

Negative Spaces: Bringing Indigenous women to the forefront of archaeological research in the
lower Great Lakes region

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Indigenous women are underrepresented and/or stereotyped in the archaeological record with cultural remains often being interpreted as being inherently male. Previous to contemporary decolonial and feminist research, dominant androcentric and colonial frameworks were highly influential within the discipline and distorted the Indigenous past through the use of limited historical documents provided by colonizers. This reliance on primary colonial documentation has led to a restrictive interpretation of the past. Archaeological research that employs androcentric and colonial lenses negatively affects Indigenous women, both historically and contemporarily, by excluding them from their own histories and controlling public narratives. By providing a meta-analysis of trade goods in conjunction with contextualizing European's imperious interpretations, this paper works to highlight potential roles that Indigenous women occupied and the ways in which they affected material culture that may not have been considered previously. Contrary to past interpretations of trade goods, it appears as though women would have had direct and long-term use with these materials, even having the potential to influence the types of commodities tradesmen brought to the metaphorical table.

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Chapter One— Contextualizing Negative Spaces and Public Issues

1.1 Interpretation of Women within the Archaeological Record

When an artist decides to paint a scene, their first objective is to identify the elements they deem most important to depict, with all else in the scene inhabiting what is considered negative space (Goodin 2005:1). Negative space, although not the focal point of art, plays an equally important role by outlining and emphasizing the foreground of a piece. Similarly, when an archaeologist sets out to do research, they must first identify what their objective is. Within archaeology, the most pervasive focal points of research are based in Western ideology that focuses on European, patriarchal, and colonial concepts (Spencer-Wood 2011:6). In periods when androcentric ideology has been favored, scholars have projected this ideology onto the past, forcing Indigenous women to inhabit these negative spaces. Although women have not received a place in the foreground of archaeological research, they undoubtedly have played equally important roles as their male counterparts who have been heavily studied. By looking at the negative space within the archaeological record, archaeologists can begin to remedy this by identifying the ways in which women shaped their communities.

Contemporarily, much of material culture within Western frameworks is interpreted as being inherently male. This is true of archaeological material culture here in Ontario as well; regardless of whether the material culture is of Indigenous or European origin, it is largely interpreted as being utilized by men. Within the discipline a limited catalogue of artifacts is interpreted as being employed by women, typically only accounting for beads and ceramics despite the breadth of labour that women contributed to their communities. These views are imposed historically by colonists and contemporary researchers using a Western lens. This in

turn has led to instances of monolithic and reductive interpretation of Indigenous women, which has led to the erasure of Indigenous women within the historical and archaeological record, creating a lack of representation in present-day literature. While new archaeological research has begun to re-examine the Indigenous past using a decolonial lens, historically there has been an absence in literature pertaining to Indigenous women and the re-examination of their roles within society (Million 2004, Spector 1993). It is vital to current archaeological research that sites and material assemblages be re-examined in order to bring women's roles in the past to the foreground, and thereby removing them from the negative space to which they have been relegated. As it stands, interpretations of Indigenous women within the archaeological record are not sustainable and are used as a means of colonial violence. The disenfranchisement of Indigenous women in the past has perpetuated the marginalization of Indigenous women within current colonial contexts.

Primary historical accounts of Indigenous life have become the bedrock for archaeological understanding of Indigenous life. Because these documents were produced during the Contact period, I believe it is most important to begin research in this period to tease out how our foundational understanding of past lifeways has been influenced by subjective historical accounts. In reassessing this period my research will focus on a catalogue of trade goods from the lower Great Lakes region and focus on overarching gender roles and associated artifacts within Indigenous lifeways. It is important to note that individual Indigenous groups have distinct and varying lifeways and experiences. Some groups experienced contact at a more vigorous rate while others had no contact with European traders during the early years of colonization. In this way it is possible that gender roles could have been more or less important to specific groups. In looking at the overarching theme of gender and trade goods, it is my hope

that in the future more specific studies in regard to trade items and gender can be conducted to improve and refine my findings.

Feminist Archaeology

Academia plays a key role in the perpetration of colonialism and androcentrism because of its ancient roots in the West. Archaeology is no exception; much like other facets of academia, research has often focused on androcentric ideas. The omnipresence of colonialism and the way in which it has been woven into Western society makes it easy for academics to fall into colonial trappings, particularly if someone comes from position of privilege such as myself. While others are exposed to targeted mechanisms of colonialism throughout their lives, people of privilege are afforded unfamiliarity that aids in the perpetuation of coloniality. Although no theoretical approach is without its own set of flaws, by broadening our theoretical pallet we will be better equipped to capture the nuances of the archaeological past.

Although much of the broader discipline still follows androcentric theory, the post-processual movement that started in the 1960's offered scholars new ways to conduct research. Post-processualism allowed scholars to conduct metatheoretical research which allowed archaeologists to turn inwards and begin to identify how archaeology has contributed to wider issues within society. During this time androcentric research was one of many approaches that was identified as being problematic, paving the way for a new approach that focused on feminism. Feminist theories within archaeology focus on providing information on past civilizations through a lens that challenges the typical male centric views present within archaeology (Spencer-Wood 2011:4). Androcentric theories are usually patriarchal in nature and project "modern binary gender stereotypes onto the past, justifying women's devaluation and

invisibility by falsely claiming women have always been innately biologically inferior, subordinate, and therefore insignificant” (Spencer-Wood 2011:4).

As feminist theory has developed three branches of theory have emerged; first-wave, second-wave and third-wave (Spencer-Wood 2011:3). First-wave feminism can be described as “egalitarian enlightenment, feminist theories of women’s natural equality and social agency in changing patriarchy”, while second-wave can be described as “structuralist-feminist theories that analyse how patriarchal structures produce inequalities” (Spencer-Wood 2011:3). The former although helpful in synthesizing gender divisions fails to account for the uniqueness of individual experiences which can in turn create implicit bias or white bias. Third-wave feminist theory focuses on intersectionality by providing context to individual experiences through “analyzing the diversity in gender and sexual ideologies, identities, roles, relationships and power dynamics due to the intersections of gender and/or sexuality with class, race, ethnicity, age, religion, etc.” (Spencer-Wood 2011:3). Although the utilization of all waves of feminist theory is key to developing greater insight into archaeological questions, this research will primarily utilize third-wave feminist theory in order to tackle white bias that is prevalent within the discipline (Spencer-Wood 2011:3).

In approaching archaeological theory through a feminist lens, researchers hope to provide more context to past peoples and give voices to women both historically and contemporarily (Spencer-Wood 2011:4). Feminist archaeological literature began to be published in the 1980’s when researchers began to explore and classify the ways feminists do science (Engelstad 2007:217, Rubio 2011:24). Despite feminist theories having been around for more than 40 years, feminist theory still has yet to be taken up into broader archaeological theory (Conkey 2007:290, Engelstad 2007:217) This is due to a wide range of institutional structures that exist within the

discipline. Within the realm of academia, the “current systems of tenure, promotion, and merit recognition reward entrenched ways of doing research and value a limited range of perspectives, voices and activities” (Surface-Evans and Jackson 2012). In addition, singularly led projects are often valued over collaborative projects which women within the field have often preferred (Surface-Evans and Jackson 2012). This has meant that women’s work has been considered of less value making it difficult for women in academia to continue pursuing collaborative archaeology (Surface-Evans and Jackson 2012). This type of shrouding is also imposed within publishing, with feminist articles being hidden within gendered sections of archaeological readers or given their own reader entirely so academics have an easy way to avoid this literature (Conkey 2007:290). In addition to women’s work often being less valued than that of their counterparts, women are more likely to be subject to sexual harassment within their field (Meyers et al. 2018). A survey conducted by Southeastern Archaeological Conference in 2014 showed that 68% of respondents reported that they had experience sexual harassment with the overwhelming majority of these respondents identifying as women (Meyers et al. 2018). Similarly, in 2014 a survey on Academic Field Experiences was released which revealed that 64% of respondents experienced personal sexual harassment and 20% had experienced sexual assault within the field; with primary perpetrators being identified as males who rank higher in seniority than victims (Muckle 2014). The discipline remained largely unchanged after these studies and symptoms of inequality persisted into 2019 when the SAA faced criticism when for failing to eject a known perpetrator of sexual harassment from the conference (Wade 2019). Although this event has spurred policy changes within the archaeological community, more needs to be done to protect women within the discipline and preserve their voices, perspectives, and experiences (Wade 2019). These institutional barriers and events have barred feminist

theories from being taken up within the broader discipline and utilized in cases where they may be able to provide new or better insights.

