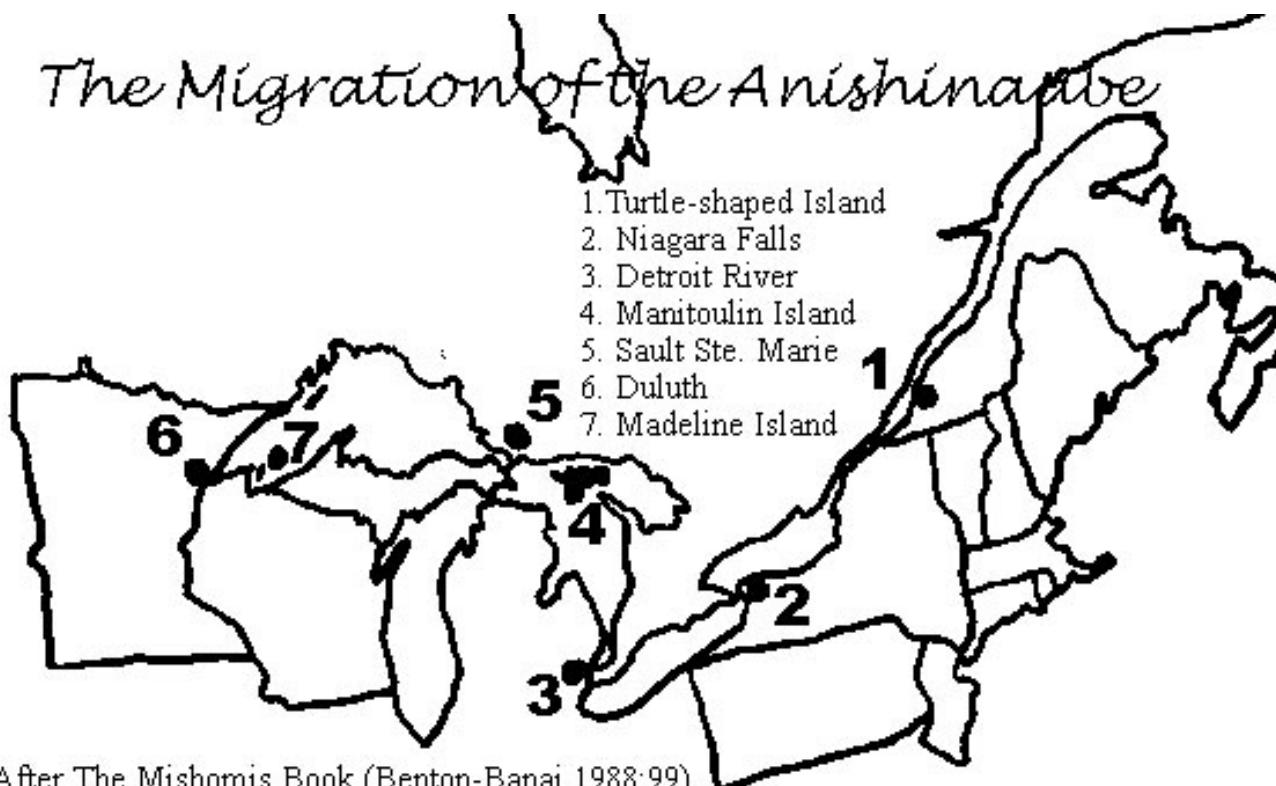


# The Migration of the Anishinaabe



After The Mishomis Book (Benton-Banai 1988:99).

According to their tradition, and from recordings in birch bark scrolls, many Ojibwe came from the eastern areas of North America, or Turtle Island, and from along the east coast. They traded widely across the continent for thousands of years and knew of the canoe routes west and a land route to the west coast. However the identification of the Ojibwe as a culture may only have occurred as a response to contact with Europeans. The Europeans would have preferred to deal with bounded groups. According to the oral history, seven great miigis radiant/iridescent beings appeared to the peoples in the Waabanakiing Land of the Dawn, i.e. Eastern Land to teach the peoples of the mide way of life. However, one of the seven great miigis beings was too spiritually powerful and killed the peoples in the Waabanakiing when the people were in its presence. The six great miigis beings remained to teach while the one returned into the ocean. The six great miigis beings then established doodem clans for the peoples in the east. Of these doodem, the five original Anishinaabe doodem were the Wawaazisii Bullhead, Baswenaazhi Echo-maker, i.e., Crane, Aan'aawen Pintail Duck, Nooke Tender, i.e., Bear and Moozoonsii Little Moose, then these six miigis beings returned into the ocean as well. If the seventh miigis being stayed, it would have established the Thunderbird doodem.

At a later time, one of these miigis beings appeared in a vision to relate a prophecy. The prophecy stated that if more of the Anishinaabeg did not move further west, they would not be able to keep their traditional ways alive because of the many new settlements and European immigrants that would arrive soon in the east. Their migration path would be symbolized by a

series of smaller Turtle Islands, which was confirmed with miigis shells i.e., cowry shells. After receiving assurance from their "Allied Brothers" i.e., Mi'kmaq and "Father" i.e., Abnaki of their safety in having many more of the Anishinaabeg move inland, they advanced along the St. Lawrence River to the Ottawa River to Lake Nipissing, and then to the Great Lakes. First of these smaller Turtle Islands was Mooniyaa, which Mooniyaang Montreal, Quebec now stands. The "second stopping place" was in the vicinity of the Wayaanag-gakaabikaa Concave Waterfalls, i.e. Niagara Falls. At their "third stopping place" near the present-day city of Detroit, Michigan, the Anishinaabeg divided into six divisions, of which the Ojibwe was one of these six. The first significant new Ojibwe culture-centre was their "fourth stopping place" on Manitoulin Island. Their first new political-centre was referred as their "fifth stopping place", in their present country at Baawiting Sault Ste. Marie.

Continuing their westward expansion, the Ojibwe divided into the "northern branch" following the north shore of Lake Superior, and "southern branch" following the south shore of the same lake. In their expansion westward, the "northern branch" divided into a "westerly group" and a "southerly group". The "southern branch" and the "southerly group" of the "northern branch" came together at their "sixth stopping place" on Spirit Island located in the St. Louis River estuary of Duluth/Superior region where the people were directed by the miigis being in a vision to go to the "place where there is food i.e. wild rice upon the waters." Their second major settlement, referred as their "seventh stopping place", was at Shaugawaumikong or Zhaagawaamikong, French, Chequamegon on the southern shore of Lake Superior, near the present La Pointe near Bayfield, Wisconsin. The "westerly group" of the "northern branch" continued their westward expansion along the Rainy River, Red River of the North, and across the northern Great Plains until reaching the Pacific Northwest. Along their migration to the west they came across many miigis, or cowry shells, as told in the prophecy.

