THE PATH OF THE WIND:
AN INSTRUMENTAL BRIDGE ACROSS CULTURES
THROUGH THE NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE

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ABSTRACT

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There are cultural differences between Native American and non-Native people in regards to education methods, history, folklore and ceremonies. The Native American flute, with its modern adaptations, has helped bridge some of these differences. In this thesis, I describe the modern musical aspects of the Native American flute, and why these characteristics were a key reason Bemidji State University chose this flute as a gift to the Leech Lake Tribal College as a symbol of their strong, continuing, and mutually beneficial relationship.

I research the history of Ojibwe education, the gifting discourse, and Ojibwe cultural gifting to set the foundation of my thesis. I then proceed to express the thoughts of key individuals involved in the particular gifting event. Last, I discuss music books/packets to further demonstrate how the Native American flute fits into both Native American and Western culture.

The research obtained expresses how Ojibwe traditions are still alive and important to the culture, but also shows that teachings of music are linked to Western methods including pitches, Western notation, and repertoire. The flute is also tied to Western culture through its ability to be played alongside Western instruments. These examples validate how the flute was the perfect gift to express healing, acceptance, and a bonding of Native and non-Native people in education.

My findings indicate that the gifting ceremony that took place between BSU and the LLTC was a rectifying moment between Native American and Western cultures. Gifting is a way to build social bonds, and therefore the gift of the flute was an expression of support for both cultures working together rather than one culture oppressing the other. This thesis illustrates that

in the gifting discourse, interdisciplinary research is needed in the disciplines of ethnomusicology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and education.

I dedicate this thesis to my teacher, mentor, and good friend Jon Romer who first inspired me in the ways of the Native American flute and strengthened my appreciation for cultural music.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

The origin of my project occurred shortly after graduating with my Bachelor's degree from Bemidji State University of Bemidji, Minnesota in the spring of 2010. Jon Romer, my Native American flute instructor, mentor, and good friend, was the first to speak to me regarding a gifting situation between Bemidji State University and the Leech Lake Tribal College. At the time, I did not know it was going to become my thesis project. During my studies at Bowling Green State University, I continued to refer back to the story of the Native American flute being used as a gift between the two colleges. My love for the Native American flute, as well as my belief in education, caused me to pursue this story further, and it finally became my thesis project.

Traditionally, Ojibwe children were brought up in a community environment.[1] In addition to parents, other members of the tribe were instrumental in contributing to the education of the children including the teaching of cultural practices. However, inter-cultural influences have impacted this system considerably. Of significant influence were the boarding schools. The boarding schools separated Ojibwe children from their family and tribe, forbade them to speak their language or participate in their traditional cultural practices. This loss of language and culture continues to be of vital concern. Tribal colleges began as a means of overcoming these wounds from the past and restoring Ojibwe culture and language.

The Leech Lake Tribal College of Cass Lake, Minnesota is one such effort. Attaining accreditation was an essential step in this journey. The LLTC turned to Bemidji State University for assistance, because BSU has had a longstanding reputation for supporting Native American

[1] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 77.

education. As a symbol of this partnership and in celebration of the LLTC's new facility as well as anticipated accreditation, on September 14, 2005 a gifting ceremony took place between the LLTC and BSU. A Native American flute was chosen as the gift to commemorate this event.

The gifting of the modern Native American flute from Bemidji State University to the Leech Lake Tribal College was a rectifying act for three reasons: 1) the gifting of the flute takes place in an educational context and redresses the wrongs in historical education; 2) gifting is a part of Ojibwe culture and has been used in negotiations with those outside of the culture; and 3) the modern Native American flute is both tribal and cross-cultural by being Pan-Native, having music with Native American roots and from other cultures, and has meanings specific to Ojibwe culture. This allows the flute to have cross-cultural practices.

In this thesis, I describe the modern musical aspects of the Native American flute, and why these characteristics are a key reason Bemidji State University gave this flute to the Leech Lake Tribal College, as a symbol of their strong, continuing, and mutually beneficial relationship. This area of study allows for the field of ethnomusicology to be an asset to the fields of anthropology, sociology, and psychology in the gifting discourse. It considers how a cultural musical artifact and its music were key to building a social bond.

Methodology

In my research, I have discovered studies of Ojibwe culture, history, and gifting, as well as collected pedagogical material on the modern Native American flute. Using a network of consultants I have been building since 2010, I gathered important information through interviews with Native and non-Native experts regarding the gifting tradition in general, and also specifically about the exchange between Bemidji State University and the Leech Lake Tribal

College. Finally, I interviewed key participants involved in the gifting ceremony. The results of these interviews appear in chapter 2.

Thesis Overview

This thesis is presented in four chapters. The first chapter provides a literature review and includes a history of Ojibwe education, Ojibwe traditional gifting, and a discussion of what a gift is, along with the gifting process. The literature search puts the significance of the gifting ceremony in context. It shows how the gift was a tool in moving towards rectification in Ojibwe educational history. Ojibwe culture has a longstanding history with the gifting practice and therefore finds meaning in receiving a gift from outsiders. The gifting process illustrates scholarly research on how to approach gifting in a respectful and meaningful way, which will further display how BSU took such steps.

The second chapter describes the gifting situation that took place between Bemidji State University and the Leech Lake Tribal College with information provided by four interviewees. The perspectives from all four individuals will further prove my argument of the Native American flute and its music comprised a culturally meaningful and appropriate gift. Two of the interviewees were Native American and the other two were non-Native. Each played a role in the gifting ceremony.

The third chapter uses Native American flute music books/packets to illustrate how the modern Native American flute bridges the gap between Native and non-Native cultures musically, and is therefore an appropriate object to symbolize the necessity of maintaining a lasting friendship between these cultures. The fourth chapter presents the conclusion that shapes the gifting event between BSU and the LLTC as a rectifying moment. This rectification was not only between the two institutions, but also between Native and non-Native people.

CHAPTER I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ojibwe culture has been passed down orally from generation to generation for hundreds of years.[2] European settlers have documented it in the written word since the fur trades, which began in 1640. The Ojibwe education system has been deeply impacted by Western culture since that time. Traditionally Ojibwe education was immersed in the culture and the language of the people. Western influences had denied these practices resulting in loss of both culture and language. Present day efforts look to restoration. In order to demonstrate how Bemidji State University's gifting of a Native American flute to the Leech Lake Tribal College symbolized acceptance of Ojibwe culture rather than oppressing it, the following literature review investigates three main areas of Ojibwe cultural history: education; gifting as it relates to cross cultural relationships in general; and gifting as an integral aspect of Native American culture.

History of Ojibwe Education

Research from historians, folklorists and ethnomusicologists on the relationship between gifting and the evolution of Ojibwe education has explored the following: 1) the role of traditional Ojibwe education in sustaining the Ojibwe culture; 2) how traditional Ojibwe education has changed due to oppression by Western culture and assimilation to that culture; and 3) the acceptance and support of Native American culture by Western culture.

Research on the history of the Native American educational system has explored inter-cultural dynamics and its impact on this system. In his book *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions*, written in 2002, historian Thomas Peacock describes traditional education for the Ojibwe as a community endeavor. Historically and still seen today, children would be raised

[2] Anton Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 11.

not only by their parents, but also by extended family, elders, and other people of the tribe.[3] The children were brought up to embrace Ojibwe cultural practices. Peacock's research identifies Native American life skills as including hunting, gathering, warfare, and the understanding of human and animal behavior. Knowledge is obtained from interaction with all parts of creation and not just with humans. Ojibwe people would first learn these skills through observation. Observation would then progress to imitation in an effort to master them. This learning was a lifelong process. As a result, throughout the course of life a person would learn about truth and wisdom and about their role as a man or a woman within their culture. Often stories would use animals as the characters to explain a situation that indirectly relays a real life circumstance. Peacock explains that it was up to the listener to see if they could learn from the issue in the story, relate it to their own story, and make changes to live a better life.[4]

Children would identify their strengths and use these strengths to contribute to their society. One important aspect of raising children was teaching them about their connection with the spirit world. Even though physical needs were vital and necessary, spiritual growth was seen as equally important. History scholar and author Edmund Jefferson Danziger explains the custom of children prior to puberty fasting for as long as their endurance would allow in the hope of acquiring a spirit guide to help them through their life journey.[5]

It was through the study of nature that many Ojibwe people came to believe in a Creator. In his writings, Native American historian and folklorist Basil Johnston of the Ojibwe tribe describes the greatest teacher for the Ojibwe people as nature itself. Consequently, Native people

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[3] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 77.

[4] Ibid. 122.

[5] Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 13-14.

learned to listen, smell, taste, touch, and see in order to process their natural surroundings.[6] The study of nature, that is, being a part of and among creation, required the use of more senses than just the eye to gain understanding and more than book learning to gain knowledge. Learning from books became more prevalent to Ojibwe culture in the late nineteenth century upon the origins of the boarding school era.

Storytelling was intended to teach the Ojibwe people how to live a better life. The elders would explain how to stay on the right path in order to live this good life. Johnston explores the role of elders in sharing their wisdom and knowledge and passing on insights attained from their ancestors through storytelling.[7] A story may be told about another circumstance that indirectly related to a real life situation. Various techniques such as stories, songs, and dance were used. They not only used resources from nature to heal human physical needs, they also gave guidance on making good choices in order to live a better life. Fortunately, these storytelling techniques have survived through the colonial era (for the Ojibwe taking hold in the 17th century) and continue to this day.

The Ojibwe language is an integral part of what portrays the Ojibwe worldview. Ethnomusicologist Beverly Diamond provides research on the Native American cultures of Northeastern North America including the Ojibwe people. Diamond reports Native American language loss as a serious concern.[8] She emphasizes that it is oral transmission, including singing, that has sustained traditional knowledge, thus making the very process of transmission integral to the development of Native American modernity. Consequently, loss of the Ojibwe

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[6] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), xvii.

[7] Ibid. 148.

[8] Beverly Diamond, *Native American Music in Eastern North America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 4.

language by its people is a loss of an important aspect of their culture as well. Immersion schools have demonstrated that children trained in their mother tongue excel both academically and professionally.[9] The Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig school near Bena, MN, is an immersion school that serves Ojibwe students both academically and culturally. Some of their classrooms have instructors that teach exclusively in the Ojibwe language.

Revitalization began to take shape in the 1970's and 1980's following the American Indian Movement (AIM) that started in 1968.[10] Receiving acceptance from other people groups has been an important part in the revitalization of indigenous people. Diamond explores the concept that reflection inspires greater understanding rather than guilt.[11] This is accomplished through coming together and listening to all sides of those that are in conflict. Diamond provides the example of tribes taking responsibility to teach the children of their enemy in an effort to create better understanding and emphasizes the need for people to work together to revitalize their nations.[12] In some cases this is done by sharing cultural knowledge from tribe to tribe and in other cases by bringing back traditions of their own tribe.

In his book *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, (Chippewa is an Anglicized version of the word Ojibwe) Danziger explores the problem of the lack of school attendance for Native American children. Key reasons for poor school attendance include the significant distance between their homes and the schools, substantial distrust in Eurocentric education, and of most significance were the cultural differences in life schedule. Ojibwe people employed a seasonal schedule related to the hunting and gathering needs of their people. This was true as late as

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[9] Ibid. 116.

[10] Anton Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 63-67.

[11] Beverly Diamond, *Native American Music in Eastern North America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 26.

[12] Ibid. 32.

1910.[13] Included in Danziger's research is the issue that the Federal education system required Native American students to be in school when they were needed at home to help the family with seasonal essentials. Even with the offering of cooked meals at schools, indigenous children were absent from a majority of class days.[14] As a consequence, the Federal Government decided it was best to take the children away from their homes and place them in boarding schools, mission schools, and day schools. This occurred from the late nineteenth century until shortly after WWII.

