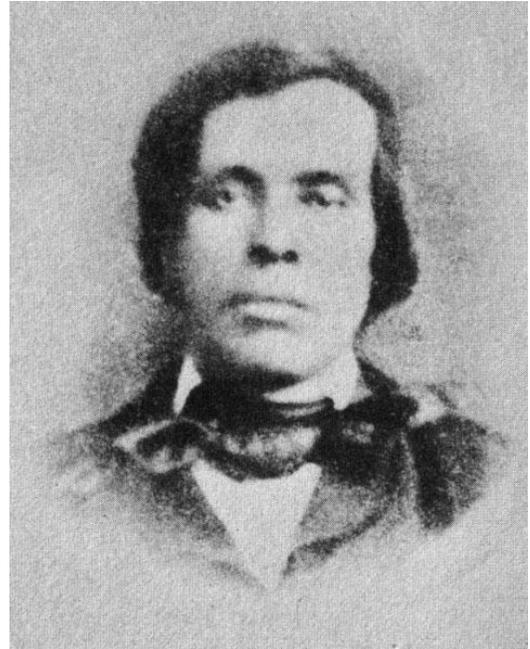


On “Sweet,” “Yellow Head,” and “Two-Spirit”

by David Thorstad

The Pillager band was the advance guard in the mid-eighteenth-century Ojibwe migration into what would become the state of Minnesota a century later. According to Ojibwe mythology, the Great Spirit (*gichi-manidoo*) had told them to migrate to a place where “the food grows on water.” Minnesota, with its plentiful wild rice (a sacred plant to the Ojibwe), was their destination.¹ Nineteenth-century Ojibwe historian William Warren (1825–53), in his history of the Ojibwe, says that the Pillagers “had become noted at this time (and it is a character which they have retained ever since), as being the bravest band of the tribe. Being obliged, continually, to fight with the Dakotas for the country over which they hunted, every man capable of bearing arms became a warrior and had seen actual service. They were consequently filled with a daring and independent spirit, and no act was so wild, but that they were ready and disposed to achieve it.”²



William W. Warren

Warren relates an incident on the island of Michilimackinac at the outbreak of the War of 1812 where Weshcubb (“Sweet”), “the war-chief of the Pillagers,” along with his band of warriors from Leech Lake, were beseeched by the British to join forces under the British flag. The chief refused, prompting the commandant to make the following insulting remarks:

“I thought you were men, but I see that you are but women, not fit even to wear the breech-cloth. Go back to your homes. I do not wish the assistance of women. Go, put on the clothing which more befits you, and remain quiet in your villages.”

As the angry commandant started to leave the council room, Weshcubb rose to his feet, put his hand on the Englishman’s epaulette, “and gently held him back”:

“Wait,” said he, “you have spoken; now let me speak. You say that we should not wear the breech-cloth, but the dress of women.” Then pointing to the

opposite shore of the lake, towards the site of the old English fort which the Ojibways had taken in 1763, We-esh-coob exclaimed:—

“Englishman! have you already forgotten that we once made you cry like children? yonder! who was the woman then?

“Englishman! you have said that we are women. If you doubt our manhood, you have young men here in your strong house. I have also young men. You must come out on some open place, and we will fight. You will better know, whether we are fit, or not, to wear the breech-cloth.

“Englishman! you have said words which the ears of We-esh-coob have never before heard,” and throwing down his blanket in great excitement, he pointed to different scars on his naked body, and exclaimed: “I thought I carried about me the marks which proved my manhood.”³

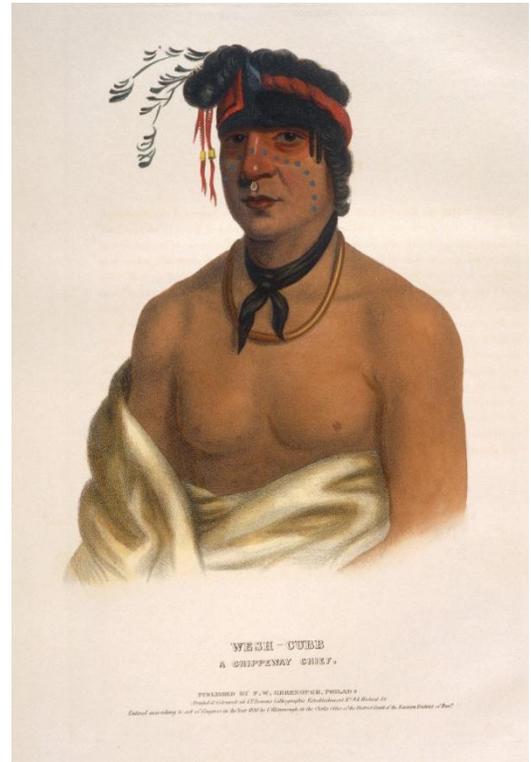
Weshcubb was known on the frontier for his prowess as a warrior and his skill as a diplomat. But he was also known for his son Ozaawindib (Yellow Head), a warrior from Leech Lake who was a notorious same-sexer.

