

THESIS PRESENTATION

***Ginawaydaganuc and the Circle of All Nations:
The Remarkable Environmental Legacy of
Elder William Commanda***

William Commanda, Hon Phd, OC



THE LEGACY OF ALGONQUIN ELDER
L'HÉRITAGE DE L'AÎNÉ ALGONQUIN

Dr. William Commanda, OC

11.11.1913 - 03.08.2011

*"We must come together
with one heart, one mind, one love,
and one determination to create
A Circle of All Nations
A Culture of Peace."*

*"Nous devons nous unir avec un seul
cœur, une seule âme et une volonté
pour créer un cercle de toutes les
nations et une culture de paix."*



A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

www.circleofallnations.ca

www.asinabka.com

My Thesis Research

The central research query focuses on

- William Commananda's thoughts on Mother Earth, **environmental and relational issues**,
- how they have informed **contemporary debates** on Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations and thinking and action, and
- whether they can contribute to a greater contemporary **integration** of his Anicinabe (Indigenous) approach to **knowledge generation** in academic discourse

- With respect to environment, my research has led me to conclude that there are **limitations to popular contemporary approaches** to the environment – e.g. environmental ethics , deep ecology, feminist geography
- **Acceleration in climate change**, and environmental crises of global impact attest to the urgent need for new, innovative approaches
- Twenty five years after Rio Earth Summit, three things predominate in environmental issues
 - the voice and place of the **Indigenous** and
 - **western domination** of thinking in a “world on fire”
 - **global connections**

Abstract

- This is presentation of a pedagogical framework for the case study analysis of the *Circle of All Nations* discourse of late Indigenous Elder, Dr. William Commanda, OC, on environment, relationships and critical social justice and peace issues.
- The focus of the study is both *abstract* (whether and how his *discourse* impacts approaches to environment and related issues); and *action oriented* (regarding the continued relevance, animation and emergence of the *discourse*, including via praxis); and it employs a *medicine wheel* conceptual framework, and four *logics of inquiry*:
 - **Performance Mapping: to explore his ideological framework**, Indigenous epistemology and the *Anicinabe* underpinnings;
 - **Historical/Dialectical: to ground the analysis in the post structural** idiom and examine its inseparability from contemporary colonial history, injustice and inequality;
 - **Phenomenological: to substantiate an interpretative approach** to analysis, inclusive of critical reflexivity, autoethnography and reciprocity;
 - **Cybercartographic: to examine multi-dimensional** reporting, archival, graphic and emergent elements.
- I explore whether *narrative, geo-narrative, critical reflexivity, autoethnography* and *cybercartographical digital atlas research* and social media methodological tools can be justified and employed to support his knowledge generation and activism in contemporary times, and I explore how such research and scholarship might impact social change.

Who is William Commanda?

- Carrier of sacred **wampum prophecy** heritage
- Renowned birch bark **canoe maker** and craftsman
- **Political Algonquin leader**, elder, chief, chief the North American Indigenous Nations Government
- Founder of the **Circle of All Nations, a global eco-peace-community** dedicated to advancing environmental stewardship and racial harmony
- **Officer of the Order of Canada** and recipient of two **honorary doctorate degrees**
- University of Ottawa Chancellor Michaëlle Jean (GG) created **Commanda Hall** in recognition of his relevance to **academic knowledge in 2014**
- **Canadian History Hall : Commanda panel and message**

William Commanda, Ojigkwanong
(Étoile du matin – Morning Star)



Portrait
2011 dpt

«Ginawayaganic – Nous sommes tous liés»
 Chief William Commanda, of Ojigkwanong, est un constructeur de canots réputé et porteur des valeurs sacrées. Il est chef de sa communauté de Ojigkwanong, dans l'Ontario, du 1983 au 1992, et est membre du gouvernement indien de l'Ontario du Nord, en 1992 à 1993. Les titres sont nombreux jusqu'à sa mort en 2021.
 En 1997, il a été élu à l'Assemblée des Nations, une des conférences mondiale internationale portant la responsabilité collective de notre planète et la paix. Il est un orateur renommé, dont deux doctorats honorifiques, lauréat de la Villa d'Ormeau et des prix d'enthousiasme interculturels. En 2006, il est nommé Officier de l'Ordre du Canada.

