



# ALGOMA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO P6A 2G4 (705) 949-2301

November 13, 1980

Dear

This past summer Dr. Bannerman of the Philosophy Department and myself had the good fortune to supervise the efforts of four young people engaged in a research project made possible by a grant from the Summer Youth Employment Programme.

The Shingwauk Project, named after the old Chief whose example has inspired generations of educators and students, involved one non-Native and three Native students (all local residents, one each from Sault College, Algoma University College, and two Southern Ontario Colleges) working together to research and produce the enclosed booklet. Although substantially more could and should be done, we were very pleased with their accomplishment, especially as the Project ran a mere eight weeks. Indeed, we were thrilled at the enthusiasm for cross-cultural understanding that developed through their learning experience. Hopefully, as a result of their efforts, you also will share in the joy of their discovery.

Pleased to be able to present this little booklet to you, we wish you to know that your commitment to the educational and cultural development of our region, and to the unique cross-cultural heritage of Algoma University College, is profoundly appreciated. Like our city of Sault Ste. Marie, our College is the culmination of the histories of two peoples, and with encouragement and good fortune it will be able to fulfil its destiny in preserving the old while nurturing the new heritage forming in the heart of this continent.

Yours sincerely,

DAJ:lg

Enclosure

Donald A. Jackson  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Political Science

## INTRODUCTION

Shingwauk Hall, the building and institution located at 1520 Queen St. East on the St. Mary's River, is one of the oldest landmarks of Sault Ste. Marie.

With the assistance of a grant provided by Summer Youth Employment, it was possible to create this booklet.

The history and activities associated with Shingwauk Hall were gathered in order that you, the public, may become more aware of the vast history and tradition represented by the Shingwauk building and site.

It is with this in mind that the following information is happily presented.

## DEAR READER:

It is to be noted that all information through personal interviews has been quoted with the permission of the persons involved. Their identity has not been disclosed for personal reasons. The information presented attempts to recreate the past events of Shingwauk Hall and interpret them as truthfully as possible. We hope that this booklet will contribute to public enlightenment and will enhance public awareness of the trials that native people have faced in their struggle to maintain their cultural, philosophic, and spiritual identities.

Robin Lesage

Madge Sanderson

Randy Small

Valerie Plain

## MANY THANKS TO:

Algoma District Synod, Anglican Church of Canada

Algoma University College

Batchawana and Garden River Band Offices

Former students of Shingwauk Hall

Sault Ste. Marie Historical Society

Summer Youth Employment Program

The Sault Star

And all others that helped (you know who you are)

## SHINGWAUK HALL

### A HISTORY

Shingwauk Hall was first established in 1873 as a residential school for native children. Chief Shingwauk, the Chief of the Ojibways at Garden River, believed that the future Ojibway needed to learn the white man's academic method of education in order to survive in what was becoming a "predominately non-native world with non-native values".

His dream was to have an educational centre built for all future Ojibway children. With the combined effort of Shingwauk's sons, Augustine and Buhgwujjenene, and Rev. E. F. Wilson, this dream became a reality. A school was built at Garden River in 1873. Six days after completion, the dream was turned to ashes; the school burned to the ground. Not giving in to misfortune another school was erected at the present site overlooking the St. Mary's River.

The cornerstone for the second Shingwauk Home was laid by the Earl of Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada, in the summer of 1874. In August 1875, the new building was officially opened to fifty pupils. Sixty years later this building was demolished and a third building was erected directly behind the old one. This was the home of the students until 1970. It now houses Algoma University College.

## CHIEF SHINGWAUK

According to historian Henry Schoolcraft, "Chief Shingwauk stood approximately five feet ten inches tall, with a stout, well-set frame. He had an intelligent eye, and countenance." Shingwauk had formerly practised the ceremonies of the Meda, or native religion, but resigned from them around 1830. He was well experienced in the system of native picture-writing and mnemonics.

Shingwauk was born in 1773. Great things were expected of him when he was a young lad. They say that when he was 14 or 15 he fasted ten times and, both in conduct and in augury, showed himself to have the qualities of a chief.

