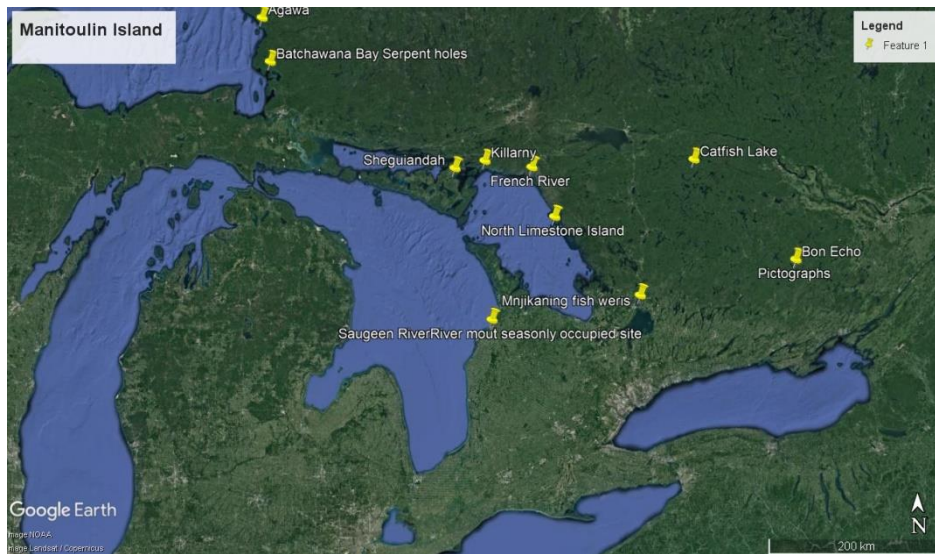


## **Manitoulin Island an Interesting Place on an Ancient Trade Route.**

I was fortunate enough to get some very good questions in response to my paper. These questions focus on the interesting cross-roads situation of Manitoulin Island, social structure and organization, navigation, bearings, reciprocal bearings and ranges, Serpent Pits and diving at pictograph sites. I hope you find parts of my correspondence interesting. While I tend to focus on Lake Superior there are many other interesting and promising sites to look for our ancient shipwreck.



Manitoulin Island is a very interesting place in this study. The Sheguiandah Paleolithic site may date back as far as 11,500 years so we have this very long period of human utilization of the Island, long before the Old Copper Culture is located there.



The Old Copper Culture and mining operations (Isle Royale 6,500 BCE Seth DePasqual et al., 2014). At that time they had a sophisticated “Blue water” boating capability and were capable of navigating all of the Great Lakes if they so desired.

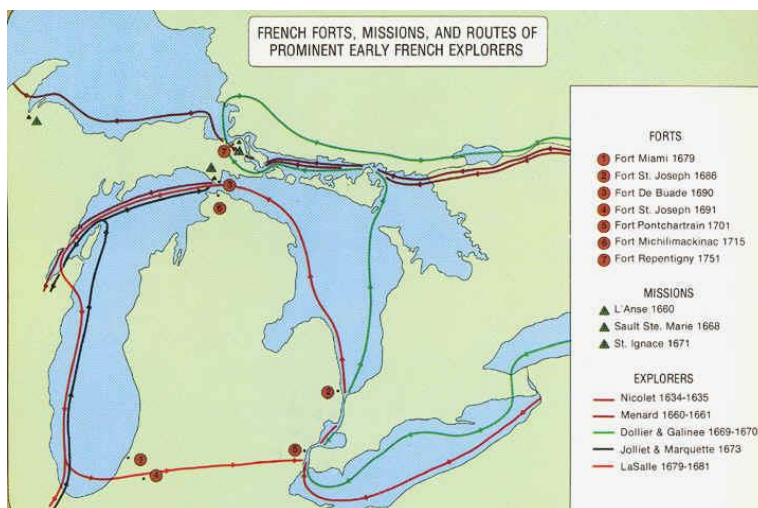
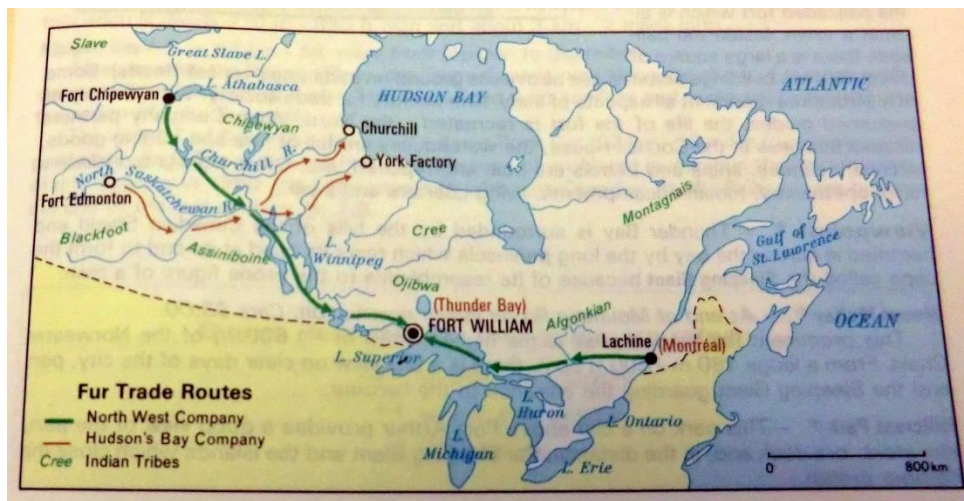
Anthropologists may be dead soul-less creatures in a way, when it comes to the larger issues, like, *what is life all about?* Little consideration is given to the nobler aspirations of man, like; art, music, philosophy, religion etc. Through the blinders of anthropology it is all about Darwinian fitness. The ability to stay alive as long as you can and successfully produce and raise your children to adult life when they to produce another generation, was of paramount importance. While I will be the first to admit this perspective may be superficial and less than cerebral, it does ensure future generations of anthropologists and may in this way, be self-serving.