Weshcubb (Le Sucre), a chief at Red Lake and Leech Lake, is also mentioned by explorer Zebulon Pike, who traveled to the headwaters of the Mississippi in the early nineteenth century. While at Leech Lake on February 11, 1806, Pike reports meeting the chief and other Ojibwe leaders: “The Sweet, Buck, Burnt, etc., arrived, all chiefs of note, but the former in particular, a venerable old man. From him I learned that the Sioux occupied this ground when, to use his own phrase, ‘he was a made man and began to hunt; that they occupied it the year that the French missionaries were killed at the river Pacagama.’ The Indians flocked in.”⁴

Pike’s editor commented in a note:

The Sweet of the above paragraph is elsewhere named by Pike as Wiscoup and Le Sucre, first chief of a Red Lake band of Chippewas. . . . The Sweet was not so named from any such personal peculiarity as would have singled him out among all Indians of whatever tribe, but with reference in some way to the concrete juice of the sugar-maple, *Acer saccharinum*, upon which he fed: cf. Sugar pt., a place-name in this vicinity. This is evidently the case of “sweets to The Sweet” —not of *saccarum per se*. The scholarly Anglojibway, Hon. W. W. Warren, who should know best how to spell Chippewa words of any author I have read, gives the name as Weeshcoob. This chief had great character, and a long career.⁵

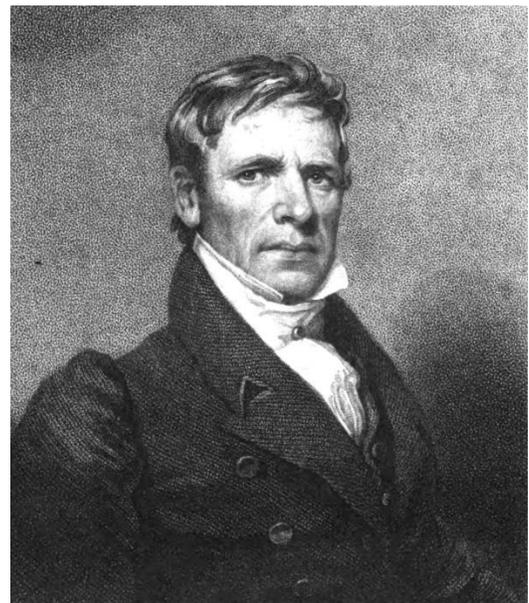
A portrait of a chief from Red Lake named Weshcubb was painted by James Otto Lewis at the Prairie du Chien treaty council in 1825, which established peace between the Sioux and their neighbors the Ojibwe, Sac, Fox, and Ioway. The portrait is of a younger man than the old chief would have been in 1825, and is identified as one of Le Sucre's sons, although the accompanying text says this figure was the father of Ozaawindib.⁶ That seems unlikely because Ozaawindib was already around fifty years old at the beginning of the century and the portrait is of a much younger man than the father would have been in 1825. Colonel Thomas Loraine McKenney, who was Superintendent of the Indian Trade Bureau and after 1824 head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, described this Weshcubb as "a good, fat, comfortable looking Indian."⁷ This



Weshcubb, 1825 portrait at Prairie du Chien

Weshcubb must have been Ozaawindib's brother or half brother. (I must say that in this portrait, Weshcubb himself "looks gay," though there is no evidence that he was.)

The two main sources for information on Ozaawindib are Alexander Henry (the Younger) (1765–1814), a fur trader with the North West Company who traveled throughout the Northwest (northwestern Minnesota, North Dakota, Manitoba, and west to the Pacific Ocean) from 1799 to 1808, and John Tanner, who was kidnapped in Kentucky by Shawnee Indians at around age ten and lived most of his life among the Ottawa and Ojibwe.⁸ Tanner (ca. 1780–ca. 1846), whose Indian name was Shaw-Shaw-Wabe-Na-Se (The Falcon), was adopted by a female Ottawa chief named Net-no-kwa. He recounts his travels throughout much of the land between Michigan and North Dakota, where his path crossed both Ozaawindib's and Henry's. The editor of Henry's diaries makes numerous references to Tanner's account in his notes.



