: Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 77, from a photograph in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, photo MCC III-L-64M.

Porcupine quills were formerly used to decorate leather goods, as still mentioned in some 19th century sources (see Ouellet and Dionne, 2000, p. 209). In the 17th century, Samuel de Champlain reported that the Anicinabek, like the Innu, were known for applying long strips of red-dyed porcupine quills to their robes⁴ (Laberge and Girard, 1998, p. 102). However, the art seems to have died out quite some time ago. The people of Pikwakanagan in the late 1920s, for example, informed the anthropologist Frederick Johnson that porcupine quillwork was remembered among their elders, but that the art was no longer practised in their community (Johnson, 1928, p. 175). Speck, who was in Kitigan Zibi at the same time, reported that the elders in their 70s (i.e., those born around 1857) could not remember the decorative use of quills in their community. Some even claimed that the technique was unknown in their community in the past, both on leather and on bark (Speck, 1927, pp. 242, 249). The disappearance of this art form in the distant past can probably be explained by the increasing popularity of new materials: cloth, glass beads and other materials obtained through trade with Europeans and Canadians.

5.2 – The influence of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)

In addition to their own ancient traditions, some Anicinabe groups have been noted for incorporating various influences from neighbouring cultural groups. For example, while in Pikwakanagan, Johnson noted that the ancient clothing preserved in the community bore marks of Haudenosaunee influence: ribbon work on women's clothing and silver brooches (Johnson, 1928, p. 175). This is not surprising for a community that historically interacted with the Haudenosaunee of the Lake of Two Mountains region. For the same reason, a similar influence was noted by Speck at Kitigan Zibi (Norcini, 2008, p. 127; Speck, 1927, pp. 241, 249).

⁴ Note that the word “robe” here refers to a large blanket made of animal skins, used to surround the body to protect from the cold.



Figure 5. Michele Buckshot of Kitigan Zibi. Photograph by Frank G. Speck. 1927.

This image reflects the Haudenosaunee influence on Anicinabe clothing, particularly in the community of Kitigan Zibi, which has long occupied the Lake of Two Mountains area along with the Haudenosaunee, not to mention the inter-ethnic unions between the two groups. Credit: Norcini, 2008, p. 127, from a photograph in the National Museum of the American Indian Archives, Smithsonian Institution, PO8454.

5.3 – The influence of the fur trade on floral patterns

The decline of quillwork decoration was accompanied by the increasing popularity of fabrics and cloths decorated with glass beads, silk threads and other ornaments. These beads could also be applied to domestically made leather (smoked hides). It is generally accepted that “beaded” floral designs were created in southern Manitoba by Métis women and then spread throughout northern Canada with the great mobility of the fur trade workforce in the 19th century. Although European influence has played an important role in the growing popularity of floral motifs, there is also reason to believe that ancient spiritual symbolism has been transferred into floral decorative art (Brasser,

2009, p. 94), not to mention the older use of certain floral motifs (see Part 7). The theory of the popularity of floral designs emanating from Manitoba seems to apply to the Algonquin Anicinabek, where floral designs in glass beads or embroidered threads seemed to be more common in the more northerly communities, where interactions with fur trade people with a constant connection to the West were more frequent and especially so until a later date. In the same passage in which the missionary Du Ranquet describes moccasins made by Flora Lévesque/Otenimakwe at Lake Abitibi (decorated with beads and porcupine quills), he refers to the more elaborate decorations found further north: “They have beautiful hoods there, leggings that are much richer and more brilliant than those we had seen elsewhere” [Translation] (Ouellet and Dionne, 2000, p. 209). Nearly a century later, at Lake Abitibi, MacPherson noted:

When cloth became the vogue, much of the clothing was decorated with bead work. In particular, the women’s leggings, made of cloth, were richly decorated in this way. [...] Moccasins with slight variations from the two type patterns are made for sale. In all cases they are richly decorated with bead work. Sometimes richly colored floral designs made out of silk thread are sewn to the moccasins for decorative purpose. On the whole the moccasins are made for utilitarian purposes and no attempt is made at decoration.

MacPherson, 1930, pp. 23, 25

As with the items decorated by Métis women, those decorated with floral motifs by Anicinabe women seem to have been often produced for commercial purposes⁵. At the same time as MacPherson's study, Johnson and Speck mentioned that this type of decoration was rather rare in the south. Johnson (1930, p. 37), in his study of the Barriere Lake community, states that floral, bead and thread decorations were very rare in this community. Only one woman did so, and Johnson notes that this woman's husband, although a member of the community, was a native of the Maritimes, which he suggests may have implied an outside influence. In Kitigan Zibi, Speck (1927, p. 249) mentions that there was little silk or bead embroider.

5.4 – A unique practice: woodblock prints on leather

Among the Kitigan Zibi people, several types of prints were used to decorate various objects, using a type of ink to do so. There were stamps carved on pieces of vegetables (see Part 7), but also stamps carved on basswood or cedar. The latter were used specifically to decorate clothing and

⁵ MacPherson adds that the floral motifs, beaded or embroidered, were of European origin. However, he does not specify whether this information came from the Anicinabek, or whether it was his personal perception of things (MacPherson, 1930, p. 70).

leather accessories (bags, pouches, etc.). The main informant in Kitigan Zibi about this art form was a lady named Mackosikwe⁶, referred to by Speck and Butler in their publication on the subject (1947, p. 26). It seems likely that only prints intended for decoration on leather would have included animal motifs (such as a fox's head, or an otter, in the examples provided by Mackosikwe). A pair of leather leggings, made by Mackosikwe and bearing the stamped markings described here, is said to have been collected in 1932 for the Museum of the American Indian in New York (Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 25). Figures 6 to 8 illustrate the technique of decoration on leather, made from wood stamps.

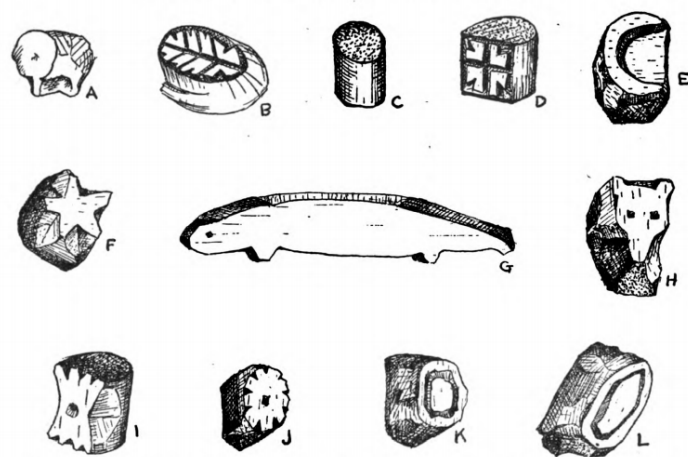


FIG. 12.—Stamps of basswood used for decorating buckskin articles. From the River Desert Algonquin, Maniwaki, P. Q. The Philbrook Art Center.

Figure 6. Woodblock prints for leather decoration.

These woodblocks were made by Mrs. Buckshot (Mackosikwe) of Kitigan Zibi. Credit: Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 27.

⁶ Speck and Butler (1947, p. 25) state that the Anicinabe name for this artisan means “beaver meadow woman.” She was born in 1862 in Pikwakanagan, and was the wife of Michel Buckshot. She learned her art from her mother, Mary Ann Migwenabe’kwe. Mary Ann’s mother was born around 1800, when the community resided at the Lake of Two Mountains.

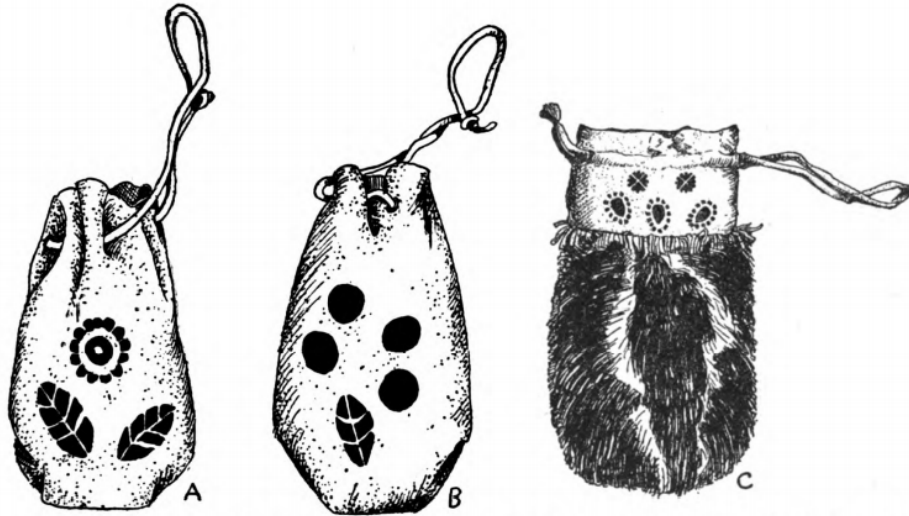


FIG. 13.—Pouches from the River Desert Algonquin. *a-b*. Buckskin pouches decorated with basswood stamp designs of leaves and berries. *c*. Pouch made of skunk skin with buckskin neck decorated with flower designs stamped in indigo with basswood block stamp. The Denver Art Museum.

Figure 7. Leather pouches decorated with woodblock prints.

Works by Mrs. Buckshot (Mackosikwe) of Kitigan Zibi. Credit: Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 27.