Shingwauk and his band were loyal to King George and fought along with the British army in many engagements. The Chief, being a great warrior, led his Ojibway braves to fight against the Americans alongside Techumseh and General Brock in the War of 1812. He received a medal from King George III for his participation and acts of bravery during the war. He was very well known and admired by many people.

Chief Shingwauk represented the Ojibways in signing the Robinson-Huron Treaty in 1850. This treaty set aside the Garden River Reserve for the Ojibways. Shingwauk had the authority to draw up deeds and perform other legal for-

malities. Therefore his name also appears on other treaties such as the Treaty of St. Mary in 1820. This treaty was arranged with Governor Cass of Michigan.

Pictured at right:  
Chief Shingwauk (centre)  
with an Indian agent who  
was the interpreter  
(left) and Nabahnagoojing  
(right) Chief of the  
Batchewana Band.

Chief Shingwauk wanted his people to learn how to read and write the English language. He wanted a school for his people that would educate them, yet allow them to retain their culture. In 1832 Chief Shingwauk snowshoed to York (Toronto) to ask the Governor of upper Canada for a teacher for his people. His two oldest sons, Augustin and Buhgwujjenene, were the ones responsible for carrying out their father's dream.

Christianity became an important part of Shingwauk's life. Before he died in 1854 he was Christened in the Anglican Church. He had four wives and nine children. After his adoption of the Christian way of life he was married to his fourth wife by the Church.

## AUGUSTIN SHINGWAUK

Chief Augustin Shingwauk, son of Chief Shingwauk and elder brother of Buhgwujjenene, succeeded his father as Chief in 1854. Some forty years after his father's journey to southern Ontario Augustin made a similar trip; to ask for a teacher for his people's children. This trip proved fruitful, for in 1871 Rev. E. F. Wilson was appointed missionary and educator for the area. Later that year Augustin and Wilson travelled together to southern Ontario to raise funds for the construction of a residential school for native children. The money that was raised contributed to the cost of building the original school at Garden River.

Augustin advocated academic education for native children because he knew that it would be necessary for their future role in maintaining native identity and heritage during a time of white political, economic and cultural domination. Unfortunately, the government policy at the time endorsed the integration and assimilation of the native people into the dominant white Christian society. This was enforced by the educators who firmly believed that they were "civilizing these pagans".

## CHIEF BUHWUJJENENE

Buhwujjenene was the last hereditary Indian Chief at Garden River. He was the second oldest son of Chief Shingwauk, and a warrior also. Unlike his father, he did not have the opportunity to be a warrior in the physical sense. But he carried on the tradition of fighting for peace and justice for his people.

In 1874 Buhwujjenene travelled throughout England with Reverend E. F. Wilson and spoke at many engagements. Together they raised funds for a new Shingwauk Hall. Many of the people who listened to Buhwujjenene's speeches were impressed with his eloquence and vast knowledge. [And they is this knew that he had had no formal education.? a sentence] It was said of him: "He is a man of remarkable intelligence; he has a fine countenance, a pleasing manner, affiable address, and entertaining powers of conversation. He has a wonderful memory, and almost unlimited stock of native folk-lore at the end of his tongue, and relates interesting incidents of his long and eventful life." Buhwujjenene's tour was very successful.

## REVEREND E. F. WILSON

Edward Francis Wilson was born in the Islington borough of London, England in 1844. His family were reform minded evangelicals, and he too imbibed that spirit. Having come to Canada to farm, he had the occasion to visit an Indian reservation in southern Ontario (Sarnia). He then decided that "God had called him here to minister to the Ojibways". Wilson was ordained in the Church of England in 1867.

While visiting Reverend J. Chance, minister at Garden River, Wilson became interested in Chief Shingwauk and the northern Ontario Ojibways. When Chance was transferred Augustin Shingwauk requested that Wilson be appointed as minister to Garden River. He took up his post in 1872 and immediately began to campaign alongside the Shingwauk brothers for funds for a residential school for native children. He remained Principal of the Shingwauk Home until 1893 when he moved to British Columbia to retire.

Most of Wilson's years as Principal were spent adhering to the philosophy that prevailed at the time. And this philosophy was "assimilation". He proclaimed to see "little good" in the ways of the Ojibway and attempted through education to change their ways. This involved creating a many-sided distance between the native students and their families.