«Ginawayaganic – We Are All Connected»
 William Commanda was a remarkable Algonquin elder, noted canoe-maker and renowned canoe builder. He served as Chief of his home community of Ojigkwanong, Ontario from 1983 to 1992 and as Deputy Chief of the North American Indian Nations Government from 1992 to 1993, receiving the title until his death in 2021.
 In 1997, he was named the Chief of History, an historical global eco-peace community dedicated to indigenous wisdom, social justice and peace. He received two doctorates, the Villa of Ormeau, and inter-cultural awards, and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2006.

Respector Mike Taro
 «La Terre, Terre, Terre et la Terre – Les éléments sont respectés à l'écologie, et la Terre est la Terre. Le monde est la Terre, la Terre est la Terre, la Terre est la Terre, la Terre est la Terre.»

William Commanda
 Leader and cultural advisor, William Commanda restored a birch bark canoe to its original form and was a member of the Ojigkwanong community of Ojigkwanong, Ontario from 1983 to 1992, and as Deputy Chief of the North American Indian Nations Government from 1992 to 1993.

Respector Mike Taro
 «The Water, Earth, Water and All – These elements are respected to the ecology, and the Earth is the Earth. The world is the Earth, the Earth is the Earth, the Earth is the Earth, the Earth is the Earth.»

William Commanda
 A birch bark canoe and cultural advisor, William Commanda restored the world's oldest canoe to its original form and was a member of the Ojigkwanong community of Ojigkwanong, Ontario from 1983 to 1992, and as Deputy Chief of the North American Indian Nations Government from 1992 to 1993.



Portrait
2011 dpt

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Why Study William Commanda

- William Commanda has been influential on environmental issues at a **global** level in some microcosmic fashion since the 1990 UN Pre-Rio Earth Summit deliberations
- He also positioned his approach in many **contemporary debates** – e.g. uranium, water contamination and megadumps, eels, damming, habitat protection, species at risk, in the process influencing diverse players
- William Commanda is well known for his voice of peace building and reconciliation, grounded in his **Indigenous rootedness on the land**, yet **connected with diverse others**
- These *others* animate his **environmental stewardship and peace** building legacy



- His Ojigiway/Squirrel seed planting efforts appear to have sprouted into **multiple still-emergent land based activities**
- As he noted, the gentle Squirrel always travels head first, up and down trees. Like Johnny Cash, he won't back down

Challenges

- There were three particular challenges with this research:
 - i. Finding a place for the knowledge of an Indigenous “**kindergarten dropout**” in the graduate level of the western academy; this required me:
 - to understand western academic thinking and academic approaches to knowledge creation;
 - to deepen my understanding of William Commanda’s Indigenous approach to knowledge; and
 - to articulate his approach to environment and related matters such that it is comprehensible and can spark new thinking within the academy

ii. I myself am **new to the academy** and the study of geography and cartography, and I am **not Indigenous**; I therefore have had to

- Focus on the academic prerequisites for executing this work effectively
- remain focused on my commitment to William Commanada to generate a space for the serious engagement with his way of thinking, and
- not create **misunderstanding** that my exposè of his *Anicinabe* thinking implies expertise with respect to other expressions of Indigenous knowledge

iii. William Commanda created a particular discourse in conjunction with a diversity of players

- the research required meticulous analysis of this informal but complex phenomena, in its past expressions, and in any emergent forms
- players are dispersed across space and occupy a range of positions in the social/cultural framework
- the relevance and role of actants, chance and *trickster* in the discourse required critical attention and analysis

The Central Argument

- Integration of Indigenous relational interface with a living Mother Earth is of critical importance in this Age of the Anthropocene
- William Commananda created his *Circle of All Nations as a BRIDGE* to centre and facilitate co-creation of *Law of Nature* knowledge
- The research experience affirms his infiltration infusion and influence to ignite passionate engagement in multiple environmental and related issues by diverse groups and people

...Environment – Earth Summit ...