Contemporarily, a majority of feminist impact can be seen within archaeological theory rather than archaeological methods. Applying feminist theory to well established frameworks makes feminist archaeology more accessible to scholars already working within the discipline. Currently feminist archaeology typically follows traditional archaeological methods but uses them in a way that captures a broader perspective of past lifeways. However, because it is still in its formative stages some obstacles have prevented this type of theory from being taken up within the field more broadly. Data has become a key issue (Voorhies 1992:1005). Academics using data to learn about the past lifeways of women have typically had a hard time solidifying their hypotheses (Voorhies 1992:1005). Data, although useful in research, often presents complications within research because of the way it can be interpreted. Data can often be simplified and in doing so the complexities present in past lifeways are not always represented. The oversimplification of messy data (Hauser 2012) has made it difficult for feminist scholars to capture women's roles within past lifeways. All people have unique experiences and identities that contribute to making it difficult to capture individual life experiences through analyzing data.

This gap in data has often lent itself to self reflection on the part of the archaeologist and has opened up a new dimension of archaeological analysis. Feminist archaeology is not just about methods and theories, it is about providing thoughtful insight into what women experience in the field currently. Through recognition of ethical dilemmas and personal struggles, feminist archaeologists are providing readers with tangible insights on how women live currently and how the discipline ought to change to better serve the communities they study. By providing

alternate insight into the archaeological realm they are acknowledging the experience of women which is an essential part in being able to interpret past women. By acknowledging current experiences of women within the world, or in this case the field of archaeology, it provides the opportunity for women's experiences to be included within the archaeological record in a multifaceted way. Through feminist archaeology, scholars are dismantling underpinnings that are present within archaeology, even those that do not seem to be inherently linked with the feminist movement.

1.2 Why the Representation of Indigenous Women is an Urgent Public Issue

Although the interpretation of Indigenous women has begun evolving within the discipline, this process is slow moving, with the majority of literature taking place over the last 40 years (Haas et al. 2020, Labelle 2013, Mihesuah 1996, Million 2004, Shoemaker 1991, Spector 1993, Van Kirk 1980, Voyageur 2016). Unfortunately, because much of this research is conducted by feminist and decolonial archaeologists, it has not been taken up by the broader discipline of archaeology which rewards colonial and androcentric worldviews (Engelstad 2007:217). Thus, literature dealing with Indigenous women is often absent from archaeological interpretations available for public consumption. Rather, interpretations based on the ways in which missionaries trivialized Indigenous women are frequently projected onto the prehistoric past. An example of this trivialization can be seen in Sagard's work where he seemingly discounted the work of Indigenous women and girls in comparison to men's when he wrote:

“Just as the men have their special occupation and understand wherein a man's duty consists, so also the women and girls keep their place and perform quietly to their little tasks and functions of service.” (Sagard 1968: 101)

This is just one mechanism of colonialism that works to dispossess Indigenous groups, which contributes to social inequality. This is not just a problem within the discipline of archaeology, anthropology or even academia. Regardless, it is imperative that archaeologists acknowledge the impact our discipline has had on “othering” and dispossessing Indigenous communities.

Colonialism has been woven into the fabric of our “Canadian culture”, and all these seemingly small instances of inequality and racism make up a much larger issue that targets indigeneity and functions to eradicate it.

The result of this can be seen in the acts of violence against Indigenous women that are carried out by governments, institutions, social service providers, industries, and all Canadians (MMIWAG 2019:77). The national inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has confirmed what Indigenous activists and scholars had been aware of for decades; Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people are the targets of genocide within Canada (MMIWAG 2019:50). This work is especially urgent with the rise of protests focused on Indigenous injustice that have been taking place across Canada in 2020. Presently, Indigenous women are at risk of experiencing violence and trauma incited by colonial powers while exercising their right to protest (Antonacci 2020, Tozer 2020). As of November 2020, we have seen acts of violence being carried out by OPP and RCMP officers working on behalf of the government, as well as individuals radicalized by anti-Indigenous racism (Antonacci 2020, Mustafa 2020, Tozer 2020). The most notable acts of violence have taken place in Wet’suwet’en territory, Mi’gmaq territory and Six Nations territory (Landback 1492), although this list is not exhaustive (Morin 2020).

In many instances’ archaeology has functioned as a perpetrator of colonial violence because of how closely scholars work with Indigenous materiality and culture. In various

instances archaeologists have functioned as gatekeepers of Indigenous artifacts and historic interpretation. Further, scholars have often focused on elements of research that are praised by the academy which are typically topics centered around and seen through the lens of androcentric colonialism. This has led to the erasure of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people within the archaeological record. This has contributed to public and personal perceptions of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people as limited representation within the historical and archaeological record can be interpreted as the devaluation or non-existence of these groups within past societies. For example, archaeology often only finds Indigenous spaces interesting when it looks like the non-Indigenous present (Wobst 2004:16). In instances where researchers have found spaces that are similar to their own contemporary spaces, researchers have been at fault for imposing modern ideology onto Indigenous pasts which has fuelled persistent harmful beliefs rooted in colonization regarding Indigenous women and girls (Wobst 2004:17). The lack of research historically in regard to gender makes taking on a gendered lens in these contexts important because women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people are impacted in distinct ways that have not been fully explored (MMIWAG 2019:230).

The taking up of feminist archaeology has been slow and performed primarily by white researchers who have enough privilege to be able to explore chosen topics. Although white researchers are beginning to shift the lens towards gender oppression, this research often overlooks racial issues which in turn alienates many Indigenous women (Mihesuah 1996:17). White feminist research also tends to focus on power dynamics and seemingly subservient roles despite research suggesting that a large number of Indigenous women do not show interest in colonial opinion of the division of labor or power (Mihesuah 1996:18). Rather, they view these domestic duties as being just as important as men's roles and feel empowered within their

domestic spheres (Mihesuah 1996:18). In acknowledging this, this thesis will not focus on power dynamics but rather it will try and contextualize women's contributions, regardless of perceived importance, during the Contact period. Though archaeology is entrenched in colonialism, recent works into public issues anthropology have meant that the discipline is able to analyze and problematize itself from the inside out, paving the way for more ethical research (Hedican 2016, Ingold 2018). In turn archaeologists have begun to use their authority within the sphere of academia to take up decolonial discourses, such as feminist theory, transforming current and future relationships with Indigenous groups and beginning to shift the power dynamic to one that is balanced. Through new discourse, such as community archaeology, the publics academics are facilitating research with have the power to produce their own interpretations of the past. Within Ontario archaeology decolonial theory is just beginning to be taken up more broadly, with feminist discourse being especially rare. Intersectional feminist theory is vital to decolonial discourse and thus should be considered when interpreting the past, particularly with sites and artifacts that are being re-examined and reconsidered contemporarily. In re-examining and updating interpretations of the past, it is my hope that the public will begin to see a change in the way the past is interpreted, and it will shed light on the ways in which Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people of both the past and present have championed for their communities.

1.3 Proposed venue for publication

I believe that the second chapter of my thesis would be well suited for the journal of Historical Archaeology. This journal covers a wide variety of topics within historic archaeology including gender studies, colonialism and Indigenous research. The journal of Historical Archaeology is published quarterly, and membership is not required to submit papers for publication. As one of the leading journals in archaeology of the modern era, this journal has published many articles

throughout time and space that deal with European contact that would make it an ideal venue for my second chapter. I believe that Historical Archaeology is a journal that would reach a variety of publics within the education system. The journal of Historical Archaeology is also one that I have encountered during my time working in culture services, which leads me to believe that information published in Historical Archaeology has the potential of being passed on to the general public

Chapter Two – Bringing Women to the Forefront -- The Re-Analysis of Trade Goods Using a Feminist Lens

2.1 Introduction and Context

Within the Western world, historic and prehistoric interpretations are centered around the male existence. While there is a plethora of broad and individual accounts of how men lived throughout time and space, there is a relative absence of information regarding how women lived (Spencer-Wood 2011:13). Scholars divide the past into distinct categories, historical and prehistoric era, with the latter being prior to what the Western world would consider adequate written documentation (Trigger 1986:51). Archaeology is credited with being the principal source of information about human existence before the dawn of written history (Trigger 1986:50). However, within early historic contexts both archaeological data and contemporaneous written texts are used to paint a more nuanced picture of how our historic ancestors lived (Trigger 1986:50). The “Contact Period” in northeastern North America falls within this early historic context, and archaeologists studying Contact Period have largely depended on written accounts provided by European visitors, including missionaries, to help interpret Indigenous life. Although these written accounts are helpful in understanding the relationship between Indigenous and European settlers, there is good reason to believe that they do not accurately describe Indigenous life as they only provide information through a particular and singular lens. These accounts were typically provided by European men who were either working as missionaries or tradesmen, providing a very small scope of interest and thus a limited account.