The attempt to accomplish this was manifested in such things as the banning of the use of any native language, except for one hour a day, and the constant ingraining of Christian doctrines into the students.

In his last years at the Shingwauk, Wilson's ideas changed drastically. In The Canadian Indian, a journal he co-founded, he recommended autonomy for native people and supported the maintenance of their languages. It seems that as a result of his experience he was led to a profound change of philosophy regarding the native way of life. Having come to know and appreciate the native people he realized almost one hundred years ago that assimilation was wrong and would not work.

In any event, once begun the basic idea of the of the residential school established at Shingwauk carried on under the direction of his followers long after he was gone.

## LIFE AT SHINGWAUK

Since its inception in 1875 school life at the Shingwauk Home consisted of half a day of academic studies and the other half learning about trades. The trades taught were carpentry, shoemaking, tailoring, farming, laundry work, cooking, and general housework. These trades were considered quite important for the students to survive in the mainstream of Canadian society.

Most of the work done contributed to the upkeep of the School. The farming assisted in the feeding of the students. Carpentry proved to be helpful in maintaining the condition of Shingwauk.

In 1877 a residential school for girls was built. It was called the Wawanosh Home.

The population of Shingwauk during the first 25 years was strictly male and usually involved about 50 pupils mostly from ages 7 to 18 years. In 1911 an extension was built onto the School and the girls from Wawanosh were moved to Shingwauk Hall which brought the population to 75.

During this era there were several buildings in addition to the main Hall. These included the Principal's residence, a large building with a drill hall downstairs and classrooms upstairs, a hospital, a hospital attendant's

cottage, a carpenter's shop, farmer's cottage, shoe shop, barns, stables, and various other minor buildings.

In 1934 a new building was constructed behind the old Hall as it was believed that the interior of the old School was beyond repair. It was completed in 1935, housed 140 students, and is the main building still standing on the site today. Most of the other buildings with the exception of the Chapel (the Bishop Fauquier Memorial Chapel) and a few other minor buildings, were since destroyed.

During this later stage of Shingwauk's history as a residential school both academic studies and trades were taught. The activities for the children however, increasingly became similar to those of the regular city schools. There were Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, a choir, concerts and parties. The staff were still happy when the native children were like white children. It even became the practice to permit the boys and girls who passed their entrance to attend the Technical School or Collegiate Institute. In 1941 there were 17 students attending.

Until 1951 all students boarded at Shingwauk Hall. During the next and final 19 years of its existence as a residential school, its character as a school changed greatly. First of all, the farm was eliminated. This must have been a drastic change after many years of depending on the garden for much of the food. Also, the government took on more of the operating expenses of the School. In keeping with the policy of assimilation and integration developed by the federal government, the students were gradually placed into the public school system. Students attending the secondary schools were the first to be integrated. They remained living at the Shingwauk but attended their classes at the various high schools in the city.

With the construction of the Anna McCrea school in 1956 the grade seven and eight students were placed in the grade schools. The grade four, five, and six students followed them the next year. And thus the students also began to attend church and movies downtown, and to participate in local school sports. In addition, they no longer had to wear uniforms.

By 1961 all of the students of Shingwauk were attending public schools. And there were 148 of them registered in five public schools. Inevitably such changes produced some tension which was felt by both the native and non-native people. It seems that coping with the changes



involved in attending the public schools during this period of transition was a difficult task for the native children.

Throughout the history of Shingwauk most of the students were from northern Ontario and northern Quebec. They arrived at the School to register during the last weeks of August and early September, and they remained until summer. Until 1950 they were not allowed to go home for Christmas. And this was for many reasons which included finances, emotions, and necessity. Many families simply did not have enough money to pay for their children's long journey home and back again. Some parents hunted and trapped in the bush all winter and would not have been able to be home to see their children in the event that they did return. Being separated from family, friends, and customary environment, they were losing their way of life. Many children felt isolation and loneliness. A trip home at Christmas was an enticement for many of them to leave their education for the security of their accustomed lifestyle.

The School offered academic advantages for the time. But many former students expressed their memories of bitterness, loneliness, hunger, and intimidation. Many felt themselves to be part of a misunderstood and exploited minority -- taken out of their environment and expected to be grateful that they were given the chance to conform to the dominant society. From this perspective Shingwauk, as well as other Indian residential schools, failed miserably.