Being separated from family was only part of the concern when children were sent to the boarding schools. Peacock's research describes how cultural practices were strictly forbidden on school grounds. The children could not speak their language, nor could they take part in any of their Native cultural practices.[15] As a result, Native children were forced to assimilate to Western culture.

Some Native Americans believe that achievement in school equals being assimilated into Western culture.[16] Many Native Americans look down at public education because for them it represents white domination. The current American public educational system has been shaped based on mainstream American culture to the point that Native American youth feel like second-class citizens. There is little family support for their youth to succeed in school. Anton Treuer, member of the Ojibwe Tribe and author of *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota*, explains that the Ojibwe people have become skeptical of the education system because of the

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[13] Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 125.

[14] Ibid. 106.

[15] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 32.

[16] Anton Treuer, *Everything you Wanted to Know about Indians but were Afraid to Ask* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012), 141.

boarding school era. Treuer adds that community education including Native culture from both inside and outside of the Native community is needed to lessen negative stereotypes about Native American people.[17]

Prejudice plays the greatest role in Native students dropping out of school. Native students feel that they are less than the students of the dominant culture effectively pushing them out of the school system.[18] It is a dangerous combination when a student is a minority and attending a school where there is little support for them culturally or economically. Danziger reports that in the 1960s and 70s Ojibwe dropout rates were much higher than the National average.[19] In Fond du Lac the Native students were only 3% of the student population and 90% never finished high school compared to the 20% average.[20] Dropout rates have ranged from 60-80% in places like Fond du Lac reservation.[21]

Success is powerful. For Ojibwe people, success is seen as a medicine for their community. The Ojibwe people need more success in education along with cultural respect to aid in healing the grief of the past. There is much needed support from the community, including elders to serve as board members to represent Native American youth.

When educational teachings focus on the dominant culture and very little or misleading information is taught about the Native American culture, Native children began to have lower self-esteem. In his book, *Everything you Wanted to Know about Indians but were Afraid to Ask,* Treuer explains that culturally, Native American youth generally have skill sets that differ from

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[17] Anton Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 72.

[18] Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 201.

[19] Ibid. 200.

[20] Ibid. 168.

[21] Ibid. 201.

those students in the traditional white educational system. This is a significant reason for the ongoing achievement gap experienced by Native American youth.[22] He concludes that allowing youth to have access to Native American culture would lead to greater success within the school system.[23]

There have been many great efforts from both inside and outside the Native American culture to make things better. One of the challenges is that the wounds from the past run so deep that it could take years for healing to take place and for the situation to improve. Treuer states that even educators who are non-Native can help with the cultural revitalization effort. He provides examples of Native Hawaiian education that has had great success with both inside and outside support to revitalize their culture.[24] Other Native communities can learn from their example. Just the attempt to get rid of stereotypes can make a difference.

Help is needed from many angles, including grant writing. Danziger shares that federal government grant writing began to take shape in 1975. The goals were to try and bring jobs back home, avoid migration to the cities, provide educational opportunities on tribal lands, retain land, and build a native economy.[25]

Teachers and parents need to be able to work together to support students. This includes not just basic skills but also bringing the culture, including music, into the schools as well. Culture, history and language are the most vital elements to incorporate into the educational system. It is imperative that Native American students view educational success as a positive and not a negative. Research by Danziger demonstrates that the attitude that Native Americans have

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[22] Anton Treuer, *Everything you Wanted to Know about Indians but were Afraid to Ask* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012), 142.

[23] Ibid. 143.

[24] Ibid. 163.

[25] Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 185.

toward themselves as well as how outsiders view them greatly impacts their self-esteem. Community involvement for academic success is essential.[26]

Language and culture loss is a huge concern for Native American people. Treuer emphasizes that their language is one of the top priorities because it expresses the Ojibwe point of view.[27] The influences of the outside world have had a deep impact on language loss. Assimilation, technology, and Native people traveling away from the reservations have contributed greatly to the influence of mainstream culture on the reservation. Because of cultural adaptation, the community struggles to have youth even respect their elders thereby creating even more challenges for the fractured culture.

The ways of the people are held within the language. The language itself carries on many generations of traditions, wisdom and worldview. Using language in a fractured way expresses a fractured culture. Non-Native language can only do so much to represent Native culture. Peacock expounds that if you take the language away, then many aspects of the cultural knowledge are lost.[28]

Traditional education includes learning both life skills and attaining spiritual growth. Native Americans believe that one without the other creates a life without meaning. Together, they aid a person through their path of life.[29] The oral tradition is in the heart of Native learning. Greater support for the oral tradition will encourage Native youth to learn their culture. The oral tradition indirectly helps the people think for themselves. These traditional practices can be

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[26] Ibid. 139.

[27] Anton Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 74-75.

[28] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 31.

[29] Ibid. 68.

implemented today. It is imperative that older generations pass down their knowledge and life skills. In this way cultural identity can be retained for generations.[30]

The renewal of the arts is also needed in the schools so that even non-Native Americans can learn about the indigenous peoples.[31] Music can be a great asset in bringing the language of the culture back to the people. Peacock states, "The work of our hands and our hearts and the guidance of our teachings will help us to make that positive future."[32] Young Native Americans will find good jobs and be role models for their communities.[33]

The mixture of cultures and their influences has caused great shifts in the Ojibwe culture. Schools have begun to acknowledge Ojibwe culture. Some areas have gone as far as building an inclusive school for Ojibwe youth such as the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School discussed earlier. The idea is to combine Western core academics with the Ojibwe worldview. Tribal colleges also serve a crucial role for Native students pursuing education beyond high school. These are two-year Associative Arts programs incorporating Native cultural support including language and cultural class offerings. Their goal is to help Native people gain access to higher education, eventually shifting from two-year programs to a four-year college degree.

These investigations on the journey of Ojibwe education express the importance and acceptance of Ojibwe culture in the present day. The boarding school era was designed to take away Ojibwe culture, but Bemidji State University gifting a flute to the Leech Lake Tribal College expresses an acceptance and honoring of the Ojibwe culture by both insiders (LLTC) and outsiders (BSU). Therefore, the idea of acceptance from a mainstream university, as well as the school's desire for partnership with a tribal college, is very significant. In this way, the

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[30] Ibid. 41-42.
[31] Ibid. 18
[32] Ibid. 11.
[33] Ibid. 85-86.

gifting of the Native American flute was a rectifying act by speaking to the injustices in historical education, showing acceptance and affirmation of the Ojibwe culture, and a desire for ongoing relationship with and support of the culture and educational system.

Scholarly Research on Gifting

Gifting is an exchange that is understood across human societies. Gifting is a material and social exchange as well as a cultural and economic event, which is highly influential in establishing, maintaining and expressing relationships.[34] Cultural identity is closely associated with gift giving, as addressed by anthropologists such as Gouldner, Malinowski, Mauss and Schwartz. "'...the gift imposes an identity upon the giver as well as the receiver'."[35]

In his research, anthropologist Vassos Argyrou explains that anthropologists study how the objects and people interact in the gifting situation.[36] This interaction is a mixture of the exchange of objects and also the building of relationships with the people involved. French ethnologist Marcel Mauss' important book *The Gift*, written in 1923, initiated an expansive study on the subject of gifting that later extended to the fields of psychology and sociology. Mauss, like many others who followed him, spoke of gifting as a social system enacted through cultural rituals. Giesler addresses the viewpoints of social systems and social facts.[37] The gift itself, when imbedded in the culture, becomes a part of the economic, political, and religious nature of that culture. Research by sociologist Aafke Komter identifies a gift exchange as a demonstration of

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[34] Peter D. Ashworth, "The Gift Relationship," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 44 (2013): 2-3.

[35] Jill Klein, Tina Lowrey, and Cele Otnes, "Identity-Based Motivations and Anticipated Reckoning: Contributions to Gift-Giving Theory from an Identity-Stripping Context," *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 25, no. 3 (2015): 433.

[36] Vassos Argyrou, "The Philosopher's Gift," *Critique of Anthropology* 27, no. 3 (2007): 301-302.

[37] Markus Giesler, "Consumer Gift Systems," *Journal of Consumer Research* 33 (2006): 283.

power between the people groups.[38] In the social web there are positive and negative outcomes of a gift exchange. Positive outcomes include friendships and respect. Negative outcomes include manipulation and domination.

A potlatch is a gift-giving feast practiced by the Native Americans of North America in the Pacific Northwest.[39] It is traditionally an important part of the economic system and often includes elaborate ritual. There are characteristics of the potlatch among the different cultural groups. Each nation, tribe, and family group has its own way of carrying out the potlatch. With varied presentations and meanings, Mauss illustrates how this potlatch works in *The Gift*. He identified the term "potlatch" to describe a system of gift giving with political, religious, family and economic implications including exchange practices in tribal societies.[40] Psychologist Peter Ashworth explains that in these societies economies were recognized by the competitive exchange of gifts, in which gift-givers seek to out-give their competitors in an effort to gain important political, personal and religious advantages. Regardless of the outcome, the gifts would demonstrate the relational side of the tribes, including the social standings of each tribe and changing hierarchies.[41]

Gifting is the series of mutual gifts and relevant communications between two partners. Gifting is seen as an establishment of identity both socially and individually. Responsibilities within a community dictate that individuals are obligated to give, receive and to reciprocate.

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[38] Aafke Komter, "Gifts and Social Relations: The Mechanisms of Reciprocity," *International Sociology* 22, no. 1 (2007): 93-94.

[39] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York, NY: The Norton Library, 1967), 5.

[40] Ibid. 3-5.

[41] Peter D. Ashworth, "The Gift Relationship," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 44 (2013): 2.

Mauss defined gift giving as a self-perpetuating system of reciprocity.[42] Relationships are established and affirmed through the mutual exchange of gifts. Relationships are then reaffirmed through the sequence of regular gift exchanges. Depending on how the gift exchange occurs, it can make or break the relationship. It takes time and energy on behalf of the giver to display mindfulness of the recipient and their interests as well as their situation.

According to anthropologist John F. Sherry Jr., there are three main stages in the gifting process: gestation, prestation and reformulation.[43] These three stages specify the gift transaction through which donor and recipient progress. Sherry, in 1983, theorized this gift exchange process as a dialectical chain of gift transactions between two partners. He viewed the process of exchanging gifts as a dialogue.[44]

Gestation involves everything that happens before the actual gift exchange occurs. Gestation involves the giver's search and reasoning behind the choice of the gift. Sherry explains that because both the giver and the receiver are involved in the social relationship, the giver needs to take into account both themselves and the recipient when choosing the gift.[45] In other words, the gift symbolically expresses what has developed between the giver and the recipient in building a relationship.

Studies by social psychologists Dunn, Huntsinger, and Lun demonstrate that gifts help to build social relationships because the gift itself expresses similarities between the giver and

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[42] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York, NY: The Norton Library, 1967), 1.

[43] John F. Sherry Jr., "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective," *The Journal of Consumer Research* 10, no. 2 (1983): 162.

[44] Ibid. 158.

[45] Ibid. 164.

receiver to further express their social bond.[46] It is interesting to note that according to consumer psychologist Ruth and business educators Otnes and Brunel, a non-ritual gift makes a greater impact than a ritual one.[47]

Prestation is the scene where the gift is given. It is not just the gift itself that is important, but where, when and how it is given. Sherry emphasized that it is how the event and the gift affect the recipient's response that is most important.[48] The response could be a mixture of emotions depending on how the gift is interpreted as well as the giver's intentions.

Reformulation speaks to the positive or negative outcomes of the gift. One factor is how the recipient uses the gift. For it to be a positive outcome, the gift should be used according to its purpose, whether it is to be consumed or on display. A negative outcome would be to reject the gift, such as to dispose of it or disregard it. Ashworth explains that it is the meaning of the gift taken by the recipient that expresses the weight of affection in the relationship. The gift can do this for a group of people and not just one recipient.[49] When the recipient wants to express their appreciation they may do so with the hope of a long-term relationship.[50] Receiving a gift is to accept a relationship. The idea of giving a gift in return should not be thought of as changing the gift to exchange, but rather to further strengthen the relationship. In other words, giving a gift in return expresses both parties taking similar interest in the other.

