
Kinoomaadiwag

“They are Teaching Each Other”

Niibaakhom: Ojibwe War Chief and Debassige ancestor

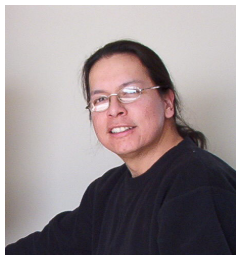
By A. Corbiere

When mention is made of the War of 1812, the two names that come immediately to mind are Tecumseh and General Isaac Brock. Although it is well known that numerous Nishnaabeg from Lake Huron area fought in the War of 1812, many of these warriors and chiefs have sunk into obscurity and are not remembered. Some notable chiefs and warriors who achieved some fame include Chief Shingwaukonse (Pine) from Garden River, Jean Baptiste Assiginack (Black Bird), as well as Mookomaanish (Little Knife), both of whom eventually settled at Wikwemikong. But who were the Michigiwadinong (M’Chigeeng) chiefs and warriors

that served in “His Majesty’s Service” during the War of 1812?

Oral tradition on Manitoulin, as recounted by both Wikwemikong and M’Chigeeng residents, recall a great war chief named Niibaakhom. Chief Niibaakhom was the father of Chief Taibosegai (Debassige), so he is the great-great-great grandfather of all “Debassiges” and “Taibosegais” in M’Chigeeng.

The name Niibaakhom has been translated as “Clap of Thunder at night”. However, Niibaakhom descendant Lewis Debassige, understands the name to mean “He who is at the periphery”. Vincent Debassige talking



Mr. Alan Corbiere

about Niibaakhom stated that “**gii-bmose maaba gbe-dbik mtigwaakiing, niibaakhom gaa-nji-zhinkaazod:**

This fellow

walked all night through the woods, that is why he was called Niibaakhom”. By Debassige family tradition, Niibaakhom means “walking through the woods at night” or “he who is at the periphery” while the historical documents report that it means “clap of thunder at night”. Niibaakhom fought alongside the British during the War of 1812 and was reportedly described as “a great war chief who was renowned for his brave exploits and for his accuracy in foretell-

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Special points of interest:

- *Art Contest finalist of Grade 7 & 8, Featuring Niibaakhom. Take a look!*
- *Story of “Niibaakhom Captures Fort” told by Lewis Debassige*
- www.mchigeeng.net/kinoomaadoog

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