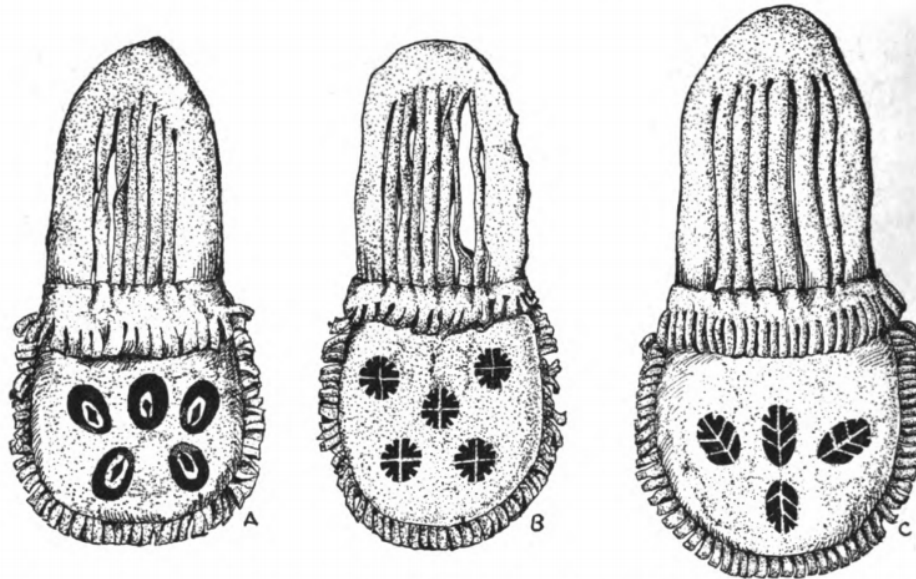


FIG. 14.—Tanned buckskin pouches with slit opening ("puzzle pouch") decorated with stamped figures of leaves and flowers. From the River Desert Algonquin, Maniwaki, P. Q. The Denver Art Museum.

Figure 8. "Puzzle" pouches decorated with woodblock prints.

Works by Mrs. Buckshot (Mackosikwe) of Kitigan Zibi. Credit: Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 28.

6 – Wampums

The word “wampum” is an abbreviation of an Algonquian word from the South Atlantic coast, which came into use in English at an early stage. In French, early texts use the term “porcelain” instead (Lainey, 2004, p. 11). The Huron-Wendat anthropologist and historian Jonathan Lainey explains the uses of wampum beads were multiple, but originated in specific cultures and places:

The materials to make them came from a single, distant source, the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, but trade networks, laws and wars allowed the beads to spread throughout the north-east of the continent. These materials were used to adorn the body, clothing and objects. They were also used to make objects with a political and diplomatic function, the porcelain necklaces, which have their origins in Iroquoian mythology. For more than two hundred years, these objects were exchanged according to precise rituals that were borrowed from the Iroquois by a multitude of nations, including the European nations, which caused them to be modified. [Translation]

Lainey, 2004, p. 215

The shells used to make white and purple wampum beads came from different species available along the Atlantic coast. As Lainey explains, these beads came to the Laurentian Valley through trade between Indigenous nations. They were therefore not made in Anicinabe territory (Lainey, 2004, pp. 12, 24-26). The use of wampum beads was therefore sometimes of a sacred, ritual and diplomatic nature, as in the case of wampum “belts” or “necklaces”, but sometimes also of a more common or economic use, as currency (Lainey, 2004, pp. 56-59). The meaning to be given to the two colours, although varying according to the times and cultures involved, can nevertheless be summarised by certain principles:

It is generally agreed that the colour white denotes what is positive while purple denotes what is negative. Purple, often referred to as black, is associated with sadness, mourning, war, death, while white refers to peace, alliance, friendship. [Translation]

Lainey, 2004, p. 167

Several known wampum belts are historically associated with the Anicinabek. There are references to them in written sources, as early as the beginning of the 17th century, in connection with diplomatic practices involving the Anicinabek (Joly de Lotbinière, 1993, pp. 55-56). As the interpretation of the meaning of wampums is a very complex subject, sometimes even political (Joly de Lotbinière, 1993; Lainey, 2004), we will not discuss these multiple possible interpretations here, but only the description of the motifs that appear on them. One of the ancient belts associated

with the Anicinabek, at a time when some of them spent their summers at the mission of the Lake of Two Mountains, is the belt known as the “Two Dogs”. This belt, which is also associated with the other communities that inhabited the Lake of Two Mountains at that time (Mohawks, Nipissings), is now preserved in the McCord Museum in Montreal (see Figure 9), and dates from at least 1781. At that time, it was used to claim title to the territory at the Lake of Two Mountains (Joly de Lotbinière, 1993, p. 57).



Figure 9. The "Two Dogs" wampum.

It was acquired in 1919 from David Swan, Mohawk, by the McCord Museum of Canadian History. Credit: Lainey, 2004, p. 265.

On a purple background are several human beings holding hands, standing on a white line, and a cross, as well as two dogs (one at each end). Parallel white and purple lines complete both sides of the belt.

Five other pieces of wampum are also historically associated with the Anicinabek: four belts and a “hand”. A wampum hand represents several strands of beads joined at one end. These five pieces are particularly linked to the present-day communities of Kitigan Zibi and Barriere Lake (Becker, 2016). The first belt has seven white lozenges on a purple background, with the central lozenge formed by double lines. Two other belts have a common motif, a central white line running the length of the piece, on a purple background. The fourth belt has three human beings holding hands

and a cross to their left, all in white on a purple background. Finally, the wampum “hand” consists of several beads in white only, strung on several strings (Becker, 2016, pp. 92-95).

7 – Trees, wood and bark

In this section, various graphic practices related to tree materials are discussed. They are very varied, ranging from carving on still standing trees, to woodworking, to objects made from birch bark. The communicational aspect of some of the symbols on the bark is also included here.

7.1 – Decorated living trees

Two forms of decoration made on living trees have been found in written sources. Although these are modifications to the trees for ritual or practical purposes, there is still a graphic aspect to these practices. The first form is related to the practice of a hunting rite, and the second to geographical and perhaps ritual practices.

The Oblate missionary Jean-François-Régis Déléage, in an 1863 text describing the main traditional ritual practices of the Kitchisakik people, mentions what he calls the *Magochewin*, or Feast (AMM, 1863, fo. 2c). He describes the practice in detail, although he considers it to be rather rare. In times of hunger, it is said that a hunter would sacrifice a dog in front of a tree, where he would carve the features of a face representing a “deity” (this is probably a reference to guardian spirits) on the bark. The hunter would then cook and eat the dog in front of this representation on the bark in order to gain success in the hunt.

The second practice of decorating live trees is known in nineteenth-century language as the *lopstick* or *lobstick*, and is considered a hybrid practice, blending ancient indigenous traditions with those from Europe, in the fur trade context. These were large, pruned trees, usually pine or spruce, with only a few branches left at the top, so as to make them visible from a great distance in the landscape. On the French-Canadian side, these trees could recall, among other things, the masts that were raised in the past to honour militia captains (Podruchny, 2009, p. 131). More interestingly here, lopsticks probably also echoed indigenous ceremonial trees or posts, such as those found among the Haudenosaunee, but also the Great Lakes or Western Anicinabek. Among the Western Anicinabek, trees used as landmarks (and stones used for the same purpose) were called *gikinawaajichigan*. For the *Madaa'idiwin* ceremony, they also decorated a tree trunk, which they then planted in the ground. In the context of the fur trade, however, lopsticks were used as landmarks for navigation on lakes and rivers. These trees could also be pruned to honour a person deemed important, such as a fur company agent or an exceptional traveller who passed by (Podruchny, Gleach and Roulette, 2010). Both Anicinabe and French-Canadian fur company employees may have been involved in the making of the lopsticks, each group probably having their own understanding of the symbolism of the ceremonial tree.

At least one lopstick is recorded in the written sources in Anicinabe territory. It was named "Polson's Lopstick" in 1822, and was located at the outlet of Lake Abitibi to the west (HBCA, B.135/a/124, fo. 52). At this time, William Polson was employed as an interpreter at the Hudson's Bay Company post on Lake Abitibi. Although he himself was not of Anicinabe origin (he was born to a Cree mother in Eastmain), it remains likely that Anicinabe people were involved in the crafting of this lopstick, in honour of William Polson.

What may be a second lopstick is mentioned in 1843 near the Mattawa trading post. The large spruce tree is described as having the shape of a cross (Ouellet and Dionne, 2000, p. 154). No other details are given, and it is not certain that it is a lopstick.

7.2 – Woodcarving

Several types of decorated objects were carved from wood. First, some utilitarian objects were made of wood, such as maple sugar molds, to give the sugar a special shape. Cedar wood moulds were often carved with the effigy of a beaver in the Gatineau River valley (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 80). As discussed in Part 5, basswood or cedar wood stamps were also used to produce identical designs on leather clothing or accessories. Few details are reported in the sources regarding the variety of designs used on wooden objects. An Anicinabe woman named Angélique Caponicin, or White Caribou Woman (1884-1979), is reported to have explained in the 1940s that in the Upper Gatineau Valley “double-curve” designs were burned into wood as decoration (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 77). This information corrects Speck's (1914) statement that the “Algonquins” were not the bearers of the widespread double-curve pattern tradition, although he did state that the pattern was present among all of their neighbours: Cree, Attikamek and Ojibwe.