Among scholars there is debate about what a gift actually means, and whether or not a

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[46] Elizabeth Dunn, Jeff Huntsinger, Janetta Lun, and Stacey Sinclair, "The Gift of Similarity: How Good and Bad Gifts Influence Relationships," *Social Cognition* 26, no. 4 (2008): 470.

[47] Julie Ruth, Cele Otnes and Frédéric Brunel, "Gift Receipt and the Reformulation of Interpersonal Relationships," *Consumer Research* 25 (1999): 398.

[48] John F. Sherry Jr., "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective," *The Journal of Consumer Research* 10, no. 2 (1983): 164.

[49] Peter D. Ashworth, "The Gift Relationship," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 44 (2013): 18-20.

[50] Ibid. 25.

gift is even possible. Research by social anthropologist Soumhya Venkatesan identifies some studies that indicate that there is no such thing as a gift. He states that in one way or another, gifting represents some form of exchange and therefore ceases to be a gift.[51] Venkatesan explains that the exchange does not need to be an object and there are situations in which the gift looks more like an exchange than a gift. He defines an exchange that builds a relationship between people as a gift and an exchange that establishes a relationship between objects as an exchange.[52]

A variety of research studies have explored the differentiations between gifting and exchanging. A gifting has been shown to express the relationship between the giver and receiver and helps to communicate, reinforce and build that relationship where as a commodity exchange expresses the relationship between the objects.[53] A gift is intended as a personal exchange between giver and receiver, while a pure exchange is not.[54] Gifting builds individual and cultural relationships through time.[55] The gift expresses a desired relationship for the future. The future of a relationship is always uncertain but gifting shows that both parties wish to promote and

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[51] Soumhya Venkatesan, "The Social Life of a 'Free' Gift," *American Ethnologist* 38, no. 1 (2011): 47, accessed July 6, 2015. doi:10.1111?J.1548-1425.2010.01291.x.

[52] Ibid. 52.

[53] Asaf Darr, "Gifting Practices and Interorganizational Relations: Constructing Obligation Networks in the Electronics Sector," *Sociological Forum* 18, no. 1 (2003): 50.

Maija Jansson, "Measured Reciprocity: English Ambassadorial Gift Exchange in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *Journal of Early Modern History* 9 (2005): 348.

John Monaghan. "Fiesta Finance in Mesoamerica an the Origins of a Gift Exchange System." *Royal Anthropological Institute* 2 (2001): 501.

[54] Aafke Komter, and Wilma Vollebergh, "Gift Giving and the Emotional Significance of Family and Friends," *Marriage and the Family* 59 (1997): 750.

[55] Jennifer Thigpen, "You Have Been Very Thoughtful Today: The Significance of Gratitude and Reciprocity in Missionary-Hawaiian Gift Exchange," *Pacific Historical Review* 79, no. 4 (2010): 547-548.

Mary Ann McGrath, John F. Sherry and Sidney J. Levy. "Giving Voice to the Gift: The Use of Projective Techniques to Recover Lost Meanings," *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 2, no. 2 (1993): 186.

support its growth.[56] The idea of reciprocating a gift should not be seen as making the gift an exchange, but rather a response to the initial gift in order to keep building the social relationship.[57]

In my thesis, I support psychologist Peter D. Ashworth's philosophy on gifting. Ashworth emphasizes that gifting along with the gifting event and the gift itself builds the relationship between giver and recipient.

> Gifting is fundamentally a matter of social relations, and what is essential to the gift relationship is the existence of donor and recipient, and a form of relationship between them that the event of gifting communicates, celebrates, initiates, maintains or cements.[58]

The idea of a gift verses exchange is continually a gray subject. In the end, either through exchange or gift, there are always elements of both. It is important to emphasize that the focus of gifting is on the relationship between people and not on the object itself.

The gifting of the modern Native American flute from Bemidji State University to the Leech Lake Tribal College was a rectifying act as both the gift itself and the gifting event symbolized mutual respect and a desire for ongoing support and collaboration between the two cultures and educational facilities.

Gifting as an Integral Aspect of Native American Culture

In Ojibwe culture, man is blessed with the ability to dream, which is considered to be the greatest gift given by the Creator.[59] Native American cultures have traditionally considered the

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[56] Julie Ruth, Cele Otnes and Frédéric Brunel, "Gift Receipt and the Reformulation of Interpersonal Relationships," *Consumer Research* 25 (1999): 398.

[57] Thomas O'Connor, "A Knight and a Count Exchange Gifts in the Gelded Lady," *ANQ* 17, no. 4 (2004): 34-35.

[58] Peter D. Ashworth, "The Gift Relationship," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 44 (2013): 29.

[59] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 21.

music of the flute to be a voice speaking in the language of dreams.[60] Native American flute player Kevin Locke, of both the Lakota and Ojibwe tribes, explains that what is said in this dream language depends on the person listening to it.[61]

The Ojibwe view the earth as a gift from the Creator. The land was not to be owned but to be shared among the people. The Creator gave Ojibwe responsibilities for the land He created and the Ojibwe were morally obligated to be thankful for the resources provided and to respect them. The land as well as food, water, supplies and warmth from the sun were considered gifts from the Creator. Danziger describes the Ojibwe giving thanks for all life on the earth and what the earth provides for the people. He explains that if one Ojibwe family had an abundance of food and supplies, they would share their stock with those who were in need.[62] Children were also viewed as a gift from the Creator.

Ojibwe culture teaches that the abilities of each individual are a gift from the Creator.[63] These teachings encourage each person to do his or her part for the greater good of all, and to give thanks for these blessings. Johnston describes how Ojibwe story telling guides all humanity in sharing their gifts.[64] These stories warn that not doing your part in the sharing of gifts will result in being isolated from the group.

Ojibwe believe there is a difference between exchange and gifting even if both parties give. Gifting is shown as a means of building moral and social bonds. Johnston shares examples

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[60] Kevin Locke and Richard Dube, *Learn to Play the Flute: Music Lesson Book for the Indigenous North American Flute* (Bloomington, MN: Lakota Language Consottium, Inc., 2014), 3.

[61] Ibid. 3.

[62] Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 11.

[63] Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 111.

[64] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), xii.

of how Ojibwe have traditionally used animals as characters to explain morals to the Ojibwe people. There are stories of animals sharing gifts with one another and other stories of only taking gifts and not giving in return.[65] Johnston's story of the seagull, who did not give, describes the punishment they endure to this day:

> As an added penalty for his refusal to share his gifts, the Bear and his kin and their neighbors sentenced the Seagull to eat scraps, the entrails of raw fish and to keep the beaches clean by eating whatever carrion he finds. Even now the Seagull's descendants clash, scuffle, and brawl over putrid waste. They will not allow even one of their own kind to share in the spoils.[66]

Because of their role in maintaining the Ojibwe culture, the stories that have been preserved in Ojibwe culture are seen as gifts. The oral tradition allows for wisdom and knowledge to be passed down from generation to generation. Johnston's research describes instances of when Ojibwe people learned from animal behavior, and in return passed their lessons down to their people.[67] Ojibwe consider it a gift to share their culture either with their own younger generations or with people outside the culture.

In Ojibwe culture tobacco has great meaning and is considered a sacred element. Tobacco is a substance obtainable by man, pleasing to the spirit world and considered to be a gift from the Creator. The smoking of tobacco is seen as a means of bringing this gift back to the Creator and also as a way of extending this gift to others. Because tobacco is essential in the use of the pipe, the pipe is also an important means of promoting peace and is often used in peace offerings. Danziger describes the use of tobacco in ceremonies as a peace offering between tribal

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[65] Ibid. 107.
[66] Ibid. 110.
[67] Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 81.

groups. Tobacco smoke was seen as a way of expressing emotion and thoughts to other animals and to the Creator. It was also seen as a sign of friendship between Ojibwe people.[68]

Traditionally, during times of harvest, Ojibwe offer tobacco in thanksgiving to the Creator and Mother Earth for the food and with hope for a bountiful harvest in the future. Hunters offer tobacco both to the animal spirit as well as to Creator as a means of giving thanks for the life of the animal. When traveling on a dangerous road, an offering of tobacco could be made to the Creator for guidance and safety. When gathering medicine supplies, tobacco is given in thanks for these provisions.[69]

A request for knowledge requires an accompanying gift. The giving of tobacco or a prized possession continues as a common practice. The acceptance of a gift implies that the recipient of the gift would answer the questions and provide wisdom or knowledge. Peacock states that to this day, tobacco and blankets are often used as gifts when one seeks advice.[70] Johnston states that the blanket is also a gift of love from mother to son.[71]

Ojibwe came about their views, ideas and accepted wisdom through the study of the earth. Giving thanks to Creator for providing is fundamental to the Ojibwe people. In 1805, Red Jacket, a famous speaker of the Seneca Nation, explained to the missionaries that the Creator had given missionaries the book (the Bible), but for Native Americans, the Creator had given their people the earth. The earth was their bible of understanding.[72]

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[68] Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 11.

[69] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 42-43.

[70] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 74.

[71] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), vii.

[72] Ibid. vii.

Before the fur trade (prior to 1640)[73], the Ojibwe participated in a potlatch (see Scholarly Research on Gifting) known as the Feast of the Dead. Tribes met to honor those who had died, and giving continued with personal objects, games and food.[74] Johnston relates Ojibwe stories that speak of how gifts can come even from the dead, including certain plants growing at burial sites that may be of medicinal use.[75]

During the fur trade (1640-1820)[76] there was competition between businesses to win the favor of the Ojibwe through the giving of gifts. The Ojibwe people would traditionally expect food and care during times of Native and White gatherings. Danziger's research discusses how gift giving played a role in business transactions between the French and the Ojibwe people during the fur trade (the fur trade took place primarily in the great lakes area).[77] One such gift was alcohol, which has had a negative impact on the Ojibwe community to this day and has caused further distrust with outsiders.

Prayer and thanksgiving are used not only in ritual but are also an important part of everyday life. Once the giver gives freely, so too should the receiver.[78] Items are not the only things that can be given. One can give through song, and not just to people but also to other parts of nature as well as to the spirit world.[79] Ojibwe view a bird's song as a song of thanksgiving to

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[73] Anton Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 11.

[74] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 16.

[75] Ibid. 53.

[76] Anton Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 11.

[77] Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 28, 61-62.

[78] Ibid. 23.

[79] Ibid. 32.

the Creator and Mother Earth.[80] The following words come from the Code of the Midewewin (Healers among the Ojibwe people). The code emphasizes that the Ojibwe people traditionally, and to this day, carry the worldview of gratitude with all that has been given to them, and thankfulness to all those who gave it.

> Thank Kitche Manitou (God) for all his gifts. Honour the aged; in honouring them, you honour life and wisdom. Honour life in all its forms; your own will be sustained. Honour women; in honouring women, you honour the gift of life and love. Honour promises; by keeping your word, you will be true. Honour kindness; by sharing the gifts you will be kind. Be peaceful; through peace, all will find the Great Peace. Be courageous; through courage, all will grow in strength. Be moderate in all things; watch, listen and consider; your deeds will be prudent." from The Code of the Midewewin[81]

The gifting of the modern Native American flute between Bemidji State University and the Leech Lake Tribal College was a rectifying act since BSU used gifting as a way to build a positive relationship with the LLTC due to gifting being an integral aspect of Ojibwe culture.

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[80] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 146.

[81] Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 93.

CHAPTER II. THE STORY OF THE GIFT

The Bemidji Pioneer

Page B1

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Education

Inside:

Classified Ads B2-7
Comics B8
Dear Abby B8

Lasting connection

Bemidji State, Leech Lake Tribal College share celebration

By Michelle Ruckdaschel
Pioneer Staff Writer

CASS LAKE – As Leech Lake Tribal College embarks on a new chapter in its history with the recent opening of its new facility, a neighboring university has offered its support by presenting a gift to the college.