## TRANSITION

In the early years of Shingwauk students came from Walpole Island, Sarnia, Parry Island, Kettle Point, Christian Island, and Garden River. A few students came from other provinces and from the United States as well. In the later years the majority of the students were from northern Ontario and Quebec.

School life for the students presented a traumatic change in lifestyles. For many it was their first time away from family and friends. One of their first experiences at the Shingwauk was a headshave, for males, and then a spraying with a disinfectant followed by quarantine in the infirmary. After the child was deemed to be "cleansed", he or she was given a uniform and assigned a number by which to be known. Many thought this a strange greeting.

The structure of life at the Shingwauk was based on daily routines and hourly schedules, many barely heard of on the reserves. Daily life on the reserves depended upon the weather, the season, and the need for food and work, play and enjoyment. Reserve life placed much less emphasis on such a structured environment.

The culture shock experienced by the students was one of the main factors that made some of them run away from

the School. While a few succeeded, most were caught and returned to the School. Punishment waited for the unlucky escapees. It took various forms over the years, ranging from the shaving of heads for both males and females, to strapping and isolation.

## ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF SHINGWAUK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

The administration and operation of the Shingwauk Residential School began under the auspices of the Anglican Diocese of Algoma. The first School, built at Garden River in 1872, was paid for by funds raised in Ontario and England through various members and congregations of the Church of England (Anglican Church). A campaign for new funds to construct a second building was quickly started after the shortlived existence of the original building. By 1874 sufficient funds had been raised to begin construction of a new building located at the present site of Shingwauk Hall. The Anglican Church administered the School, supplying the staff and teachers that were deemed necessary at the time. The Federal Government of Canada assisted the funding of the School on a per student basis and provided for a small percentage of the overall cost. Each year the School depended upon the contributions from their congregation members to keep the School in operation.

Sixty years later, in 1934, the School was overcrowded and dilapidated -- no place for children to be housed. Thus came an agreement between the Federal Government and the Anglican Synod. This agreement gave title of the property to the Crown on the condition that the Crown construct a

new school to be maintained as a "Residential School for Indian Children". The Church was responsible for the administration and the education which took place at the School.

All faculty and staff were hired by the Anglican Church of Canada. This procedure continued until April 1, 1969. After this date the Indian Affairs Branch of the Federal Government assumed these responsibilities regarding education. The School was formally closed at the end of the 1969-70 school year after ninety-five years of service.

## INTERVIEWS WITH FORMER STUDENTS

Shingwauk Hall was a home for many Native children from all over the Province. Some came from nearby reserves such as Garden River and from northern Michigan. Some came from as far away as Sarnia to the south and Fort George Quebec to the north. Each and every student who attended Shingwauk received a different reaction from their new home. Their feelings for this environment varied. The former students that were interviewed discussed openly what they felt and experienced at Shingwauk Indian Residential School.

"It would have been a good place to be if there was enough food given to us", said a student who attended in the earlier years of Shingwauk. "There wasn't enough food", was a familiar line with the students that were interviewed. This was most evident during the years 1895 to 1915. There were a lot of undernourished children residing at Shingwauk Hall at that time. "It was bad the way the kids were treated", said one former student.

"I think a lot of the kids were hungry, that's why they would try to run away. A lot of times the older boys would steal potatoes from the storage room and run into the bush to eat them. They would cook them but I don't know where they got their matches." Another alumnus tells the story of crawling out of third storey windows at night and

shinnying down a rope to steal lard and bread.

"Parents could send money if they had it and we could draw it out on Saturdays. One of the most popular purchases was a loaf of bread. Candy wasn't a big deal. Bread lasted longer."

One story was related of a mother from the James Bay area sending down a beaver to her daughter. Wrapped in oil skin the beaver was heated over the radiator for a day. After the day's walk and trips to the store for bread, the whole dormitory feasted.

"We were up at seven and had porridge every morning. You knew what meal you would have every day of every week." A student who had attended Shingwauk thirty years before this time also remembers porridge every morning.

"During the war years we got Crisco with bread and the students that were liked by the bread slicer got the big slices of bread", said a former student from Michigan. "You got a good meal for that time. It was a good meal considering those years." "Not the best but you got your vitamins."

