

INDIGENOUS SUBSISTENCE STRATEGIES ON THE CANADIAN SHIELD: A CASE STUDY FROM THE KENNAWAY SETTLEMENT

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Abstract

Haliburton County, Ontario, is an area that has received little historical attention, despite the fact that it was one of Ontario's last "frontier" regions before Canada opened its western provinces to settlement. A collection of historical records, including censuses, tax assessments, journals, published histories, and even archaeological excavations, feature one of Eastern Haliburton's earliest recorded permanent inhabitants, a Huron-Wendat man named Bernard Naraseau. This innovative figure established a unique blend of subsistence strategies that combined selected elements of traditional and Western approaches, during a critical time when the region was transitioning from Crown Lands to colonial settlement. The picture of the life way that emerges is one that defies historical binary definitions of First Nations hunting vs. settler farming. Far from practising a simple blend of the two styles, Naraseau was a selective farmer and tender of livestock, choosing only some of the crops and animals that his Euro-Canadian neighbours did, and his choices happened to be the most economical for the rocky soils of the Canadian Shield. Naraseau was also an occasional canoe guide, assisting colonial surveyors who mapped out lots and concessions in the new townships. Finally, rather than conforming to colonial stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples being generalized hunters, the data reveals how Naraseau scrupulously hunted certain game animals for specific economic purposes, including bone marrow extraction and bi-annual fur sales. Strategies like Naraseau's cannot be readily fit into traditional categories, and studies like this one can continue to interrupt the oversimplified binary we sometimes find in historical narratives that counterpose First Nations and settler subsistence practices, into more complex visions that help us to comprehend increasingly accurate historical realities.

Résumé

Le comté de Haliburton, en Ontario, a peu attiré l'attention d'historiens, malgré le fait qu'il s'agit d'une des dernières zones « frontalières » ontariennes avant que le Canada ouvre la porte à la colonisation des provinces de l'Ouest. Un ensemble d'écrits historiques, dont des recensements, des évaluations fiscales, des journaux personnels, des histoires publiées, et même des excavations archéologiques, fait référence à un des premiers habitants connus de l'est du comté, un Huron-Wendat du nom de Bernard Naraseau. Ce personnage hors du commun a mis en place un ensemble de stratégies de subsistance combinant des méthodes tirées des approches occidentale et traditionnelle, à une époque importante : la région passait du statut de terrain de la couronne à celui de territoire ouvert à la colonisation. L'image qui découle de ce mode de vie met à mal l'image binaire de modes de vies européen (agriculture) et autochtone (chasse). Loin de pratiquer un mélange des deux, Naraseau pratiquait l'agriculture et l'élevage de façon judicieuse, ne choisissant que certaines des plantes et certains des animaux utilisés par ses voisins euro-canadiens, et ses choix comme par hasard étaient les plus économiques dans le contexte du sol rocailleux du bouclier canadien. Guide en canot à l'occasion, venant en aide aux arpenteurs coloniaux qui divisaient la terre en lots et en concessions dans les nouvelles communautés. Enfin, plutôt que de se conformer au stéréotype de l'indigène chasseur généraliste, les données montrent que Naraseau s'en tenait à certains animaux pour certains usages bien précis, dont l'extraction de la moëlle osseuse et des ventes de fourrures deux fois par an. On ne peut faire entrer de telles stratégies dans des schémas traditionnels, et des études telles que celle-ci peuvent continuer à interrompre le simplisme binaire que l'on retrouve parfois dans des études historiques opposant les modes de subsistance des autochtones et allochtones, et offrir plutôt une vision plus complexe des choses, qui nous aident à comprendre de façon toujours plus juste des réalités historiques complexes.

Come November, the forests of Haliburton County, Ontario come alive with hunters, who, in contrast to the birds emigrating from the region for warmer climes, flock to the area to partake in some of the most beautiful hunting grounds in Ontario. So the region's beauty must have seemed in the mid-1800s, and its reputation spread far and wide, even reaching the Lac-de-deux-montagnes area beside Montreal, where it reached the ears of a young Huron/Wendat man. Raised in the French Catholic tradition, his Christian name was Bernard, and for most of his life he would go by the name Bernard Naraseau. Each Autumn hunting season, Naraseau set out in his canoe and travelled north up the Otta-

wa River and turned westwards, continuing up the York Branch of the Madawaska River, finally arriving in lands that, in the 1860s, came to be known as Harcourt Township in the eastern reaches of Haliburton County (Cummings, 1993, p. 49, Dobrzensky and Dobrzensky, 1985, p. 151, Smith, 2003, p. 65). Whether it was the plentiful hunting, the region's many sparkling lakes, the proliferation of warm autumn colours, or some combination of them all, Naraseau was moved to establish a home on lands that were later surveyed and labelled as lots 24 and 25 of Concession X in Harcourt Township (1871 Canada Census, Cummings, 1993, p. 65, Dobrzensky and Dobrzensky, 1985, p. 131, 151). It would be disingenuous to brand Naraseau as the area's "first pioneer." Rather, Naraseau was continuing a long tradition that Indigenous Peoples maintained, of traversing and living in that area of Turtle Island, which later came to be referred to as the Canadian Shield. Aside from a few squatters in Dysart Township to the west, Naraseau "and another were encountered as early as 1858 by Surveyor Fitzgerald," (Cummings, 1993, p. 49, Dobrzensky and Dobrzensky, 1985, p. 151) before any Euro-Canadian settler towns were established in Eastern Haliburton. In the French Canadian articulation, Naraseau's "Christian name" Bernard came to be locally pronounced "Benoir," and it is for this reason that the narrow lake flowing past Naraseau's Harcourt property, which connects to the Madawaska-York Rivers, was named Benoir Lake, the name it retains to this day. There, Naraseau practiced a unique blend of resource procurement strategies in which he combined a particular selection of traditional hunting and trapping activities, with an assortment of colonial style agricultural practices that later settlers in Harcourt Township favoured. A renewed perspective on the historical sources for this blended subsistence strategy can demonstrate that his approach was ingeniously and specifically tailored to best fit the complex plethora of resources and limited agricultural potential of the Canadian Shield region. Rather than seeing Naraseau's blended strategy as a trend that moved him incrementally away from a traditional lifestyle and eventually towards a fully Western farming "ideal," the historical and archaeological evidence instead suggests that Naraseau was an active forger of a lifestyle that was custom designed to be best fit for his time, place, and circumstances.