During the college's first weekly feast for students and staff at the new facility Monday, Bemidji State University officials presented a wooden flute with a small loon carving on it to LLTC President Leah Carpenter.

"The university's had an association with the college from its very early beginnings," BSU President Jon Quistgaard said.

He said LLTC has taken its long-time dream of building a new facility and made it a success in a very short amount of time.

"What they've accomplished today is nothing short of remarkable," Quistgaard said. "It tells you that dreams are real."

He said Monday's feast provided BSU the opportunity to honor the college and its board, as well as the entire Leech Lake Nation.

"We wanted to take time to convey our support for the college and its mission," he added.

Joining Quistgaard to present the flute to Carpenter were Lee Cook, executive director of BSU's American Indian Resource Center, and Lorena Cook, assistant to the president for affirmative action at BSU.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Chancellor James H. McCormick and Will Antell, who serves on the MnSCU Board of Trustees, also attended the presentation and the feast.

McCormick offered his congratulations to LLTC on behalf of the colleges and universities in the MnSCU system. He and Antell, a White Earth Nation member, are visiting tribal chairs throughout the state.

One of the goals, Antell said, is to try to build understanding and relationships between tribal chairs and governments and the MnSCU Chancellor's Office and the presidents' offices at MnSCU institutions.

On Monday, Antell congratulated LTTC on its new facility and commended the college's relationship with BSU. He added that he hopes many of the students who attend the college will consider furthering their education at BSU or other MnSCU institutions.

Carpenter said LLTC is working with BSU to make the transition more seamless for students who transfer to the university. And, she added, the flute from BSU symbolizes the relationship between the two insfitutions.

"To me, it just means that we will continue to be partners for a long time," Carpenter said after unwrapping the flute from the fabric it was kept in. "We will continue to make beautiful educational music together."

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Pioneer Photo by Monte Draper

Leech Lake Tribal College President Leah Carpenter reads a small plaque on a wooden flute presented by Bemidji State University President Jon Quistgaard, left, and other BSU officials Monday at the college. At right, David Boswell takes a look at the flute.

Figure 1: Scanned Image of the Newspaper Article on the Gifting Event

After much consideration, key members from BSU chose the Native American flute due to its modern musical aspects, assuring the flute would best represent and serve as a symbol of an enduring and equally valuable association between the two institutions. The Leech Lake Tribal College began in the early 1990's and wishes "[t]o be recognized as a center of academic excellence that advances the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) worldview and empowers life-long learners who are fully engaged citizens, stewards, and leaders."[82]

[82] Gaa'Oziskwaajimekaag Gabe-gikendaasoowigamig, "Mission Statement," *Leech Lake Tribal College*, http://www.lltc.edu/about/mission.

This chapter focuses on the perspectives of four individuals who were directly associated with the giving of a Native American flute from Bemidji State University to the Leech Lake Tribal College. I interviewed two outsiders (Caucasians) and two insiders (Native Americans). The Caucasian interviewees are Dr. Jon Quistgaard, President of Bemidji State University and giver of the gift, and Jon Romer, an instructor at the Leech Lake Tribal College, advisor to both BSU and the LLTC. The two Native Americans are Dr. Leah Carpenter, President of the LLTC and receiver of the gift, and Dr. Ginny Carney, Dean of Academics at the same school, who has since replaced Dr. Carpenter as President of the LLTC, a close observer of the gifting ceremony.

The gifting process, as identified in chapter 1, includes three stages: gestation, prestation, and reformulation, and it seemed logical and efficient to organize interview questions and their later summarizations around these stages.

Music is an art practiced by all cultures and is a reflection of each culture. The sharing of music brings joy to the individual and creates connections with others. Kevin Locke, a Native American flute player with both Lakota and Ojibwe ancestry, teaches us that when a person is introduced to the music of a culture they meet the heart of its people. He explains that there are Native American people who consider music to be the mother of all creative expression.[83]

Dr. Jon Quistgaard

Dr. Jon Quistgaard obtained his PhD in Political Science at the University of Arizona. He spent 30 years of his career at Bemidji State University working in admissions, being Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Academic

[83] Kevin Locke and Richard Dube, *Learn to Play the Flute: Music Lesson Book for the Indigenous North American Flute* (Bloomington, MN: Lakota Language Consottium, Inc., 2014), 1.

and Student Affairs, and the President of the college. Quistgaard served as president from August 2001 until the summer of 2010 when he retired.

In the beginning, the LLTC was scattered across the town of Cass Lake in several different run down buildings. At the time the Leech Lake Tribal College moved into their new facility in 2005, Quistgaard already had a long relationship with them. The relationship began when the tribal college first took root in the 1990's. Quistgaard was there to assist the tribal college if they were ever in need. "My involvement started to take shape when I was asked to help them reach accreditation." Helping the Leech Lake Tribal College get accreditation would become one of his greatest projects between the two institutions. "...it was about creating more access and opportunity because I am sure that you are aware that graduation rates from American Indian people [are] not where [they need] to be." (see Chapter 1)

The Leech Lake Tribal College started out in modest conditions as far as location. Quistgaard started working with Larry Aitken (the president of the Leech Lake Tribal College at the time) along with Larry's brother Joe Aitken to see about possible new locations for the college. "We wanted to be mutually supportive of each other."

Quistgaard mentioned Bemidji State University (BSU) and how it could assist Native American students who are coming from the Leech Lake Tribal College. BSU has an American Indian Resource Center (AIRC), which Quistgaard mentions is designed to preserve the Ojibwe culture as well as be a spotlight for Native American education at the international level. Students who are pursuing their education at the Leech Lake Tribal College, which is a two-year Associative Arts program, can continue their education through the AIRC at BSU to finish their four-year degree. These students may use the libraries at both institutions. This option for students at the Tribal College has been ongoing since the early 1990's.

There are connections between the two schools as far as the Ojibwe language and the curriculum of Native American education. The AIRC is specifically for Native American education, and therefore is a place for Native American students to feel welcomed at the University. Quistgaard mentions that the more perspectives that are shared from students at the University with various backgrounds, the better off everyone will be in the attainment of knowledge:

> We all have so much to learn from each other. Native people are great listeners, and that is something I believe we need more of in our institutions. The more perspectives and ideas, the more we provide for our students a wide variety of ideas, diverse opinions, and interpretations of history, among others.

There were suggestions made to Quistgaard to consider a peace pipe as the gift of choice. A peace pipe is a traditional gift that uses tobacco, which is a sacred element (see Chapter 1). Because tobacco and the peace pipe are tied to sacred Ojibwe ceremonies and traditionally embedded in Ojibwe culture, Quistgaard did not feel comfortable with this as a choice since he was a non-Native. As a giver, he wanted to be sure that the gift showed the University's support and respect. He believed giving the pipe might be insensitive and could possibly produce a negative message or outcome. Even after Quistgaard was given assurances from elders, and spiritual people from all three reservations surrounding Bemidji including White Earth, Red Lake, and Leech Lake, he still felt uncomfortable about the use of the peace pipe and tobacco as the gift. Jon Romer, LLTC instructor, advised the University to give a Native American flute rather than a peace pipe. Quistgaard speaks on how he strived to make sure the gift was appropriate:

> At the time when the gift was provided it was provided on behalf of Bemidji State University and I wanted to provide them a sincere and significant gift from the University that would be appropriate.

There were three things Quistgaard wished to convey to the Leech Lake Tribal College through the gift: that Bemidji State University was their partner; that they were supportive of the tribal college and their goals; and they were respectful of the Native American culture. Quistgaard expresses his support for Indian education:

> We wanted to do this to express that Bemidji State University is supportive of education for Indian people. In my own career I believe in public education because I believe in access. When the Leech Lake Tribal College started there were questions about enrollment, but for me if the Leech Lake Tribal College provides the means for providing individuals access to education then we should support that.
>
> In my perspective, education is the key to opening doors and we want the doors to be open for everybody. It comes to success and we should all be about sharing that success.

Quistgaard illustrates the change of mentality in education for Native American people. Rather than oppressing the culture, the education system is now accepting and embracing it. The flute symbolizes this acceptance.

Jon Romer

Jon Romer attained his Master's Degree in Choral Literature and Performance from the University of Iowa. He was a voice instructor at the University of Missouri from 1966-70, and Gustavus Adolphus College from 1970-1989. It was in the year 1990 that Romer made his home in Cass Lake, MN. From 1990-1998, Romer taught music at the Bug-O-Nay-Geh-Shig school (where he first learned to play the Native American flute from Windy Downwind, who is a traditional flute player originally from the Red Lake reservation in Minnesota) and was also a faculty member of the Leech Lake Tribal College from 1993-2004. Romer was approved to begin a Native American flute course in 1998. That Native American flute program was a part of the tribal college curriculum from 1998-2004. Since then, Romer has been retired, but has continued to teach Native American flute courses at the tribal college through community education programs.

Romer taught Native American flute at the tribal college and also taught Native American flute courses at the American Indian Resource Center at BSU. In addition, he played for various ceremonies. This is where Lee Cook, who was the executive director of the American Indian Resource Center at the time, became friends with Romer. Due to Romer's dedication to Native American education, knowledge of both the tribal college and BSU, as well as being a white man who was knowledgeable about both mainstream and tribal education, Cook went to Romer for guidance regarding an appropriate gift choice between Bemidji State University and the Leech Lake Tribal College. Cook expressed that the gift choice needed to be a symbol expressing the partnership between the two schools and to show students the accessibility of education when moving from the LLTC to BSU.

Romer felt that the Native drum was too sacred to be considered as a gift choice. The drum is more for the people of the culture than for those who are outsiders. Outsiders would not readily understand the sacred and traditional aspects of the drum or the peace pipe and tobacco, nor would this be understood by some of the Native American youth. Also, when the peace pipe and tobacco are gifted, the leaders will usually speak in the Ojibwe language causing further separation from those outside the Native American culture.

When Cook asked Romer about a possible gift from BSU to LLTC, Romer thought of the Native American flute instantly. The flute is both "tangible and spiritual," which ties into the Ojibwe worldview (Chapter 1). It also is a bridge between the cultures. Cook agreed with Romer that the flute would be a suitable gift.

Because it is relatively easy to learn and can sound either a pentatonic or major/minor scale (see Chapter III) the modern Native American flute can fit in to many different kinds of music across cultures. The flute has opened itself up to cultures outside of the Native American

communities. This includes Native and non-Native people. Also, the music of the flute comes from the heart in Native American teachings. In this way, the music expresses the heart of BSU wanting to expresses a partnership from one heart (BSU) to another (LLTC).

Western scales and Western culture are finding their way into Native American music as a whole. Romer states that Earl Nyholm, who wrote the Ojibwe Dictionary, said that culture is in a constant state of change, and therefore is not something to be overly concerned about. Romer also asked an elder about the ability to play non-Native songs on the flute. The elder assured Romer that if the music brings joy then it is not wrong. Romer adds that R. Carlos Nakai, who was instrumental in revitalizing the Native American flute, also plays outside of the flutes traditional context including jazz.

When asked to describe how the Native American flute relates to both BSU and the LLTC, Romer states:

> The Tribal College has both Native and non-Native people as there are at the University. So the flute and its music can run between both. I think what is always miraculous to me when yet here is this ancient instrument that represents a culture for thousands and thousands of years, it still exists today, and because of the influences on the music of the flute, such as the western scale being present along with the pentatonic scale, it goes across boundaries, it goes across cultures, and it goes across the centuries.

When asked why the flute would have a positive outcome, Romer explains:

> If you had to pick one word the word that I would pick for me is music brings joy to my heart. Even though there are sad songs, and sometimes music causes us to think about sad things because of the music that we've heard and associate with a sad event, the music I think goes straight to the heart. It opens the heart. There's no filter from one culture to another. The music just goes there and we respond. So I think that's the quickest way to build a relationship.

