

Memo

From: Peter Di Gangi & Alison McBride, Algonquin Nation Secretariat
Date: 25 February 2016
Re: **Review of AOO Voter's List of December 2, 2015**

Background

We have reviewed the “Algonquins of Ontario” (AOO) voter’s list of 2 December, 2015. This is the list of voters who are deemed eligible to vote on the ratification of the proposed AOO Agreement in Principle (AIP), which will affect Algonquin rights and title to about 36,000 square kilometers of the Ontario portion of the Ottawa Valley.

The AOO voters’ list contains approximately 7,714 individuals.¹ Of these, only 663 (8.6%) are actually registered members of the Pikwakanagan First Nation (formerly Golden Lake). The remaining 7,051 individuals are not registered members of Pikwakanagan, but are people who claim their eligibility by way of one or more “root ancestors” contained on a master list prepared by the AOO.² It is not clear what criteria were used to determine the list of “root ancestors”, or to decide on the rules for eligibility and enrolment in the AOO claim. These decisions were made during the negotiation process between the AOO and the governments of Ontario and Canada

Based on the actual identity and history of some of these “root ancestors”, there appear to be some significant questions about large numbers of voters on the AOO list, and whether they in fact have any legitimate connection to the Algonquin nation for the purposes of voting on an AIP which is intended to modify or extinguish Algonquin Aboriginal title and rights.

Summary of Findings

In the process of review, we identified a very large number of individuals who have relied on root ancestors whose only connection to the Algonquins or Nipissings appears to date back to the 1600’s or early 1700’s. It appears that these root ancestors relocated to New France during that period, and were entirely absent from the territory until their descendants moved back to the Ottawa Valley as French Canadian or Franco-Ontarien settlers in the mid-1800’s. In other cases these “root ancestors” are actually descended from Abenakis, not from Algonquins or Nipissings.

¹ Note that we have only had access to a pdf copy of the AOO voters’ list of Dec 2, 2015. Our counts are approximate and there may be a small margin of error.

² See Chapter 3 of the AOO AIP, “Eligibility and Enrolment”, May 2015.

It also appears that the “Algonquins” who are relying on these root ancestors have had no intermarriage with anyone of Algonquin or Nipissing ancestry for at least 200, and in some cases, more than 300 years. By our count, this category of individuals makes up 39% of the entire AOO voters’ list. In contrast, as pointed out above, only about 8.6% of the voters’ list is actually made of up registered members of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan.

The Root Ancestors in Question

Individuals must be able to connect themselves to one of a list of “root ancestors” in order to be enrolled to participate in the AOO claim. All of the material in the following summaries is public information, readily available on internet genealogical forums, including the genealogical site Ancestry.ca.

This analysis is based on the following ten “root ancestors” whose origins date back to the 1600's or early 1700's.

- Madeleine Euphrasie Nicolet (c 1628-1689). Probably born Lake Nipissing. Father French trader, mother local First Nations (Nipissing) woman. Grew up in Quebec City. Two marriages to Frenchmen in Quebec City (1643 Jean Leblanc; 1663 Elie Dussault). Died in Quebec City. At least 10-15 generations of French-Canadian descendants over 300 years.
- Etienne Pigarouche-Pikarwiche (c1621-c1660). Algonquin, originally from Allumette Island area. Converted to Christianity and moved to Jesuit missions at Trois Rivieres (1639) and Quebec City (1643). Death date unknown. Father of woman below.
- Marguerite Pigarouche-Pikarwiche (c1643-c1682). Daughter of above. Before 1671, married French soldier and trader Pierre Lamoureux dit St Germain. Lived at Ste Anne de Bellevue (west end of Montreal Island). At least 10-15 generations of French-Canadian descendants over 300 years.
- Paule Ouriphenemick (c 1660-1697). Not Algonquin, but Abenaki (so no connection to Algonquin territory). In 1680 married Frenchman Jean-Francois Lienard in Quebec City. Died in Quebec City. At least 10-15 generations of French-Canadian descendants over 300 years.
- Roch Silvestre Manithabehick (Manitouabeouich) (born late 1500's, death date unknown). Most likely Abenaki, not Algonquin. Died in Quebec City area. Father of Marie below.

- Marie Olivier Silvestre Manithabehick (c 1624-1665). Daughter of the above. Married Frenchman Martin Prevost (1644) in Quebec City. Died in Quebec City. At least 10-15 generations of French-Canadian descendants over 300 years.
- Marie Mitewamewkwe (c 1631-1699). Probably Algonquin, birthplace unknown. Married Frenchman Louis Couc in 1659 at Trois Rivieres. Died in Trois Rivieres. At least 10-15 generations of French-Canadian descendants over 300 years.
- Marie Nicole Matinikinan (c1698-1745). From Nipissing village at Lake of Two Mountains (Oka/Kanesatake) near Montreal. Married Frenchman Pierre Hery Duplanty (married formalized at Oka in 1739). Buried at Oka. At least 10 generations of French-Canadian descendants over 250 years.
- Thomas St. Jean dit Laguarde and wife Sophie Emilie Carriere. This couple were married on 20 Aug 1827 at Saint-Eustache (near Lake of Two Mountains). There is virtually no historical documentation that they were Algonquin. Based on information provided at the hearing into their eligibility for membership in the AOO, their immediate ancestry was entirely French-Canadian (as are their descendants). The couple later moved to Calumet Island. In the appeal, the presiding Judge decided, on the sole basis of an 1845 missionary letter (and over protests from Pikwakanagan), that Thomas St Jean dit Laguarde was probably Algonquin.

Although we could find no relevant information on them, the following two “root ancestors” are almost always associated with the “root ancestors” listed above, so we have included them for the purposes of this exercise:

- Veronique Matkateinins
- Jacques Paquette

Of the 7,714 people on the AOO voters’ list, it appears that 3,016 rely solely on one or more of the above-named individuals for their eligibility. This accounts for about 39% of the entire AOO voters’ list.

Breaking these numbers down further according to the non-registered groups that make up the majority of the AOO membership provides an indication of where the descendants of these “root ancestors” are concentrated:

- Mattawa / North Bay: 1,779 out of a membership of about 3,372 (53%)
- Greater Golden Lake: 705 out of a membership of about 1,170 (60%)
- Bonnechere: 368 out of a membership of about 812 (45%)