In this study, the authour employs a historical approach to ask the questions, *how can historical sources of information illuminate the ways that Indigenous Peoples negotiated frontier¹ environments in order to develop diverse and complex subsistence strategies? Does a new look at these strategies lead us to revise our understandings that historically tended to divide Indigenous and Euro-Canadian settler subsistence strategies along simple binary definitions (i.e., "First Nations" vs. "European")?* To help answer these questions, the authour focuses on a significant case study from what might be called one of Ontario's last "frontiers," the Haliburton-Muskoka region, which was opened up for agricultural settlement in the 1860s and 1870s. This

area has often been overlooked in historical literature, perhaps because it was hastily settled just before the Canadian government formally acquired and opened up the lands that now constitute Manitoba, sparking an increase in settlement in the Canadian West (Martinello, 2015, pp. 180-181). There are significant historical records and resources to illuminate how the family of Bernard Naraseau, members of the Huron-Wendat nation, lived in-relation-to their ecological setting in Haliburton, in contrast to the life ways generally followed by Euro-Canadian inhabitants in the mid to late-nineteenth century Haliburton. The authour utilizes a constructivist methodology, assuming that the findings presented here represent only one of many ways to interpret data in order to construct meaning. J. Amos Hatch asserts that

Constructivists assume a world in which universal, absolute realities are unknowable, and the objects of inquiry are individual perspectives or constructions of reality...constructivist science argues that multiple realities exist that are inherently unique because they are constructed by individuals who experience the world from their own vantage points (Hatch, 2002, p. 15).

Hatch cites Berg's (1998) assertion that "It is the job of the historiographer to examine potential sources of data...to make interpretations based on multiple data sources, and to weave these into a "meaningful set of explanations" (Hatch, 2002, p. 25). The authour constructs this case study of late nineteenth-century subsistence procurement strategies based on the historical and archaeological evidence of Bernard Naraseau, who was among the Haliburton region's first recorded resident. The authour writes this work from the position of one trained in the Western academic studies of History and Archaeology, as a History, Archaeology and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies teacher and researcher, and as a person of European-settler heritage with some Accawmacke/Gingaskin Indigenous ancestry. Growing up, he spent many summer days in the (now)-cottage country of Eastern Haliburton, upon whose lands Bernard Naraseau, the subject of this study, and many generations of Indigenous Peoples lived and co-existed. Because historical sources of information are fairly scant for the time period and location in question, the authour has attempted to assess every available source to assist in reconstructing a picture of how Indigenous life ways were practiced in Eastern Haliburton's Canadian Shield region in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, when colonial settlers began to formally survey townships for the first time and map the land into lots and concessions for sale to "pioneers."²

As has been the norm in the production of historical narratives in areas that have been called frontiers, the lion's share of attention has

been placed on colonial settlers, casting them as brave, adventurous, and hardy folk “taming” a “wilderness” in the name of civilization and progress. Scholarly treatment of Indigenous history has developed significantly in recent decades, as noted by Peers and Podruchny:

Since the late 1970s, scholarship on Aboriginal history in Canada has increased by leaps and bounds. The 1980s and 1990s saw the production of fundamental works on the histories of particular communities and regions and socio-economic and political phenomena such as the numbered treaties, agricultural programs, reserve life and residential schools (Peers, and Podruchny, 2010, p. 2).

Before historical accounts were written from more Indigenous perspectives, historians had not only routinely omitted Indigenous perspectives from historical narratives, but when they have allowed space for them, Indigenous life ways were often cast in a collectivist, reductive manner that mainly served to highlight their differences to the Euro-settler colonial life ways (Younging, 2018, p. 18). Take, for example, Edwin Guillet’s 1933 assertion that “The first homes in Ontario were those erected along the Detroit River by several hundred disbanded French soldiers, who were settled there in the last forty years of the French period” (Guillet, 1938, p. 9). If writers mentioned the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to this colonial experiment, it was often in the way of handy or worthwhile inventions that these same Euro-Canadians deemed worthy of appropriating, stereotypically things such as maple syrup, snowshoes and toboggans (see for example Garrett, 1954). In fact, Indigenous Peoples have often been “historicized” in our historical narratives, described as living life ways much as they did upon the eve of European contact, and then left out of official histories, as if they had vanished or been absorbed wholly into “mainstream” society. This is often the assumption that is made after Euro-Canadian authorities “taught” Indigenous Peoples the benefits of Western culture, for example, European agricultural practices, and supposedly improved the ways in which Indigenous Peoples could subsist. This is an example of what Neal Ferris and others refer to as “acculturation master narratives,” highly discriminatory versions of history in which “Models of acculturation have emphasized a clear progression from “timeless” precontact societies through rapid change triggered by exposure to more “advanced” donor cultures (i.e., European), leading to both a loss of cultural distinctiveness and a dependence on the dominant society for livelihood and even identity” (Ferris, 2009, p.11). These narratives tended to portray Indigenous Peoples as somewhat powerless in the ebb and flow of historical forces that led them to find new ways to subsist. The purpose of this research is to interrogate

some of these assumptions and refine our knowledge about how, in one particular area at least, new light can be shed on the dynamic ways in which Indigenous Peoples were in fact canny engineers of their environments and subsistence strategies, not only blending traditional life ways with Western ones where appropriate, but also assisting Western settlers in negotiating complex and challenging environments in Ontario, particularly in the diverse Canadian Shield region.