This lens has caused limitations within archaeologists’ interpretations of the past, with women being largely unaccounted for. Indigenous women in particular are represented poorly

within these sources and therefore in interpretations of the archaeological record, with most categories of material culture, including trade goods, being attributed to the labor Indigenous men would have performed. While mentioning how limited the accounts of Indigenous women are in the archaeological record it is also important to note the limitations of my own research. Due to the limited number of accounts that discuss women during Contact Period, this research has had to utilize whatever accounts were available as there is simply not enough information about women in specific traditions. Although this has made it possible for this research to be conducted, it has also muddied the unique cultural experiences of women within different Indigenous traditions and in turn contributes to a pan-Indigenous narrative that is reductive. Although in this text I will mention subsistence activities such as farming or cultural practices such as piercings it is critical to note the vast range in subsistence patterns, and cultural practices within Indigenous groups of North Eastern Canada that I was unable to convey in this research due to limited information. It is my hope that in the future conducting smaller scale collaborative projects that focus on women in individual traditions will be possible and will remedy my shortcomings within this research. I implore all readers to keep these limitations in mind while reading this research.

Historic accounts such as *Jesuit Relations* record very little about Indigenous women in comparison to their male counterparts, and the accounts that are provided are shrouded by European sensibilities. It is common within *Jesuit Relations* to see Indigenous women's duties and positions depicted as akin to “slaves, laborers and beasts of burden” (Thwaites 1896[1]:257). Missionary accounts have provided a small amount of context to the division of labour between Indigenous men and women, and these subjective accounts have become the basis of archaeological understanding of the division of labour. Missionaries often used disparaging

terms like “slave” and “laborer” when referring to women’s societal roles as a way to undermine their value (Thwaites 1896[1]:258). But in fact, before colonization, women were regarded within their own societies as “a present and powerful force” (Voyageur 2016:15). This has been particularly well documented within Iroquoian traditions where women played profound roles in the “political and economic life of the community” (Voyageur 2016:15). Although in most instances women's labour was generally local, they controlled “the means of production and the products of major subsistence activities” particularly in farming traditions (Voyageur 2016:15). More accurate glimpses of women's traditional societal roles can be seen within missionaries' accounts with them describing the ways women would have to balance childbearing and their workload (Thwaites 1896[1]:258). Within *Jesuit Relations* women are described as steersmen of canoes, cultivators of food, sewers of clothing, procurers of wood as well as talented artisans amongst other things (Thwaites 1897[4]:205). Although European accounts often referred to women as inferior, it appears that European fur traders were well aware that women and the roles they performed were essential to survival in the “New World” (Voyageur 2016:15); with historical documents stating that “throughout the 18th century, officers of the day argued with the London Committee that it was essential to keep Indian women in the posts, as they performed important tasks (which) the British had not yet mastered” (Van Kirk 1980:54). Indigenous women possessed a great deal of survival skills, as well as having the ability to work as translators between traders and Indigenous groups (Voyageur 2016:16). It comes as no surprise that Indigenous women have been described as “crucial to the success of fur trader[s] and the fur trade industry” (Voyageur 2016:18). Although these new interpretations of Indigenous women, provided by feminist researchers, are beginning to change the narrative

surrounding women's roles both historically and prehistorically, this type of interpretation has yet to be taken up by the broader discipline of archaeology.

It is important to bring concepts such as feminist theory to the forefront of archaeology because gender is often not considered relevant to important cultural contexts. The one to be explored in the rest of this thesis is how European items entered and were used in Iroquoian societies during the early Contact Period. Archaeologists have been interested in this topic for some time, and have recognized its complexity. For example, Manning et al. (2018:2) mention "Contemporary perspectives on contact in the 16th and 17th centuries recognize that there were different modes of participation in and access to trade networks". In another article by Manning he is more specific, noting that

"There are other reasons European goods do or do not show up in the archaeological record. How near or far a place was from transport routes, and local politics, both within and between groups, could play a role. Whether Europeans made direct contact, or there were indirect links, could affect availability." (Manning 2020:6).

All of that is true but, despite listing a number of socio-economic factors that could have affected how trade goods came to end up in Indigenous archaeological sites, Manning fails to mention another key determinate in socio-economics: Gender. This is indicative of a greater issue within the discipline; even in articles coming out as recently as this year, gender is not mentioned as even a potential factor in important cultural events (Manning 2020). This is especially problematic when analyzing the Contact Period within Ontario, because our understanding already relies on primary documents that obscure women, making it difficult to imagine them playing significant roles within cultural events such as trading.

Understanding the Contact Period in Ontario

Before proceeding further, it is useful to contextualize “Contact Period.” Contact Period is known as the phase of European exploration beginning the late 15th century that led colonists to what is now known as North America. Despite the existence of historical records from that period, it is only partially understood. Trigger (1986:121) notes that “[v]ery little is recorded about the earliest contacts between Europeans and Indigenous groups along the eastern shores of North America, this in turn has allowed the proliferation of a large body of speculative literature”. The implications of this speculative research are broad and sometimes obscure, affecting our understanding of history, identity, and Indigenous cultures in ways that have not been fully explored (Silliman 2005:55). As it stands, an artificial disciplinary barrier between historical and prehistoric archaeology has also created dysfunction that hinders discussion about historical processes and cultural histories (Silliman 2005:56).

Although Contact Period is a phase of archaeology that is often mentioned, the chronology associated with it is ill-defined. Previously, the periods of Indigenous prehistory and history were established solely from the perspective of European colonists using “the basis of the presence/absence of European trade goods and other archaeological indicators” such as ceramic seriation (Manning et al. 2018:1; Manning 2020:2). Even in trying to evade this by presenting an Indigenous perspective, colonial chronology remained pervasive (Manning 2020:2). Essentially, sites with trade goods were assigned to the Contact Period; while sites with similar ceramics but without trade goods were assigned to before the Prehistoric Period. However, with the further development of Radiocarbon dating archaeologists now are able to independently date archaeological sites which has demonstrated that trade goods followed a more ambiguous and gradual timeline of introduction (Manning et al. 2018:2). This new understanding of trade goods on Contact Period sites opens up a wider array of questions that no longer focus on colonial

questions but Indigenous ones (Manning 2020:7). The focus has now shifted to why and how these trade goods were taken up in particular contexts, and one of such elements that has yet to be considered is gender.

As it stands, Contact Period is still a fairly ambiguous period particularly from a cultural perspective. There are various elements of Contact Period that archaeologists do not fully understand. Due to a lack of gendered and feminist literature, limited work has been conducted in regards to how gender may have affected various aspects of colonization. It is unclear how women and their societal roles influenced various colonial processes such as trade. In order to begin the important work of interpreting women of the past, archaeologists must first review historical records for ethnographic depictions of women critically. It is vital for researchers to understand how subjective these historical records are and begin to incorporate more recent scholarship about Indigenous lifeways and beliefs in order to begin to decipher what colonists projected onto Indigenous women versus how they truly lived. Research such as this is entirely possible and is exemplified in *Developing an Aboriginal archaeology: receiving gifts from White Buffalo Calf Woman* by Tara Million (2004). In critically examining ethnographic depictions, it is possible for scholars to begin to look at the ways that women in the past may have interacted with cultural remains such as trade goods. This provides a completely new lens for archaeologists to employ that has the potential to lead to new or better insights about the Contact Period.

2.2 Research Methods

The methods employed in this thesis include archival research on early European trade goods found in the lower Great Lakes region, as well as a literature review of feminist archaeology and Contact Period. Like many others in 2020, COVID-19 forced me to diverge from my previous plan of research. Due to the closures in March extending into May, June and July, I was unable to obtain an assemblage to analyze as outlined in my proposal. Rather than scrap the project entirely, I converted it into a meta-analysis of trade goods with primary, secondary, and archaeological sources that focused on the Contact Period within the lower Great Lakes region. Although this was the right direction to take the project, it did not come without its own trials and tribulations. Due to the lockdowns taking place libraries were closed with our university library not reopening until the end of June; with many researchers eager to get in print sources I was further delayed in getting my materials with my first print source only becoming available in the middle of July. This meant much of my research period solely depended on online resources available to me. Truthfully, this was difficult, as working in an area of archaeology that overlaps the historic period meant that many of my primary historical and historic archaeological sources were only available in print. Research under normal circumstances can be an isolating period for graduate students where you and your peers part ways to follow different interests; however COVID-19 made it particularly difficult to balance work and home life, because there was limited contact with others in the cohort it seemed impossible to judge whether you were ahead of schedule or falling behind at any given time. I think having to dive into my own research during such solitary times will ultimately affect how I potentially conduct research in the future. Given my limited resources, there is still a lot of research that can be done on this particular topic that can be aided by consultation and physical sources unavailable to me during this time. In

future research I hope to use a collaborative approach and work alongside the communities my work has the potential to impact rather than function as the sole author; however, with COVID-19 this was not possible.

