

# Indigenous Civilizations of Flamborough

This handout was created using information from Phil Bellfy's *Three Fires Unity: The Anishinaabeg of the Lake Huron Borderlands* (University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

- The first evidence of human occupation in the Lake Huron Borderlands dates to 7000-6000 B.C.E. and was found on what is now called Manitoulin Island.
- Bellfy identifies two distinct groups in his book – one civilization that dates from 7000 to 3000 B.C.E. and another that dates from 4000 to 1500 B.C.E.

## Neutral Nation

- A name of this civilization has been lost, but it is often identified as “Attawandaron Nation” which is the name the Wendat (Huron) Confederacy used for them which meant “*they are those whose language is awry.*”
- The “Neutral” moniker was applied by the French after they observed that, rather than participate in conflicts between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Huron, they remained neutral.
- The Neutral Nation’s language was related to those spoken by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy<sup>1</sup> and Wendat (Huron) Confederacy.

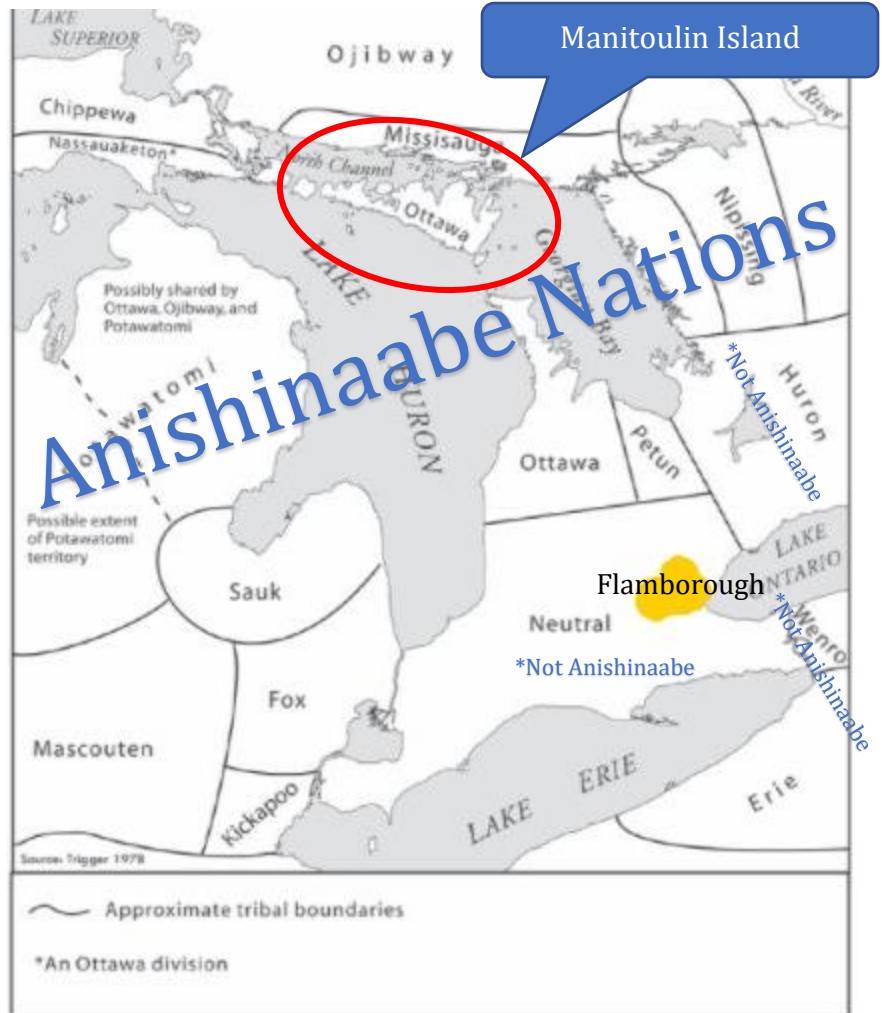
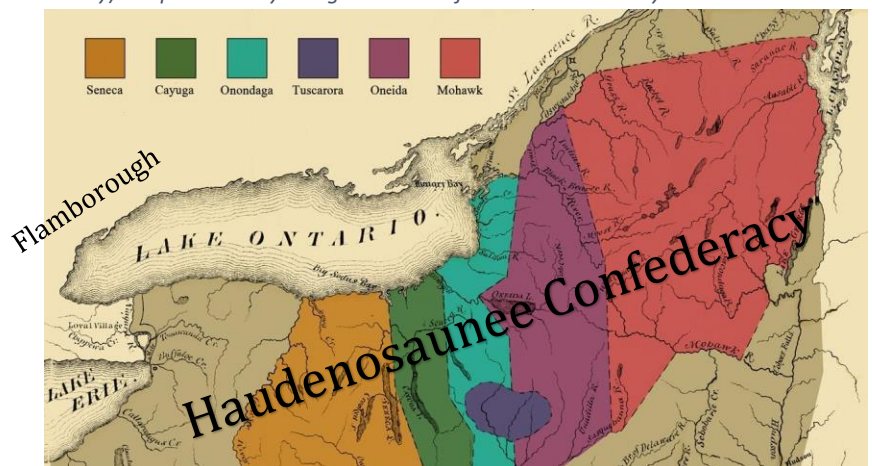
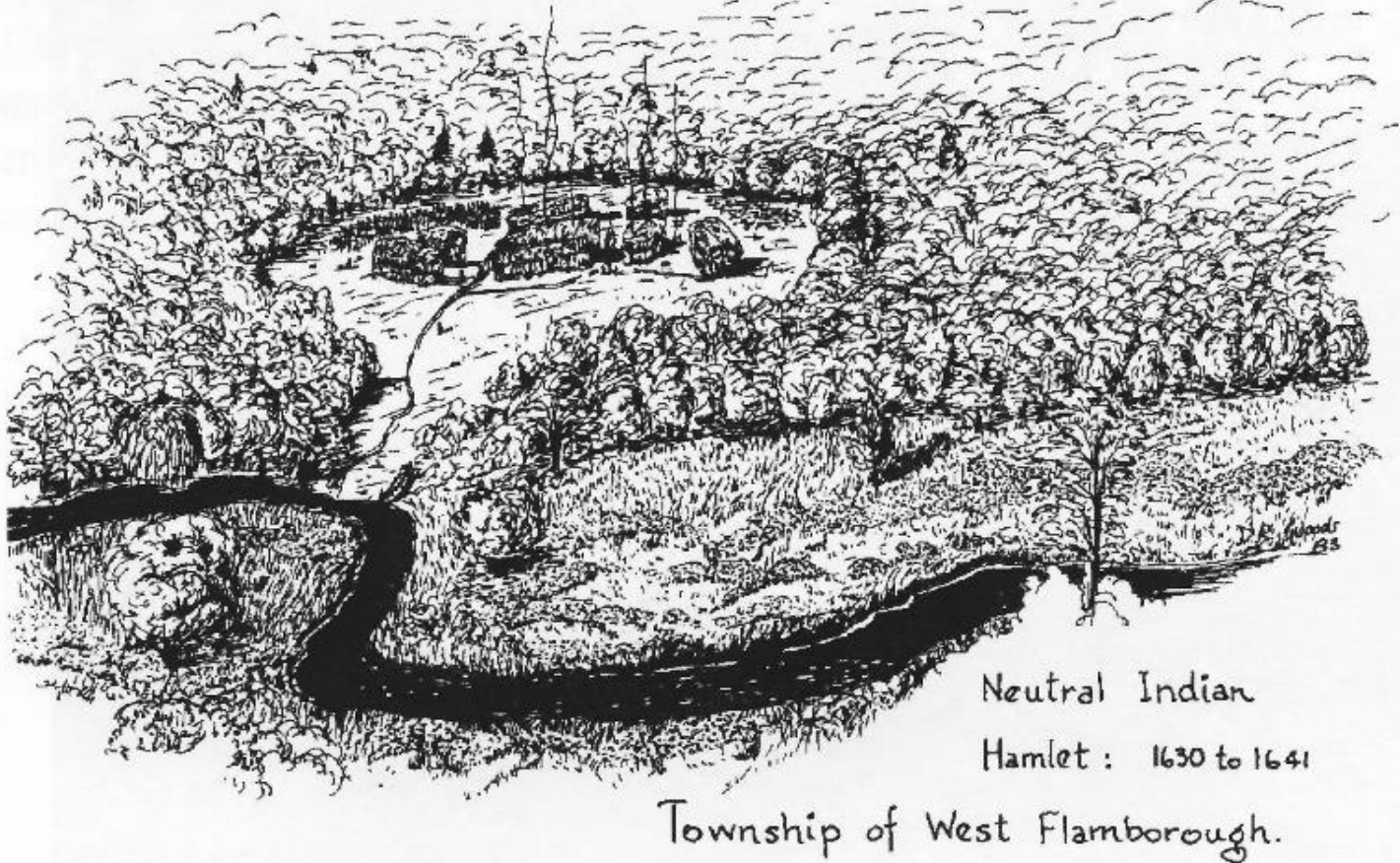


Figure 1. The Lake Huron Borderlands at the time of contact with Europeans (17<sup>th</sup> century). Map created by Margaret Pearce for "Three Fires Unity."