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

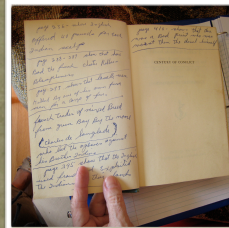
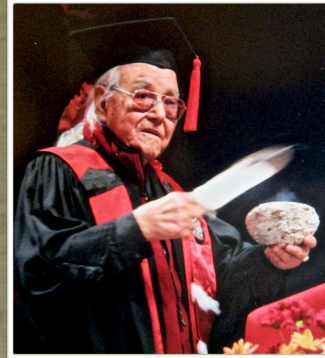
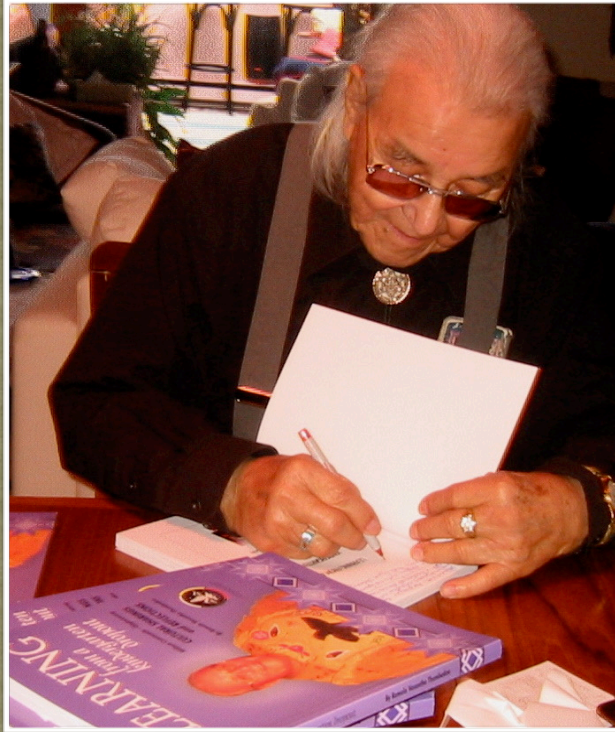


... EARTH SUMMIT PRAYER IN PARIS ...

1987 Constitutional Round Table On Aboriginal Affairs – WC talks about environment

1991 – Pipe Ceremony in France, igniting relationship with Living Earth vs Resource – provider not commodity

1996 Release of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, WC talks about water --- AND THE WORK CONTINUES ...