Memories from the early years are bitter. "I got strapped for being in a fight with another student and I had a sore back for a couple of days. I had scars from being hit with a rawhide strap, and I'll always remember

that as long as I live."

The years 1915 to 1935 brought a decrease in the harsh treatment of the children at Shingwauk but the conditions were by no means acceptable to former students. "Shingwauk Home was not all that rosy, friendly and comfortable as it is purported to be."

It was lonely for children taken from their parents for nine months of the year. "We went as families but we didn't stay together. We were split into age groups and didn't see our sisters and brothers that much except in winter out at the skating rink." Another unhappy memory of many is that of being punished for speaking anything but English. "There were many different languages and dialects. A group from one area would go off together and talk. The ones who could speak Indian spoke it, but if they got caught they got punished."

The next thirty-five years (1935-1970) was the period that finally got some form of positive reaction from the students. "It was fun to go to school with a lot of other kids from different places. It was also fun to live together and do things together like playing ball, hockey, building things and working in the garden." This statement would seem to suggest that times had changed. By this time the rest of the world was growing larger and times were changing.

New people in charge were of a different generation which caused a slight change in the everyday life of a student at the Singwauk School.

Organizations at the School included Boy Scouts, Brownies and Guides, music lessons and choir etc. "We all tried out for choir", remembers a female alumnus. In winter there was an ice rink for hockey. It was the social centre of the School through the winter months. "You met your brothers and sisters, and your friends out at the rink. The lucky ones were those with the skates."

A former student explained that the area behind the School where now are the Anna McCrea and Sir James Dunn schools and Shannon Road subdivision was all bush until the 1950's. In spring and fall there were berries and nuts to pick for treats. Boys hunted rabbit and fished in the creek for chub and bass. In winter they skated and slid down the hills. It was also common to sneak down to the St. Mary's River for a swim or to snare fish.

Sometimes students went downtown to a movie or off to do odd jobs for people who lived nearby. And, "come hell or high water we went for a walk every day. There must have been 100 girls. We all walked. Everyone knew who you were -- all dressed the same."

"Life was very structured. It had to be to maintain discipline. Children could be disciplined in those days." Yet not all students could take the structured environment. A former student tells of looking forward to afternoons when he could work out in the garden. "My letters were lying on the bed and had been opened before I got to read them", remarked one student. (Ministers or whoever had authority apparently opened personal letters which were addressed to the students.) Many would run away. "Kids just ran. They didn't go home. They just wanted to be free. Two girls I knew ran downtown. They knew they would get caught." As punishment, "they grounded you or gave you the strap." For years heads were shaved when girls were caught running away. "It really branded them. You didn't want to look at them. It was hard on everybody." One man sums it up this way. "Running away didn't do no good. You just had to go right back."

"The teachers weren't like today, not buddy buddy with the students. They weren't involved with your personal life." "If you had a problem you would keep it to yourself or tell your best friend because it is hard to keep a secret and it would be all over the school. You got strength from knowing you had a family back home."

"You'd look forward for 9 months to coming out. Then you'd be so happy to be home, but you just couldn't fit." We were outsiders to the kids at home. They had their own groups and completely different ways."

Could something like Shingwauk work for Native students today? Those interviewed thought not. "It worked for me, my father, and my grandfather, but it would not work for my children." "These days everything is open." "Education should be back on the reserves. Teachers today need empathy and native background, and then with proper training will be able to change education for Native children."

"Looking back on it, yes I did enjoy it. I got an education, learned right from wrong, the values of life and freedom."

"We were prepared academically although not able to communicate. Our horizons were limited in those days."

"You remember the good things, your good learning experiences, your good friends."

"I don't think I'd give up the experience. I think it has prepared me for a lot of things -- given me a broader outlook."

. . . "But I haven't been back since it turned into a College. I wouldn't know my way around."

## KEEWATINUNG INSTITUTE

After the closure of the Shingwauk School in 1970, the Keewatinung Institute was founded by a group of Ojibway, Cree, Odaw, and Potawatomi from Sault Ste. Marie and north to James Bay, interested in maintaining a sense of Native education. This was a time of resurgent interest and pride of Native people in their culture and traditions. To mend a society that had been torn by centuries of European intervention it would be necessary to look back to old culture and tradition. Yet because Native people were living in the 20th century, a time of sophisticated technology, the two worlds must be put together in a positive manner. The Keewatinung Institute was seen as a possible catalyst to bring together two cultures which in their present forms were antithetical.