<sup>1</sup> The Tuscarora Nation joined the Confederacy in 1720. While the Haudenosaunee Confederacy is often referred to as the “Six Nations,” the modern confederacy includes more nations. Learn more by visiting the Woodland Cultural Centre at Six Nations of the Grand River.



**Indigenous Sites in North Flamborough**

- This hand-drawn map appears in Paul Anthony Lennox’s 1977 McMaster University thesis *The Hamilton Site: A Late Historic Neutral Town*. The map highlights the various Neutral Nation sites located in West Flamborough and Beverly.

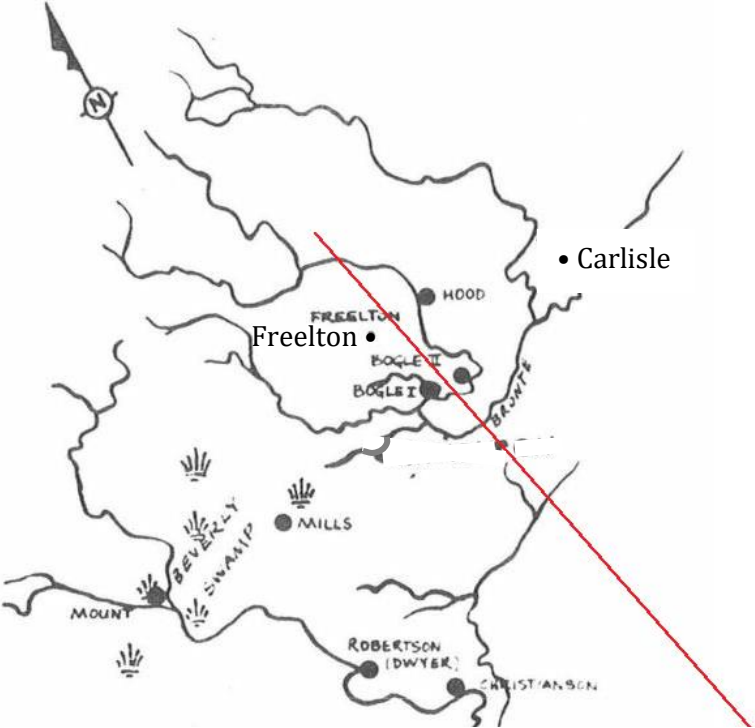


Figure 2. Paul Anthony Lennox’s 1977 map of the region surrounding Frelton and Carlisle. The red line shows the approximate location of Highway Six (and the West & East Flamborough border).

- Commenting specifically on the Hamilton Site, a 6-acre Indigenous community located on the south half of Lot 5, Concession VIII, in the Township of West Flamborough, Lennox wrote:

*The foregoing analysis has indicated that the Hamilton site is a large double-palisaded late history Neutral town which probably formed the capital of a northern tribal tier of history Neutral settlements. The late date of its occupation is indicated by glass bead serration, and the possibility exists that it was one of the eighteen settlements visited by the Jesuit missionaries, Breb uf and Chaumonot, in the winter of 1640-41. Our best dating estimate for Hamilton [archeological site] falls between 1638 to 1651 when the Neutral were dispersed from their homeland by [the Haudenosaunee Confederacy].<sup>2</sup>*

- In 1951, Carlisle's Jack Bennett was clearing 50 acres of pasture farm on the 8<sup>th</sup> Concession, when he struck black earth. Discovering pottery shards, flint stones and an anvil, Bennett contacted Professor Bell of McMaster University.
- Ten years later, after excavations on the site, it was determined that it was the most westerly site of the Neutral Nation, dating back to 1200 CE. Since then, other important sites have been discovered in the area, including the "Gunby Site" 1 kilometre down the road:

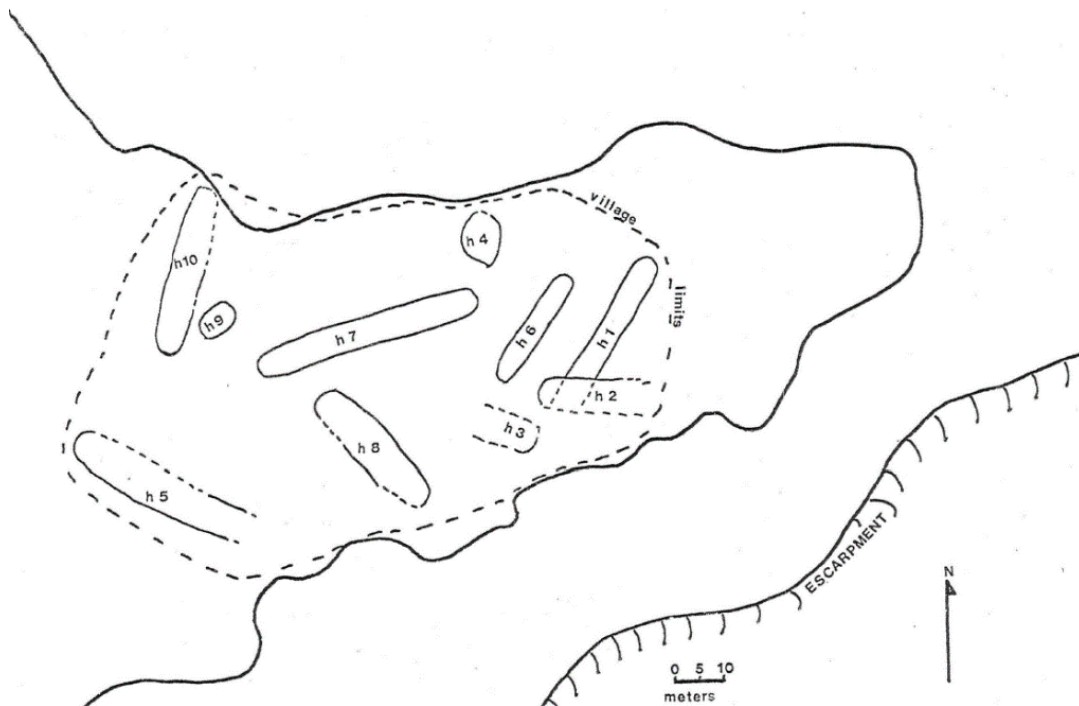


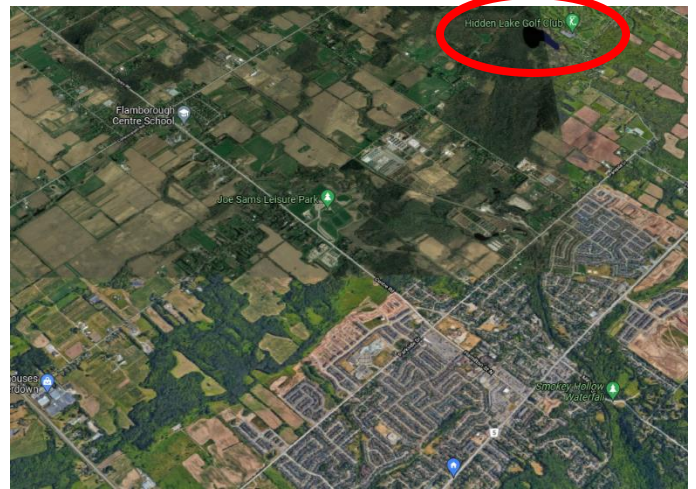
Figure 3. A 1979 map of a Neutral community (called the "Gunby Site") drawn by Robert John Rozel.