Although 1858 was several years earlier than the official opening of Haliburton County to agricultural settlement, much less the inauguration of the Kennaway village which was later situated near its eastern boundary, Naraseau likely spent a considerable amount of time in the area years before his 1858 encounter with the surveyor Fitzgerald. The 1871 census register for Harcourt (the first recorded census for the township) lists the 45 year old "Bernard Narsue" (giving his birth year of 1826) and his 40 year old wife Catherine. This was Catherine Baptiste, according to the 1891 census, also Roman Catholic and from Quebec (1871, 1891 Canada Census). The Baptiste family also had members residing in Herschel Township in Hastings County, which borders Harcourt Township on Harcourt's east. The Madawaska River connects to Baptiste Lake in Herschel, and Naraseau would have had to traverse this waterway en route to Benoir Lake in Harcourt. The census lists their oldest child, John, as 20 in 1871, suggesting that the couple was together by 1851. Since the Baptiste family had members living in the township to the east, Naraseau was ostensibly familiar with Haliburton perhaps in the 1840s, when he was a young man in his twenties. Both Naraseau's family and his resource-procurement techniques developed, and by 1871 the census taker found Naraseau's ecological subsistence strategy divergent enough from Kennaway's other residents that he recorded it as "Farmer & Hunter" rather than just "Farmer," as he did for all of the Township's other inhabitants, themselves descended from Euro-Canadian settler families (1871 Canada Census). An examination of the evidence for Naraseau's economic activities will effectively demonstrate that no small degree of niche-environment planning had to go into it in order for him to be able to support a family of ten and growing.

The available historical information suggests that Indigenous Peoples on the Canadian Shield exploited diverse employment opportunities in which they capitalized on their skills and experience. In Naraseau's case, this not only included hunter, trapper/fur sales, selective farming and animal husbandry, but also canoe guide. Naraseau had already spent years living in the Eastern Haliburton region by the 1860s, therefore when the land was formally surveyed for the purposes of allocating into lots and concessions in the colonial manner, surveyors approached Naraseau to assist them in travelling through the area up and down the navigable rivers via canoe. Eastern Haliburton was surveyed in the 1860s by Alexander Niven (Dobrzensky and Dobrzensky, 1985, p.

151, Emmerson, 2015, p. 76, Telfer, 2004, p. 14). He was an agent of the English Land and Emigration Company, based in London, England. This company was formed for the purposes of acquiring, and opening up for agricultural settlement, land that would become the first nine townships in Haliburton (Cummings, 1993, Dobrzensky and Dobrzensky, 1985, Martinello, 2015, p. 183, Smith, 2003, p. 10). Niven kept a diary of his time surveying the thick forests of Eastern Haliburton, and in his entry for 2 July 1869, wrote, "Examined Noisy Creek and Mill sites and positions of dams on same to Papineau Lake [now called Fishtail Lake]...Pd. Barnard 50¢ for canoeing. A fine day" (Cummings, 1993, p. 176). Later that summer, on 11 September, Niven wrote "Left camp at 7:30 AM and went to Bernards on Branch.³ Examined pine on west of Elephant Lake in afternoon. Returned to camp at Bernards at 7:00 PM. A fine day," and then on 13 September, "Explored pine on west of Branch in Harcourt from Elephant Lake to Bernards. J. Barnard assist..." (Cummings, 1993, p. 177). Finally, on 14 September, Niven tells us that "Murray, Holland, Roberts & self exploring. J. Barnard canoeing self went up both branches of Madawaska to 9th Con. A fine day. Heard wolves howling at 5 PM" (Cummings, 1993, p. 177). This entry from Niven's journal reveals a few noteworthy details. First, notice that Niven included the names of three settlers of European heritage (inhabitants of the fledgling Kennaway village) as members of his exploration party, but excluded J. Barnard (sic) (likely Naraseau's adult son John) from this group. He relegated Barnard to the role of a servant, simply stating that Barnard "canoeed [my]self...". Not only might this reveal a colonial bias, but it may also provide a hint that Niven and the settlers were in a position of having to explore the area, while Barnard did not need to explore it, since he had spent many years in the area and knew the region well. It also reveals that Barnard could earn 50¢ a day for lending his services as a canoe guide, revealing one more way The Naraseau family supplemented their diversified income strategy. Niven's diary is corroborated by the diary of another traveller, A.H. Telfer. Telfer was at one point a member of Niven's team of surveyors. On 14 October, 1886, Telfer was at Mattawa, farther north up the Ottawa River, east of North Bay, when he wrote, "Spent most of the day strolling about the streets, and helping Joe Bernard to buy a new suit of clothes" (Telfer, 2004, p. 73). Lorene DiCorpo, the current editor of Telfer's journals, suggests that "The Native individual, Bernard, is probably the same man referred to throughout the diary as Joe Bernard. From local accounts, his name was actually Bernard Naraseau, from the Lac des Deux Montagnes area near Montreal. He maintained a home in Haliburton and worked frequently for Niven as a canoe man" (Dobrzensky and Dobrzensky, 1985, p. 151, Telfer, 2004, p. 94). Ultimately, the survey of the Haliburton area was greatly assisted by the contributions of Indigenous Peoples like Naraseau and his family. Acculturation master narratives are effectively interrupted when colonial agents like Niv-

en have to place themselves under the guidance of Indigenous Peoples like Naraseau, particularly when the guidance is used as one of many sources of income in a complex subsistence strategy.

Cultigens

Authors who discuss the growth of farming in Ontario and other regions of North America have often described the modification of the land for agricultural pursuits as “developing” or “improving” the land to make it “productive” (Guillet, 1972, p. 70). This kind of language can be described as inherently colonial, since it presupposes that before the introduction of European farming methods, land was undeveloped, unproductive and unimproved. Not only can forested land be described as naturally “developed” into forest, but for those who know how best to access the many resources of these environments, the land can be *extremely* productive. From the colonial position, farming is often depicted as the ideal food procurement strategy, and the presupposition in “frontier” communities is that settlers should aspire to modify the land to force it to conform to the European farming ideal. This ideal usually sees formerly “wild” lands “tamed” into regular patterns of rectangular lots and concessions, and further divided into square or rectangular fields, each one for a different purpose or crop. Therefore, the result of this system has been the imposition of a checkerboard-style of land allotment onto a landscape that may not naturally or optimally be suited for agricultural purposes.