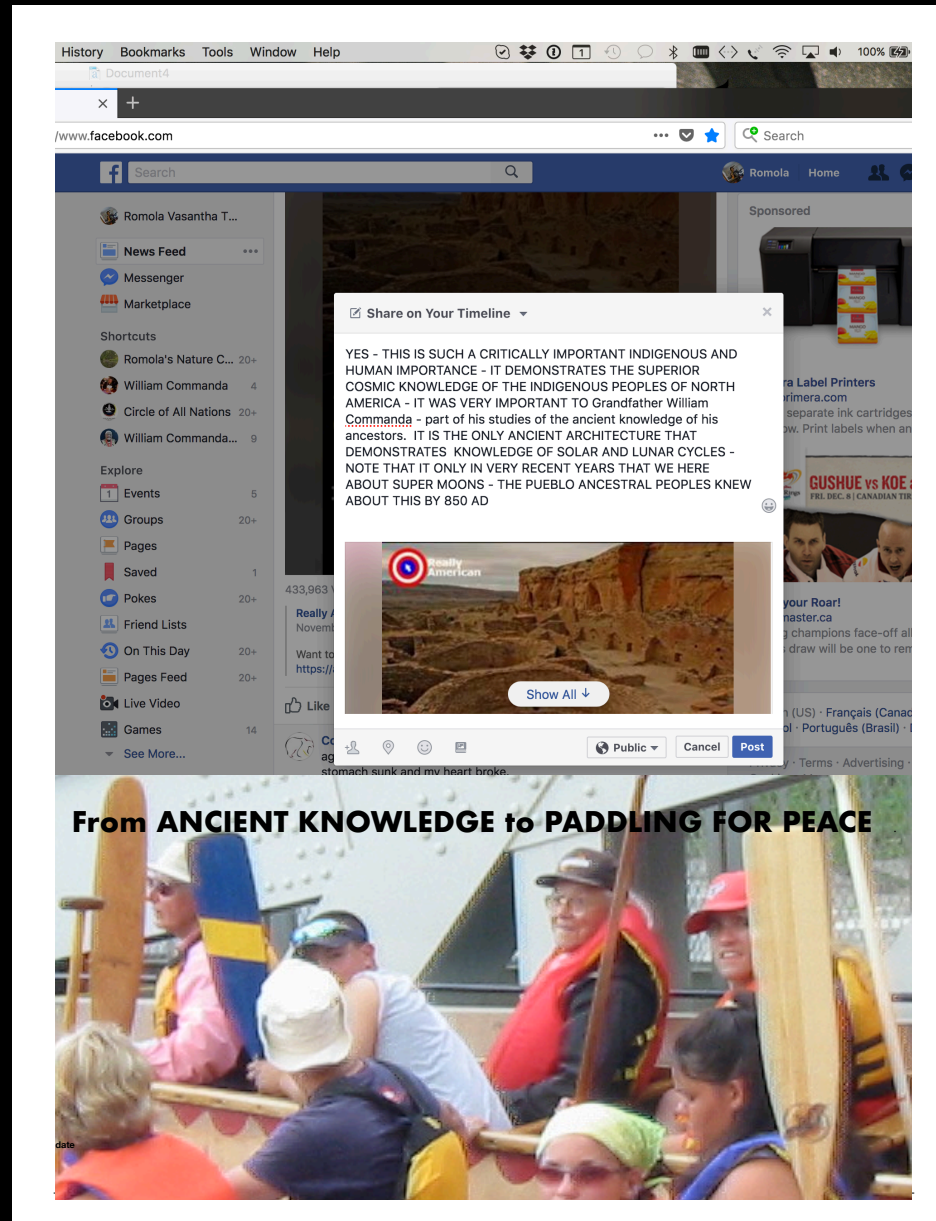
PERPETUAL LEARNER

TIRELESS TEACHER

My central argument now is that a better understanding and integration of William Commanda's ideas and approach to teaching and knowledge generation are of critical importance today. He learned via multiple sources and taught in complex and extremely effective ways. References to him on social media from people across the globe right into 2018 affirms the extensiveness and persistence of his *Circle of All Nations* discourse

www.circleofallnations.ca; www.asinabka.com

WHY IS THE TOPIC IMPORTANT?



The image is a composite graphic. The top portion is a screenshot of a Facebook post. The browser address bar shows 'www.facebook.com'. The post is from 'Romola Vasantha T...' and is titled 'Share on Your Timeline'. The text of the post reads: 'YES - THIS IS SUCH A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT INDIGENOUS AND HUMAN IMPORTANCE - IT DEMONSTRATES THE SUPERIOR COSMIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA - IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO Grandfather William Commanda - part of his studies of the ancient knowledge of his ancestors. IT IS THE ONLY ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE THAT DEMONSTRATES KNOWLEDGE OF SOLAR AND LUNAR CYCLES - NOTE THAT IT ONLY IN VERY RECENT YEARS THAT WE HERE ABOUT SUPER MOONS - THE PUEBLO ANCESTRAL PEOPLES KNEW ABOUT THIS BY 850 AD'. Below the text is a video thumbnail showing ancient stone structures with a 'Really American' logo. The bottom portion of the image is a photograph of a group of people in a canoe, wearing life jackets and hats, paddling on water. The text 'From ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE to PADDLING FOR PEACE' is overlaid on this photograph.

History Bookmarks Tools Window Help

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Really American

Show All

Public Cancel Post

From **ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE** to **PADDLING FOR PEACE**

THE THEORY BEHIND MY ARGUMENT?