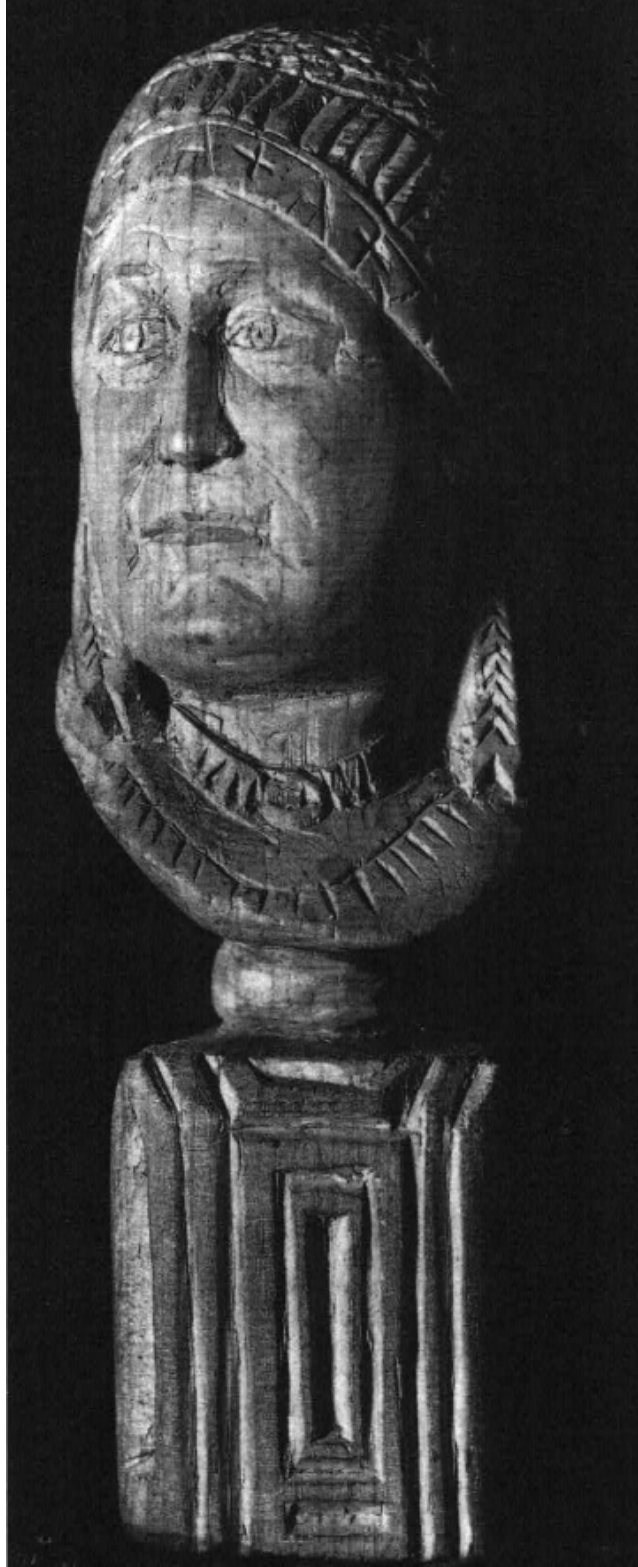


Figure 10. Sculpture (now lost?) of Pakinawatik, founder of Kitigan Zibi. Work by Caponicin.
Credit: Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 81, from a photograph in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, photo
MCC III-L-64M.

In Lake Abitibi, the making of animals carved from cedar wood as toys for children was documented in the early 20th century. MacPherson describes some of these toys as realistic (MacPherson, 1930, p. 71).

Other types of wood carvings had more spiritual functions. Some people kept carved representations of their guardian-spirit with them, considered by MacPherson (1930, p. 71) as a kind of magical charm. Another use that seems to be linked to spiritual practices is given by Angélique Caponicin (1884-1979), but without further details:

In the Upper Gatineau Valley, [...] when I was a child, an old man used to carve small figures of birds and human faces. People would plant these figures in the ground around tents or log cabins. Pine, cedar or birch was used for carving. [Translation]

Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 77

Finally, it should be noted that similar objects, but made of stone, are mentioned in Part 8.

7.3 – Ash baskets with stamped decorations

A rather rare form of decoration has been noted among the southern Anicinabek, in this case those of Pikwakanagan, Gatineau and Lièvre rivers: decorations made with potato stamp-blocks on baskets of ash strips (Petrullo, 1929, p. 234; Speck and Butler, 1947, pp. 1, 24). The technique for making these baskets was first introduced to North America by Swedish settlers on the Delaware River before 1700. Ash strips baskets were then made in large quantities by the indigenous nations of the East Coast, before being introduced further north in the Laurentian Valley (Brasser, 2009, pp. 49, 51). One way of decorating these baskets was to carve stamps into potatoes (or turnips), dip the stamps into a dye or paint, and then apply the marks to the wood of the baskets. This way, identical patterns could be obtained and produced rapidly. But before discussing the stamping technique, it should be noted that the ash strips themselves could be used to decorate the basket. In contrast, among the Anicinabek, this form of decoration was quite limited. Johnson, referring to the ash baskets of Kitigan Zibi, observed that the decoration was limited to the use of some coloured (probably dyed) strips and a few curly cues, which he considered to be much less elaborate than in other indigenous groups further south (Norcini, 2008, p. 142).

The origin of the printing technique is thought to have come from what is now the north-eastern United States and is, according to Speck and Butler (1947), an original indigenous creation, whereas for Brasser (2009, p. 54) it is a borrowing from the Swedes, as is the case for ash baskets

as such. Probably related to earlier hand-painting practices, printmaking would have increased with the gradual acculturation and industrialisation of art in society at large. Although the use of potatoes (imported to North America) as printing blocks is only documented from the late 18th century onwards, the use of other types of materials for prints (leather, bone, wood) suggests, according to Speck and Butler, an early use that predates the arrival of Europeans. On the other hand, the spread of prints from the East Coast and the newly Christian indigenous communities in that region (where a Natick-language Bible was published as early as 1664) also suggests dissemination linked to the introduction of printing among these Indigenous peoples, as well as to the spread of Christian missions. The dissemination of potato prints in the St. Lawrence Valley would be later, as well as its migration to the Anicinabek of the Lièvre and Gatineau rivers, who frequented the Oka mission until the mid-19th century (Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 33). The influence of the Haudenosaunee, or more generally of the indigenous groups from the south, is therefore mentioned in the majority of sources (Norcini, 2008, pp. 134, 142; Speck and Butler, 1947, pp. 24-25). The community of Kitigan Zibi would therefore have represented the northern limit of the Anicinabe practice of potato stamping, and by the same token, of ash-strip baskets (Norcini, 2008, p. 142).

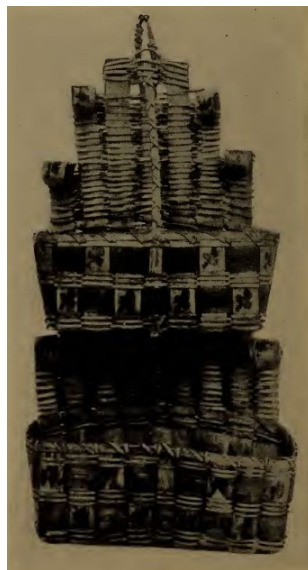


Figure 11. Wall basket made of ash strips, stamped with motifs, from the Anicinabek of the Lièvre River.

Although not clearly visible in the photograph, floral motifs are present on this piece. Credit: Petrullo, 1929, p. 234.



FIG. 16.—Splint basket decorated with potato-stamp design in “leaves” symbol. River Desert Algonquin, Maniwaki, P. Q.
The Philbrook Art Center.

Figure 12. Kitigan Zibi basket of ash strips, decorated with stamps.

Credit: Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 29.

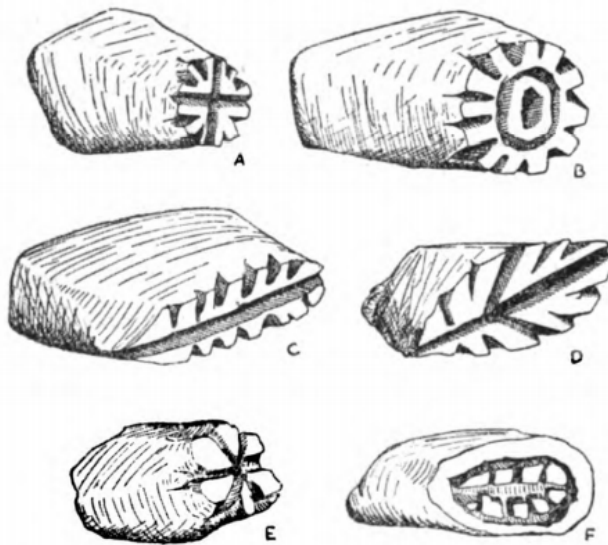


FIG. 11.—Stamps cut out of turnips, representing floral figures used in decorating surfaces of splint baskets, River Desert Algonquin, Maniwaki, P. Q.

Figure 13. Examples of turnip stamps used to decorate ash strip baskets in Kitigan Zibi.

Credit: Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 26.



FIG. 15.—Series of potato-stamp design figures made by Mrs. Michele Buckshot to illustrate variations in the patterns of carving. River Desert Algonquin, Maniwaki, P. Q. The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

Figure 14. Variety of potato print designs.

Work of Mrs. Buckshot (Mackosikwe) of Kitigan Zibi. Note the hand in the lower right which is reminiscent of the pattern engraved on the lichen of the boulder at Apitipik Point (see Part 8). Credit: Speck and Butler, 1947, p. 29.

Finally, it should be noted that this technique apparently only concerned baskets made of ash, not bark (Speck and Butler, 1947, pp. 28-29).

7.4 – Bark dwellings

The old bark dwellings were sometimes decorated with different motifs. Only MacPherson mentions this practice among the people of Lake Abitibi. He states that sometimes only narrow strips were painted with red ochre paint (MacPherson, 1930, p. 49). He also gives another description, this time a little more detailed:

The bark covering [of conical lodges] is occasionally decorated. There was very little design to the decoration. Red and black spots in some sort of geometric design seemed to be the favourite pattern. The spots were painted on, in a series of three and five – three red and five black, or vice versa.

It may be that this sort of decoration had formerly a religious significance, although none of my informants could give any information regarding the meaning of the design.

MacPherson, 1930, pp. 16-17

He finally mentions the presence of animal figures sometimes painted on bark dwellings, related to the concept of guardian-spirits (MacPherson, 1930, p. 70).

7.5 – Bark baskets

As bark baskets and canoes are made using similar techniques, they are discussed here in the same section. The technique generally used to apply decorations to birch bark canoes and baskets is to scrape the cambium of the birch bark to bring out the desired patterns and figures through colour contrast. However, one source mentions painting and staining to decorate bark among the people of Lake Abitibi. MacPherson mentions this practice a few times. He may have misinterpreted the words of his informants, but the details provided about this technique suggest that it was actually present, especially as he also describes the paintings used on bark dwellings (see previous section). He also writes about the use of a black willow root dye (1930, pp. 49, 51), the more recent use of “ordinary” paint obtained at the trading post (1930, p. 49), “painted” figures on canoes and baskets (1930, p. 70), and finally baskets decorated with red ochre painted figures (1930, p. 67). This method, painting on bark, was unknown in communities further south, such as Kitigan Zibi (Speck, 1941, p. 248).

Whatever the technique used (scraping or painting⁷), the motifs and figures were quite varied. Geometric patterns are mentioned by Johnson (1928, pp. 176-177) at Pikwakanagan, without further details. Speck (1941, pp. 244-246), in his most comprehensive study on the subject, presents certain geometric patterns located around the opening of the baskets, which may have had both a utilitarian function (as it was a cut bark reinforcement) and an aesthetic one. Sometimes the utilitarian aspect was left out, and the geometric patterns were simply scraped all around the opening (see Figures 16 to 19).