Life expectance of a Paleolithic man is 32, life expectancy of a man in the terminal woodland 42-44. When I studied at Lakehead University I attended a lecture by Dr. El Malto, one of North America’s leading physical anthropologist. He did the work on the Nipigon burials (Vert Island). The site dated back 1100 years and had been partly dug in a pedestal type excavation by the OPP. Male and female remains were interred side by side. He died around age 42 but his body was that of a very old man who had lived a hard life. They had huge dental abscesses and joints that no longer flexed due to arthritis, their list of medical ailments were exhaustive.

When we consider how the archaeological features were used we need to remember the great depth of time involved. As mentioned in the spring, when the fish run at the river mouths, Pukaskwa pits allowed for the storage of fish. This allowed larger groups of people to live together as a community for longer periods of time. It is with these communities early miners traded and intermarried. At the beginning of this period these archaeological features would be used for their functional utility, food storage (pits), travel information (pictographs), copper (mines) but as we approach the historic period the same sites were being venerated.

Over this timeline a very sophisticated transportation system developed and things like prehistoric fish weirs and Pukaskwa pits are technological developments to accommodate this life style. Returning to Red Sucker Point, near Terrace Bay, we see the same technology employed differently. I do not think the Pukaskwa pits

there had much to do with fish storage. At that time pits were used to store Woodland Caribou. Seasonal migration of Caribou herds would be stampeded over cliffs or into another type kill site and harvested. It should be noted, we believe that in the prehistoric, Woodland Caribou behaved just like Alaskan Caribou do today and they congregated and migrated in large herds unlike today's Woodland Caribou, it is a numbers thing.



European explorers and fur traders traded with and employed indigenous guides and crews. If you look at the fur trade map and the map of the French explorers the importance of Manitoulin Island becomes self-evident. It is a natural cross roads where East-West and a North-South trade routes cross.



While this is very interesting in terms of travel, trade and commerce, in terms of social organization this is the birth of a nation. The carrying capacity of the land limits population growth. In a Boreal environment you need 24 square miles to feed one person on a self-sustaining basis. This leads to a nomadic life style. They exploited vast areas of land, a family of five would have to travel and harvest from 125 square miles. The locals would load the families and possessions into what we would call a two man canoe and travel the rivers and lakes setting up camps to exploit various resources. Hunting expeditions would go out, kill game and feed these small family or clan groups. This life style is effective but hard on the male population and a gender imbalance with more women than men occurred.

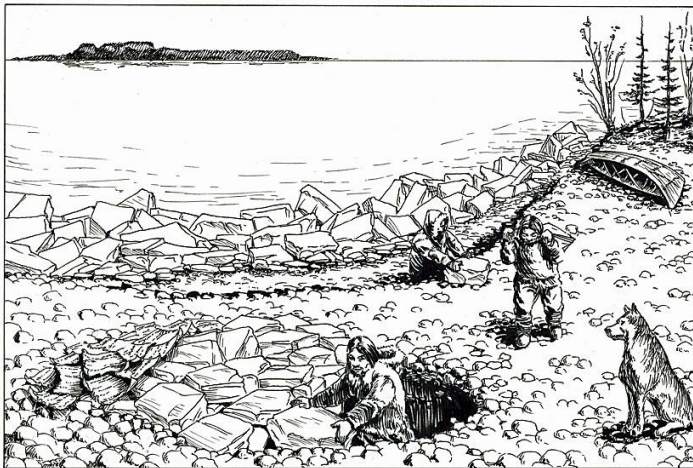


To some degree polygamy addressed this imbalance but it was not sustainable and women would marry out of the group. The Copper Revolution was a giant step forward over lithic technology.