- William Commanda created his Circle of All Nations, Culture of Peace global eco-community, as a **deliberate bridge to facilitate the centering Indigenous** in the consciousness of people, quite literally, relationally – that is by making them his relations.
- He did this so that he could introduce them to a relational intimacy with his Mother Earth and to **facilitate co-creation of knowledge emergent from Indigenous earth-based rootedness.**
- World View Sketch: Evelyn C. Dewache





A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

WISDOM

*HARMONY
BALANCE*



Cyber-
cartographical



WELCOME

Animated by the passion of Grandfather William Comandis, the Circle of All Nations is a global eco-community unified by his fundamental and unshakable conviction that as children of Mother Earth, we all belong together, with Nature, irrespective of our individual nation, creed or culture.



Phenomeno-
logical

Logics of
Inquiry

Performance
Mapping



Historical
Dialectical





Cyber-
cartographical
mapping



Critical
Reflexivity

Primary
Methods

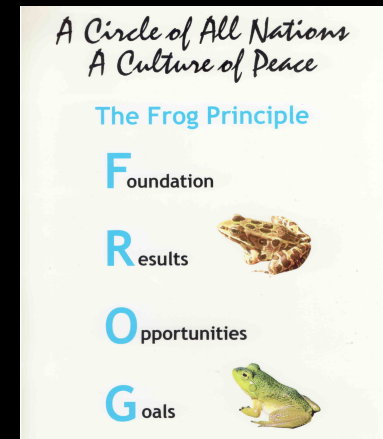
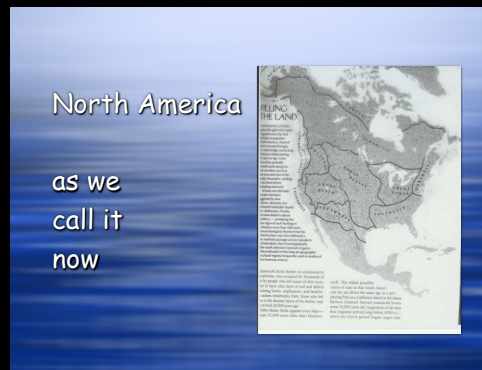
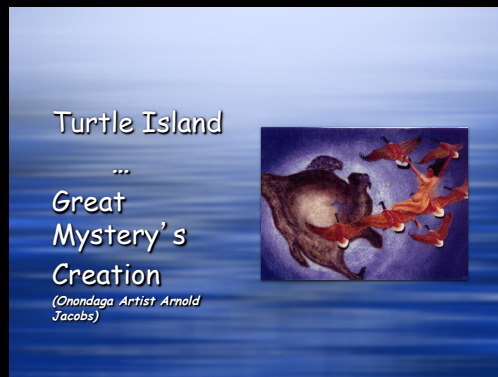
GeoNarrative



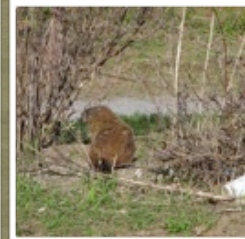
Narrative



Constellations of Information



- Understanding William Commanda's multidimensional and multilayered discourse via methodological tools of
 - Circle of All Nations Frog Principle (developed before word clouds!)
 - Pentimento
 - Photocinography
 - Negentropic Animation



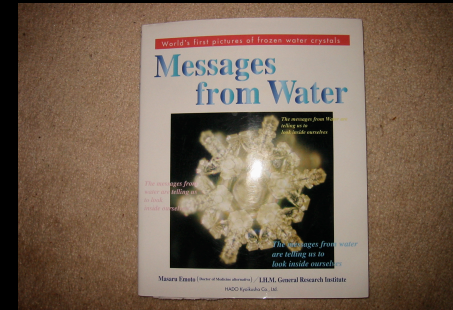
NATURE THE TEACHER

Cosmic, Rocks, Water, Plants, Animals - and Reflexivity

We have thousands of images of the multiple faces of Nature. I say that I take these photographs to acknowledge the lessons that emerge from engaging relationally with the Laws of Nature; it is my equivalent of the tobacco or copper William Commanda would offer nature in exchange for spruce roots or birch bark. It engenders reciprocity.