2.3 Ethnographic Depiction of Gender in Southern Ontario Indigenous Societies

The depiction of gender historically is key to contextualizing past Indigenous lifeways. It is important to note that many of these distinctions between gender roles were established and documented historically by European traders and missionaries, which has provided a monolithic view of past Indigenous lifeways. These sources are the foundation of academic knowledge about Indigenous lifeways. Although new theorems on decoloniality and feminism are emerging, due to the pervasiveness of male perspective within the academy, texts rooted in androcentrism continue to be the basis of our understanding. Although pervasive academic perspective may not provide an incorrect account of Indigenous life, it may not provide a correct one either, as male scholars do not share the same experiences and world view as women. This thesis employs texts that were available to me during my research to contextualize gender roles such as *Jesuit Relations*, Sagard's *Long journey to the country of the Hurons* and supplementary texts from Bruce Trigger among others; however, it must be noted that the majority of materials that were available to me were written by white males with roles of authority.

Overall Gender Roles

Although Jesuit writings typically only mentioned women as peripheral participants in society, it is made clear in their interpretations of the Huron-Wendat that the most basic distinction in Indigenous society were gender roles (Thwaites 1897[5]:133). It is depicted that tasks were exclusive to one gender or the other, with the expectation that every person was expected to be familiar with most, if not all, of the tasks appropriate to their gender (Trigger

1987:34). Women were responsible for a number of time-consuming tasks including cooking, sewing, and tending to children (Trigger 1987:37). The chief tasks performed by women in sedentary settlements were the planting, tending, and harvesting of the crops; for the Huron-Wendat this accounted for around three-quarters of all the food that they ate (Trigger 1987:34). Within Huron contexts, women worked the soil with small wooden spades, scraping it up to form hills a foot or more high and several feet in diameter, in which they planted their seeds year after year. (Trigger 1987:34). In areas that were safe from attack, women frequently spent the summer living with their children in temporary cabins near their fields (Trigger 1987:36). Although men are depicted as being the exclusive hunters within their communities, women would help “catch fish and gather shellfish for food; often they even hunt” (Thwaites 1896[2]:78).

Although Jesuits often depicted Indigenous women as being treated unfairly and doing most if not all of the manual labour within the society, modern interpretations of Indigenous societies within the lower Great Lakes region characterize them as sharing relative equality with men (Wabie 2019:57). Although Indigenous men are depicted as dominating the public sphere, women led their communities in more covert ways (Labelle 2013:159). Despite the “slave-like” depiction given by Jesuits, Indigenous women had their own distinct roles and responsibilities which appear to have been valued, respected and integral to ensuring the survival of the community with women passing down their culture and traditions to the next generation (Wabie 2019:58). “If men kill, thereby providing subsistence and material culture, women nurture, providing spiritual culture” (Sioui 1999:19).

Unlike the colonists, Iroquoian groups during the Contact Period followed matrilineal rather than patrilineal processes (Trigger 1986:89). With the change towards more sedentary settlement patterns matrilineal residence would have been reinforced by the shift in labour

(Trigger 1986:89). Women's tasks would increasingly be confined to village sites while men's tasks would require them to leave the village to pursue fishing, hunting, trade and defense (Trigger 1986:89). By the Contact Period, Iroquoian women would have had an influential voice in all matters pertaining to their communities with male community members functioning as an advocate for women's perspectives in public dealings with other groups such as colonists (Trigger 1986:89).

Gender Roles in Economic Activities

Typically, within the archaeological record, women are credited with being the overseers of the private sphere and are interpreted as having little, if anything, to do with affairs beyond the household. This typically feeds into the stereotype that women did not take part in decision making. Although the colonial perspective has begun to be challenged in recent scholarly work, Indigenous women's roles within their communities have not been reassessed (Kane 2017:97). Economic participation is an important factor, and in order to better contextualize how women could have interacted with trade goods, scholars must first look at how women participated within the economic sphere. It is important to re-evaluate the ways in which Indigenous women contributed to their communities in order to transcend the Western stereotype of a woman's place within society.

According to written accounts, it appears that women took up many overt economic roles, with men only concerning themselves with hunting, defense, and trade (Trigger 1987:135).

For women:

“besides the onerous rôle of bearing and rearing the children, [they] also transport the game from the place where it has fallen; they are the hewers of wood and drawers of water; they make and repair the household utensils; they

prepare food; they skin the game and prepare the hides like fullers; they sew garments; they catch fish and gather shellfish for food; often they even hunt; they make the canoes, that is, skiffs of marvelous rapidity, out of bark; they set up the tents wherever and whenever they stop for the night—in short, the men concern themselves with nothing but the more laborious hunting and the waging of war” (Thwaites 1896[2]:78-79)

Beaver pelts which were central items of trade would have been processed by women and possibly even hunted by them as men are described as contributing largely to larger, more “laborious” hunts (Thwaites 1896[2]:79). Although women are typically depicted as not having a presence in direct trade, new research shows that in more established trade relationships there was a greater rate of participation from women because of overall economic dependence (Kane 2017, Van Kirk 1980, Voyageur 2016).

In recent years, scholars have begun reassessing the interpretation of Iroquoian women within their communities (Kane 2017:93). Iroquoian society is often described as “matrilineal, matrifocal extended family household that controlled agricultural production and influenced the consensus-based political life of the village” (Kane 2017:93) These practices seem to indicate that women had involvement outside the private domestic sphere and that women were involved in the public sphere at a greater rate than previously thought (Kane 2017:93). However, reassessments about women's impact within the public sphere have yet to be explored (Kane 2017:94). Dutch accounting books belonging to Evert Wendell and an unidentified trader in Ulster during the early 18th century record Indigenous women as participating in “half of all accounts” (Kane 2017:96). Women were participating in trade practices using their own trade

accounts or working under a male relative's account (Kane 2017:96). It appears as though the subtext present in the narrative of women inhabiting solely the private sphere is a symptom of a fractured colonial understanding of the past (Kane 2017:97). Settlers have archivally erased Indigenous women's history because they interpreted their roles as being non-public and thus outside of the sphere of diplomacy, economics and decision making (Kane 2017:97).

2.4 Process of Exchange

European contact with North America in the late 15th century was preceded by over 100 years of exploration and commercial expansion (Trigger 1986:119). Old world states sought to discover and exploit new sources of gold, slaves, fish and agricultural land (Trigger 1986:119). Very little is recorded about the earliest contacts between Europeans and Indigenous groups along the eastern shores of North America (Trigger 1986:121). There is also little information about how Indigenous groups interpreted the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century (Trigger 1986:126). As an act of good faith, it was standard for Europeans to provide new Indigenous groups with gifts in hopes to create the basis of a trade relationship; with Europeans providing Indigenous trade contacts with metal items and glass beads (Trigger 1986:127). Some archaeologists believe that Indigenous groups were interested in obtaining European items such as glass beads and metalware because they were seen as being of supernatural origin much like their own native copper (Trigger 1986:126). Some researchers believe that this was the initial motivation between Indigenous and European trade in the beginning, as supernatural power could reinforce personal authority (Trigger 1986:127). The main factor of trade from its inception in Canada appears to have been the casual trade of animal pelts (Trigger 1986:127). In the beginning of the 16th century this trade was conducted on a small scale and was still limited (Trigger 1986:127). As Indigenous groups became more acquainted with Europeans, they became aware of the catalogue

of goods Europeans possessed that could be exchanged for beaver pelts (Trigger 1986:128).

While they continued to seek ornamental items such as glass beads, some groups began to show an interest in more practical ironware that could be used as tools (Trigger 1986:128). Interest in particular European trade goods appear to have varied group to group although the reasons for these preferences are still largely unclear (Trigger 1986:128).

2.5 Trade Goods

In order to understand the trade goods that reached Indigenous communities in the lower Great Lakes region and determine whether gender provides a useful lens through which to examine their adoption, I draw upon a catalogue of lower Great Lakes trade artifacts compiled by William Richard Fitzgerald in his PhD thesis *Chronology to Cultural Process: Lower Great Lakes Archaeology, 1500-1650*. This work provides a descriptive inventory of European goods from 16th and 17th century sites across the lower Great Lakes region and documents quantitative and qualitative trends in materials (Fitzgerald 1990:405). The re-analysis of this catalogue of trade goods will allow me to later compare it to primary ethnographic accounts of women's societal roles. This will in turn provide evidence about the ways in which women could have been using European technology, which has yet to be largely considered. This catalogue encompasses items that archaeologists know Europeans were bringing from the West for trade purposes which largely consist of tools and ornamental items.

European textiles were an early and popular trade commodity; however, their archaeological presence is often identified by associate artifacts such as lead seals or clothing fasteners which indicate the presence of textiles (Fitzgerald 1990:407). Kettles were another prominent trade good (Fitzgerald 1990:410). With the intensification of the fur trade, attempts to manufacture kettles with reduced quality to increase sales were made (Fitzgerald 1990:428).