⁷ More rarely, some designs were cut from a separate sheet of bark and then sewn with roots onto the basket (Speck, 1941, p. 247). See Figure 15 for an example.



Figure 15. Pattern cut from a piece of bark and sewn onto a basket. Photograph by W. F. Patman.

Credit: Speck, 1941, plate 37.

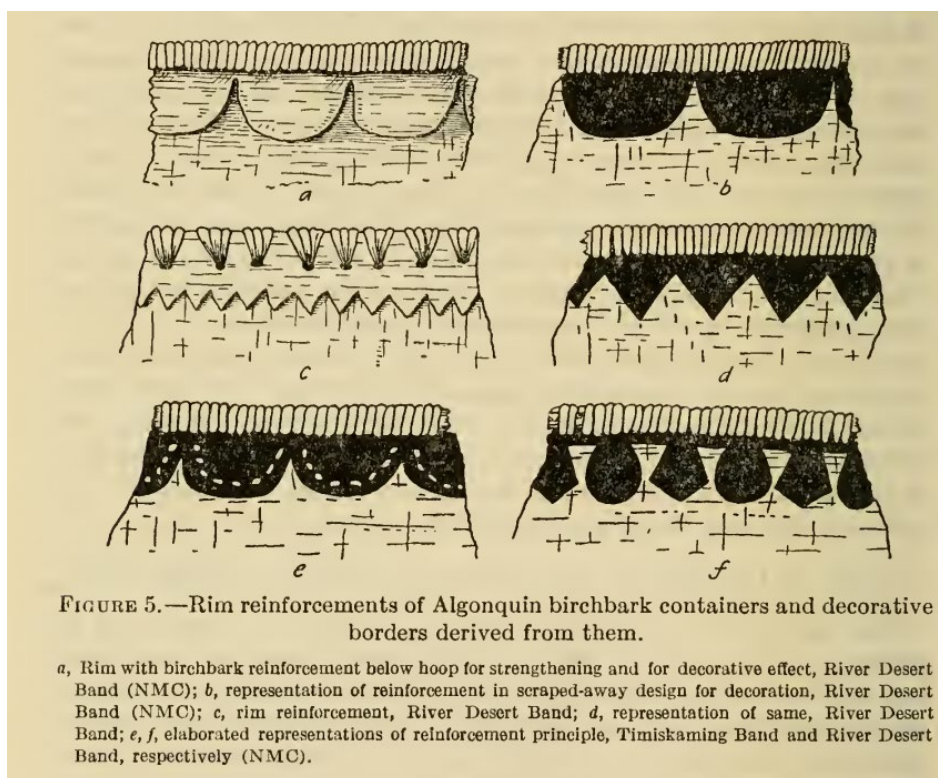


Figure 16. Some examples of bark basket edge finishing.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 244.

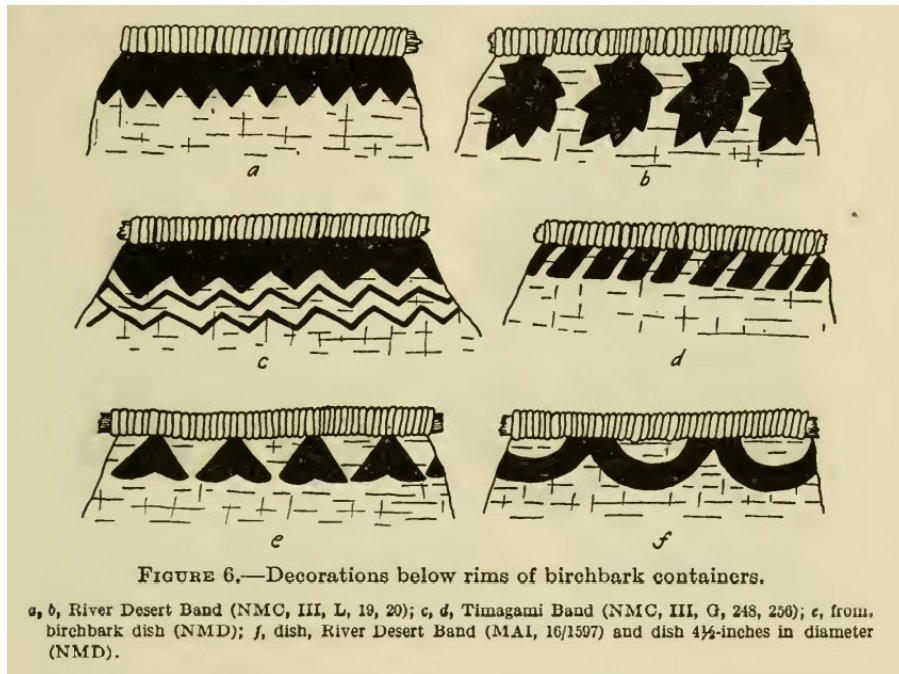


Figure 17. Some examples of bark basket edge finishing.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 245.

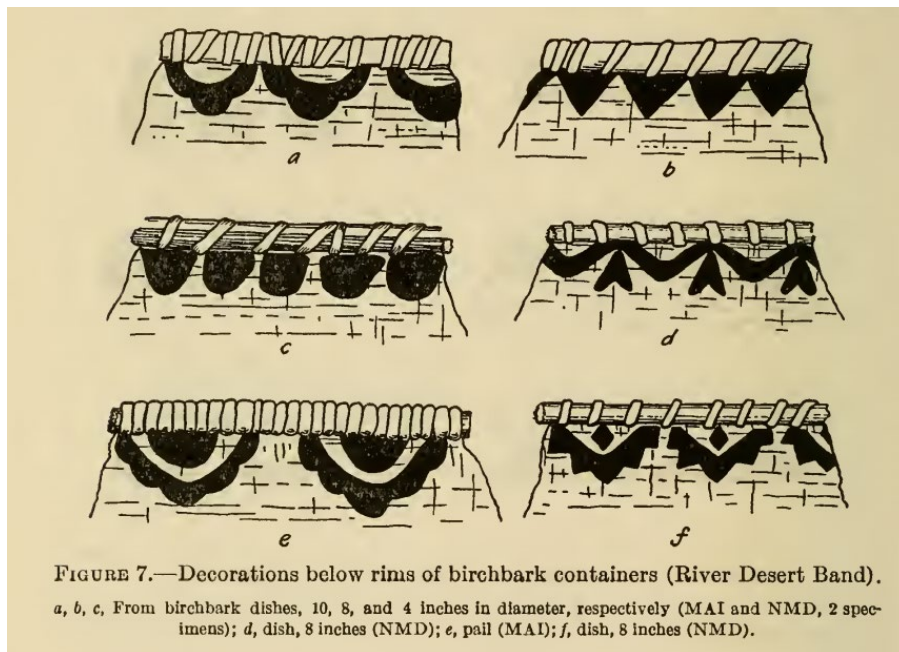


Figure 18. Some examples of bark basket edge finishing.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 246.

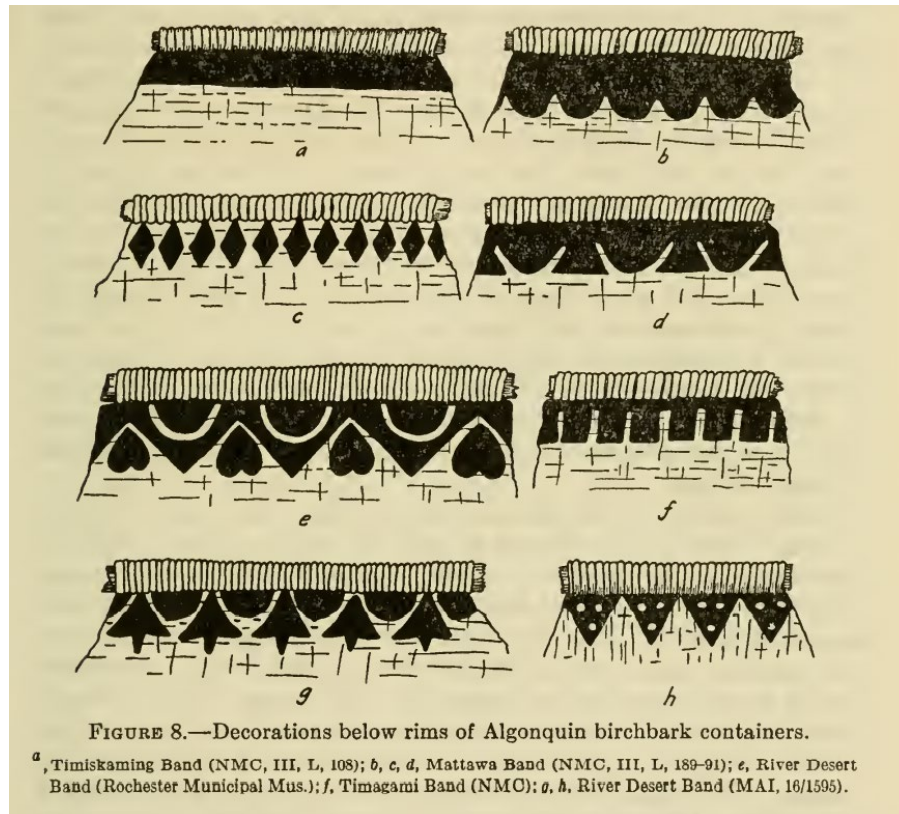


Figure 19. Some examples of bark basket edge finishing.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 247.

On some occasions, human representations are mentioned, sometimes including guns, and presenting “scenes” (Norcini, 2008, p. 141; Speck, 1941). Realistically drawn animal figures include moose, white-tailed deer, bear, dog, mink, otter, beaver, partridge, loon, duck, other unspecified birds, and fish (Johnson, 1928, pp. 176-77; MacPherson, 1930, pp. 49, 67, 70; Norcini, 2008, p. 141; Speck, 1941, p. 251). Speck, who is the anthropologist who studied⁸ this question the most in the first half of the twentieth century, noted, on the one hand, several similarities between the way bark baskets were decorated among the Anicinabek and the Innu of Lac Saint-Jean. On the other hand, he saw a great difference between Anicinabe production in general and that of their Attikamek or even Barriere Lake Anicinabek neighbours, who did not seem to decorate their baskets with engraved motifs at that time (Speck, 1941, p. 234). Another of his observations was that the further west you moved into the Anicinabe communities (those with the neighbouring

⁸ See his 1941 study, in which he analyzed a collection of 130 birchbark objects from Anicinabe communities, including the names of the museums where they were kept at the time, the date of collection and the names of the communities of origin: Kitigan Zibi, Rivière du Lièvre, Pikwakanagan, Mattawa and Timiskaming.