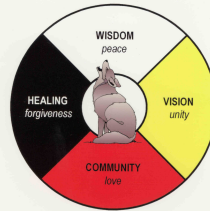
See Romola's NATURE CAN TEACH PAGE ON FACEBOOK!

Water, Syntrophy and Prophecy



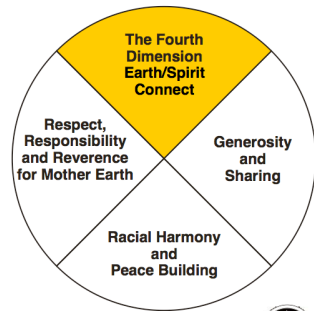
- **Beaver – Water generator and engineer** of the emerging American North East
- **Water – the life trail and primal teacher** of the First Peoples of the American North East, post the retreat of the Wisconsin Ice sheet
- **Alonzo Commanda read** the fire, land, water, wind and stars – cosmic and integrated them;
- **The Seven Fires Prophecy** Wampum Belt was carried by his direct ancestor, Great Grandfather Pakinawatik, and later William Commanda himself
- **Syntropy is a powerful construct** to elucidate the complexities and depths of Indigenous knowledge that quantum physics and scientists are now examining

*A Circle of All Nations
A Culture of Peace*



The Wolf Project
dignifying each other as one race:
"A Human Race"

The Light of The Eighth Fire



William Commanda
circleofallnations@sympatico.ca



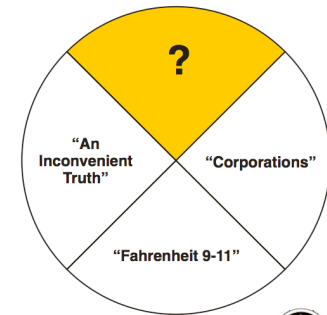
A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

WISDOM

HARMONY
BALANCE



Dominant Ideologies



William Commanda
circleofallnations@sympatico.ca



A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

The Crucial Paradigm Shift



William Commanda
circleofallnations@sympatico.ca



A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
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A CIRCLE of ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE of PEACE
 FOUNDED BY
WILLIAM COMMANDA
 a global eco community
 unified by values of

- RESPECT
- RESPONSIBILITY
- FORGIVENESS
- COMPASSION

Focussed on advancing

- INDIGENOUS WISDOM
- RESPECT for MOTHER EARTH
- RACIAL HARMONY
- SOCIAL JUSTICE

Reciprocity of 1's & 10's
 Can you do too without asking?

ASINABKA
SACRED CHAUDIÈRE
SITE

- Indigenous Centre
- Peace Building
- Eco City Park
- Historic Park

Reconciliation



SPiRiT of the NOR
WISDOM OF THE OLDER SiE

Recipient of 1's & 10's
WILLIAM COMMANDA
CORONA BOREALIS

FROM the HEART of POLAR BEAR
A MESSAGE

SAVING AGES

- IN THE OLD DAYS WILLIAM WALKED 50 MILES A DAY ON HIS SHOULDER AND ALL THE COMMUNITIES PTY WAS HEALTHY + FM
- TODAY WE HAVE THE CIVILIAN + SPOONING SPORTS + ELITIST SPORTS + SPORTS BODY WORSHIPS ABOUT 1000

TROPHY they
THAT WE GOT FOR OUR
TRIN ORCHARD

An Iteration of the Commanda Discourse

CANOE
Spirit of MAMTOU
 Where was Mamtoou before he created the Earth?
 'In his Canoes, which was floating in the skies'
The Indigenous Canoe
 -the penultimate symbolic wonder of CANADA

- Integrating the physical + metaphysical
- Integrating Spirit, Art, Craft + Invention with the practical + sustainable

The Metaphor for Navigating the Journey of one's Life

WATER FALLS
of the
SPiRiT OF WATER

- ONE OF THE FOUR SACRED ELEMENTS
- CONTAMINATED, POLLUTED + DEPLETED EVERYWHERE

WILLIAM COMMANDA SAYS
 'I believe Mother Earth is a living creature. She has body + spirit + veins. The rivers are her veins. If they are blocked everywhere, cancers, poisons build up; eventually they kill Dams, motor vehicles, foreign animals, fertilizers, pesticides, sewage are attacking the blood of Mother Earth. We are obligated to fight back in NATURE'S LAW'