Iron lance heads and barbed harpoons were manufactured by Europeans for use in fishing and marine hunting and were a commodity that both European settlers and Indigenous populations could use (Fitzgerald 1990:429). The lanceolate blade typically consists of an elongated gently tapering blade that is bi-convex in cross-section with the tang also gradually tapering while the shoulder is rounded (Fitzgerald 1990:429).

Iron axes seem to have gone through stylistic changes over time with them becoming substantially lighter (Fitzgerald 1990:442). Some axes recovered from earlier sites were as much as four times heavier than axes found on later sites (Fitzgerald 1990:442). In conjunction with the shift in weight, early sites tend to have longer axes, while later sites exhibit a notable range with a general trend towards smaller axes although these distinctions are less clear than weight distinctions (Fitzgerald 1990:448).

Iron knives are well recorded within the archaeological record because they are found at many Indigenous sites (Fitzgerald 1990:454). Iron knives appear to be used in multiple ways with broken knives being reworked into tools such as scrapers and barbed harpoons (Fitzgerald 1990:454). Knives are found in a large variety of styles and sizes with large butchering knives appearing at the beginning of trade; once the fur trade developed, it appears as though shorter “table” knives were typically imported (Fitzgerald 1990:472).

Iron spatulate scrapers are also prevalent and appear to be manufactured by Europeans from large nails or spikes (Fitzgerald 1990:473). These items have been identified as spoons, barking spuds, caulking spatulas, and hide scrapers; however, their resemblance to lithic scrapers could indicate that they were used in the same context (Fitzgerald 1990:474).

Iron adzes were a distinctive trade item commonly encountered in 16th century contact contexts and are identified as being some of the earliest European goods imported (Fitzgerald

1990:476). The replacement of Indigenous woodworking and chopping implements with European equivalents occurred comparatively rapidly, whereas other native tools persisted with the adoption of European goods; groundstone adzes seem to have disappeared after the initial introduction of iron adzes (Fitzgerald 1990:480).

It appears as though once raw materials became available through trade to southern Ontario groups, they immediately implemented material such as sheet metal for the production of projectile points (Fitzgerald 1990:481). There were two dominant styles of metal projectile points: the isosceles triangular variety and the stemmed triangular variety (Fitzgerald 1990:481). Metal projectile points begin to appear on Neutral sites after epidemics swept through communities and decimated large portions of the population; it appears this was done out of necessity rather than desire to forgo traditional lithic technology (Fitzgerald 1990:484).

Iron Awls (or punches) are one of the earliest European added to the Indigenous toolkit (Fitzgerald 1990:487). Although this European equivalent was finer and more durable than Indigenous awls, it was adopted into the toolkit and did not replace the Indigenous equivalent as both items persisted throughout the 17th century (Fitzgerald 1990:487)

European ladles are an interesting import that are found infrequently on Indigenous inhabited sites with only three being reported in Ontario (Fitzgerald 1990:495). Unlike other metalwares, ladles are only found in what are believed to be pre-epidemic sites, which is inconsistent with all other metalware examples (Fitzgerald 1990:496).

The fur trade ushered in an increase of personal ornamentation, particularly in burial contexts (Fitzgerald 1990:497). Ornamental items manufactured from European materials appear to be primarily manufactured by Indigenous craftsmen, with European manufactured ornaments only appearing later in the archaeological record after the acceleration of European trade, and

even then, still appearing infrequently (Fitzgerald 1990:498). Ornamental items that were manufactured using folding and bending techniques were often produced using alloys with a high copper content (Fitzgerald 1990:500). It appears Indigenous artisans utilized European raw materials, copper and brass sheet metal, to produce metal ornamental items (Fitzgerald 1990:500). This type of sheet metal was useful because it could be manipulated without using heat (Fitzgerald 1990:500).

Tinkling cones were produced from sheet metal blanks cut into triangles; they were rolled into conical shapes and typically were hung from leather thongs or animal hair (Fitzgerald 1990:501). Tinkling cones are regarded as some of the earliest, and most persistent, creations by Indigenous people using European raw material with examples being dated as early as 1580 and as late as the end of the Iroquoian occupation of southern Ontario (Fitzgerald 1990:503). It is believed these items were intended to emulate cut and drilled proximal deer phalanx bangles common to Ontario Iroquoian sites (Fitzgerald 1990:503).

Beads were also manufactured in a similar way to tinkling cones, with Indigenous crafters rolling sheet metal into tubes (Fitzgerald 1990:504). It appears metal beads were manufactured in a similar way to bone beads using scoring and snapping processes (Fitzgerald 1990:504). Bone beads however far superseded metal ones even at later sites, as bone was readily available, and no rolling was required (Fitzgerald 1990:504).

Sheet bracelets and rings were produced very simply by cutting sheet metal into strands before manipulating them into the desired shape (Fitzgerald 1990:505). Despite manufacturing being a simple process there are temporal and quantitative restrictions to these items for unknown reasons (Fitzgerald 1990:505).

Similarly, rolled tube spirals used sheet metal rolled into tubes and coiling the tubing around itself (Fitzgerald 1990:510). While circular pendants are cut from sheet metal which was typically copper alloy (Fitzgerald 1990:511). The exception to pendants being manufactured from sheet metal comes in the form of a small 16th century coin that has been fashioned into a pendant by punching a hole in the top (Fitzgerald 1990:511).

European manufactured ornaments are more infrequent than Indigenous manufactured ornamental items (Fitzgerald 1990:514). Ornaments of European manufacture are rarely used without Indigenous modification, with the exception of glass beads (Fitzgerald 1990:515). Beads are acknowledged as being one of the earliest trade items to be exchanged with Indigenous communities that evolved to become a staple in European-Indigenous trade (Fitzgerald 1990:515). Glass beads are found both in cemetery and settlement contexts (Fitzgerald 1990:515).

Coiled hair bands are another European produced product that Europeans attempted to trade with Indigenous groups. They consisted of three metal pieces, a brass coil, a brass tube and a copper wire that formed a tube for hair to be pulled back into and secured (Fitzgerald 1990:517). These items have not been found on Iroquoian sites in the same contexts as European sites, with all three parts being separated and the object itself being modified (Fitzgerald 1990:517).

Although bells typically appear to be an early export during first Contact, the lower Great Lakes region appears to have received this item later than other regions (Fitzgerald 1990: 519). There are three typical bell varieties, Oval Saturn, round Saturn and flushloop (Fitzgerald 1990:520). All are constructed of two sheet hemispheres, with Saturn bells being constructed by turning out the edges of these hemispheres to solder them together (Fitzgerald 1990:520).

Flushloop bells follow a slightly modified design with the edges of the hemisphere being soldered flush together (Fitzgerald 1990:520).

European manufactured rings and medallions are the typical ornamental style worn by colonists (Fitzgerald 1990:522). With the large number of missionaries active within the lower Great Lakes region, it is no surprise that a majority of rings and medallions often depicted spiritual symbolism and these items would be used as religious paraphernalia (Fitzgerald 1990:522). Depictions of religious figures such as Christ, the Virgin Mary, and saints are typical, as well as the depiction of religious events, both biblical and personal sacraments can be seen on these ornaments (Fitzgerald 1990:522). Although the lower Great Lakes was a target for missionary activities, these medallions and rings are generally infrequent (Fitzgerald 1990:522).

Europeans also brought with them new weapon technology that aided in their expansion, the most notable being the introduction of firearms. These were introduced at varying rates throughout the lower Great Lakes region but largely show up later in the archaeological record (Fitzgerald 1990:534) Other weaponry technology such as swords and daggers were also introduced but appear infrequently (Fitzgerald 1990:535).

There is a single example of a pronged hoe dating to 17th century provenience, consisting of a U-shaped two-pronged blade forged to a socket that was found at a Neutral village site along the Grand River (Fitzgerald 1990:536). However, there appear to be no other examples of a pronged hoe in the lower Great Lakes region (Fitzgerald 1990:536).

European ceramics have occasionally been recovered at sites interpreted as being inhabited by Indigenous communities, however typically this earthenware is accompanied by a significant number of other material goods associated with Jesuits (Fitzgerald 1990:538). There

is a singular example of the stem of a mould-blown drinking glass appearing in the 1636 Ossossane ossuary (Fitzgerald 1990:538).

A number of other European manufactured materials appear infrequently, and sometimes singularly, leading to the presumption that these goods were likely not being employed by Indigenous communities. These items consist of a toothbrush, scissors, glass lens, a brass pin, an iron key, footwear, and a picture frame (Fitzgerald 1990:541).

2.6 Discussion

Potential Gendered Uses for Trade Goods based on the Jesuit Relations

Reviewing historical accounts using a feminist lens can help archaeologists begin rethinking the ways in which women interacted with material culture during colonization.