John Tanner

Even though the Ojibwe did not write about their sexual practices (or anything else, besides cryptic bark notations pertaining to myths and religious practices), and despite the reticence of whites to discuss homosexual practices that were condemned in white culture (even bringing the death penalty in some countries at the time) but accepted as part of Native cultures, the observations of both Henry (who openly stated his distaste for Native sexual practices, and even for the Indians he encountered) and Tanner nevertheless seem credible and even relatively unbiased. If homosexuality had not been accepted in the Native societies they encountered, they would no doubt not have written about them at all. Christian missionaries, of course, anathematized same-sex practices, and that doubtless explains, to some extent at least, why the institutionalization and integration of same-sex sexuality among the Ojibwe have been eliminated. The U.S. government also sought to stamp out Native languages and religious practices.⁹

When Tanner encountered Ozaawindib along the Red River of the North near Pembina during Henry's time there, he was disgusted by Ozaawindib's overtures:

Some time in the course of this winter, there came to our lodge one of the sons of the celebrated Ojibbeway chief, called Wesh-ko-bug, (the sweet) who lived at Leech Lake. This man was one of those who make themselves women, and are called women by the Indians. There are several of this sort among most, if not all the Indian tribes; they are commonly called A-go-kwa, a word which is expressive of their condition. This creature, called Ozaw-wend-dib, (the yellow head,) was now near fifty years old, and had lived with many husbands. I do not know whether she had seen me, or only heard of me, but she soon let me know she had come a long distance to see me, and with the hope of living with me. She often offered herself to me, but not being discouraged with one refusal, she repeated her disgusting advances until I was almost driven from the lodge. Old Net-no-kwa was perfectly well acquainted with her character, and only laughed at the embarrassment and shame which I evinced whenever she addressed me. She seemed rather to countenance and encourage the Yellow Head in remaining at our lodge. The latter was very expert in the various employments of the women, to which all her time was given. At length, despairing of success in her addresses to me, or being too much pinched by hunger, which was commonly felt in our lodge, she disappeared, and was absent three or four days. I began to hope I should be no more troubled with her, when she came back loaded with dry meat. She stated that she had found the band of Wa-ge-to-tah-gun, and that that chief had sent by her an invitation for us to join him. . . . I was glad enough of this invitation, and started immediately. At the first encampment, as I was doing something by the fire, I heard the A-go-kwa at no great distance in the

woods, whistling to call me. Approaching the place, I found she had her eyes on game of some kind, and presently I discovered a moose. I shot him twice in succession, and twice he fell at the report of the gun; but it is probable I shot too high, for at last he escaped. The old woman reproved me severely for this, telling me she feared I should never be a good hunter. But before night the next day, we arrived at Wa-ge-to-te's lodge, where we ate as much as we wished. Here, also, I found myself relieved from the persecutions of the A-go-kwa, which had become intolerable. Wa-ge-tote, who had two wives, married her. This introduction of a new inmate into the family of Wa-ge-tote, occasioned some laughter, and produced some ludicrous incidents, but was attended with less uneasiness and quarreling than would have been the bringing in of a new wife of the female sex.¹⁰

Both Wagetote and Ozaawindib are listed by Henry as part of his crew in 1800 (Ozaawindib is described as "La Berdash [Sucre's son])."¹¹

Ozaawindib may have dressed and acted like a woman, but he was also a brave warrior, which belies assumptions one might make about such an individual. Henry relates an account of Ozaawindib's heroism in his journal entry dated January 2, 1801 (an exploit that was recounted frequently):

Berdash, a son of Sucrie [Sucre, Sweet, or Wiscoup], arrived from the Assiniboine, where he had been with a young man to carry tobacco concerning the war. This person is a curious compound between a man and a woman. He is a man both as to members and courage, but pretends to be womanish, and dresses as such. His walk and mode of sitting, his manners, occupations, and language are those of a woman. His father, who is a great chief amongst the Saulteurs [Ojibwe], cannot persuade him to act like a man. About a month ago, in a drinking match, he got into a quarrel and had one of his eyes knocked out with a club. He is very troublesome when drunk. He is very fleet, and a few years ago was reckoned the best runner among the Saulteurs. Both his speed and his courage were tested some years ago on the Schian [Sheyenne] river, when Monsieur Reaume attempted to make peace between the two nations, and Berdash accompanied a party of Saulteurs to the Sioux camp. They at first appeared reconciled to each other through the intercession of the whites, but on the return of the Saulteurs, the Sioux pursued them. Both parties were on foot, and the Sioux have the name of being extraordinarily swift. The Saulteurs imprudently dispersed in the plains, and several were killed; but the party with Berdash escaped without any accident, in the following manner: One of them had got from the Sioux a bow, but only a few arrows. On starting and finding themselves pursued, they ran a considerable distance, until they perceived the