Ojibwe Anicinabek), the more animal and human motifs you found. This was a characteristic that was rarely found among the Anicinabek further east, and even less so among the Innu of Lac Saint-Jean. Conversely, moving eastward, there were more floral motifs (Speck, 1941, pp. 244, 247).



Figure 20. Examples of animal motifs used at Kitigan Zibi.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 252.

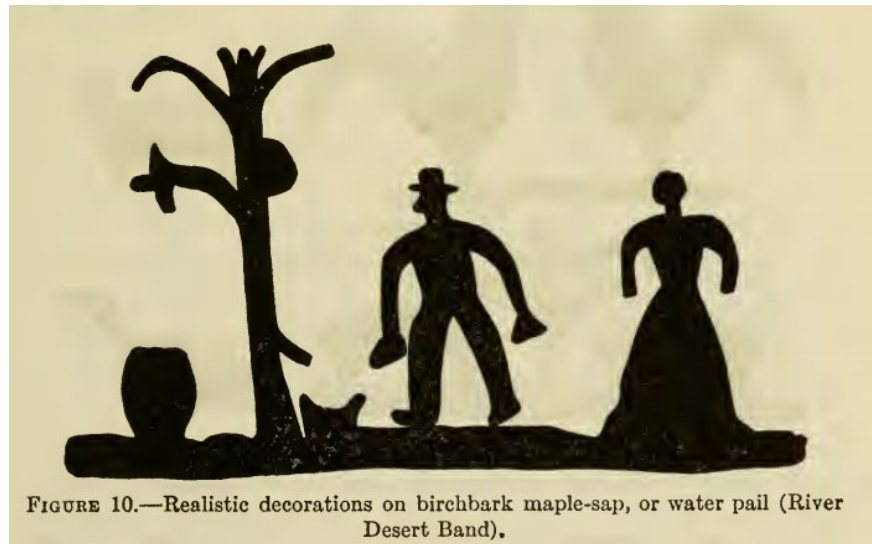


Figure 21. Example of a realistic scene including humans, at Kitigan Zibi.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 253.

Floral motifs are often mentioned in decorative bark art. Several hypotheses have been put forward, which in general tend to attribute a relatively recent introduction of this practice from the south to the north. For example, anthropologist Vincent M. Petruccio (1929, pp. 228-230) believes that the floral decoration of the Lièvre River bark baskets appeared to be quite different from that made by other Algonquins further west and north and he interprets this as a greater European influence. In Kitigan Zibi, Johnson reported in the 1920s that almost all bark work there had floral designs (Norcini, 2008, p. 141). Even further northwest, MacPherson (1930, p. 49) observed at Lake Abitibi that floral designs on baskets (painted, not scraped) were in recent use in 1930. Nevertheless, Speck argues that most of these hypotheses seem to have been very poorly supported by solid evidence of such a European influence, except perhaps in some cases (such as on the Lièvre River) where the floral motifs were clearly inspired by European folk art. It is thus more likely that indigenous floral motifs were gradually influenced by European floral art, rather than all being borrowed directly (Speck, 1941, pp. 235, 251-254). In this regard, Speck explains that his Anicinabe informants were well aware that some motifs were borrowed from the European imagery (e.g., the card game symbols: hearts, clubs, spades and diamonds). Conversely, some floral (or more abstract) motifs were thought to be of very ancient indigenous origin (see Figures 22 to 25). One such motif is the “frog leggings”, which are very abundant in the bark decoration at Kitigan Zibi (see Figure 23). This motif is thought to represent the leaves of a medicinal plant, *Sarracenia purpurea* (Speck, 1927, pp. 248-249; 1941, p. 253).



Figure 22. One of the variations of the ancient arch motif.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 257.



Figure 23. One of the variations of the early “frog leggings” or “toad leggings” motif.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 263.



Figure 24. The ancient “frog leggings” motif, combined with other motifs.

Credit: Speck, 1941, plate 30.



Figure 25. The early dome motif with indentations on the flat side, or “lily bloom”.

Credit: Speck, 1941, p. 263.



Figure 26. Kitigan Zibi bark basket with floral designs.

Credit: Speck, 1927, p. 246.

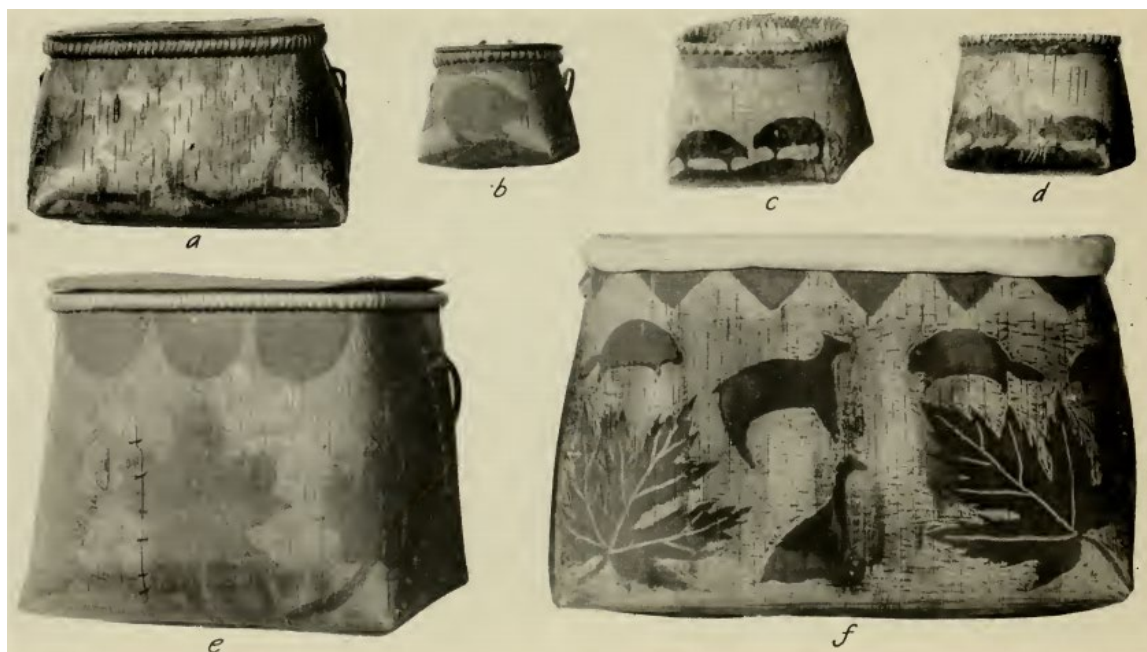


Figure 27. Examples of bark baskets with animal and floral designs, Timiskaming community.

Credit: Speck, 1941, plate 34.

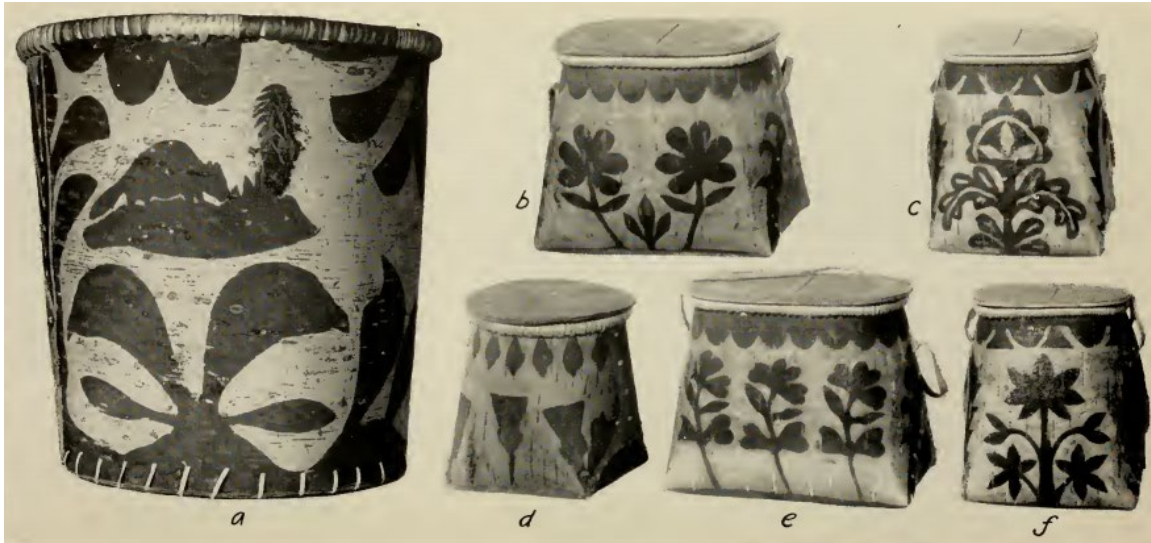


Figure 28. Examples of bark baskets with floral designs, Kitigan Zibi community.

Credit: Speck, 1941, plate 33.

After having described the different types of decoration present on the bark baskets and canoes, it should also be noted that certain observations in the sources also concern the absence of a particular characteristic in the Anicinabe graphic heritage, compared to their neighbours. Petrullo (1929, p. 228), in his study of bark baskets collected on the Lièvre River, states that the baskets he saw in this region did not have multicoloured spruce root lacing on the edges, as was done by the Attikamek and Barriere Lake people. The latter may have been the only Anicinabek to use this technique (see Figure 29). Still on the Barriere Lake community, Johnson (1930, p. 35) explains that, according to him, decorations obtained by scraping bark were not present in this community, and that this practice was only done on request; an influence he suggests came from Kitigan Zibi. The hypothesis that southern Anicinabe groups decorated their bark baskets and canoes much more by scraping the bark, compared to northern groups, is mentioned by Johnson in his field notes (Norcini, 2008, p. 141). This could explain the mentions of painting, rather than scraping, in MacPherson's (1930) writings at Lake Abitibi.