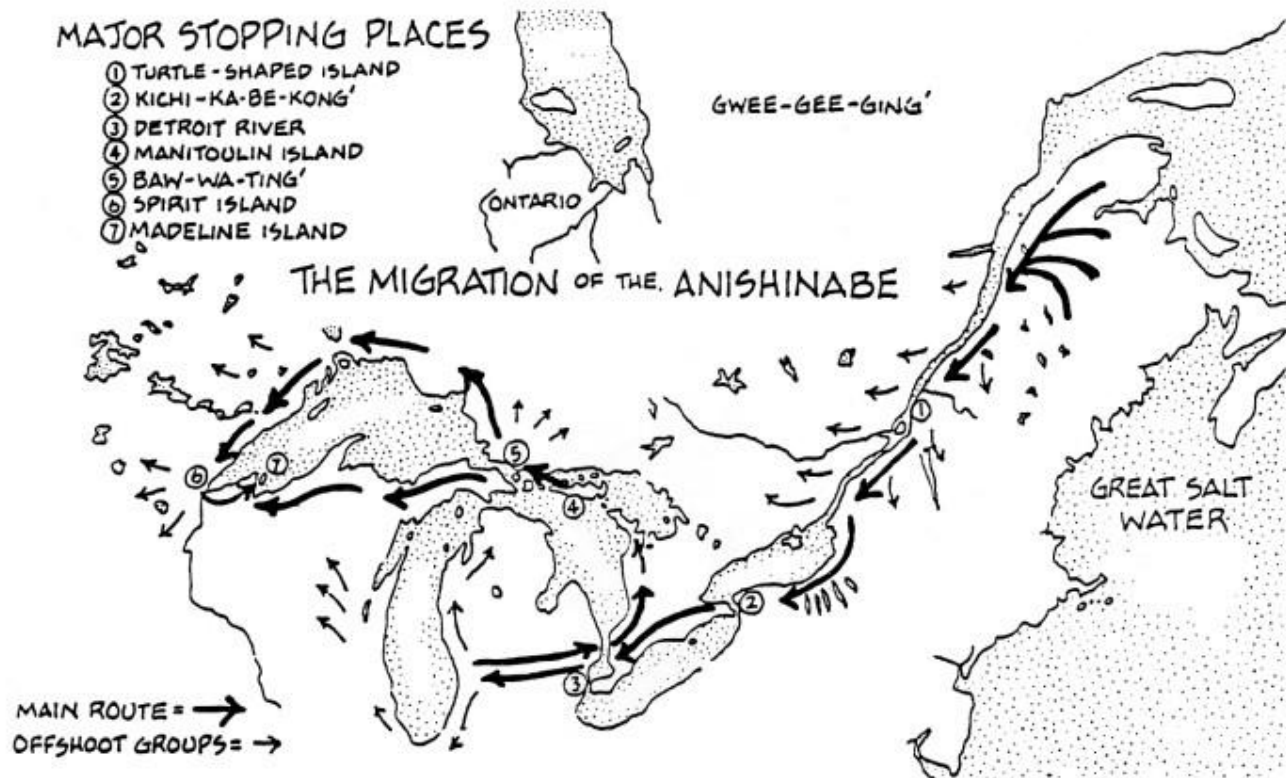
<sup>2</sup> Lennox, Paul Anthony. *The Hamilton Site: A Late Historic Neutral Town*. BA Thesis. McMaster University, 1977.

- Lake Medad (northwest of Waterdown – where Hidden Lake G & CC is located) is an important Indigenous Site where numerous artifacts have been uncovered.



Clay pipe (ca. 1620-1650) found at Lake Medad around 1868-1893 and obtained by Waterdown's Dr. John Owen McGregor in 1893.





Source:

\*Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: Voice of the Ojibway*, Indian Country Press, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1979, pp. 94-102.

### **Anishinaabe = People (Information from Phil Bellfy's *Three Fires Unity*)**

- According to Anishinaabeg oral tradition, they had once lived on the Atlantic shore and then migrated westward to the Great Lakes Region around the 14th century.
- Among the Anishinaabeg, every person had a belief in individual liberty.
- Individual members of communities could not be compelled to do the bidding of any “chief.” (The term and concept of “chief” is a European invention, created to fit their preconceived notions of how they thought societies must function).
- “In contrast to the rigid, gender-based distribution of political (and social) power in European society, Anishinaabeg society was decidedly egalitarian.”
  - Instead of designating a principal male at the head of their political and social structures, experienced members of the community (regardless of gender, or sexual identity) would provide leadership in a variety of roles to suit specific situations. The community members would only follow these individuals in leadership roles only as long as they inspired confidence, or a situation required them to.

The concept of individual liberty was somewhat mirrored within the community as a whole. The Anishnaabeg lived most of the year in small, semi-autonomous units, returning to central locations at various times of the year as social and subsistence demands warranted. These semi-autonomous communities were closely connected to others through marriage, and cooperation and unselfish hospitality were the ruling forces in community relations. These units could be reduced to autonomous family units, and these separate, or individual families (or larger “bands” of families) would, through traditional custom, return to the same areas for hunting, fishing, gathering, etc., year after year, although the concept of land “ownership” as the Europeans conceived of it was completely foreign to the Anishnaabeg. It isn’t difficult to see that a political philosophy that embodies individual liberty and community autonomy faces certain disadvantages when faced with the monolithic concepts of “The British Empire” or the white Americans’ self-proclaimed “Manifest Destiny.” These disadvantages will be made evident as this study unfolds.

*Section from “A Brief Ethnography of the Anishinaabe” in Phil Bellfy’s “Three Fires Unity,” Page 15*