When asked about how the gift would express the people involved, Romer states:

> The most important thing is that the flute has music that flows between people. The flute is more than something pretty to look at, but it also speaks to us. I think it was really important for the Tribal College to receive from BSU because it also puts the spotlight on

> not only the culture, which exists now, but on the journey of that culture for thousands of generations.

Romer believes that the flute being used as a gift had positive outcomes. He states that Quistgaard did well by presenting the gift at the home of the people who received it (the Tribal College). Staff members have spoken to Romer in positive ways about the gift, and the flute is on display for people to appreciate and observe. It has aided in strengthening the flute program at the tribal college. Romer also believes that the flute needs to be played for the flute to be appreciated fully. Therefore Romer has played this flute as well as other Native flutists, including Frankie Graves, reputed to be one of the best players on the Leech Lake Reservation. Romer explains how the flute symbolizes the embracing of Native American culture by non-Native Americans as well as for Native Americans to feel welcomed and accepted at a mainstream University:

> The American Indian Resource Center is not only an open door for Native American students to come into the University but it also symbolizes to non-Native students how important Native culture has been to our country. The Resource Center is a front door to the University in terms of the importance of culture. The flute goes out where the people are and again to me that symbolizes what every teacher should know, which is to start where the students are and bring them to where the idea is. The flute is the motivator; it catches them and brings them to the University.

Dr. Leah Carpenter

Dr. Leah Carpenter obtained her PhD in American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona. During her time at the Leech Lake Tribal College, Carpenter served as an instructor from 1997-1998, Dean of Instruction from 2001-2002, Vice-President from 2002-2003, Interim President from 2003-2005, and President from 2005 to 2008. Carpenter has also been a part of BSU from 2001 to present where she teaches accounting as well as mentoring American Indian students.

Tribal colleges began as a means of correcting the misguided education that has been prevalent since the boarding school era. Carpenter says that tribal colleges are necessary so that Native Americans can take hold of their education for their own communities. As with most tribal colleges, the LLTC needed help when they first started. The LLTC turned to BSU for that aid, which created a partnership from the beginning.

Attaining accreditation was an essential step in the ability of tribal college to become independent rather than dependent on outsiders. Carpenter explains that Quistgaard was a great asset in preparing the tribal college for their accreditation. Both Quistgaard and Cook wanted the tribal college's success. This attitude from key figures at BSU countered other faculty members' attitudes about the Tribal College. Other members of BSU thought that tribal colleges would steal students from them. Also, Carpenter explains how mainstream Universities thought that tribal colleges would not last long due to the assumed poor academic quality, and tribal politics.

> Mainstream institutions thought the American Indians are too dumb to run a college or Indians are not smart enough to go to college. There are biases and stereotypes that have been there historically that are still with us today. All of those still get played out. It's there. It's there all around us every day.

The decisions made at Bemidji State University give an example apart from these negative stereotypes. BSU has a longstanding reputation for supporting Native American education. BSU has the highest enrollment of Native American students in the state of Minnesota. The fear of BSU losing students to the LLTC was a concern. However, the opposite effect occurred. Because the LLTC is a two-year program, students are encouraged to move from LLTC to BSU to finish their four-year degree. In this sense, the LLTC feeds BSU students rather than stealing them. This made the partnership between the two institutions that much stronger. Both Quistgaard and Cook understood this. Helping the LLTC was beneficial to BSU.

The ceremony where the Native American flute was gifted was to commemorate the LLTC's new facility as well as LLTC being on its way to attaining accreditation. This was a validating moment for the LLTC. It made the tribal college stronger, which in turn made the partnership between BSU and the LLTC stronger. Carpenter explains the conditions prior to the new facility, which further emphasizes how meaningful it was for the ceremony to take place at their new building.

> Yeah, it's hard to believe but before we moved into that first new building we were scattered across the town of Cass Lake in five buildings that were run down. We were in a church where the roof was caving in, the snow would melt in the springtime where the walls would run with water, and there was mold. We were teaching in those buildings. It was horrible conditions. It was just really hard to teach, and it was really hard to learn in those places for the students.

The boarding school era tried to strip Native Americans of their culture, but the transition of the LLTC to its new facility and attaining accreditation expressed a healing of the wounds from that era. The transition also expressed the strengthening and acceptance of the Tribal College as well as acceptance of the Native American culture. Carpenter addresses that the flute is known to bring healing through its music and therefore symbolizes the healing of the education system that was taking place along with the hope for a better future.

Originally, the peace pipe and tobacco were considered for the gift. However, the gifting situation was not strictly between traditional Ojibwe people but also included individuals from outside of that culture. Therefore, the use of the peace pipe and tobacco would not have made as big of an impact. The flute in this case would speak to all of the people who were involved and in a stronger way. This was largely due to the fact that Jon Romer's flute program at the LLTC was very strong at this point and was being recognized by both the AIRC and BSU. As a result, Quistgaard and Cook were both aware of this important curriculum and turned to Romer for guidance on the gift choice.

Carpenter agrees that the Native American flute, its adaptation, and being used as a gift spoke very well to the relationship taking place between BSU and the LLTC. Although the Native American flute now uses western pitches, it continues to carry with it many aspects of the Native American culture. In this way it ties the two cultures together. This makes the Native American flute an ideal gift in this situation and communicates a positive relationship. Carpenter sees music as a universal language and therefore it has the ability to communicate between people groups. Carpenter also provided real life examples of how the Native American flute speaks to both cultures in positive ways.

> We had an indigenous arts festival here a couple years ago and we invited Windy Downwind to come and play his flute. On his way here he picked up one of his students to join him, and it was Jon Romer. So they played together. I remember that night when they were playing. They did speak of the western tones the flute plays.

Carpenter later explains that they spoke of the western pitches of the flute, and Downwind (Native) along with Romer (white) playing together was a positive sign. Kevin Locke, a famous Native American flute player with both Lakota and Ojibwe ancestry, also spoke on this matter in a positive manner.

From a cultural standpoint, Carpenter expressed how the loon on the totem of the gifted flute was meaningful. The loon clan represents the orators in Ojibwe culture. The orators were the great speakers, and singers. Orators represented the Ojibwe people when it came to discussions between Ojibwe and other tribes as well as non-Natives during the fur trades.[84] The loon totem on the gifted flute conveys the idea to Ojibwe people that they would always be involved in talking and working with non-Natives in productive ways. The people at BSU may not have been aware of this cultural significance. “I think it may have been an appropriate

[84] Anton Treuer, *The People of Minnesota: Ojibwe in Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 7.

accident on their part." Carpenter adds that the flute maker was Ojibwe and would have known about the clan symbol and its meaning.

Other important factors to take into account were the steps Quistgaard took in both the gift selection and the gift presentation. Quistgaard sought guidance from suitable individuals to assure the right gift choice. The extra effort was recognizable and was meaningful to the people of the tribal college. It is important to note that Dr. Carpenter emphasizes that Quistgaard went to them, to their home, to their college, to give the gift. This created a positive outcome because the people at the Tribal College are accustomed to having to go over to the mainstream schools and rarely ever do the mainstream people ever go to their home. The tribal college honors their Native American culture. Therefore, Quistgaard going to the tribal college not only demonstrated respect for the tribal college but also for the Native American culture.

> He came to our new home, gave that gift, and joined us in our feast. The room that we were in was small. We were all packed in and that's where we had our feast and our drum. It was no fancy thing. We were very proud of what we had accomplished.

Carpenter explains that the aftereffects of the gifting ceremony have been positive. The partnership between BSU and the LLTC continues to stay strong and there continues to be a sharing of curriculum and grant writing. Original partnerships continue and new partnerships are being created. The bond between BSU and the LLTC remains strong.

Dr. Ginny Carney

Dr. Ginny Carney was Dean of Academics at Leech Lake Tribal College when Dr. Quistgaard presented the gift and was an observer when the gifting ceremony took place. Dr. Carney earned a PhD in English at the University of Kentucky. She served as President of the LLTC from December 2008 until her retirement in 2012. In the summer of 2015 the LLTC Board of Trustees asked her to return as interim president while they searched for a full-time

president. Today, she continues to serve as the president of LLTC. Through the years, Carney has been a strong supporter of revitalizing Native American culture and would like to see the arts used as a way to strengthen and convey the culture.

Carney agreed with Dr. Carpenter that giving a peace pipe and tobacco to the LLTC would not have been as appropriate as the giving of a flute. Not only would people outside of Ojibwe culture not understand, but also there are a number of Native American youth that would not understand the traditions either. One of the reasons why the tribal college has become so important is because it is there to help revitalize the culture. The students that attend there can learn about their culture as well as learn about their own personal identity. Later these students may become leaders in the Native American communities.

Carney understood that Quistgaard's intentions were to express BSU's support for the LLTC and its mission. The Native American flute was meaningful to the Native people. Quistgaard knew that even if it may not have had a deep connection with him personally, he wanted to express something meaningful to the Native people as a gift from his heart.

Carney was in agreement with Carpenter about the idea of the loon as well as the viewpoints of Quistgaard going to the LLTC to give the flute. The fact that Quistgaard took the time to go over to the LLTC to present the gift was also very meaningful. Native people are usually expected to go over to the mainstream campuses. Quistgaard taking these steps showed that he had a heart for the Native American people. He consulted with multiple people who knew about the culture. A musical instrument had deep meaning for Carney. "I feel that music is an integral part in a society that is rapidly losing our civility."

Carney believes that the Native American flute brings healing to relationships. She spoke of how Bill Miller (well-known Ojibwe flute player) visited the tribal college campus and shared

his thoughts regarding this as well and how it had applied to the relationship between him and his father.

The sound of the Native American flute is different from other wind instruments. Even though the Native American flute plays western notes, it still carries with it the beliefs and identity of Native American people. To Ojibwe people, the Native American flute is animate and has a spirit. This made the gift much more impactful to the receivers. In Carney's words, "It was not just a gift. It was a spiritual gift."

The information gathered from each interviewee express the gifting of the flute from Bemidji State University to the Leech Lake Tribal College as a rectifying act by addressing the wrongs in historical education and a desire to make it right, using gifting as a means of respecting Ojibwe culture and creating cross-cultural unity, and choosing the flute as the gift due to its modern musical aspects extending cross-culturally from Native American to Western culture.

CHAPTER III. THE NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE AS A CULTURAL BRIDGE

Native American flute traditions have changed over time through colonization, cultural interactions, and with the contributions of individual players of the Native American flute. Ojibwe culture as a whole has also been impacted by cultural interactions resulting in both a desire to maintain a strong hold on the traditional culture as well as acknowledging adaptations to western culture. This process of continuity and change is evidenced in the journey the Native American flute has taken resulting in its modern musical aspects. These aspects were key in the use of the Native American flute being chosen as a gift from Bemidji State University to the Leech Lake Tribal College. Research on the relationship between gifting and the Native American flute has explored the following: the history of the Native American flute; adaptations and transitions of the Native American flute; and the Native American flute as an instrument for cross-cultural unity.

History of the Native American Flute

The origin of the Native American flute is found within the traditions of this culture. The legend of the woodpecker is held to be the source of the Native American flute by many Native people, including the Ojibwe and Sioux tribes. The legend tells us that a woodpecker pecked holes in a branch to collect insects for nourishment. When the woodpecker was finished, a great wind swept through the forest creating beautiful music as it blew through the branch. A man who was close by heard the beautiful music. Thus the Native American flute was born.[85]

[85] John Vames, *The Native American Flute: Understanding the Gift* (Scottsdale, AZ: John Vames and Molly Moon Arts & Publishing, 2003), 22.