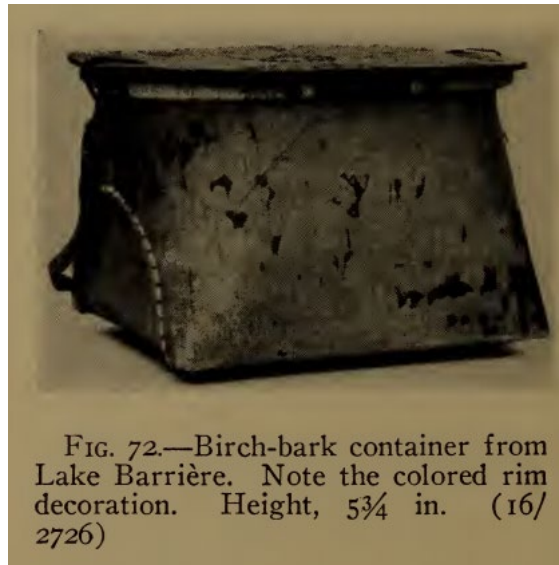


Figure 29. Bark basket from Barrière Lake, showing coloured decoration around the opening.

Although the quality of this picture is poor, the different colour tones can be seen on the dyed and coiled roots around the opening. Credit: Petrullo, 1929, p. 236.

7.6 – Bark clothing and ornaments

Birch bark was also used to produce ornaments and clothing. An Anicinabe person in the 1940s described well the clothing fashion using bark in ancient times in the Upper Gatineau: “Bracelets for wrists or ankles, rings, headdresses, belts were all made of birch bark. Floral, geometric or animal motifs were worn by all the Indians of the Upper Gatineau Valley” [Translation] (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 78). The variety of decoration types was therefore the same as on other birchbark objects.

7.7 – Various objects made of bark

Many other objects made from birch bark were decorated or cut out of the bark to produce a figure. Thus, Angélique Caponicin (1884-1979) spoke of the toys made in the Upper Gatineau: “All sorts of animal figures were cut out of the bark of trees to serve as toys for children” [Translation] (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 77). These cut-out figures could also be used as patterns (see Figure 30), in order to mark in a regular manner the motifs on bark baskets or canoes (Petrullo, 1929, pp. 240-242).



Figure 30. Examples of patterns cut from birch bark.

Credit: Petrullo, 1929, p. 240.

Another source mentions “rattles” made of birch bark and filled with small stones. It is not specified whether these were musical instruments or children's toys. They too were “covered with drawings”, but no further details are given (Clément and Martin, 1993, p. 78). Finally, we should mention that the marking of thin sheets of bark with teeth to produce geometric patterns was considered an “artistic expression” in itself by MacPherson (1930, pp. 70-71). This practice may therefore have been used not only to produce patterns transferred to other objects.

7.8 – Maps and written communication

The Anicinabek used a variety of symbols to communicate information, whether it was to draw maps, to conclude agreements with Europeans or Canadians, or to announce news to their relatives. As the main medium for making these marks was usually birch bark, this subject is discussed here.

A few maps drawn by the Anicinabek have survived to the present day. Some others seem to be copies made by intermediaries. Several symbols can be seen on them.

First, on a map drawn in 1839 by representatives of Kitcisakik⁹ who wished to receive missionaries in their community on a permanent basis, there are three eye-catching symbols¹⁰. First of all, what looks like a sun represents the geographical location of certain places: “Grand-Lac” (Kitcisakik), “Wasswaniping” (Waswanipi) and “La petite nation” (mouth of the Petite-Nation River) (see Figure 31).

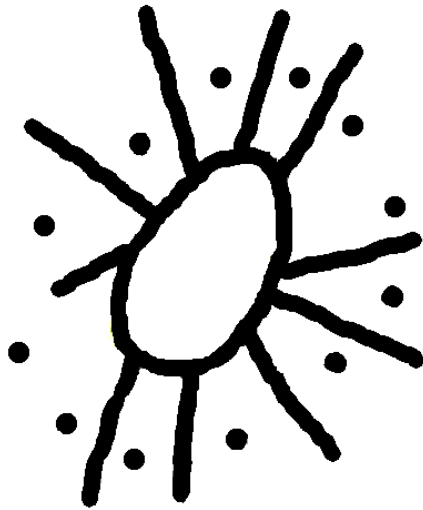


Figure 31. Reproduction of the sun motif on the 1839 Anicinabe map.

Credit: Archives de l'Archevêché de Montréal, 255.110, 839-17.

The direction of the flow of the rivers is, in turn, represented on this map by arrows (see Figure 32). Other Anicinabe or Anicinabe-inspired maps probably also included these arrow symbols (Smith and Dyck, 2007, p. 160), while other maps only showed the course of rivers, rapids (indicated by crossbars) and “X”s to mark specific locations¹¹. However, it is not certain that these arrows were of Anicinabe origin. It could be a cultural borrowing, or a practice shared by many groups. This question should be investigated further.

⁹ In a letter accompanying the map, we learn that the Kitcisakik representatives seemed to have the mandate to also represent the Anicinabek of the surrounding communities (AAM, 1839a).

¹⁰ This document is kept in the Archives de l'Archevêché de Montréal (AAM) as 255.110, 839-17.

¹¹ A complete inventory of preserved Anicinabe or Anicinabe-inspired maps remains to be made. For examples of maps with only the route of rivers, rapids, and “X”s, see: BAnQ-Q (n.d.) or Marcotte (2015).



Figure 32. Reproduction of the arrow symbol to indicate the direction of the rivers' flow, on the 1839 Anicinabe map.

Credit: Archives de l'Archevêché de Montréal, 255.110, 839-17.

Finally, the 1839 map also includes a schematic representation of a chapel at the location where the Anicinabek wanted a permanent Catholic mission to be established (see Figure 33).

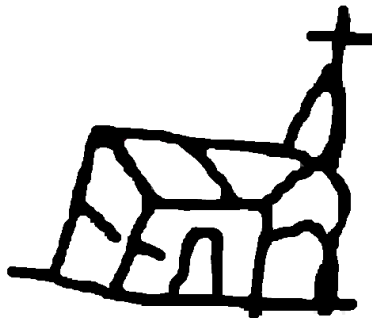


Figure 33. Reproduction of the representation of a Catholic chapel on the 1839 Anicinabe map.

Credit: Archives de l'Archevêché de Montréal, 255.110, 839-17.

Mention is also made elsewhere of geographical maps on bark, but without details of their composition, as for example in the account of the missionary Du Ranquet in 1843 (Ouellet and Dionne, 2000, p. 221).

The Anicinabek have, in past centuries, ratified agreements with Europeans or Canadians using certain designs as signatures. Although these drawings were seen by the colonisers as an approval of the written text, it is more likely that the drawn signatures referred, for the Anicinabek, to the

approval of the oral speech delivered before the signatures were affixed. One of the best known documents with this type of signature is undoubtedly the Great Peace of Montreal Treaty of 1701.

This is a document formalising a generalised peace between the many First Nations allied to the French at the time, the French themselves, and the Five Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois) Nations. The official document that has survived is a copy made at the time, but which is considered to be fairly faithful to the original, which seems to have since disappeared (Guillaud, Delâge and d'Avignon, 2001). The type of representation that is the drawn signature is however far from being always clear.

The lack of a systematic dimension in the terminology used to identify the signatory [on the documents] does not therefore make it possible to determine whether it evokes a symbol (clan, national or place) that would designate the individual signatory or rather the group for which the signatory is committing himself. [Translation]

Guillaud, Delâge and d'Avignon, 2001, p. 32

However, taking into account the risks involved in interpreting the real meaning of these drawings, Guillaud, Delâge and d'Avignon nevertheless assume that most of the symbols present on the document of the Great Peace of Montreal of 1701 represent entire nations. Among the indigenous signatures in the treaty, two symbols are associated with the “Algonquins” (who are here differentiated from other Great Lakes Anicinabe peoples): one without any doubt, and a second with some doubt. The first is a drawing of a bird. According to Guillaud, Delâge and d'Avignon (2001, pp. 35-36), it is a clan symbol representing a wader or a crane¹². The inscription “mark of the algonkins” appears next to it (see Figure 34). Just to the right of this drawing is a human representation. Two hypotheses are raised by the same authors concerning this second drawing. Firstly, it could be a representation of the signatory himself (who would be an Algonquin chief named Ounanguissé). But it could also be a symbol representing another nation, perhaps the Nipissings. In the latter case, it would be the only national signature without explanation alongside it in the 1701 document. Finally, it should be noted that the Témiscamingues, who were considered an independent nation from the Algonquins at the time, do not have a signature in their name on the document, although they were also present at the peace ceremony in 1701. Also, some of the signatures on the document remain impossible to associate with a particular nation at this time.

¹² Other researchers see it as a Canada goose (Leroux, 2003, vol. 1, pp. 47-48).

Nevertheless, it remains difficult to link the Témiscamingues to any of these enigmatic drawings (Guillaud, Delâge and d'Avignon, 2001, pp. 35-36, 38).



Figure 34. The signature associated with the Anicinabek, also known as Algonquins, on the Great Peace of Montreal Treaty of 1701.

Credit: Beaulieu and Viau, 2001, p. 110.

Another form of Anicinabe graphic expression is written communication on birch bark leaves. According to MacPherson's writings (1930, pp. 69-70), there was at first a system of codes that could tell messages to passers-by, such as the direction a group was travelling, how long it would take to reach a camp, or whether a group member had died, for example. These could be marks on sticks, trees, or bark. He also speaks of "pictographic" writing, without further precision, to talk about messages on bark. It is this last form of communication that seems to have attracted the most attention from witnesses of the time. It involved the use of numerous symbols to communicate.

