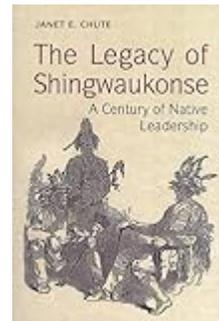




**Janet Elizabeth Chute.** *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse: A Century of Native Leadership.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. xii + 359 pp. + 20 pp. of plates. \$66.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8020-4273-6; \$29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8020-8108-7.



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### **The Pine trees need land, air, and water to flourish.**

Janet E. Chute, in *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse*, successfully combines ethnographic and historical records with the oral tradition of the Garden River First Nation community, located near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. As a result, she has produced a thoroughly researched monograph which examines larger issues in Canadian history from the aboriginal context. This contextualization is a result of Chute's in-depth work among elders of Garden River First Nation as well as with records held at academic institutions.

Structurally, Chute's monograph is chronological and topical, centering on events salient to Garden River First Nation. Locally significant issues allow Chute to situate the local within the national. This approach permits the reader to understand how Chief Shingwaukonse's vision affected government decision making from the 1830s to the early twentieth century. The centrality of land and resources to the success of Shingwauk's vision readily becomes apparent. Chapter nine ponders whether or not Shingwaukonse's actions and those of later leaders acted with one goal in mind –the preservation of their economic and political independence free from interference

by the Canadian State. For Chute, the answer is a definitive yes.

As Chute argues, nineteenth-century Sault Ste. Marie, like elsewhere in the Great Lakes, experienced a gradual decline of the reciprocal relations based on relative equality between natives and non-natives, or what has been termed the 'middle ground' (p.15). Lying astride the Canadian-American border, the growth of two separate nation-states affected native peoples at the 'Sault.' Incoming Indian Agents, customs officials, traders, soldiers, miners and settler populations further contributed to social, economic, and political transformations. As such, decreasing natural resources, loss of land, increasing white encroachment, and state formation eroded the independence of the Ojibwa. According to Chute, it is these factors which Shingwaukonse and his heirs, Ogista and Buhkwujjenene, confronted with varying degrees of success.

Chute's work, begun at the behest of the Garden River Band Council, reflects her close involvement with the elders. Instead of stressing resistance to Canadian policy, the work maintains that native leadership sought

a balance. This balance is seen through Chief Shingwaukonse's efforts to maintain links with both native and non-power sources. For instance, after studying different Christian sects, Shingwaukonse selected Anglicanism in an effort to gain access to the elites of Upper Canada as well as demonstrate his loyalty to the Crown (pp.47-71). Once the Anglican church proved unable or unwilling to aid him, Shingwaukonse sought access to other churches, the Canadian press, and entrepreneurs at Sault Ste. Marie (e.g. pp. 79, 122, 144). While attempting to establish a relationship with western society, Shingwaukonse maintained his ties with traditional native leadership and spirituality, such as the Midewiwin. Each source of power, when in balance, helped the chief in his attempts to assert native economic and political self-determination.

In addition to maintaining a balance, Ojibwa leaders were expected to maintain "reciprocal responsibility" with their followers (p. 18). Hence, Shingwaukonse, Ogista or Buhkwujjenene would not have been accepted as leaders had they assumed an agenda of personal aggrandizement. Chute offers the activities of Ojibwa leaders from Minnesota, such as Hole in the Day, the younger and elder, as a counter example to the leadership at Garden River (pp.151- 2). While useful, Chute's examples are counteracted by Kugel's recent work *To Be the Main Leaders of Our People* (1998) wherein Kugel argues effectively that Minnesota leaders in many ways followed the concept of forwarding group interests over personal desires. Nevertheless, Chute convincingly demonstrates that Shingwaukonse and his heirs strove to promote group interest through their defense of their land, its resources, and their right to share in its bounty with non-natives.

A scholarly influence in Chute's writing is R. White's *Middle Ground* (1991). Through her grasp of Ojibwa culture and events, Chute demonstrates that the Ojibwa sought to establish a relationship with Euro-American newcomers. While White's work chronologically ends his study with the conclusion of the War of 1812, Chute extends the theoretical concept into the twentieth century. Therefore, desire for aboriginal peoples to establish 'reciprocal' relations based upon mutual respect has never ended.

One minor problem I found within the work is Chute's treatment of missionaries, particularly their ability to act independently of native and non-native perceptions. Chute's discussion of Rev. James Chance, the Anglican missionary to Garden River from 1854 to 1871, is but one example (pp. 185-91). During concerted

attacks on the leadership and community by local and national government representatives, who 'coincidentally' were connected to resource exploitation interests, Chute presents Chance as being easily manipulated. In her narrative, Judge Prince and Lands Agent Joseph Wilson encouraged Chance to attack the Catholic mission in a feeble attempt to divide the community along religious lines. This strategy failed largely due to the Native desire to remain neutral, only taking on the role of mediators between feuding missionaries when events threatened to disrupt the community. My own work, however, illustrates that Rev. Chance believed, like many Canadians, that the Roman Catholics were little better than pagans and that Methodists were intruders in the Anglican realm. Chance wasted no opportunity to criticize any sect but his own and adamantly sought the Toronto Synod support in having the Jesuits removed from Garden River. Chance's activities and attitudes thus played into the strategies of others. Nevertheless, my minor difference of opinion does not detract from the overall argument Chute makes.

As a Garden River Band member, I found the work a fascinating exploration of our community's history. Chute has been a ready student of our elders, Dan and Fred Pine in particular. Her intensive labours with the Pine family, however, may leave Chute vulnerable to politically charged debates between families within the community. The legacy of our 'grandfather' Shingwaukonse continues to inform relationships with non-native governments, making this project an important contribution to the collective past. As a community, we have known and understood the significance of the vision to ourselves and the larger society. Chute's labours among our elders permit outsiders to consider a man, who for many Anishnabai, has assumed a role of guardian and guide.

As an academic, I consider the *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse* a well-rounded exploration of the political leadership of the Sault Ste. Marie native community during a period of rapid change and increased government involvement in native lives. Leadership through balance and reciprocity greatly influenced not only Shingwaukonse, but Chute as well. By sharing this work, and through the creation of dialogue, it is hoped that *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse* will inform future studies on aboriginal people. As such, Chute's monograph is crucial for individuals studying, and an important contribution to, First Nations and Canadian History.

The Pine or Shingwaukonse vision led the Garden

River community leadership to maintain economic independence, and thereby political self-determination. Simply, his 'children' would need land, air, and water to flourish as a viable community.

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