Traditionally the flute has served in both sacred and social roles.[86] Because the Native American flute can be used in multiple cultural settings, it serves as a valuable tool for reestablishing and supporting cultural identity. The cultural mindset of the native people is reinforced through ceremonies and rituals. The Native American flute has not been tied to any one ceremonial situation. This creates flexibility in how the flute has been used. As such, the flute plays an important role in reconnecting native peoples to their traditions and reinforces their cultural beliefs. Historically, Native American music was not written down but was passed down orally from teacher to student through the generations.[87] Rituals and ceremonies were vital for maintaining cultural identity and traditions as they carried and sustained Native American teachings using the oral tradition.[88]

Every culture of the world has some form of a flute.[89] Bone flutes have been found dating more than 40,000 years old.[90] For the Sioux and Ojibwe the flute represents the force of the wind.[91] According to Kevin Locke, diatonic flutes, or "Grandfather-tuned" flutes,[92] were the historical Native American flutes. These flutes can be used to play many songs from many tribes

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[86] Kevin Locke and Richard Dubé, *Learn to Play the Flute: Music Lesson Book for the Indigenous North American Flute* (Bloomington, IN: Lakota Language Consortium, Inc., 2014), 7.

[87] R. Carlos Nakai and James Demars, *The Art of the Native American Flute* (Phoenix, AZ: Canyon Records Productions, 1996), 1.

[88] Ibid. 1-6.

[89] Kevin Locke and Richard Dubé, *Learn to Play the Flute: Music Lesson Book for the Indigenous North American Flute* (Bloomington, IN: Lakota Language Consortium, Inc., 2014), 3.

[90] Ibid. 3.

[91] Ibid. 2.

Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 12.

[92] Kevin Locke and Richard Dubé, *Learn to Play the Flute: Music Lesson Book for the Indigenous North American Flute* (Bloomington, IN: Lakota Language Consortium, Inc., 2014), 15.

and serve to connect and preserve the cultural heritage of Native American people. "All humanity shares music as a basic joy, a way of creating happiness and connection."[93]

The courting flute is one of the main subtypes of the Native American flute. The flute is said to be a gift from the Creator to help men win the hearts of women. The Sioux and Ojibwe people generally separated boys and girls during their youth. Just as birds sing to attract mates, young men learned to play the flute as a way to communicate with and get the attention of the women.[94] Men would travel from village to village with their flutes to charm a girl.[95] Women found flute playing by the men very attractive and thus the idea of the courting flute was born.[96]

The modern Native American flute can be used inter-tribally, but its meanings and traditions are tribal specific. For the Ojibwe and Sioux tribes, the flute was used for more purposes than courting, including songs to nature, battle, hunting, and gathering.[97] The flute was considered an extension of the human voice, and the Ojibwe and Sioux people would create a vocal song and then play it on the flute later.[98] Music works in cooperation with nature for the Native American people.[99] For many tribes, including the Ojbwe people, the flute was seen as

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[93] Ibid. 1.

[94] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 85.

[95] Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 28.

[96] Kevin Locke and Richard Dubé, *Learn to Play the Flute: Music Lesson Book for the Indigenous North American Flute* (Bloomington, IN: Lakota Language Consortium, Inc., 2014), 5.

[97] Ibid. 7.

[98] Ibid. 5.

[99] Beverly Diamond, *Native American Music in Eastern North America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 27.

an imitation of nature.[100] The flute also imitates nature as it takes on the importance of and represents the wind, which is seen as the breath of life.[101]

Adaptations and Transitions of the Native American Flute

Music is a natural place for different cultures to meet.[102] Since the flute exists in every culture, the flute becomes the perfect instrument to create cross-cultural unity. Western influences have caused the flute to take on Western pitches and western notation, which enable it to adapt to modern Western culture.

Kevin Locke has contributed to bringing back "Grandfather-tuning," which uses the diatonic scale and therefore has the ability to utilize Western pitches and notation. The modern Native American flute is primarily tuned using the minor pentatonic scale. A series of recordings from the 1980s identified the Native American flute as primarily a minor pentatonic instrument. These include:

Changes: Native American Flute Music (1983) - by R. Carlos Nakai

Cycles: Native American Flute Music (1985) – by R. Carlos Nakai

Journeys: Native American Flute Music (1986) – by R. Carlos Nakai

Nakai: Earth Spirit (1987)

Canyon Trilogy: R. Carlos Nakai (1989)

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[100] Basil Johnston, *Honour Earth Mother* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 2.

[101] Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri, *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in all Directions* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 37.

Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), 12.

[102] Beverly Diamond, *Native American Music in Eastern North America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 135.

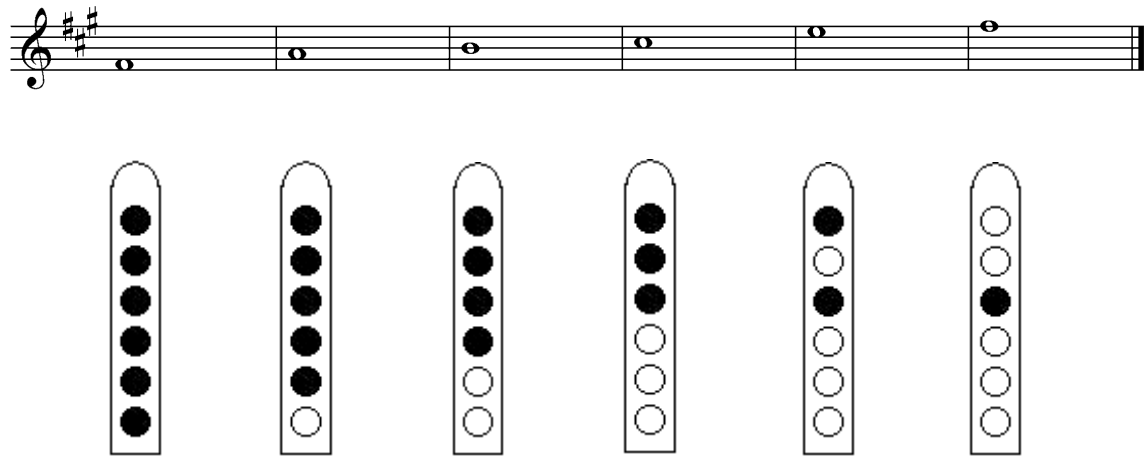

Figure 2: Example of the Minor Pentatonic Scale and Corresponding Fingering on the Native American Flute. Computer Notation and Illustration by Jake Kaehne.

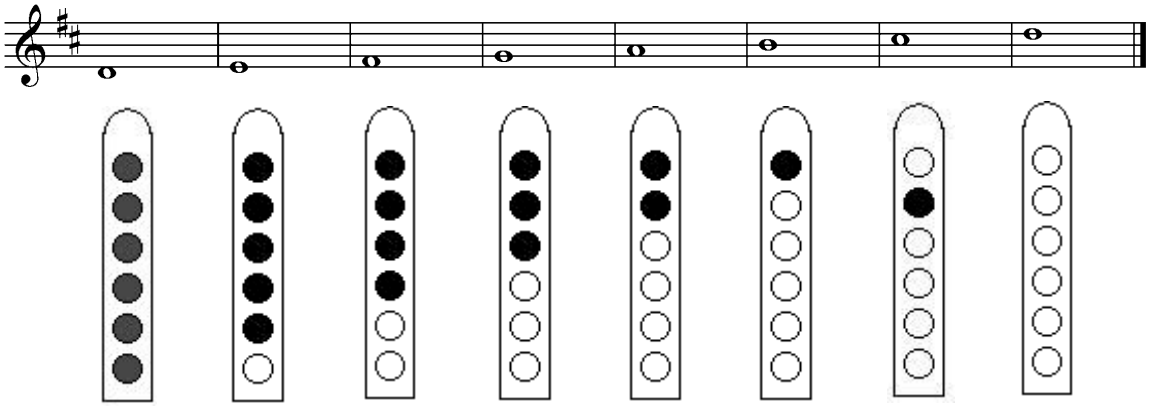

Figure 3: Example of the Diatonic Scale and Corresponding Fingering on the Native American Flute. Computer Notation and Illustration by Jake Kaehne.

Native flutes are made of wood and have a mellow and subdued timbre. Parts of the flute, such as the leather binding, and the totem, have become more mainstreamed than personal. Still, the flute carries on the traditions of the totem and leather straps. Jon Romer taught me that the totem traditionally identified the clan symbol of the individual player. The leather straps were part of the binding used to hold the flute together after the flute was hallowed out. Today the flute can be hollowed out by laser cuts. The leather straps are maintained even though they are no longer needed. Even with the flute being tuned in Western pitches, the traditional songs can still be played and taught, either orally or with Western notation.

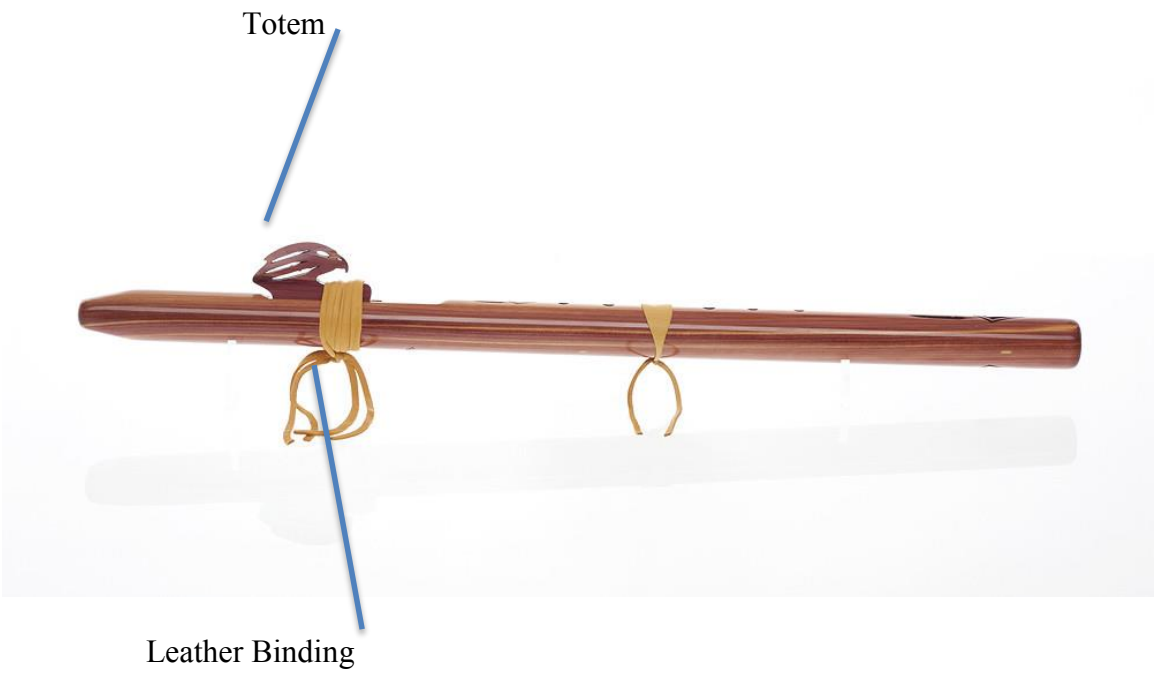

Figure 4: A Picture of an F# Red Cedar Flute from High Spirits. Image Accessed on the World Wide Web. http://highspirits.com/collections/flutes-in-the-key-of-f/products/golden-eagle-f-aromatic-cedar

Many different kinds of woods have been used to make Native American flutes, but the most common is red cedar. (See f# flute above) Red cedar was the primary wood used for Ojibwe flutes and continues to be the most common. Ojibwe people imbue the cedar tree with symbolic importance. Jon Romer teaches that red cedar carries the meanings of the circle (year round) and everlasting life due to being an evergreen tree. Cedar is a softer wood, and therefore does not produce a resonating pure sound, as does a classical flute. Cedar, being a softer wood, produces a traditional Native sound. If harder woods are used, the sound is much purer and therefore more western, but softer woods create a more natural sound, in keeping with sounds tied to nature.