Jesuits referred extensively to the laborious work that women carried out on a day-to-day basis often referring to hunting as being the only chore women did not perform (Thwaites 1896[1]:257). The task that is repeatedly referred to as arduous is the procurement of wood (Thwaites 1896[1]: 257). Although the procurement of wood often involved collecting fallen tree limbs there is one account within the *Jesuit Relations* that states women “cut the poles for the cabin” (Thwaites 1897[7]:114). Although not common, there are also some ethnographic instances where “the collecting and splitting of firewood” is described as typically being “the work of women” (Trigger 1986: 209). The increase of axes over time within the archaeological record suggests that axes were being taken up into Indigenous toolkits in certain contexts. According to the collection discussed in Fitzgerald (1990), trade axes appear to go through a chronological shift throughout colonization, with axes starting out as heavy and broad, but later becoming lighter and sligher. Fitzgerald's conclusion from the temporal distribution of axe

weights is that once the fur trade intensified, lighter axes were supplied or expressly manufactured to maximize returns (Fitzgerald 1990:446).

Although Fitzgerald interprets this shift as potentially being influenced by European economics, based on the number of historical accounts of women gathering wood for fires and cutting poles for shelter, an equally plausible interpretation would be that women could have been using these axes. It is possible that the shift of broader axes to slighter axes was a result of the consumers demands. As traders made connections with Indigenous populations, it is possible they could have observed that women were in charge of wood procurement. This is consistent with other archaeological interpretations of trade items, specifically the astronomical rise in red beads during the GBP III (Kenyon 1984). This shift to lighter axes could have been imposed by either Indigenous need or European interpretation, as Europeans often used a saviour complex; imposing the image of women being feeble and less skilled in comparison to their male counterparts even describing women's work as “little tasks and functions of service” (Sagard 1968:101). In this way, European traders may have seen making axes lighter as a way to “benefit” the women that were using them. This shift would end up benefiting European traders in various ways; not only would they appeal to a broader audience in their own views, but they would be able to use less iron to manufacture the axes, create a higher profit return, carry more axes on cargo ships, as well as creating their own demand for the product as inferior axes would lead to more frequent replacement (Fitzgerald 1990: 453).

It is possible that women were also using other woodworking tools. Although it appears in many settlements that men performed tasks like making the frames of canoes, primary sources often depict women as primarily working with wood. Not only are women in charge of procuring firewood, but they work with wood to make various key items namely canoes and houses or

cabins (Thwaites 1897[5]:133, Thwaites 1897[3]:101). If women are working with wood in various distinct ways, it can be inferred that they could have possibly employed European woodworking tools such as iron adzes that would have the potential to make their work more efficient.

Archaeologists can begin to look at other roles that women performed and begin to reimagine the way they interacted with material culture. Women were in charge of retrieving and processing animals after a hunt, so it is within the realm of possibility that they were also utilizing European tools in that context (Thwaites 1897[3]:101). Two of the most important processes women employed with game were butchering and dividing the meat, as well as preparing the skins (Thwaites 1897[6]:234). It is possible that Indigenous women adopted European tools such as iron knives for butchering game and spatulate scrapers for processing hides (Thwaites 1897[6]:234). Typically, iron tools are interpreted as being tools used by men, despite the fact that women would have had various uses for these tools as well. Although these items in European instances would be considered an indicator of mundane chores such as butchering, or in the case of axes cutting wood, in Indigenous circumstances these items are interpreted as being used as weapons; often being described by colonists as “iron tools in war” with knives and hatchets being described as “useful in war” (Trigger 1987:221). This interpretation is dangerous in many ways, as it depicts Indigenous cultures as inherently violent, but also excludes the interpretation of the mundane. In turn, this interpretation of iron tools being used within war infers that these tools were exclusive to men as “men concern themselves with nothing but the more laborious hunting and the waging of war” (Thwaites 1896[2]:78). This interpretation appears to be a projection of Western ideologies, as tools such as knives, axes, and scrapers would be categorized as typical for men's work in Europe.

Similarly, tools such as iron lance heads, barbed harpoons and metal projectile points are often categorized subconsciously as being part of men's toolkits exclusively. Again, these tools are seen as violent, and thus inherently male. But according to various missionary accounts it seems as though in some communities fishing was shared work between men and women (Thwaites 1897[3]:101). In these accounts, not only were the women in charge of collecting, gutting and cooking the fish, women also “go fishing and do the rowing” (Thwaites 1897[3]:101). In this case it is possible that these women would have taken up iron lance heads and barbed harpoons to hunt fish. In addition to women who “catch fish and gather shellfish for food; often they even hunt” (Thwaites 1896[2]:78). This means that it was possible that women even participated in hunting land game, making it a possibility that they used metal projectile points in their own labour. Due to limited references, it is unclear if this is an isolated account of women spurred by extenuating circumstances. However, it still stands that women employing tools for hunting is within the realm of possibility particularly in later periods after European disease devastated Indigenous communities and vastly decreased population. If they were using these tools, it becomes probable that they would have had an interest in, and perhaps a say in, their acquisition via trade.

Iron awls are unique in that they were adopted into Indigenous toolkits once available without replacing Indigenous equivalents. It is possible that iron awls were adopted by women to use in manufacturing clothing or ornamental items. Missionary accounts about ornamental items confirm that both men and women were adorned with ornaments (Thwaites 1897[3]:73). These accounts typically cite women as the producers of such goods, with women incorporating more ornamental styles into their clothing (Sagard 1968:102). In conjunction with using iron awls to create clothing items and produce ornamental items, it is possible that women took up this tool

with something else entirely in mind. Various accounts discuss using piercings as a form of ornamentation stating, “the men as well as the women pierce the lobes of their ears, and place in them earrings made of glass or shells” (Thwaites 1896[1]:282). In addition, “When [a] woman bears a child the custom of the country [of the Hurons] is that she pierces the ears of the child with an awl or fish-bone and puts in the quill of a feather or something else to keep the hole open...” (Sagard 1968:127). It is possible that the unique fineness and strength of the European iron awl would have been a particularly useful implement for piercing. This could explain why iron awls were so readily taken up yet did not replace any Indigenous equivalent, as awls would still persist in being useful for the manufacturing of clothing and ornamental items while the iron awl would suit the specific need of piercing.

As stated previously, each Indigenous group is distinct and unique in the way that they inhabit and utilize the land. In some circumstances women and men labour equally, while there were other instances where the work was left entirely to the women (Thwaites 1896[2]:165). Although it is maintained by colonists that women were in no way forced to commit themselves to the majority of labour it was not unusual for women to take this up (Sagard 1968:101). Women were vital to communities thriving and at the very least surviving. It is possible that with particular circumstances such as men leaving village sites, women were left with even more work than usual, which could indicate that an Indigenous woman's toolkit is even broader than I have suggested here. If men were leaving communities for greater lengths of time, women, children, and elders could have had to adapt and fill roles that adult men typically would have. Overtime, as trade goods become part of the Indigenous toolkit, it becomes more likely that women were using these items. It is possible with the acceleration of colonialism that there was a greater chance of women using a wider toolkit. With European diseases devastating Indigenous

populations, it is possible that this instability caused women to take up roles that men had previously inhabited in order to survive. Examples of this are particularly stark during periods of Diaspora. This means that women could have used artifacts that previously were attributed as being hypermasculine, such as metal projectile points, knives, and barbed harpoon heads.

The theory of Communities of Practice can aid in the interpretation of women's interactions with trade goods as the modification of trade goods can identify material expressions of identity (Dermarkar 2019:22). A community of practice can be described as a group of people who are linked through mutual participation in the extended process of creation in accordance with a set of standards and procedures that are agreed upon (Dermarkar 2019:22). During this process, the product reproduces and reinforces social identities and connections held by the group (Dermarkar 2019:22). With trade goods being found primarily within the contexts of village sites, it can be inferred that these items typically were used within the private spheres that women primarily inhabited. In turn, the ways in which women interacted with these trade goods, either through use or manipulation, would reflect both individual and group beliefs and expressions of identity within these contexts. In this way, more specific studies would be able to gauge how women within individual societies contributed based on the expressions of identity found in trade goods.