In 1843, the missionary Du Ranquet explained that messages on birch bark were frequent: "This is how the Indians write and communicate news to each other. On the points where the canoes must necessarily pass, we have seen these kinds of posters several times" [Translation] (Ouellet and Dionne, 2000, p. 221). This priest uses the word "poster" to describe these barks bearing Anicinabe symbols. Others have used the word "book" instead, such as the missionary Moreau in 1840, near Barriere Lake:

On arriving, I found an Indian book (it is a birch bark on which there are various hieroglyphs [sic] which serve as an information to the Indians. This bark is put at the

end of a stick, which they then plant in the ground, so that it can be seen by those who pass by. Not understanding what was on the book, I asked one of those who were camped with us what it meant. Immediately he opened it and examined it a little. Then he said to me: “It is my father who wrote it today, he says that you are coming accompanied by several small canoes, that you are going to Trout Lake and that you will stay there for eight days.” [Translation]

AAM, 1840, fo. 41-42 (underlined in the text)

This example shows that the Anicinabe writing system was sufficiently precise to communicate information related to the author of the message, time markers, elements of geography, activities or everyday objects. Using the terminology developed by the anthropologist Pierre Dél  age, we could probably classify this writing system as a type of “selective” writing (D  l  age, 2013; Lefebvre, 2016). It should be remembered that the missionary Poir   had also noticed these types of symbol associated with the communication of messages, but this time on animal skulls, “marked with several hieroglyphs” [Translation] (Poir  , 1840, p. 45). He attributed the same function to them.

A few clarifications are necessary here. First, it should be noted that the symbols mentioned by these priests have not survived, at least in the documentation consulted so far¹³. Although similar symbols among the Ojibwe Anicinabek, further west, could be used to try to reconstruct those used by the Algonquin Anicinabek, this would only be a hypothesis. Secondly, the term “hieroglyphic” has been used by several historical observers to refer to different indigenous writing systems in North America. The use of this word is therefore of little use here to understand what symbols are involved (see D  l  age, 2013, pp. 44-45, 65, 99, 103). Third, the world of indigenous written communication underwent a period of renewal at this time with the creation, by Methodist missionary James Evans, of the syllabic writing of the Cree language, which he developed in 1840 at Norway House, Manitoba (D  l  age, 2013, p. 75).

Although this type of writing quickly spread eastwards in the following years, it remains impossible that the symbols observed by Poir   in 1839, or Moreau in 1840, were syllabic writing. The Anicinabek had their own writing system long before the introduction of syllabics to the Cree. Finally, to complicate matters, by 1842 the syllabic writing invented at Norway House had reached Moose Factory, James Bay, where the Methodist missionary Barnley noted it as “hieroglyphics”.

¹³ One exception should be mentioned here. A time symbol was found in the sources consulted. As this symbol was drawn on a rock, it is discussed in Part 8.

As mentioned above, this is not the same system as the one used by the Anicinabek before this date, despite the misleading use of the term “hieroglyph”. Only a few years later, and throughout the 19th century, the use of the Latin alphabet to write Anicinabemowin gradually came into use among the Anicinabek (Inksetter, 2017, pp. 289-293).

8 – Earth and stone

The mineral world also served as a medium for graphic expression, whether on small carved objects, such as pipes or pendants, but above all on the rocks themselves, i.e. through rock art.

Some early written sources illustrate or describe some of the clay or stone objects. For example, an article in the newspaper *L'Opinion publique* in 1882 illustrates two stone pipes found in the ground near Lake Timiskaming, probably in the 1870s or 1880s. The first one (Figure 35) was carved from a “yellowish-white and very soft stone”, while the second (Figure 36) was carved from a “kind of dark red marble” [Translation] (Paradis, 1882b, pp. 435-436)¹⁴. However, as the author of the text (the missionary Charles-Alfred-Marie Paradis) specifies that the red pipe is broken into two fragments, it seems that his descriptions of the two pipes may have been unintentionally inverted. The patterns apparent in these illustrations consist of simple parallel or perpendicular lines. In any case, it seems that these two pipes are of the type known in archaeology as the “Micmac pipe”, which was very popular among both Indigenous people and Euro-Canadians between the 17th and 19th centuries. Further study of these pipes would therefore be necessary before confidently attributing their manufacture to the Anicinabek themselves (see Daviau, 2008).

Other sources, on the other hand, refer to early archaeological finds, but without giving details of the designs on the artefacts. This is the case for a clay pipe found at Great Lake Victoria in the 1880s and apparently sent to the Peabody Museum in Massachusetts (Putnam, 1888, p. 37).

¹⁴ Father Paradis states in his article that the two pipes were (in 1882) kept at the Ottawa College Museum. Perhaps a search of this institution might reveal traces of these artifacts, as well as other artifacts mentioned by the author (e.g., a fish hook made by the Anicinabek) or even a human skull attributed to an ancient chief.



Figure 35. First stone pipe drawn and described by Father Paradis.

Credit: Paradis, 1882b, p. 435.



Figure 36. Second stone pipe drawn and described by Father Paradis.

Credit: Paradis, 1882b, p. 435.

Elsewhere, in an early 20th century notebook, archaeologist W. J. Wintemberg (n.d., vol. 1, p. 55a) describes a bird-shaped stone amulet in the Victoria Memorial Museum in Ottawa¹⁵. He explains that the amulet was purchased by Dr. E. Sapir from Catharine Michel, an Anicinabe from Kitigan Zibi, on May 16, 1912. The artefact was reportedly found at Lac des Trente et Un Milles. Catharine Michel explained that this amulet was once used by the chief as a pendant and as a sign of his political status.

Another facet of the Anicinabe graphic heritage found on mineral supports is certainly what is known as rock art. Quite present on practically all the territory of the Anicinabe peoples (including those known as Algonquins), rock art generally takes the form of red ochre paintings on the sides of rocks located along lakes and rivers, but also more rarely the form of engravings on lichen.

In general, rock art sites are associated with places of spiritual power.¹⁶ Indeed, the missionary Poiré, in one of his travel accounts, explained how the rocks were one of the most important forms of *Manito* for the Anicinabek: “By *Manito* they mean what they have seen in a dream - a dog, a turtle, a rock, etc. A mirror, a rock, these are the greatest” [Translation] (Poiré, 1841, p. 11). Some of these rocks became the site of offerings. A report from the Chevalier de Troyes, who was travelling on the Ottawa River in 1686, confirms this fact. His troop of soldiers was passing the so-called Bird Rock, an important rock art site:

On the north side, following the road, there is a high mountain, the rock of which is straight and very steep, the middle being a black wall. This is perhaps because the Indians make their sacrifices there, throwing arrows over it, to the end of which they attach a small piece of tobacco. Our Frenchmen have the custom of baptizing in this place those who have not yet passed through it. This rock is called the bird by the Indians and some of our people, not wanting to lose the old custom, threw water over themselves. We camped at the bottom of the portage. [Translation]

Caron, 1918, p. 37

In many places, the Anicinabe rock paintings seemed to be directly associated with the presence of supernatural beings, sometimes called *Petits Hommes* in French, or *fairies* in English, but mostly (according to the pronunciation used by the anthropologist Speck), *Pakwadjèwinini* or *Mimingwèsi* in the Anicinabe language. Several types of supernatural beings seem to fall under these different

¹⁵ It is now the Ottawa Museum of Nature. The catalogue number given by Wintemberg is VIII-E-158. A search of this institution might help locate the artifact.

¹⁶ For more general studies on rock art in Quebec, see: Arsenault (2008), Lemaitre (2013) or Vaillancourt (2008).

names (Speck, 1927, p. 251). As the historical sources are not all clear as to the type of supernatural being referred to, we have mentioned these different names here.

In order to show some examples of this association between rocks with rock paintings, places of offerings, and the presence of supernatural beings, here is an excerpt from a story reported in Anicinabe territory. The story is about the rock with rock paintings at Cape Manitou, Lac Simon in the Outaouais. In 1882, the Catholic priest Jean-Baptiste Proulx published the following account to supplement his mention of the paintings:

Simon Blanc liked to tell, in his times, the following prodigy. One summer he set his lines in front of the Manitou, the fish were swarming at the bottom of the lake; three times a day he made his visit, the bait had always disappeared, but not a single fish was caught on the hooks. What did it mean? One fine morning, at dawn, as he was approaching, he saw, o surprise! two fairies who were lifting his lines. At the sight of him, they fled, and sinking into the water they disappeared at the foot of the rock. There was no doubt about it, they were either the daughters, the sisters or the wives of the Manitou. [Translation]

Proulx, 1882, p. 22

This type of association appears to have been common. For example, the site known as Devil's Rock on Lake Timiskaming was reputed to contain small supernatural beings at the very spot where the Anicinabek offered tobacco as an offering (Sha-Ka-Nash, 1971, p. 6; Speck, 1915, p. 82). Other examples exist elsewhere.

Apart from general description¹⁷, one of the most mentioned rock painting motifs in ancient writings is the anthropomorphic (or human-shaped) figure. This is also the case for the previously mentioned Cape Manitou rock. In this case, the Catholic priest describing the place reported the presence of a “diabolical figure, bearing two long horns” [Translation] (Proulx, 1882, p. 22). Of course, in the Christian imaginary, a horned figure necessarily represented the devil, whereas for the Anicinabek it could have a completely different meaning. A similar misinterpretation was even made much later by a priest visiting Lake Abitibi in the 1960s, when he described a “figure similar to that of a Viking god” [Translation] (Laflamme, 1989, p. 143). Once again, the lack of a cultural referent probably led the observer to misinterpret the presence of horns on an anthropomorphic figure. Similarly, the “mannequin” observed by the Sulpician missionary Louis-Charles Lefebvre de Bellefeuille in 1838 in the Portage de la Montagne on the Ottawa River may have been an

¹⁷ For example, the archaeologist Wintemberg (n.d., vol. 1, p. 8a) only mentioned the presence of “red pictographs” at Lake Buies at the turn of the 20th century.

anthropomorphic figure painted on a rock, especially considering that the priest first wrote the word “manito” in his text, before replacing it with “mannequin” (BAnQ-RN, 1838, fo. 2).

Sometimes the anthropomorphic figures painted on the rocks have been more specifically associated with Anicinabe mythological figures, or with particular historical figures. An Anicinabe from Temagami, for example, claimed to have seen a strange figure on the rocky shores of the Ottawa River, perhaps related to Wiske'djak (Speck, 1915, p. 83). Still concerning the people of Temagami, very close to the Anicinabek or Algonquins, it seems that the rock paintings (often anthropomorphic) were often believed to be the work of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). Anthropologist Speck reports that according to Chief Alex Paul, the Iroquois of past centuries sometimes went north to find new territories, since they had been forced off their land by the Americans. As they passed through here, they would have painted figures on the rocks to tell what had happened to them in these foreign lands. Speck adds: “The Ojibwa attributed nearly all pictographs to the Iroquois. On Lady Evelyn lake are a number of such figures, showing animals and men in canoes” (Speck, 1915, p. 76).