The land in Eastern Haliburton consists of shallow, stony soils on the Canadian Shield, and is just such an example of an area that was not well-suited for the European style of agriculture. Haliburton region villages like Kennaway, Essonville, Cheddar, Deer Lake, Ursa and Hotspur, founded in the late-1800s on the European farming ideal, were abandoned after a few decades, after the area’s poor agricultural potential became all too obvious, and the new province of Manitoba offered much more attractive farmland to prospective settlers. Before the Kennaway village was abandoned, however, settlers reported to local tax assessors the specific output of their farms over a period from 1870 until the late 1890s. This gives us a clear, specific breakdown of exactly what kinds of crops and livestock area settlers produced during these years. An investigation into the recorded patterns of agricultural output can shed much light on the ways that Indigenous Peoples like Bernard Naraseau cleverly adapted traditional subsistence strategies with European farming techniques to carve out a niche that was unlike that of settlers of European descent. Examining the data on the agricultural patterns that Naraseau and the other inhabitants of Kennaway practiced, demonstrates that Naraseau’s reliance on settler agricultural strategies

was far more selective than that of his Euro-Canadian neighbours. Instead of presenting this selectivity as a lack of development or progress towards the European farming model (which happened to be ill-suited for the region), it can instead provide further evidence that Naraseau's strategy was in fact cleverly custom-designed to the specific time and place, and in reality represents an intelligently engineered approach best suited for the environment.

A total of nine families founded Kennaway as the first agricultural village in Eastern Haliburton in the 1860s. The 1871 census gives us the first clear record of how much land a settler family had cleared and under crop about five years after settlement. Census takers recorded how many acres each family had cleared, and how many of which kinds of crops they were tending. Graph 1 demonstrates that by 1871, the average Kennaway settler family had chopped down 18.7 acres of forest for cropland. Although the largest farms had 30 to 40 acres of cleared land, Naraseau's plots were composed of just 6 acres, the smallest farm of all nine families. Previously, in colonial histories, this might have been portrayed as a failure to fully develop the land according to the European farming ideal. Taking a renewed look, attempting to remove colonial lenses, however, can demonstrate that Naraseau was limiting his efforts in farming European crops in order to better diversify the subsistence strategy he used to support his family. Aside from selective farming, there were other factors that determined the sizes of farms that settlers cleared from the forest, including the ages of the settlers (have they had more time to work on their farms?) and the sizes of their families (Did they have more children/farmhands to share the work?). A quick comparison of these factors, however, compiled from census records, illustrates that Naraseau was neither the youngest of the settlers, nor had the smallest family. In fact, in 1871, Naraseau was the fourth oldest settler in Kennaway, and had the second largest family in the settlement (see Table 1). The discrepancies between Naraseau's large family size, more advanced age, and the humble amount of acres he had cleared and under crop reveals a proclivity to base his agricultural practices on a different value system than his Euro-Canadian neighbours.

Tabulating the results of the Kennaway settlement's first reported crop yields provides insight into another telling feature of Naraseau's subsistence strategy. Graph 2 tabulates the total farm produce, in bushels, reported by the settlement's inhabitants in 1871 (1871 Canada Census, Martinello, 2015, p. 189). As can be seen, oats and potatoes overwhelmingly dominate the agricultural output. In the shallow, acidic soils of the Canadian Shield region, these two crops had the best chance of growing, and settlers relied on them the most. Comparing these crop outputs to the total farm produce that Naraseau reported (see Graph 3) demonstrates that he exclusively grew these two cultigens, and in 1871 did not report harvesting any of the other crop types that the Euro-Ca-

nadian settlers did, which included barley, hay, peas, spring wheat, and turnips (Martinello, 2010, p. 71). Where Euro-Canadian settlers were attempting to grow many different kinds of crops and diversify their farming strategy to attempt to rely predominantly on agriculture, Naraseau chose to grow only two of the seven reported crops in Haliburton, and they happened to be the two most reliable and prolific crops that could be grown in the region. This would free Naraseau to implement varied subsistence strategies, tailored to the area's environmental limitations.

Animals

The tax records and other historical sources for the Kennaway settlement also record the kinds and quantities of farm animals that the inhabitants declared over a decade and a half, from 1871 through to 1885 (see Table 2 for Bernard Naraseau). An examination of these sources further demonstrates that Naraseau's subsistence practices diverged from those of his Euro-Canadian neighbours, and served as a role model for an economical practice well-adapted to the conditions of the region. Area farmers recorded their herd and flock sizes of sheep, pigs, cattle, oxen (draft animals), milk cows and horses (Martinello, 2015, p. 192). Although Naraseau specifically recorded owning no animals in the first census year of the settlement (1871), later tax assessment registers recorded the development of his (and the other inhabitant's) livestock. These totals have been recorded in Graphs 4-7. They compare Naraseau's livestock patterns (in black) to the averages of the Euro-Canadian settler's herds (in white) (1871 Canada Census, 1871-1903 Tax Assessment Registers, Harcourt Township). They demonstrate that, from the 1770s until the mid-1880s, Naraseau's family experimented with sheep ownership, tending a small flock of seven at most. As the 1880s wore on, however, his sheep ownership dropped off, while that of the other families tended to rise. Naraseau's ownership of horses, however, usually doubled the average of the other families in the community, since he routinely registered a pair of the comparatively-expensive animals in the tax assessments. Aside from boat transportation on rivers and lakes, horses would have been the primary means of transportation in the remote villages on the Canadian Shield. One animal that Naraseau never recorded owning was oxen. Oxen are primarily draft animals, and families owning them would indicate possession of a cart or carts, and/or seasonal work logging the surrounding forests for lumber. It is, however, in the areas of hogs and cattle, that an interesting pattern becomes apparent. Through the documented assessment years, Naraseau tended to exceed the local averages in hog and cattle ownership. The reasons for this are difficult to determine. However, it may be no coincidence that

hogs are generally the fastest-growing of the listed animals and would most quickly yield quantities of meat in the least amount of time, added to the advantage that they can eat a wide variety of foods including table scraps and vegetable bits not fit for a family's table. Cattle, on the other hand, represented the largest meat animal and could yield great quantities of meat for a large, hard-working family.