The subjectiveness of historical accounts has greatly influenced the ways in which we understand Indigenous women. This can be seen in foundational historical texts written by the Jesuits and other missionaries such as Gabriel Sagard. Although it is clear that colonists were impressed by the roles and amount of labour women were able to accomplish, often their depictions of Indigenous women are reductive in nature either overtly or covertly. The work performed by Indigenous women and girls is often minimized by colonists and has been

described by Sagard as “little tasks and functions of service” despite women inhabiting a number of dynamic roles (Sagard 1968:101). This can be seen in historical accounts where missionaries describe roles within the canoe where “the woman holds the [oar] at the stern and consequently steers” (Thwaites 1897[4]:205). Steersmen hold arguably the most important place within a canoe, as they are in charge of navigation and steering. In addition, colonists repeatedly discuss the strength women hold within these societies as they are the child-rearers as well as labourers. Sagard describes Indigenous women as “so strong that they give birth by themselves” and is impressed that unlike European women they “for the most part do not lie up” (Sagard 1968:130). Child rearing is described as having little impact on the quantity and quality of women's work. Sagard recounts seeing “some of them come in from the woods, laden with a big bundle of wood, and give birth to a child as soon as they arrive; then immediately that are on their feet at their ordinary employment” (Sagard 1968:130).

It is impossible to fully encompass why European men used reductivity to discuss Indigenous women but it can be inferred that colonists purposefully pursued the disenfranchisement of Indigenous women as they were caretakers of the land. “Women cultivated the land to sustain their families; it was also the landscape on which homes were built, and therefore a space under the authority of mothers, daughters, and wives” (Labelle 2013:159). In discrediting the duties that women and girls performed for their communities, Europeans in turn discredited the connection women had with the land which allowed them to accelerate the colonization of land. Europeans despite showing admiration for the labour women perform also use reductive language describing women as being “trained quietly to perform trifling and petty household duties” (Sagard 1968:133). In one instance they go so far as to describe young Indigenous girls as doing “evil” which “makes them worthless for the most part when grown up”

(Sagard 1968:133). In targeting and immobilizing women, who functioned as pillars within their communities, Europeans were able to gain access to all means necessary to colonize. Our foundational knowledge of Indigenous history, identity, and culture are based in these primary accounts provided by European colonizers, which has in turn influenced the ways that archaeologists interpret artifacts. On these Contact Period sites in particular, archaeologists rely heavily on written resources to interpret the types of activities that were happening on these sites. Due to trade goods being unequivocally linked to Contact Period sites, interpretations of women performing “petty household duties” and largely existing within the private sphere have greatly informed how archaeologists interpret trade goods. If women exist within the private sphere and are seen as existing on the periphery of European life, it is easy to assume that women did not interact with Europeans nor their trade items. As Indigenous men are depicted as performing the duties of the public sphere through trading with Europeans, it is easy for archaeologists to imagine that trade items were influenced solely by men as they were the ones directly interacting with Europeans and their goods.

2.7 Conclusion

The influence of gender on behaviour and how this would have affected the archaeological record has yet to be fully considered during the Contact Period, particularly in relation to trade and trade goods. Rather, trade goods are implicitly or explicitly attributed to the activities and decisions of Indigenous or white men unless the goods are projected as being feminine through a Western lens. As demonstrated here, a broad number of trade items have the potential of being used by Indigenous women based on the labour divisions that have been recorded by missionaries. Trade axes specifically seem to exhibit a clear shift over time from heavier to lighter implements, and although in the past this has been analyzed as a result of

increase in trade, there is the possibility that European traders began this shift after consideration of who was using the axes to procure wood, a job performed by women. In addition to this, it is possible that because women worked with wood, they also occupied the role of artisanal woodworkers, giving way to the possibility of women using iron adzes. Iron spatulate scrapers and iron knives have yet to be considered as being used by women despite women being the ones in charge of dividing the meat and working the hide. In addition, hunting and fishing are often credited to men despite there being various independent accounts of women also inhabiting these roles. This means that tools interpreted as being particularly hypermasculine such as metal projectile points, barbed harpoon heads and iron lance heads could have also been employed by women in particular circumstances. Iron awls were also adopted into Indigenous toolkits and it was likely these implements were being used for manufacturing ornamental items and possibly bodily alterations. The current archaeological record has not accounted for women's use of European goods in broader archaeological theory, nor has it accounted for specified circumstances.

North American archaeologists have only just started coming to terms with how pervasive and damaging subjective European accounts are to our understanding of Indigenous culture. These accounts continue to aid in our contextualization of material culture and have the potential of misguiding our interpretations of the past. These realizations are taking place presently with new research relying on scientific analyses that are able to transcend historical biases. In the case of Wilamaya Patjxa located in modern day Peru, researchers are beginning to see that men were not the sole contributors in big game hunting (Haas et al. 2020:1). Upon researchers' discovery of a myriad of large game hunter's burial sites, they presumed all individuals would be male (Haas et al. 2020:1). While analyzing the remains of the Wilamaya

Patjxa individual 6 that they believed to be a small adult male hunter, scholars discovered the individual's morphology was more typical with that of a young adult female (Haas et al. 2020:2). This was confirmed using proteomic analysis of sexually dimorphic amelogenin peptides in tooth enamel (Haas et al. 2020:2). In using new archaeological theories and technological advancements, these scholars were able to overcome the pervasive colonial barrier that exists within the discipline. However, without the reconsideration of gender during their research, this ground-breaking archaeological find could have just as easily been overlooked and missed.

Within lower Great Lakes contexts, archaeologists need to begin to consider gender as a factor in trade as gender influences socio-economic activity. The acceptance and preference for particular trade goods may have been influenced by gender rather than economics which has previously been the focal point of research. Therefore, as noted by scholars such as Manning and Birch (2018), the discovery of particular types of trade goods on sites may not reflect solely chronology, but also topics that have yet to be considered like gender. Although archaeology has attempted to understand agency through motives, meanings and structures; much of archaeological understanding of agency is influenced by pervasive contemporary Western ideology that prevents scholars from considering gender as a factor of agency (Dornan 2002: 324). It is imperative that archaeologists utilize "historical context, proximate cause, and local understanding of intentionality" in order to begin to decolonize our understanding of the past (Dornan 2002: 324).

The reduction of Indigenous women throughout time and space is a colonial function that serves to eradicate Indigenous lifeways from the past, present, and future. In re-examining parts of the past using new lenses archaeologists have the ability to provide new and more inclusive insights about the past that have the potential to support contemporary Indigenous

communities and better inform the public. Archaeologists have painted the same landscape for centuries with little regard for the negative spaces that they have created and the people who inhabit them. It is the duty of scholars who study the past to begin looking at new subjects to inhabit the foreground of archaeological research so that we can begin to paint with a better understanding of the past and convey the nuances that have been muddied by colonial bias

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Appendix

Primary Source Quotes

The following quotes are ethnographic descriptions of Indigenous life in Acadia, Quebec, the Hurons, and Cape Breton, provided by missionaries during the Contact Period. These descriptions informed my analysis of both the roles of Indigenous women, and of the Colonial and gendered lenses through which these accounts were transmitted to us. While some of these quotes more directly address women's roles within their communities, other quotes provided specific insight into the pervasive subjectiveness of the Western voice during this period. In this way, these quotes have been utilized to acknowledge Western entanglements within primary source information while also serving to provide context to how women lived, what roles they played within their communities, and how this could have affected trade and trade goods.

1. *“The care of household affairs, and whatever work there may be in the family, are placed upon the women. They build and repair the wigwams, carry water and wood, and prepare the food; their duties and position are those of slaves, laborers and beasts of burden. The pursuits of hunting and war belong to the men. Thence arise the isolation and numerical weakness of the race. For the women, although naturally prolific, cannot, on account of their occupation in these labors, either bring forth fully-developed offspring, or properly nourish them after they have been brought forth; therefore they either suffer abortion, or forsake their new-born children, while engaged in carrying water, procuring wood and other tasks, so that scarcely one infant in thirty survives until youth. To this there is added their ignorance of medicine, because of which they seldom recover from illnesses which are at all severe.”* (Thwaites 1896[1]: 257-259)

2. *“The women know what they are to do, and the men also; and one never meddles with the work of the other. The men make the frames of their canoes, and the women sew the bark with willow withes or similar small wood. The men shape the [55] wood of the raquettes, and the women do the sewing on them. Men go hunting, and kill the animals; and the women go after them, skin them, and clean the hides. It is they who go in search of the wood that is burned. In fact, they would make fun of a man who, except in some great necessity, would do anything that should be done by a woman. Our Savage, seeing Father de Nouë carrying wood, began to laugh, saying: “He’s really a woman;” meaning that he was doing a woman’s work. But a short time afterward, his wife falling sick, and having no one in his cabin who could assist him, he was*

compelled to go out himself in search of supplies; but in truth he went only at night, when no one could see him.” (Thwaites 1897[5]: 133)

3. *“When we reached the place where we were to encamp, the women went to cut the poles for the cabin, and the men to clear away the snow, as I have stated more fully in the preceding Chapter. Now a person had to work at this building, or shiver with cold for three long hours upon the snow, waiting until it was finished.” (Thwaites 1897[7]: 114-115)*

4. *“It is the women who are the seamstresses and shoemakers; it costs them nothing to learn this trade, and much less to procure diplomas as master workmen; a child that could sew a little could make the shoes at the first attempt, so ingeniously are they contrived.” (Thwaites 1897[7]: 16-17)*