PARKS + the BOREAL FOREST

- 70% of NATIONAL PARKS WERE CREATED AT THE INSISTENCE OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES
- THE BOREAL RENDEZVOUS IS EMBEDDED IN THE PRAYERS OF OUR ELDER

WE ARE LIVING IN TIMES of PROPAGACY
ONLY AFTER THEN IS NOW
 THE LAST TREE IS CUT LOGGING IN DECLINE
 RIVER IS POISONED OYABA RIVER PARK
 LAST FISH CAUGHT ANCIEN TEEL'S DAM
 THEN YOU WILL KNOW AND
 MONEY CAN'T BEHOLD GLOBAL CRISIS

WILLIAM COMMANDA IS THE TIGER'S VOICE
 THE NATIONAL CAPITAL OF CANADA
 THE MOTHER EARTH LAW OF CANADA
 THE INDIGENOUS CANOE

HISTORY - ANCIENT HISTORY

- Well beyond 4000 years
- BILLIONS of YEARS AGO, the MOST ANCIENT ROCKS EMERGED HERE
- + 5000 YEARS AGO → MEETING PLACE of INDIGENOUS PEOPLES of N.A.
- 400 years AGO, WILLIAM'S ANCESTORS PRAYED HERE AS CHAMPLAIN WATCHED
- IN the 1500's, there were plus 100,000,000 peoples in America
- DECIMATED BY ORIGINAL GERM WARFARE + near GENOCIDE
- IN the 1800's the LAND TRANSFORMATION BEGAN →
- FUR TRADE • LOGGING • DAMS
- HYDRO • NUCLEAR ENERGY
- ie RESOURCES of WILLIAM'S ANCESTORS GAVE BIRTH TO CANADA

WHAT CONTENT DO I USE?