Aside from historical records, what evidence is there that Naraseau's family actually emphasized hogs and cattle in their diet? In the 1990s, an archaeological dig was commissioned on the property Naraseau's family inhabited. The archaeologist's excavation results yield more information about some Indigenous food-procurement strategies in this late-nineteenth century community. For example, the archaeologists assumed that a "...nineteenth century farm operation would concentrate on livestock which were less labour and capital intensive, particularly pigs," and that "we would not expect to find that cattle raising would comprise a major activity in a nineteenth century farming operation until well after the start up phase, and usually after a period dominated by sheep production" (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, p. 58). However, they noted, according to the quantities of osteological (bone) remains excavated in test pits on the site that date to Naraseau's time period, "that the major domestic food animals were ox [cattle] and pig" (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, p. 58). The archaeologists excavated remains of juvenile hogs that they identified as less than half grown, butchered perhaps a couple of years before they grew to their full capacity. This kind of practice, they indicate, is seen in butchering for individual family consumption, rather than for sale, perhaps as a result of "seasonal shortages in the food supply" (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, pp. 58-59). Further, there is some indication that Naraseau's family depended heavily on these food animals, perhaps when other sources were scarce. The animal bone fragments the archaeologists excavated were indicative of large portions, and they found that "the cuts represented for both species would be atypical of the more finely sliced twentieth-century consumer portions, but they are consistent with those recovered from nineteenth-century sites" (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, p. 59). If this evidence suggests that Naraseau's family relied on farm animals like hogs and cattle, it not only implies that the family was utilizing the most economical animals for the rocky Canadian Shield region, but also that they tended to utilize these resources as backup or intermittent food sources, to supplement a diversified subsistence strategy. Other farming families in the community tended to put more emphasis on farming, and increasingly on sheep, as the predominant strategy.

Hunting

The picture painted by the historical evidence about farm animal

use would be corroborated if there was considerable proof that a family like Naraseau's participated in hunting to a large degree. Again, an array of historical data including published histories and archaeological evidence suggests just such a situation. As stated above, Alexander Niven was one of the surveyors that the Canadian Land and Emigration Company enlisted to survey parts of Haliburton, and he routinely employed Naraseau and his sons to guide him through the area. In his journal of 13 September 1869, Niven records that he and a couple of Kennaway residents, including Naraseau, were on the west branch of the Madawaska River in Harcourt, and that some of the men were hunting deer (Cummings, 1993, p. 177). Naraseau's reputation as a hunter was significant enough that the 1871 census record for Harcourt Township lists Naraseau's occupation as "Farmer and Hunter" (1871 Canada Census). Since every other inhabitant of the Kennaway village was registered solely as farmers, Naraseau was the only one to have two occupations listed. Historical sources describe the opportunities Naraseau capitalized on to benefit from the seasonal sales of furs that were held in nearby Haliburton Village. Cummings describes the semi-annual fur sales held in Haliburton Village in the late 1800s, at which hunters like Naraseau would congregate to sell their wares:

More carefree than [surveyor Alexander] Niven were the hunters and trappers in the Haliburton district. These congregated in great numbers in the village for the semi-annual fur sales, said by Thompson to have been held on the 24th of May and the 5th of November in each year. "The village was in a great commotion on those big sale days...The proceedings would usually close with a rifle shooting match and a dance at night. The hunters and trappers were splendid specimens of manhood and all jolly good fellows" (Cummings, 1993, p. 113).

No doubt these semi-annual sales provided versatile resource strategists like Naraseau with significant sums of money to assist their families through each half-year period.

Evidence uncovered by the archaeologists who excavated Naraseau's old property corroborates the historical records. They found that

The most frequently occurring species [found in excavation pits] is the Virginia white-tailed deer. Given the ubiquity of deer throughout the excavated portion of the site...we may reliably conclude that much of the subsistence activity represented by the faunal sample involved procurement of this wild resource species. Body portion representation data...indicate that all parts of the carcass are represented. This supports the idea that whole deer carcasses were processed on-site (Dibb and

Dibb, 1997, p. 59).

One difficulty in using this data to support the contention that Naraseau's family employed a mixed-methods subsistence strategy best suited to the environment, yet different from that of Euro-Canadian settlers in the area, is the fact that almost all early Haliburton farming families likely also hunted for animals to supplement their dinner tables. However, in the usual establishment of farming communities, as the archaeologists indicated in their report, cattle-raising usually develops well into a village's establishment, and so we may see a greater reliance by all families on hunting in earlier periods (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, p. 58). Further evidence that Naraseau did *not* conform to this pattern, however, comes again from the archaeological patterns identified by the excavators of Naraseau's homestead site. They unearthed identifiable remains of one beaver, one dog, one black bear, six pigs, and eight oxen [cattle], compared to a staggering *thirty-four* deer! If Naraseau's subsistence strategy conformed to the Euro-Canadian settler farming ideal, we would see reliance predominantly on hunted animals in the older stages of the site's occupation (i.e., from the lower layers of the excavation), and an increasing presence of farm animal remains in the newer, or higher levels of the excavation. However, the archaeologists noted

...no obvious reciprocal patterning with respect to deer and ox remains. It would be convenient to assume that ox deposition occurred mostly toward the late end of the site occupation, and that deer deposition occurred mostly in the pre-logging camp period [before the late 1880s]. If so, then it would seem that either there was no difference in depositional focus between early and late periods, or that the original patterning was effectively blurred by scavenger action and by subsequent logging disturbance...The high frequency of perimortem (spiral) fracturing (observed on half of all deer bones) is consistent with bone marrow extraction, and is characteristic of pre- and early post-contact Native Canadian faunal assemblages (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, pp. 60-62).

The best evidence suggests that Naraseau's family, instead of conforming to the Western farming ideal, selectively utilized a variety of strategies to maximize the animal fat and protein sources in their diet, including bone marrow. This represents a strategy that is best-suited to the highly variable topography, seasonal temperatures, and animal resources available in the Canadian Shield region. If more families of Euro-Canadian descent had adopted similar strategies instead of attempting to rely exclusively on the European model of farming, then perhaps villages like Kennaway, Essonville, Cheddar, Hotspur, and Deer Lake,

originally intended as farming communities, might not have been ultimately abandoned.