5. *“These poor creatures endure all the misfortunes and hardships of life; they prepare and erect the houses, or cabins, furnishing them with fire, wood, and water; prepare the food, preserve the meat and other provisions, that is, dry them in the smoke to preserve them; go to bring the game from the place where it has been killed; sew and repair the canoes, mend and stretch the skins, curry them, and make clothes and shoes of them for the whole family; they go fishing and do the rowing; in short, undertake all the work except that alone of the grand chase, besides having the care and so weakening nourishment of their children.” (Thwaites 1897[3]: 101)*

6. *“They are very much attached to each other, and agree admirably. You do not see any disputes, quarrels, enmities, or reproaches among them. Men leave the arrangement of the household to the women, without interfering with them; they cut, and decide, and give away as they please, without making the husband angry. I have never seen my host ask a giddy young woman that he had with him what became of the provisions, although they were disappearing very fast. I have never heard the women complain because they were not invited to the feasts, because the men ate the good pieces, or because they had to work continually,—going in search of the wood for the fire, making the Houses, dressing the skins, and busying themselves in other very laborious work. Each one does her own little tasks, gently and peacefully, without any disputes. It is true, however, that they have neither gentleness nor courtesy in their utterance; and a Frenchman could not assume the accent, the tone, and the sharpness of their voices without becoming angry, yet they do not.” (Thwaites 1897[6]: 234-235)*

7. *“When I reached the cabins of the Savages, I saw their place for drying eels. This work is done entirely by the women, who empty the fish, and wash them very carefully, opening them, not up the belly but up the back; then they hang them in the smoke, first having suspended them upon poles outside their huts to drain. They gash them in a number of places, in order that the smoke may dry them more easily. The quantity of eels which they catch in the season is incredible. I saw nothing else inside and [10] outside of their cabins.” (Thwaites 1897[5]: 89)*

8. *“And yet these same Savages, the offspring, so to speak, of Boreas and the ice, when once they have returned with their booty and installed themselves in their tents, become indolent and unwilling to perform any labor whatever, imposing this entirely upon the women. The latter, besides the onerous rôle of bearing and rearing the children, also transport the game from the place where it has fallen; they are the hewers of wood and drawers of water; they make and repair the household utensils; they prepare food; they skin the game and prepare the hides like fullers; they sew garments; they catch fish and gather shellfish for food; often [17] they even hunt; they make the canoes, that is, skiffs of marvelous rapidity, out of bark; they set up the tents wherever and whenever they stop for the night—in short, the men concern themselves with nothing but the more laborious hunting and the waging of war.”* (Thwaites 1896[2]: 78-79)

9. *“The women wear skins hanging from the shoulders and neck to the knees. They wear belts and bracelets ingeniously manufactured from Venus shells, which we commonly call porcelain, or from porcupine quills; and necklaces made in this fashion they value highly. They make very neat mats from marisco (a variety of marine rush); with these they cover their floors, and also take their rest upon them, or upon the soft furs of the seal or the beaver. In winter they sleep about a fire constantly burning in the middle of the lodge, in summer under the open sky.”* (Thwaites 1896[1]: 282-283)

10. *“For the women are girdled both above and below the stomach, and are less nude than the men; also they are usually more ornamented with matachias, that is, with chains, gewgaws, and such finery after their fashion; by which you may know that such is the nature of the sex everywhere, fond of adornment”* (Thwaites 1897[3]: 73-74)

11. *“They dress and soften the skins of beaver and moose and others, as well as we could do it here, and of these they make their cloaks and coverings; and they paint them in patterns and a mixture of colours with very good effect.”* (Sagard 1968: 102)

12. *“The men as well as the women pierce the lobes of their ears, and place in them earrings made of glass or shells. The larger the hole, the more beautiful they consider it.”* (Thwaites 1896[1]: 282)

13. *“When the woman bears a child the custom of the country [of the Hurons] is that she pierces the ears of the child with an awl or fish-bone and puts in the quill of a feather or something else to keep the hole open, and afterwards suspends to it wampum beads or other trifles, and also hands them round the child's neck however small it may be.”* (Sagard 1968: 127)

14. *“Also make a kind of leather game-bag or tobacco-pouch, which they work in a manner worthy of admiration with porcupine quills, coloured red, black, white, and blue, and these colours they make so bright that ours do not seem to come near to them in that respect.”* (Sagard 1968: 102)

15. *“Moreover the sashes, collars and bracelets that they and the men wear are of their workmanship; and in spite of the fact that they are more occupied than the men, who play the noblemen among them and think only of hunting, fishing, or fighting, still they usually love their husbands than the women here.”* (Sagard 1968: 102)

16. *“As to the Savages, they know nothing about cultivating the land, and cannot give themselves up to it, showing themselves courageous and laborious only in hunting and fishing. However, the Armouchiquois and other more distant tribes plant wheat and beans, but they let the women do the work.”* (Thwaites 1896[2]: 165)

17. *“In regard to the labor of women, Carr says: “The Iroquois or Six Nations are the only people among whom, so far as I know, it cannot be shown that the warriors did take some part either in clearing the ground or in cultivating the crop; and we find that even among them the work was not left exclusively to the women, but that it was shared by the children and the old men, as well as the slaves, of whom they seem to have had a goodly number.”* (Thwaites 1896[2]: 165)

*** This statement [‘that the field-work was *not* left entirely to the women’], as to the actual condition of a large majority of the tribes living east of the Mississippi and south of the St. Lawrence, is believed to be true; yet it is not denied that there were many instances in which this labor was, practically, left to the women, owing to the fact that the men were away from home, hunting or fighting. This fact was, unfortunately, of frequent recurrence; but, as it was the result of an accidental and not of a permanent condition of affairs, it would hardly be fair to ascribe it to the existence of any custom, or to any belief in the derogatory character of the work.”—Cf. Rochemonteix (*Jésuites*, vol. i., p. 97, note).

19. *“They usually do more work than the men, although they are not forced or compelled to do so. They have the care of the cooking and the household, of sowing and gathering corn, grinding flour, preparing hemp and tree-bark, and providing necessary wood.”* (Sagard 1968: 101)

19. *“Just as the men have their special occupation and understand wherein a man’s duty consists, so also the women and girls keep their place and perform quietly to their little tasks and functions of service.”* (Sagard 1968: 101)

20. *“They go upon the rivers in light birch-bark canoes, very neatly made; the smallest of them can hold 4 or 5 persons and leave room for their little baggage. The oars are proportioned to the canoes, one at the bow and one at the stern; ordinarily, the woman holds the one at the stern, and consequently steers. These poor women are real pack mules, enduring all hardships. When delivered of a child, they go to the woods two hours later to replenish the fire of the cabin. In the Winter, when they break camp, the women drag the heaviest loads over the snow; in short, the men seem to have as their share only hunting, war, and trading. Apropos of trading, I have as yet said nothing, and it is also the last thing which remains to be said in regard to the Savages.”* (Thwaites 1897[4]: 205-207)

21. *“Even the women with child are so strong that they give birth by themselves, and for the most part do not lie up. I have seen some of them come in from the woods, laden with a big bundle of wood, and give birth to a child as soon as they arrive; then immediately they are on their feet at their ordinary employment.”* (Sagard 1968: 130)

22. *“Just as the little boys have their special training and teach one another to shoot with the bow as soon as they begin to walk, so also the little girls, whenever they begin to put one foot in front of the other, have a little stick to put into their hands to train them and teach them early to pound corn, and when they are grown somewhat they also play various little games with their companions, and in the course of these small frolics are trained quietly to perform trifling and petty household duties, sometimes also to do the evil that they see going on before their eyes, and this makes them worthless for the most part when grown up, and with few exceptions worse even than the boys, boasting often of the wickedness which should make them blush.”* (Sagard 1968: 133)

23. *“They make pottery, especially round pots without handles or feet, in which they cook their food, meat or fish.”* (Sagard 1968: 102)

24. *“They employ themselves also in making bowls of bark for drinking and eating out of, and for holding their meats and soups.”* (Sagard 1968: 102)

25. *“Their clothes are trimmed with leather lace, which the women dress and carry on the side which is not hairy. They often carry both sides of elk skin, like our buff skin, then variegate it very prettily with paint put on in a lace-like pattern, and make gowns of it; from the same leather they make their shoes and strings. The men do not wear trousers, because (they say) they hinder them too much, and place them as it were, in chains; they wear only a piece of cloth over their middle; in Summer they often wear our capes, and in Winter our bed-blankets, which they improve with trimming and wear double. They are also quite willing to make use of our hats, shoes, caps, woolens and shirts, and of our linen to clean their infants, for we trade them all these commodities for their furs.”* (Thwaites 1897[3]: 75-77)