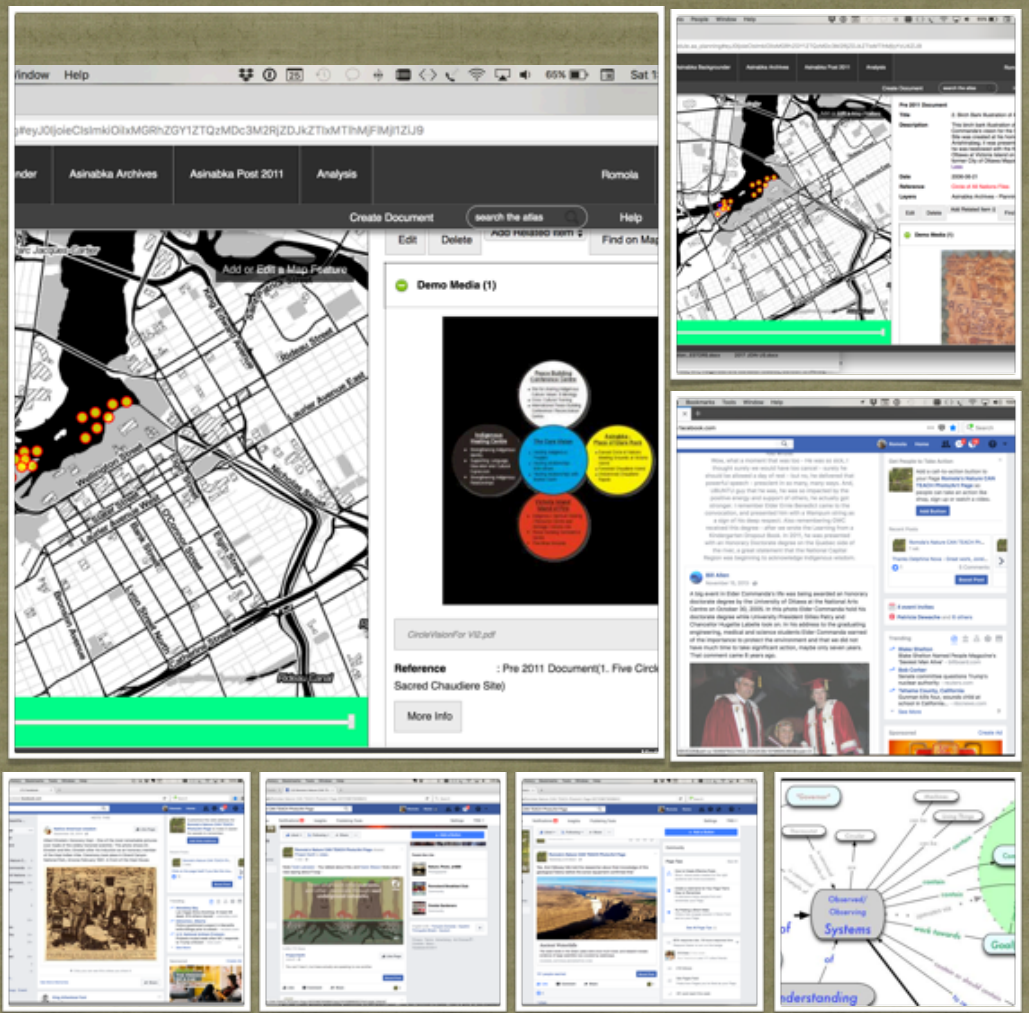
ASINABKA SACRED CHAUDIERE SITE



During the Spring of 2017, the National Capital Region awakened to the power of the Chaudiere Falls, with the unprecedented flooding throughout the Ottawa River Watershed. On the day I delivered my written thesis, Carleton University students were challenging the National Capital Commission's coloured light show Miwate at the contested sacred site - note The Leveller on the desk of Erin Johnston, Graduate Programs Administrator.



William Commanda, Spiritual Leader, and Douglas Cardinal, world renowned Architect, worked together for over two decades to develop and advance the vision for the Asinabka Victoria Island/Sacred Chaudiere Site. Donald Marshall Junior, the voice for Indigenous Justice and Rights, was also actively engaged in the work. I call them our Indigenous Triumvirate - they are powerful voices on the critical global issues of our times: Indigenous rights, environment, peace, education, youth, culture, values, responsibilities, justice, art and creativity. They envisioned the fully inclusive global Asinabka eco-peace think tank conference centre at the ancient sacred meeting place.



CYBERCARTOGRAPHY

Ancient Knowledge Base and Contemporary Application

More than a decade ago, D. R. Fraser Taylor, Director of the Geomatics Cartographic Research Centre (GCRC) at the Carleton University, the academic pioneer in the field of cybercartography, wrote that this technology would see cartography applied to a much wider range of topics than had traditionally been the case: "It will also utilize an increasing range of emerging media, forms and telecommunication networks such as the Internet and the World Wide Web. It will be a multidimensional cartography using multimedia formats and is more likely to be an integral part of an information package than a stand-alone product. Cybercartography will also be highly interactive and engage the user in new ways. In organizational terms, it will see new partnerships being created between national mapping organizations, the private sector and educational institutions and the products of cybercartography are likely to be compiled by teams of individuals from very different disciplines and professional perspectives working together" (Taylor and Pyne 2009).

ISSUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Many more exciting topics present for further research on William Commanda's discourse
 - The brain is hardwired to movement
 - Oral storytelling is *Thought in Motion*; Indigenous languages hold singular concepts
 - Spirit-grounded reflexivity consistent with *Laws of Nature*
 - Cyber Moccasin Mapping!

• *The Journey Continues ...*



William Commanda 1913 - 2017



**A Circle of All Nations, A Culture of Peace:
Legacy Vision and Work of Sacred Wampum
Belts Carrier, Algonquin Elder, Indigenous
Chief, Environmental Activist and Peace
Builder, Officer of the Order of Canada
Dr. William Commanda**

A special spiral in the William Commanda life cycle concluded with his November 11, 2017 birthday. With gratitude to those who keep him Encore Vivant and continue to animate his work. 11-11-1913 - 3-8-2011