The construction of the flute and its tunings need to be considered in determining why it is a perfect symbolic gift between Native and Western cultures. As mentioned above, the flute has gone through cultural adaptations. Some aspects of the flute still hold true to tradition, while others aspects have been altered in order to interconnect with Western music. The tunings, type

of wood, symbolisms, fingerings, and written notation using Nakai tablature all play a role in determining Native tradition and modern cultural adaptation.

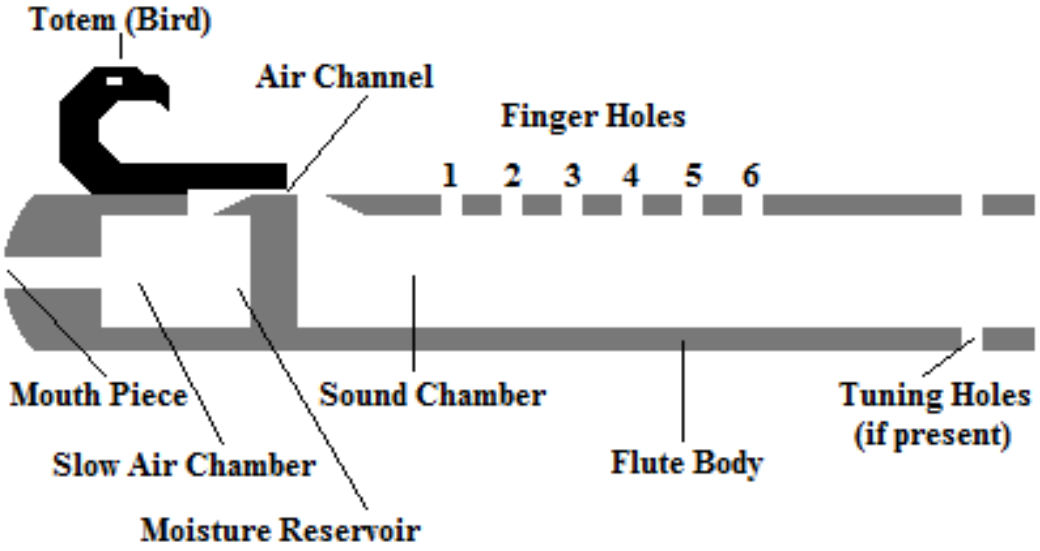

Figure 5: The Parts of the Native American Flute. Illustration by Jake Kaehne.

Traditionally, Native American flutes were not tuned to the Western scale system. The music was taught through oral tradition and did not use written notation. Flutes were built according to the physical measurements of the person who played it. Arm length, hand length, and finger length were all measurements used in creating a flute.[103] Because each individual would have slightly different measurements each flute was unique. The idea of the flute representing the characteristics of the player was more highly sought after and praised than a universal flute or Boehm system flute.[104] There was no need for universal tuning because the flute would either be played by itself, with a hand drum, or with singing.[105]

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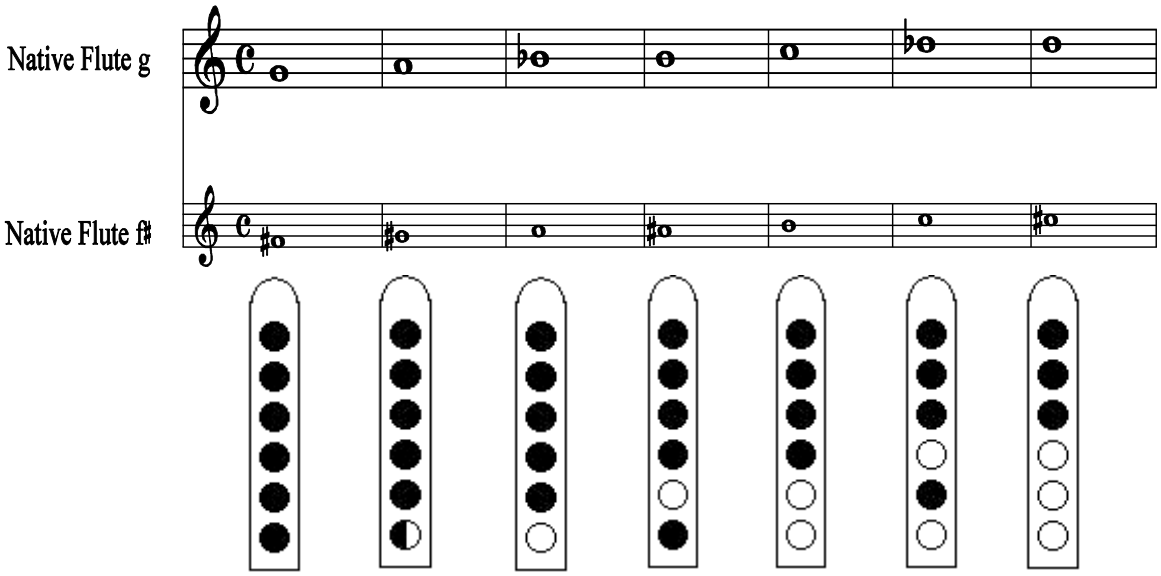
[103] Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota History Society, 1979) 167-169.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Kevin Locke and Richard Dubé, *Learn to Play the Flute: Music Lesson Book for the Indigenous North American Flute* (Bloomington, IN: Lakota Language Consortium, Inc., 2014), 5.

The sound of the Native American flute became more familiar as result of recordings made in the 1980s by R. Carlos Nakai, who played a pentatonic flute.[106] Because of this, flutes created using pentatonic tuning sold well and pentatonic became the Native American flute's modern tuning identity. Grandfather-tuned flutes (the general tuning of the past) would have been diatonic, and could play the pentatonic scale.

Almost all modern Native American flutes use the pentatonic scale. The six-hole Native American flute is the most common of the modern flutes. The six-hole flute allows for the minor pentatonic scale plus the octave note above. Also, the six-hole flute allows for additional notes to be played in addition to the pentatonic scale. This creates more flexibility when choosing Western music repertoire.



[106] Jeff Todd Titon, *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples Third Edition* (Belmont, CA: Shirmer Cengage Learning, 2009), 64-65.

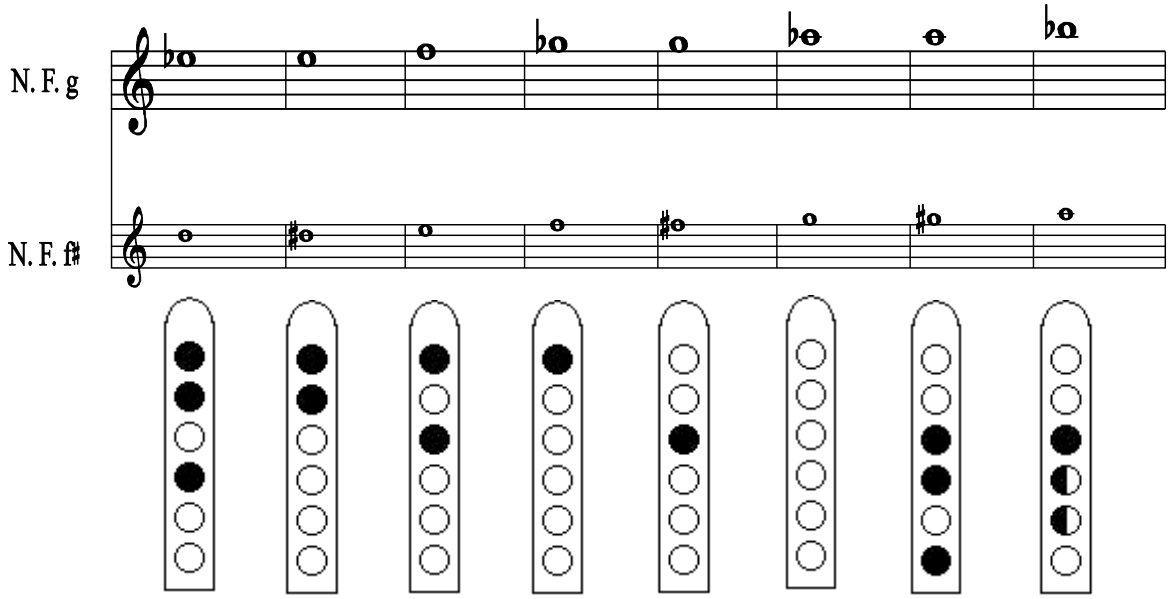


Figure 6: Chromatic Scale and Fingerings with G Minor Concert Pitch and F# Minor Tablature. Computer Notation and Illustration by Jake Kaehne.

Songs for the Native American flute can be learned using Western music notation. R. Carlos Nakai developed a method called f# tab (tablature). Concert pitch is achieved only by playing an f# keyed flute with this method. By learning all the notes possible with the f# flute in f# sharp tab, a musician can play any keyed flute in f# tab because the fingerings for most flutes are the same. Regardless of what keyed flute is being played, the musician can follow the f# tablature and achieve the same melody in a different key. This does several things. The flute player learns the Western ways of playing music (such as rhythm, pitch, and following written notation rather than using improvisation and the oral tradition). Also, the f# tab allows for an easier way of learning the Western ways by the player only needing to learn to play in one key, and allows a player to focus on Native ornamentation and style. Nakai's ornamentation methods include pitch bend, trills, flutter tongue and double tongue.[107]

[107] R. Carlos Nakai and James Demars, *The Art of the Native American Flute* (Phoenix, AZ: Canyon Records Productions, 1996), 29-32.

Nakai Tablature allows for the flute player to understand Western music notation while maintaining Native American ornamentation. Nakai developed written notation for Native American flute ornamentation, including the flip and the slide. Through Western music notation, the Nakai tablature has allowed the flute player to be able to read music, as well as keep the Native American traditions alive, including notation of Native American ornaments.[108]

Agreeing to use Western music notation helps maintain rhythmic accuracy, especially during collaboration between native musicians and their western counterparts. One often hears a Native flute playing with the guitar. This combination can be notated accurately, (see below) using Nakai symbols and western chord symbols.

Native American flute players now perform traditional and contemporary music. String instruments are some of the more common instruments from Western culture used for accompanying the Native American flute. The harp, violin, viola, cello, and guitar among others are often used, and the Native flute is being played with symphony orchestras. Besides large ensembles, a guitar with the flute is the most prevalent. The guitar is identified with the west, open and free, and takes on the Native traditional outlook of being symbolically open and free to roam the creator's lands. The guitar and flute are a common duet in many recordings.

There are many recordings of Native American flute players accompanied by western instruments. The tuning of the modern Native American flute allows for this to be possible and for cultures to come together with music as the tool:

1. Meditations: Native American Flute – John August accompanied by Guitar, Violin, Percussion and Upright Bass.
2. Mississippi Sunrise – Jon Romer accompanied by Celtic Harp.
3. Bridges – Jon Romer accompanied by Celtic Harp.

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[108] Ibid.