Conclusion

No passive canvas to be painted over in the Western fashion, Naraseau was instead the painter himself, selecting his colours from a diverse array of life ways to compose an image that conveyed a canny sense of niche-management that confounds simplistic explanations like acculturation master narratives. These efforts call on us to attend to the highly complex ways that Indigenous Peoples could master multiple economic pursuits in what are colonially referred to as “frontier” environments, like that of Haliburton, Ontario in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The fact that Naraseau’s resource-procurement system was so multifaceted led the archaeologists who excavated his homestead to assert that “The mix of subsistence resources differs radically from that found in early and middle nineteenth-century farmstead sites in Southern Ontario. The most striking differences are in the emphasis on wild resources-particularly deer, which seems to have been processed in the Native fashion-and the narrow range of domestic animals” (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, p. 64). The evidence for Naraseau’s intricate blend of animal resources in particular shows that the

faunal sample reveals a pattern of faunal resource utilization which can not be fit into a familiar pattern...The pattern is unlike assemblages attributed to Native Canadians during the Iroquoian Period. It is unlike assemblages related to Northern Ontario fur trade...it is unlike the general pattern for Southern Ontario farmstead sites (Dibb and Dibb, 1997, p. 65).

The fact that this kind of tradition cannot be readily fit into a known pattern attests to the innovative nature of the people who develop it. The fact is that the Canadian Shield environment in Haliburton is different from that of Northern Ontario, and it is different from that of the “Iroquoian Period” as well as that which farmers encountered in the flat, fertile lands of Southern Ontario. Considering strategies like Naraseau’s in new ways problematizes the Western/Indigenous binary that has often characterized historical descriptions of subsistence strategies, and challenges acculturation master narratives. Ojibwe/Dakota scholar Scott Lyons tells us that

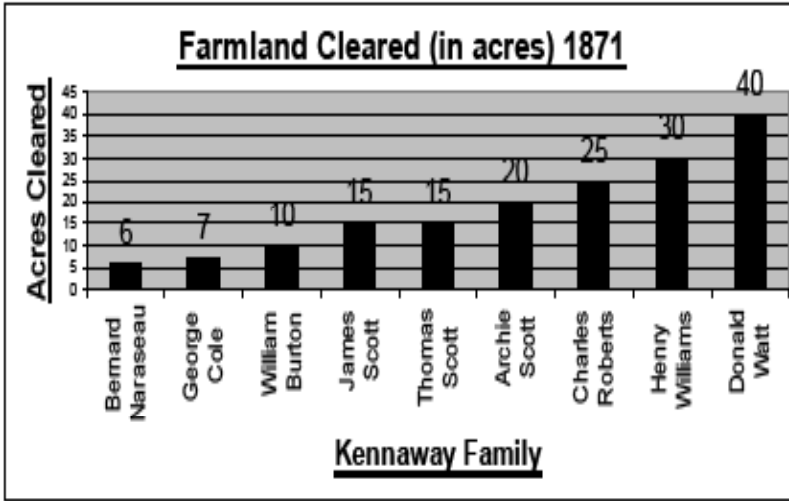
Thinking historically means seeing different Indian spaces invented in different times and social contexts, and in fact our spaces have been imagined in many different ways...At first,

Indian space was isolated and always on the move; its image was the *camp*. On occasions when Native and newcomer had to meet, the space for doing so was a *frontier*. the Frontier was traditionally conceived as the line where Civilization meets Wilderness, the latter as yet untamed by the former, so the concept is inseparable from imperialism...As for the Indians imagined on the wild side of the line, they would either stay in their camps and vanish or evolve into someone who might yet live on the civilized side of time and space. Such was the logic of a world cut in two by imperialism (Lyons, 2010, p. 16).

Therefore, we need to see Indigenous Peoples as active agents in identifying and exploiting emergent niche lifestyles and possibilities in changing historical contexts, and understand that people are highly adaptable, not as a generalized and binary state of being in comparison to Western imperial cultures, but as purposeful authours in the original creation and engineering of opportunities as they related to diverse and constantly changing ecological and economic possibilities. The erroneous assumption that the natural course of action for Indigenous Peoples in Canada was to "evolve into [people] who might yet live on the civilized side of time and space" (Lyons, 2010, p. 16) is to relegate them to the passive role of receptacles of those aspects of Western culture that colonial authorities deemed laudable for Indigenous Peoples to obtain (regardless of what Indigenous Peoples thought). It distorts our understandings of the entrepreneurial human spirit and the ability of Indigenous Peoples to identify potential problems and changes to the societies/places in which they live. It discredits people's abilities to assess possible ways to negotiate those changes, and to act as effective engineers of their own futures in the midst of those changes. How would envisioning Indigenous Peoples as active engineers/proponents of cultural change in the midst of colonization alter the ways we envision and teach history in Canada? How would an increasing ability to perceive Indigenous Peoples as knowledgeable entrepreneurs, combining a selection of traditional life ways with a selection of Western ones, customized to particular times, environments and communities affect the stereotypes with which we still often portray Indigenous Peoples? Future studies like this one can continue to interrupt the oversimplified binary we have sometimes found in historical narratives that counterpose First Nations and settlers, hunter-gatherers and farmers, into more complex understandings that help us to comprehend increasingly accurate historical realities. Instead of seeing individuals like Naraseau as "hunters and farmers," we might better articulate our grasp of these life ways in Ontario by saying that he was a *selective* farmer of *certain* cultigens best suited for the soils of the Canadian Shield, and a *discerning* caretaker of *particular* animals, again best fit for life in Haliburton, a hunter of *specific* game animals, such as

deer, and a *part time* fur-sales entrepreneur, topped off as an *occasional* canoe-guide. The more we can identify and examine case studies in which people are shown to be dynamic entrepreneurs, actively shaping events and opportunities to be able to successfully thrive in (and in spite of) the cultural context of colonialism, the more we can recast our notions of history to be better able to effectively interpret the dynamics of what we may call “engineered cultural interaction”.