This technological advancement allowed for a more efficient resource exploitation and population growth. These mining trade expeditions during the early part of the Archaic period were likely conducted early in the spring, as guests would host, feed or more likely feed guests, when food was plentiful this was easily done. This evolved, in a way you could say they extended their shipping season. Other resources such as Caribou at Red Sucker Point or Canada Geese at Wawa were exploited and once a relationship was developed they could rendezvous when they pleased. For example, they may have used a lunar calendar and met for Pow Wows when the moon was full or some set time.

It is difficult for modern humans to understand the importance of food at these gatherings (modern man rarely gets hungry enough). From this historical record know that “binge” eating occurred at the feast which lasted several days. While the environment provided time when food was plentiful and easily obtained it is also true that there were periods of austerity when hunting was poor and the weather bad. In that environment everyone knew what hunger and starvation were all about. Even when times were good they had constant reminders that hunger was never far off.



Returning to the illustration by artist Ben Lowery, you will note that one man carries a load on his back using a tumpline. When I was in high school I worked as a camp counsellor and canoeing instructor at a YMCA. We used Woods packs that

used this feature. Voyagers learned from the Indigenous and these tumplines were made from a four inch wide strip of raw moose hide. When the going got tough to stave off starvation you can chew on a piece of moose hide or use it for soup stock. There were constant reminders that hunger was never far off.

In a time when all communication was mouth to mouth and all knowledge and wisdom handed down from one generation to the next. Elders are venerated and respected for their wisdom; Pow Wows functioned like trade fairs. Knowledge was exchanged there, as well as food. This is how a nation was built. Extended family living in distant communities and a trade system that also functioned as a communication system bound people together over a very large geographical area led to a “shared culture,” a common heritage. This in turn leads to the institutions of social organization, religion and politics.

When it comes to Manitoulin Island and many other prehistoric sites they are easy to understand early in this time line but become more complex as we approach the historic period. It is from this period I think your question about Serpent pits, celestial navigation, bearings, reciprocal bearings and ranges are born.







Agawa has this feature which is large enough to accommodate my then eight year old daughter, and may be a Serpent pit.





As you can see from this series of photographs there is a lot more to Agawa that just pictographs. This natural crack in the rock and associated topographical features leave the visitor with a sense of awe and wonderment, (especially if it is not raining). This is the kind of place anthropologist and author Carlos Costaneda would have called a power spot.

If we look at all we know about this culture we have to admit that we have barely scratched the surface in terms of understanding this past lifeway, on a very small part of a very large trade route.



This photograph shows the remains of a prehistoric fish weir. This shot is from the Mnjikaning fish weirs but they occur elsewhere along the Bruce Peninsula. Like their Northern counterpart, Pukaskwa Pits, they are a food storage system that can be used to facilitate long distance canoe travel.



I will leave you with something else to think about that calls on your expertise as a doctor.



Returning to our horned rock trickster Maymaygwayshi, as he is associated with the cracks in the rock and he is often painted over the cracks in the rock and it is hard to get a good look at him. He commonly is drawn in this squat position and if you look at the image and add a little imagination. I am not sure he does not have some kind of congenital hip problem, injury, arthritis or possibly polio that has crippled him and affected his right hip?

He is also drawn with a very triangular shaped body and a "barrel" chest. Is this a representation of tuberculosis? He represents life's unexpected adversities and both polio and tuberculosis would qualify as adversity.

Saving the best for last, there has been very little diving done at Pictographs, as far as the Park superintendent at Bon Echo knows no one has ever dived there. The one dive that I am aware of at a Pictograph site, that I am aware of, was made by a lifelong diving colleague, Ryan William LeBlanc AKA "Flipper." Ryan and I

both had an interest in Archaeology and loved to hang out with then regional field archaeologist, David Arthurs. The photographs of the Red Rock pictograph site were shot in the winter and we skied across the bay. Ryan and Dave made a summer trip to the site and Ryan did not have a dive partner. He decided to drop down the rock face for a look see. The visibility was poor as the Nipigon River was dumping a lot of silt into the bay. The Domtar paper mill at Red Rock also adds to this problem.

Ryan is half “feeling” his way in the darkness down the rock wall at a depth of ten feet he came to a small cave or cleft in the rock face that formed a perfect rock shelf. He looked in and side by side where three skulls from very large Northern Pike lined up side by side with no other fish bones around all looking out at him.

Continuing down the rock face he came to a talus slope and then the by and large flat abyssal plateau of the bay bottom. Needless to say we have absolutely no idea how or when those fish skulls came to be there and we have never seen anything like this anywhere.

You never know what you will find and if you do not look you do not find.