Sault Ste. Marie was a natural location for the Institute since "Gitchi Bawating" (Great Rapids in the Ojibway language) was traditionally a gathering place for many of the tribes surrounding the Great Lakes and a major link in the European settlement of the Americas.

In 1970 Algoma University College was making plans to re-locate to the vacant Shingwauk Hall. Keewatinung asked that it be allowed to share quarters in the historic centre. This was achieved.

Through its affiliation with an accredited university the long journey of cross-cultural dialogue and understanding could hopefully begin at the topmost of educational institutions. Native people could write a different history through a joint system of education. Housed with the University the Institute lent staff to assist instructors in courses of Native content. "Ethnology of Native People" was financed by the University and conducted by the Institute as a full credit course. Many Native people were enrolled in university programmes.

For the Native community the Institute ran language and craft programmes, audio-visual workshops and seminars on Native culture, such as the Indian Ecumenical Conference conducted by elders from across Canada and the United States. Young people learned traditional survival in wilderness experiences.

The meaning of the Ojibway name for the Institute sums up the past and points the way to the future. "Keewatinung", the direction North, is the last direction in the turning of the sacred pipe. Literally it means "to go home". It is the direction to which bodies of native people were pointed before their journey to the afterlife. "Keewatinung" signifies winter and old age -- white snow and the wisdom of grandparents. The Keewatinung Institute reminded Native people that "to go home" as a people they

must look to the path of their ancestors and to the path of future generations. And during the four years that the Institute was active the Native people involved in its community became aware that they could survive. Furthermore they could survive as they as Natives defined survival.

## WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THIS LAND

I feel that I should tell you  
About the people of this land  
I ask you please to listen  
Understand it if you can

Our life blood is the rivers  
Our flesh and bone the sod  
We are the people of this earth  
Placed here by Our God

You came with your gilded bible  
Your god you said to trust  
We learned your hymns of praise  
While his image turned to rust

You brought us books and learning  
You said we needed schools  
We learned to read and cypher  
Now we're educated fools

You brought us beef and bacon  
You drove the deer away  
Today we cash our welfare cheques  
And hunt at the Hudson's Bay

We used to have our spirits  
They were always here before  
But now we buy our spirits  
At the local liquor store

You burned our shaking tent  
Put a phone upon our wall  
And charge outrageous prices  
For a long-distance call

We knew about the universe  
The animals, earth and trees  
While you were telling people  
That the moon was made of cheese

We had our herbs and medicines  
We cured with drum and song  
You lock us up in hospitals  
And try to guess what's wrong

You said it was the devil  
He never did such good  
When you crucified your God  
I guess you never understood



You crawled from out your caves  
Ten thousand years or more  
We were cultivating corn  
Twenty thousand years before

You dammed up all our rivers  
Run its power in little wires  
We told you the earth had power  
You thought that we were liars

We shared this entire land  
A truly democratic place  
You fenced it back and forth  
And called it real estate

We said this earth was our mother  
Our mother could not be sold  
But each of you a Judas  
With thirty pieces of gold

You killed and buried Jesus  
He arose and left this place  
I guess I really can't blame him  
When I think of this human race

You took away our tipis  
Outlawed our right to roam  
You built us all new houses  
But you took away our homes

You shared with us your blankets  
They were filled with your disease  
Annihilating our people  
The way you're cutting down our trees

You brought war and destruction  
You murdered your fellow man  
We spoke of life and sharing  
Now you try that if you can

We spoke of co-existence  
The way all people should  
But only your vengeful God  
And only your laws were good

Perhaps there's still a chance  
I don't speak of assimilation  
For us all to co-exist  
As unique and growing nations

I feel that I have told you  
About the people of this land  
I hope you tried to listen  
I hope you tried to understand

Our life blood is its rivers  
Our flesh and bone the sod  
We are still the people of this earth  
Placed here by OUR God

Roland J. Nadjiwon  
May 1979