4. Beneath the Raven Moon – Mary Youngblood accompanied by multiple string instruments and percussion.

5. Heart of the World – Mary Youngblood accompanied by multiple string instruments and percussion.

6. Earth Gift – Kevin Locke accompanied by multiple string instruments and percussion.

7. Estun – Bah: Melodies of the Cane Flute Vol. 2 – Tony Duncan accompanied by Guitar

8. Native America – Various Native American artists including Andrew Vasquez and Bill Miller who play the flute with guitar accompaniment

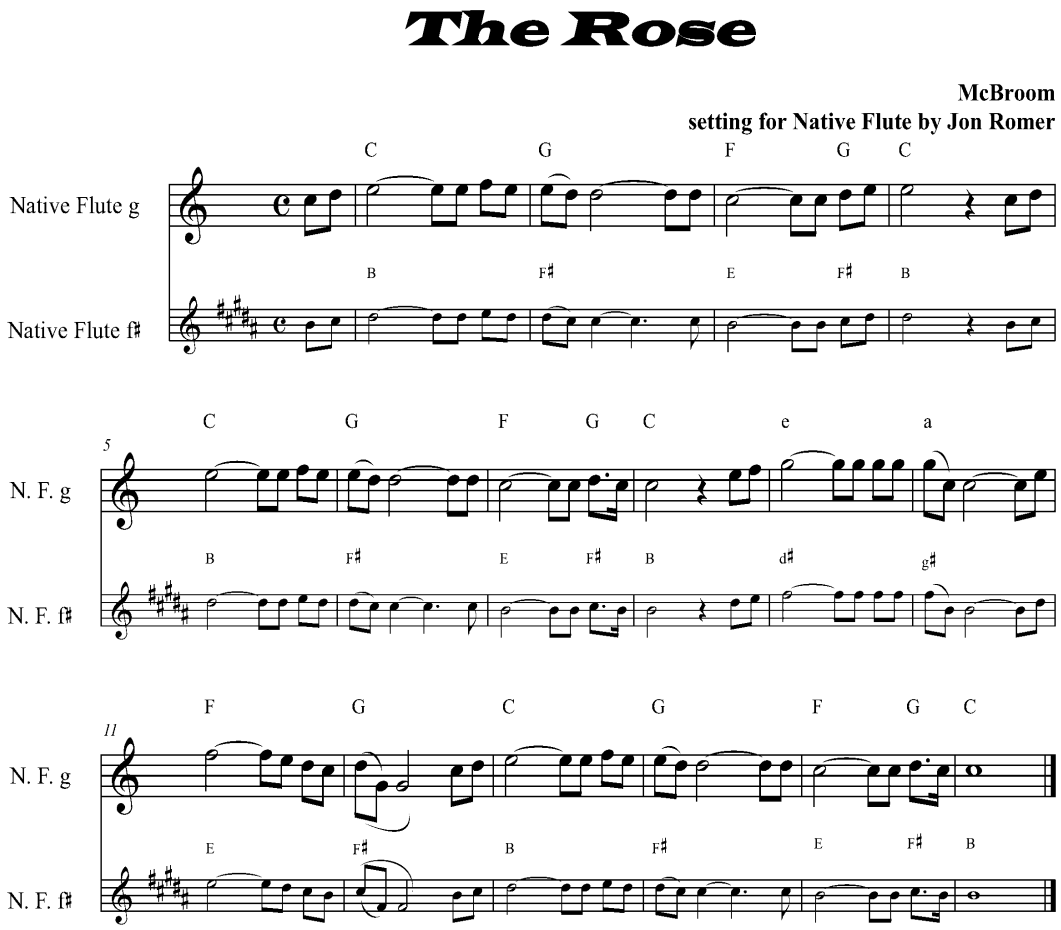

Figure 7: The Rose. Setting for the Native American Flute. Computer Notation by Jake Kaehne.

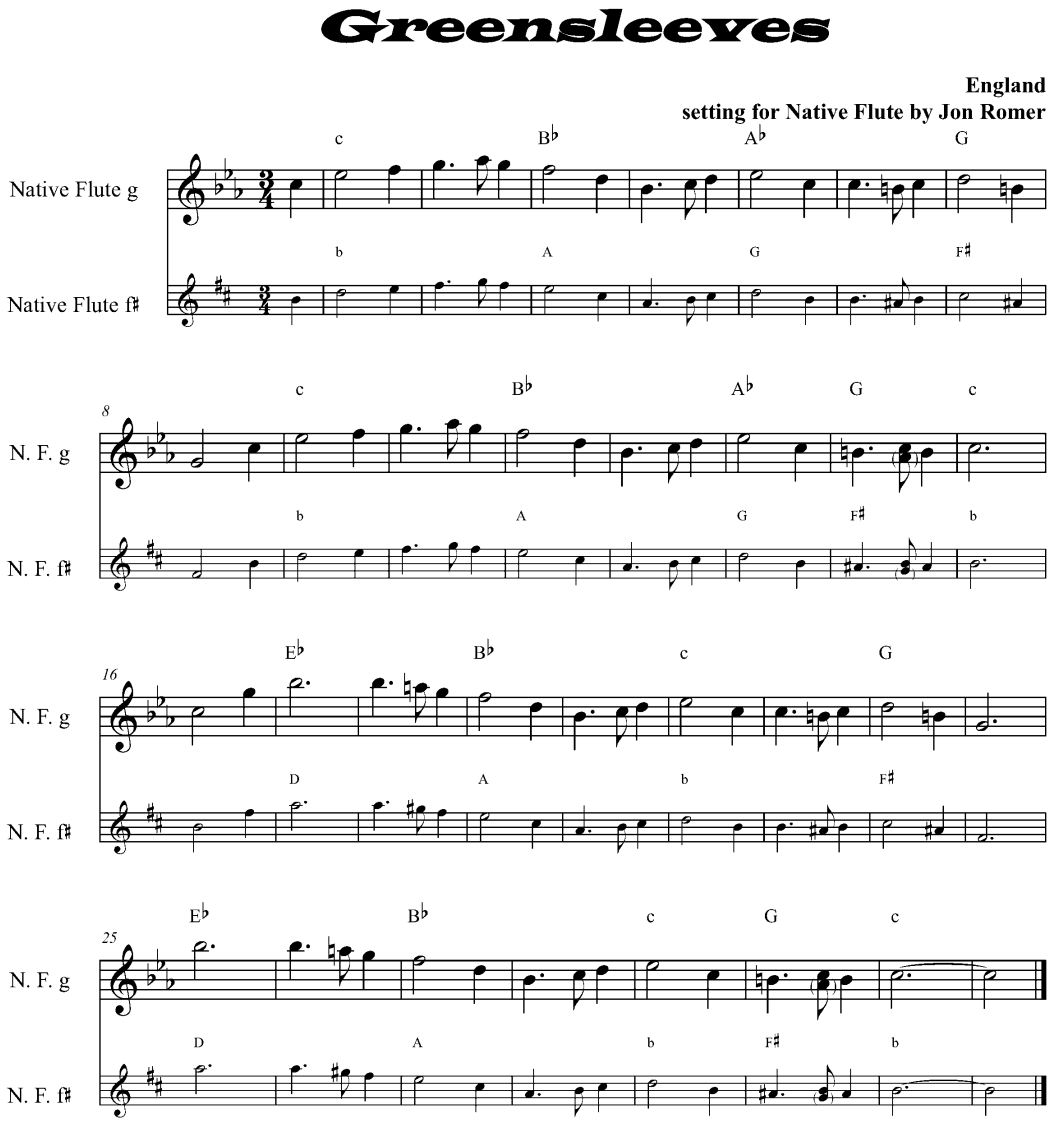

Figure 8: Greensleeves. Setting for the Native American Flute. Computer Notation by Jake Kaehne.

The Native American Flute as an Instrument for Cross-Cultural Unity

With the assistance of comparative musicologists in the early 20th century, such as Frances Densmore, the music of the oral tradition lives on. It lives on but in a different method of preservation. Rather than the oral tradition being dominant, it is the written and recorded tradition that is dominant. With the struggles of Native culture, and the oral tradition unable to sustain, it is recordings and written notation methods that allow it to survive. Native American music has journeyed from an oral tradition, to recordings, to written notation, and is now striving to return to its oral roots. Currently, all three methods are strong in Native American flute learning. This transition demonstrates how traditional and contemporary methods between Native American and Western culture are working together to help multicultural music thrive. The Native American flute is an excellent example of this.[109]

The influences of Western musical culture has caused the Native American flute to adapt, adjust or evolve, so that Native flute traditions and performance practices remain alive, while blending into new styles and idioms. In present times the Native American people are faced with a multicultural environment. Cultures make sacrifices as well as maintain traditions in order to be accepted and understood by other cultures. The flute is a symbol of this shift. The sound of the flute, the meaning, and the ornamentation lives on. The exact tuning, the scale, and how music is preserved and learned has changed. It is through these preservations and alterations that the ways of the Native Americans are communicated to Western culture and bring about better understanding.

The cross-cultural adaptability of Native American flute music and its cultural significance as a gift has helped to cement a friendship between BSU and the LLTC. The flute

[109] Johnny D. Boggs, "Frances Densemore's Fight to Preserve Indian Music," *Wild West*, February 2016, 27.

that was gifted communicates support and respect to the Ojibwe people associated with the LLTC through its cedar wood, loon totem, and most importantly its sound. The adaptations of the flute to western culture allow the flute to also speak to the people of BSU as a mainstream university. The Western tunings allow the flute to expand its horizons to western music, therefore allowing the flute to be understood and accepted at BSU. The flute has mutual meaning for the two institutions and therefore symbolizes the partnership they share.

The gifting of the modern Native American flute between Bemidji State University and the Leech Lake Tribal College was a rectifying act for the modern Native American flute is both tribal and cross-cultural by being Pan-Native, having music with Native American roots and from other cultures, and has meanings specific to Ojibwe culture. This allows the flute to have cross-cultural practices.

CHAPTER IV. CONCLUSION

There are cultural differences between Native and non-Native people, but the Native American flute, with its modern adaptations, have helped bridge some of those differences. In Bruno Nettl's book *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts* we find how ethnomusicology expresses the universals of music due to all cultures possessing it, but the music is also non-universal because each culture has its own unique musical styles and worldviews.[110] I described the modern musical aspects of the Native American flute, and why these characteristics were a key reason Bemidji State University chose this flute as a gift to the Leech Lake Tribal College as a symbol of their strong, continuing, and mutually beneficial relationship. This thesis truly illustrates that in the gifting discourse, it is important to combine threads from the disciplines of ethnomusicology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and education.

I researched the history of Ojibwe education, the gifting discourse, and Ojibwe cultural gifting to set the foundation of my thesis. I then proceeded to express the thoughts of key individuals involved in a particular gifting event. Last, I discussed music books/packets to further show how the Native American flute fits into both Native American and Western culture.

My findings indicate that the gifting ceremony that took place between BSU and the LLTC was a rectifying moment between Native American and Western cultures. The boarding school era set out to destroy Ojibwe culture, whereas the gift of the flute supported that culture. Gifting is a way to build social bonds, and therefore the gift of the flute was an expression of support for both cultures working together rather than one culture oppressing the other.

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[110] Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005) 42-59.

The interviews conducted further support this argument by showing how the giver took the necessary steps to ensure a positive outcome. These steps include, visiting leaders of the culture for guidance, choosing a gift that represents both the giver and the receiver to signify their relationship, and going to the receiver's home as a form of respect when giving the gift. The four individuals interviewed overlap each other's ideas of the gifting to further indicate that intentions of the gift were well understood by all parties involved.

Lastly I discussed the musical aspects of the Native American flute through three music books/packets. These resources demonstrate how the Native American traditions are still alive and important to the culture, but also show the teachings of the music to be linked to Western methods including pitches, western notation, and repertoire. The flute is also tied to Western culture through its ability to be played alongside western instruments. These examples validate how the flute was the perfect gift to express healing, acceptance, and a bonding of Native and non-Native people in education.

Future research will want to further consider how music can be an ally in building social bonds. If scholars in the fields of education, psychology, sociology, and anthropology are dealing with a situation with a musical item or musical involvement, then they will find scholars in ethnomusicology to be worthy partners in the matter. The gifting discourse altogether should continue to keep in mind the idea of gifting as a means of rectification between people groups. That rectification can be symbolized in a much deeper way than merely the gift object itself, but also in how the gift has and is being used to symbolize and strengthen that social bond.

I will conclude with a quote from the newspaper article that covered the gifting event between BSU and the LLTC. Dr. Leah Carpenter makes her statement regarding the gift when Dr. Jon Quistgaard presents it to her. "'To me, it just means that we will continue to be partners

for a long time,' Carpenter said after unwrapping the flute from the fabric it was kept in. 'We will continue to make beautiful educational music together.'"[111]

[111] Michelle Rickdaschel, "Lasting Connection," *Bemidji Pioneer* (Bemidji, MN), Sept. 14, 2005.

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