Sometimes the anthropomorphic figure is not complete, but rather represents a part of the human body. The hand motif is thus reported. Apitipik Point (at Lake Abitibi) is already known for the presence of a boulder bearing a “lichenoglyph”, or engraving on lichen. Figure 37 shows a view taken in 1919, the earliest known, which shows the hand shape that is usually attributed to the engraved design on the stone block. In this image the engraving is clearly visible and it is evident that it is not a natural discoloration.



Figure 37. A group of citizens from La Sarre in front of the boulder at Apitipik. 1919.

The large hand motif, engraved on the lichen, can be seen clearly behind the man pressing a hand on the boulder. Credit: Laflamme, 1967, p. 14.

Archaeologist Frank Ridley was the first scientist to describe this boulder, when he visited in 1954:

On the north side of the promontory, where the granite outcrops, there is a very large boulder supported by a tripod of three small stones. The boulder, some eight cubic yards in volume, has a representation of a hand, an encircled mammal figure, and a sinuous line that might represent a snake.

Ridley, 1956, p. 19

A few years later, Ridley (1962, p. 89) seems to change his mind about the mammal motif, which he then interprets as a turtle.

The archaeologist Thomas Lee (1965, p. 12) also commented on the presence of the engraved boulder during his fieldwork at Lake Abitibi in 1964: “The Abitibi stone, however, has a large portrayal of a human right hand, thumb extended, on its northern face. The hand has a breadth of 30 inches, and was produced by scraping away the blackened lichens to expose bare rock.”

It should also be noted that the hand motif appears elsewhere in the Anicinabe repertoire, in this case in the potato prints of Mrs. Michele Buckshot of Kitigan Zibi in the first half of the 20th century (see Part 7).

As for the archaeologists Côté, Inksetter and Roy, they refer to the boulder as the “sacred stone”. A footnote explains:

This stone is a large boulder resting suspended on three small rocks of about 15 cm in diameter. The precarious aspect of the whole, as well as a different colouring forming the silhouette of a hand on one of its faces, inspired the Abitibiwinnik with a sacred feeling towards this stone. [Translation]


Côté, Inksetter and Roy, 2002, p. 23

Côté and Inksetter (2004, p. 8) then refer to the boulder as “Kitci asini”, without further clarification of the sources for this name. The fact that the boulder had a lichen engraving, rather than just a random discoloration, thus seems to have been overlooked in the scientific literature following Ridley and Lee's archaeological fieldwork. Figure 38 shows the boulder at Apitipik Point in 1972, when the pattern already looked quite altered compared to the 1919 photograph.



Figure 38. The boulder at Apitipik Point in 1972.

Credit: Mailhot, 1972.

Finally, it should be noted that resistance to conversion to Catholicism among the Anicinabek of Lake Abitibi has already been mentioned in a context that could have included the boulder that is of interest here. In what ethnohistorian Leila Inksetter calls the “power struggles” involving missionary priests and shamans that took place at Lake Abitibi from the 1840s onwards (Inksetter, 2017, p. 270), one incident in particular draws our attention. In 1843, the missionary Du Ranquet, visiting Apitipik, reported the intervention of an Anicinabe openly opposed to Catholicism: “We are even told that during the night one of them [those opposed to Catholicism] climbed onto a rock above the  Indians huts and from there shouted: *don't listen to the Black Robes, they want to mislead you*” [Translation] (Ouellet and Dionne, 2000, p. 196). Now, the only “rocks” that could give a view “above” the tents set up by the Anicinabek would be one or other of the few boulders present on the site. Taking into account that the boulders could represent one of the most important manifestations of power, it could be hypothesised that the erratic boulder with a hand on it could have served as a symbol of resistance to Catholicism by some Anicinabek shamans in the mid-19th century.

Animal motifs, whether or not accompanying anthropomorphic figures, seem to have been fairly common as well (Lemaitre, 2013, p. 164). After describing a large figure of a snake carved on a rock on Lake Huron, the fur trader Daniel Williams Harmon said that he had frequently seen animal representations along the route that led him there, probably on the Ottawa River, among others: “We have often seen other engravings, on the rocks, along the rivers and lakes, of many different kinds of animals, some of which, I am told, are not now to be found, in this part of the world, and probably never existed” (Harmon, 1820, p. 36).

Finally, it is relevant to add that some symbols, which probably also had a use in bark writing, have been noted among the rock paintings. In 1821, a group of fur traders saw a mark on a large rock, while passing through the Roche Capitaine portage on the Ottawa River: “On passing the Mountain we observed an Indian Mark on a flat rock. This was to show the Indians who followed the Time the Party passed this Spot. The half circle represents the horizon, the Line the Sun’s Direction when they were at the Spot” (Garry, 1900, pp. 100-101). The original text includes a reproduction of this symbol, shown here in Figure 39. To the right of the word “rock” is the motif in question. The semicircle represents the path of the sun across the horizon, and the straight line pointing upwards probably signifies the sun at its zenith, at noon.

Y 101
ark on a flat rock φ.
Time the Party passed
n, the Line the Sun's

Figure 39. An enlargement of Garry's text, showing a schematisation of the rock painting observed in 1821.

Credit: Garry, 1900, p. 101.

9 – Conclusion

After presenting the portrait of the various graphic practices of the Anicinabek, as described in the ancient written sources, several observations can be made. First of all, it appears that relatively few details concerning the types of motifs could be found. The most detailed sources are the anthropological studies from the beginning of the 20th century. However, these already referred, at that time, to ancient practices that were remembered by the Anicinabek, the details or meanings of which were sometimes lost or hidden. It then becomes relevant to turn to older sources. There again, it was found that the fur traders and Catholic missionaries were, on the whole, not very eloquent on the issue of Anicinabe graphic heritage. The descriptions are often very general. In fact, these witnesses of the time were mainly interested in describing economic or religious behaviour, social organisation, etc. The archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, for example, with which I am quite familiar, provided almost no relevant data for the preparation of this report, even though they are otherwise very rich in documenting other aspects of Anicinabe history and culture.

This being said, further investigation of some of the archives could, in my opinion, reveal some more data relevant to the subject at hand, while also probably revealing other more general information about Anicinabe culture. Due to the pandemic context during the research period, the archive centres that were thought to be relevant could not be visited in person. However, some of the research could be carried out remotely, for example in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Montreal. For those institutions that could not be visited, or for those sources that were identified indirectly, and which have an interesting research potential, here is a summary that could serve as a basis for further research.

The Deschâtelets-NDC Archives in Richelieu concern the religious order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.). Various sources related to this institution, mentioned in this report, suggest that there exist more detailed documents, written by the Oblate missionaries. Since the Oblate missionaries arrived among the Anicinabek in 1844, the potential for relevant documents is high. It should be noted here that the most relevant missionary documents are always likely to be the earliest ones, at a time when priests were busy describing Anicinabe society before it was transformed by Christianity. The years 1830 to 1850 are therefore the most relevant in this type of research. At that time, describing the customs was sometimes part of the orders given by the bishops who sent missionaries into Anicinabe territory.

The archives of the Fathers of St. Sulpice would also benefit from being explored for the same reasons. Not only were the Sulpicians the priests assigned to the Anicinabek residing at the mission

of the Lake of Two Mountains (Oka) since the beginning of the 18th century, but they also provided the first Catholic missionary to visit the Anicinabek of Témiscamingue and Abitibi on a regular basis, between 1836 and 1838. As the future of these archives is considered uncertain, an exploration of their potential should certainly be considered as part of a broader research project.

Other religious archives remain to be visited: the Archives of the Archdiocese of Quebec (in order to find unpublished documents from the missionaries between 1830 and 1850); the Archives of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa (the so-called Grey Nuns were present among the Anicinabek of Témiscamingue from 1866); and any other religious congregations that worked with the Anicinabek and possess archives.

As part of this research, I have not explored the numerous texts published under the French Regime (1534-1760), since a synthesis study has already been conducted on the subject (Laberge and Girard, 1998). This synthesis by Marc Laberge, however, deals generally with the broad Algonquian language family in north-eastern North America. Laberge relies mainly on written sources to reconstruct an illustrated ethnography of the Algonquians between 1534 and 1760, and then occasionally on archaeological data (Laberge and Girard, 1998, p. 13-14). The vast majority of the information provided in his book is of a general Algonquian character, and it is therefore difficult to perceive what may have belonged to the so-called Algonquin Anicinabek. It would probably be necessary to validate whether the general information he gives is indeed always general (in the sources of the time) or whether, on the contrary, he himself has not sometimes omitted to point out the particular Anicinabe origin of any given description of graphic elements.

Finally, more targeted verifications, carried out in certain institutions, could perhaps provide additional elements quite easily. Without being exhaustive, here are some of them listed in no particular order:

- In the study by Guillaud, Delâge and d'Avignon (2001, p. 23), mention is made of a treaty of 1721, preserved in the Massachusetts Archives, containing an “Algonquin” pictographic signature.
- Various Anicinabe objects mentioned throughout this report were long ago described as being preserved in certain institutions. Targeted research on this subject might be able to trace them: the Kitcisakik clay pipe at the Peabody Museum in Massachusetts, the two Lake Timiskaming stone pipes at the College Museum in Ottawa, or the bird-shaped stone amulet at the Museum of Nature in Ottawa (see Part 8 for more details).

- The article by Clément and Martin (1993), cited several times in this report, deals with the unpublished collection of Anicinabe legends and customs written by Juliette Gaultier de la Vérendrye in the 1940s. This manuscript, held in the Canadian Museum of History, would benefit from being examined in its entirety for potential graphic elements other than those mentioned in this report.

The process of cultural reappropriation initiated by the Anicinabek in recent years will certainly enable them to revive certain symbols or graphic aspects specifically associated with their Nation. The ancient written sources certainly have an important role to play in this process. They are useful above all because they complement old objects, which have sometimes been preserved without much information about the culture or identity of their creators. Together with the oral tradition, written sources can help to better interpret the ancient Anicinabe imagery. With this report, I hope to have made a positive contribution, even if only minimally, to the Anicinabek's efforts to reclaim their cultural heritage.

10 – Sources

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