Graph 1



<u>Farmland Cleared (in acres) by 1871</u>	
Bernard Naraseau	6
George Cole	7
William Burton	10
James Scott	15
Thomas Scott	15
Archie Scott	20
Charles Roberts	25
Henry Williams	30
Donald Watt	40

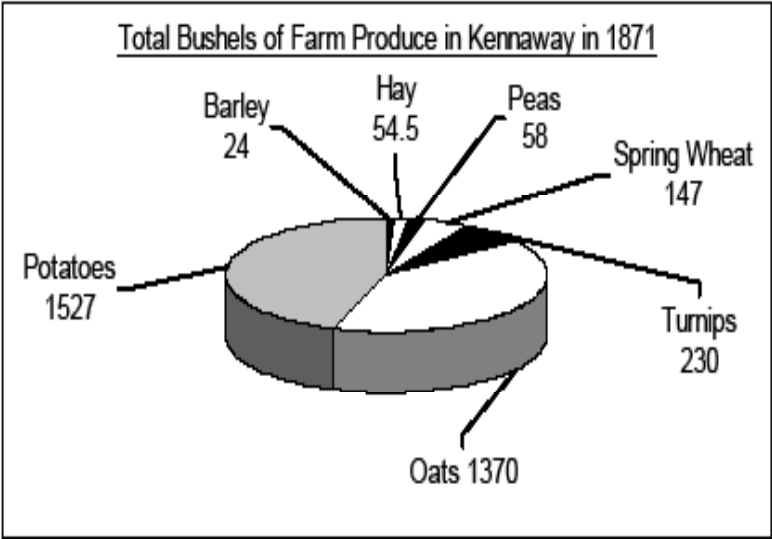
Table 1

<u>Table 1*</u>			
<u>Acres of Developed Farmland</u>		<u>1870 Ages</u>	<u>Family Size</u>
Archie Scott	20	23	5
George Cole	7	24	3
James Scott	15	25	3
William Watt	10	25	1
Thomas Scott	15	36	7
Charles Roberts	25	34	5
Bernard Narasau	6	47	10
Donald Watt	40	51	11
Henry Williams	30	59	9
Averages	18.6	36	6

Table 2

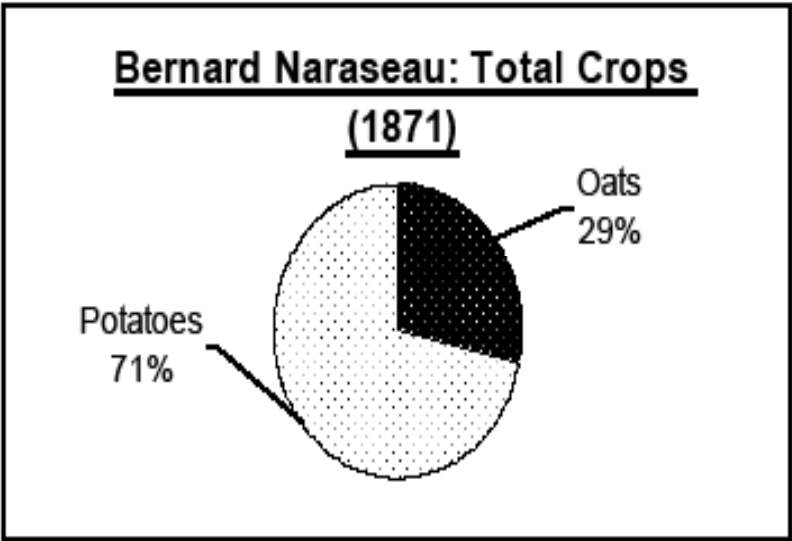
<u>Farm Animals Reported by Bernard Narasau in Tax Registers</u>											
	1871	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1883	1884	1885
Cattle	0	8	7	6	6	4	4	5	6	6	7
Sheep	0	1	1	0	0	7	0	6	4	3	0
Hogs	0	0	1	1	3	5	2	3	0	2	0
Horses	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	0	2

Graph 2



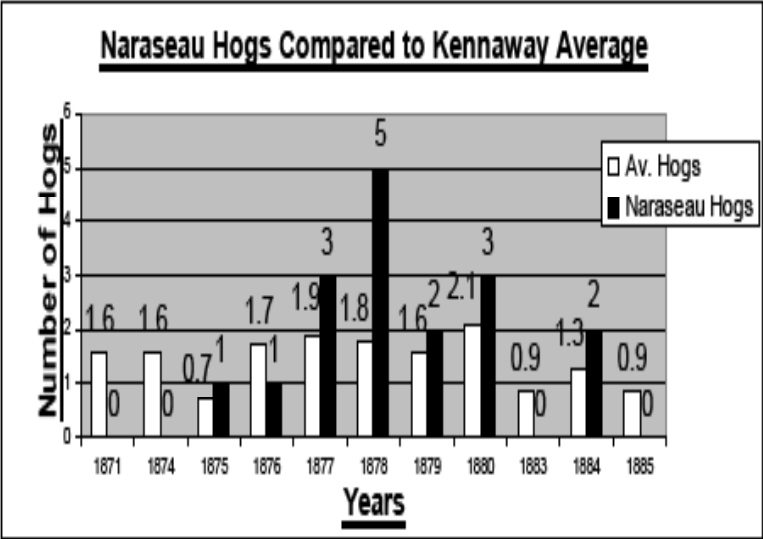
<u>Total Bushels of Farm Produce in Kennaway in 1871</u>	
Barley	24
Hay	54.5
Peas	58
Spring Wheat	147
Turnips	230
Oats	1370
Potatoes	1527

