

# REVIVING HERITAGE

*Stories of the Ojibwe People*



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# ABOUT

The Ojibwe, also known as the Chippewa or Saulteaux, is a nation of Indigenous people in Canada and the United States who are part of a larger cultural group known as the Anishinaabeg. The Ojibwe have occupied the Eastern Woodlands and the Great Lakes region, fostering a history that has spanned over a thousand years. They became an integral part of the early fur trade economy, which ended in 1870. Despite assimilative efforts by federal and provincial United States governments in 1990, Ojibwe culture, language, and activism have persisted, demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of this vibrant community.

Historically, the Ojibwe were semi-nomadic, subsisting through hunting, fishing, and gathering. They resided in dome-shaped birchbark dwellings known as wigwams and moved seasonally to follow the resources provided by the land. Gathering activities served as a time for socializing and gift-giving, which reinforced the importance of reciprocity and community in Ojibwe society.

Today, the Ojibwe language, Anishinaabemowin, remains an essential part of Ojibwe culture and identity. With many regional dialects, Anishinaabemowin is part of the Algonquian language family and continues to be spoken and taught in various communities.

*These are their stories.*

# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH STORYTELLING

## *Leah Lemm's Journey*

Leah Lemm, a member of the Mille Lacs Band of the Ojibwe Tribe, embodies the spirit of resilience and cultural preservation. Raised in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, Lemm's pursuit of education and cultural advocacy began at a young age. At 15 years old, she participated in the Native American Preparatory Scholars (NAPS) Fund initiative, immersing herself in programs aimed at increasing Indigenous representation in higher education.

Lemm found her calling in storytelling through multimedia. In her work with Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) and as a podcaster, she amplifies Indigenous voices and narratives, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions. Lemm's dedication to sharing Indigenous stories reflects her passion for empowering and fostering the betterment of the Ojibwe people.

Beyond her media contributions, Lemm remains deeply engaged in her community. She reports for a weekly segment on MPR called Minnesota Native News, where she sheds light on issues affecting Indigenous peoples. Alongside her brother, Cole Premo, she hosts and produces the podcast Native Lights: Where Indigenous Voices Shine, providing a platform for Native individuals to share their stories and experiences.

Education has always been the key to unlocking doors, not just for myself but for our entire community. It's about breaking down barriers and ensuring that our voices are heard at every level. Our stories are not just stories, they are our legacy, our connection to the past, and our guide for the future. By reclaiming our narrative, we reclaim our power and redefine our place in society. Our resilience as Indigenous peoples is not just about surviving, it's about thriving and reclaiming our place in the world. By sharing our stories, we inspire others to see the strength and beauty within our communities.

*- Leah Lemm*



Language is the heartbeat of our culture. It's not just about words, it's about preserving our identity, our heritage, and our connection to the land. For me, teaching Ojibwe is not just a profession, it's a calling. It's about passing down the knowledge and wisdom of our ancestors to future generations. Our language is our lifeline, our connection to our past, present, and future. By teaching Ojibwe, we ensure that our culture continues to thrive. We are reclaiming what was taken from us, piece by piece. It's a journey of resilience and determination, but one that is worth every effort. Our languages hold the knowledge of centuries, the wisdom of our ancestors. By preserving them, we honor their legacy and pave the way for a brighter future.

- Dr. Anton Teruer



# GUARDIAN OF LANGUAGE

## *Dr. Anton Treuer's Mission*

Dr. Anton Treuer, a distinguished Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University, is renowned for his tireless efforts in preserving and promoting Ojibwe culture and language. With over 40 prestigious awards from organizations such as the American Philosophical Society and the MacArthur Foundation, Treuer's impact reverberates across communities.

Deeply connected to the Ojibwe community from his literature, teachings, and social content, Treuer dedicates his time to officiating traditional ceremonies and fostering cultural revitalization. He's committed to transforming Ojibwe education, combating historical shame, and promoting pride in heritage. Treuer's teaching extends beyond the classroom as he shares the Ojibwe language and culture through social media platforms such as YouTube and in over 20 published books.

Treuer is instrumental in building immersion schools and advocating for social justice and equity. His influence transcends borders as he lectures globally on topics of cultural competence, equity, and tribal sovereignty. Treuer's legacy as a scholar, mentor, and advocate ensures the preservation and celebration of Ojibwe heritage for generations to come.

# PRESERVING INDIGENOUS CULTURE

## *Brooke Ammann's Vision*

Brooke Ammann, also known by her Ojibwe name, Niiyogaabawiikwe, is a dedicated and passionate leader in the revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures. She is the Director of Institutional Development at Waadookodaading Ojibwe Language Institute (WOLI), located on the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Reservation in Hayward, Wisconsin. Ammann's journey into language restoration is deeply rooted in her personal history and commitment to preserving Indigenous culture.

Ammann is committed to using cultural activities such as harvesting wild rice, maple sugaring, and snaring rabbits to teach math, science, and anatomy lessons in a culturally relevant way. She believes that language and culture revitalization are vital to a holistic, wellness approach. As a mother, educator, and administrator, Ammann is deeply invested in providing future generations with the tools to embrace their heritage. She advocates for prioritizing language restoration as a foundational step towards reclaiming Indigenous identity and asserting sovereignty.

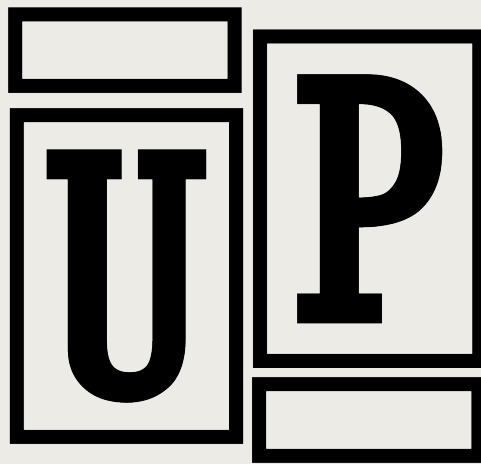
My grandfather's journey to reclaim his identity and language inspires me every day. Despite facing adversity, his determination to live the Ojibwe life and language serves as a powerful reminder of our ancestral resilience. Native organizations need support to navigate the complexities of finances and funding. By fostering reciprocity and sharing knowledge, we can empower Indigenous communities to thrive. Professional Ojibwe families who embrace language and culture contribute to local economies and drive community resurgence. Language revitalization is not just an investment in culture; it's an investment in economic empowerment.

- Brooke Ammann



# REFERENCES

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