Graph 3



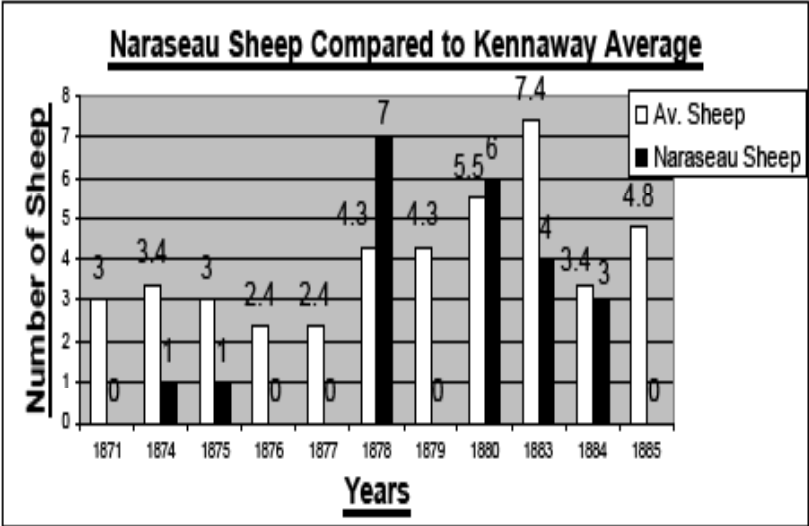
<u>Bernard Naraseau: Total Crops (in bushels)</u>	
Oats	40
Potatoes	100

Graph 4



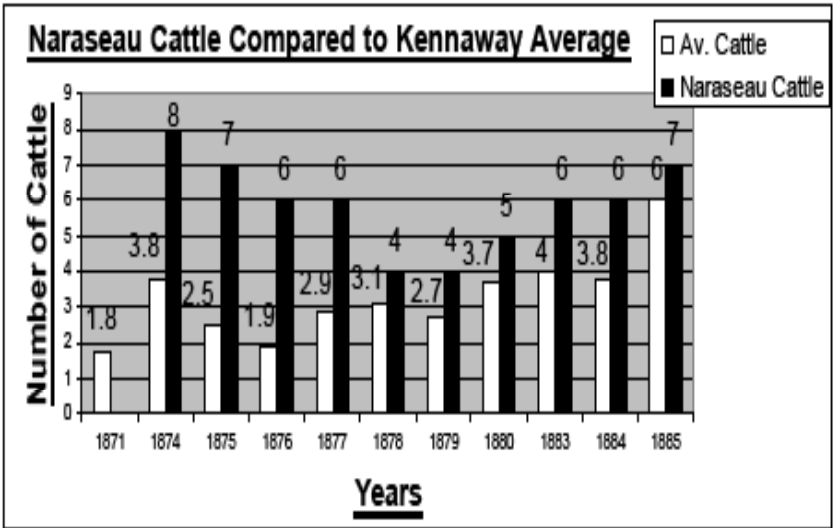
	1871	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1883	1884	1885
<u>Av.</u> <u>Hogs</u>	1.6	1.6	0.7	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.6	2.1	0.9	1.3	0.9
<u>Naras</u> <u>eau</u> <u>Hogs</u>	0	0	1	1	3	5	2	3	0	2	0

Graph 5



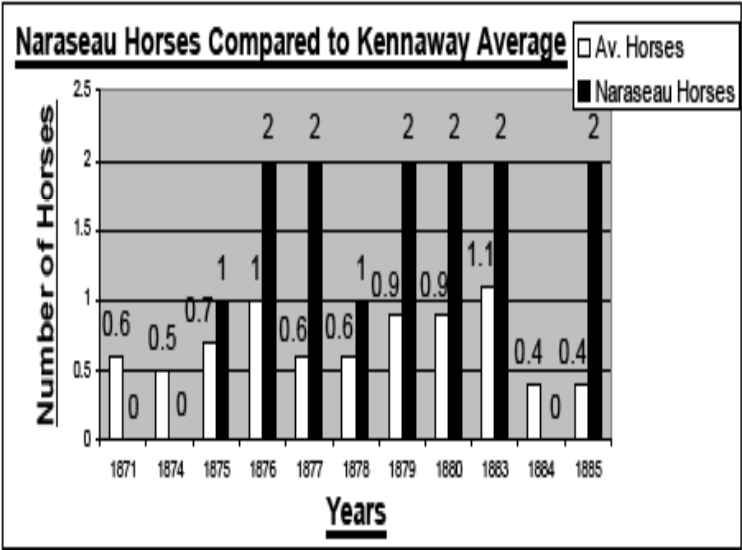
	1871	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1883	1884	1885
<u>Av.</u> <u>Sheep</u>	3	3.4	3	2.4	2.4	4.3	4.3	5.5	7.4	3.4	4.8
<u>Naraseau</u> <u>Sheep</u>	0	1	1	0	0	7	0	6	4	3	0

Graph 6



	1871	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1883	1884	1885
Av. Cattle	1.8	3.8	2.5	1.9	2.9	3.1	2.7	3.7	4	3.8	6
Naraseau Cattle	0	8	7	6	6	4	4	5	6	6	7

Graph 7



	1871	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1883	1884	1885
<u>Av.</u> <u>Horses</u>	0.6	0.5	0.7	1	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.4	0.4
<u>Naraseau</u> <u>Horses</u>	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	0	2

Notes

1. I am hesitantly using the word "frontier," with the awareness that this term has been one that perpetuates colonial violence to Indigenous Peoples. Dwayne Donald (Papaschase Cree), for example, argues that "Historical, social, and cultural understandings of the concepts... of frontier have become conflated with ways of organizing and separating people according to race, culture, and civilization. The enduring message is that Aboriginal peoples and Canadians occupy separate realities." Donald, D. (2009). "Forts, Curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining Decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian Relations in Educational Contexts," *First Nations Perspectives* 2(1), p. 4.
2. Just as in the term "Frontier," I use the word "pioneer" here fully cognizant of the colonial baggage it implies. Long before settlers of European descent "domesticated" Ontario's ancient lands, Indigenous Peoples lived on and with the land in a myriad of ways. To imply that settlers of European descent were the first to "pioneer" Ontario's land overlooks the many generations of peoples who came before, during, and are still living in the area.
3. "Branch" referring to the East Branch of the Madawaska River, the waterways that connected Benoir's Lake to the Ottawa River.
4. 1871-1903 Tax Assessment Registers, s.v. "Harcourt Township," Municipality of Dysart et. al., Haliburton County, Ontario.

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