Sioux were gaining fast upon them, when Berdash took the bow and arrows from his comrades, and told them to run as fast as possible, without minding him, as he feared no danger. He then faced the enemy, and began to let fly his arrows. This checked their course, and they returned the compliment with interest, but it was so far off that only a chance arrow could have hurt him, as they had nearly spent their strength when they fell near him. His own arrows were soon expended, but he lost no time in gathering up those that fell near him, and thus he had a continual supply. Seeing his friends some distance ahead, and the Sioux moving to surround him, he turned and ran full speed to join his comrades, the Sioux after him. When the latter approached too near, Berdash again stopped and faced them with his bow and arrows, and kept them at bay. Thus did he continue to manoeuvre until they reached a spot of strong wood which the Sioux dared not enter. Some of the Saulteurs who were present have often recounted the affair to me.¹²

In October, Henry reports that Wagetote's wife "died of the wounds of last winter, when her husband shot her."¹³

On October 27, Henry notes that "Le Sucrie [Sucre, Sweet, or Wiscoup] and ten other Indians arrived from Leech lake."¹⁴

Who was Ozaawindib?

Let's begin with who Ozaawindib was not.

Ozaawindib was not a transvestite but a male who lived, dressed, walked, and talked like a female and who had sex with "normal" males. We do not know how he came to adopt this identity, whether it was as a result of a vision, a dream, or something else. His gender status was not like the nineteenth-century European "third-sex" notion of a "female trapped in a male body," and thus he could not be described, strictly speaking, as a transperson. Clearly, he was homosexual, and the sexual behavior of the males he had sex with was also homosexual, even if their identity was heterosexual. His identity would have been, at a minimum, a way to live his homosexuality—as it would have been for his partners. In the accounts that mention him there is no suggestion that he played a spiritual role, although that can't be ruled out because Europeans would not usually have had access to Native religious ceremonies. But why invoke a vision to explain one's sexuality? The precise form that this same-sex sexuality took was clearly culture-specific.

His name had nothing to do with hair color. A number of men were named Ozaawindib, and none had blond hair, so far as is known.¹⁵

In traditional Ojibwe society, gender was usually, but not always, determined by sex. Variation in such matters was accepted, and men could have more than one wife (whether a real woman or an *agokwe*). And although there was a “strong division of labor by gender,” with males hunting, trapping, and protecting the group and females cooking, tanning hides, gardening, and so on, “women could fight as well, especially if the village was being attacked,” Ojibwe scholar Anton Treuer explains. “Female use of guns, spears, and bow and arrows were prohibited by taboo. Even on the rare occasions that women led men into battle, this seems to have been true.”¹⁶

The term used by the whites who wrote about Ojibwe people like Ozaawindib was *agokwa*. The word is sometimes rendered in English as “man-woman,” but in Ojibwe it has no specific meaning. Pronounced “ah-go-kway,” the ending does suggest something feminine, because the word for woman is *ikwe* (thus the current spelling *agokwe*). The closest word to the particle *ago* is *agoke* (stick on, adhere), but this doesn’t seem helpful (even though Tanner said the word *agokwe* “is expressive of their condition”).

In a letter from 1826, Thomas McKenney writes about an Ojibwe “man-woman”:

I have it from undoubted authority, that such do exist. This singular being, either from a dream, or from an impression derived from some other source, considers that he is bound to impose upon himself, as the only means of appeasing his manito, all the exterior of a woman. . . . it [is] impossible to distinguish them from the women. . . . [They] even go through the ceremony of marriage! Nothing can induce these men-women to put off these imitative garbs. . . . [They] live, and die, confirmed in the belief that they are acting the part which the dream, or some other impression, pointed out to them as indispensable.¹⁷

As we have seen, Henry refers to Ozaawindib as “berdash.” The word *berdache* derives from French, which is understandable since many of the early traders and explorers were French. But the word connotes more than a cross-dresser, and has been taken to suggest a Native American who dresses and lives as a woman and has sex with a “normal” man, but who also, especially in some Plains and Southwest cultures, may fulfill a spiritual role. This concept echoes the nineteenth-century notion that people who engage in sex with others of the same sex constituted a third sex, a woman’s mind in a man’s body (*anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa*), and vice versa for a lesbian. That notion was unscientific and never accurately described what were also termed homosexuals (another word from the nineteenth century).¹⁸

Traditional Ojibwe society had its own terms for such individuals, as Anton Treuer explains:

Men who chose to function as women were called *ikwekaazo*, meaning “one who endeavors to be like a woman.” Women who functioned as men were called *ininiikaazo*, meaning “one who endeavors to be like a man.” The French called these people *berdaches*. *Ikwekaazo* and *ininiikaazo* could take spouses of their own sex. Their mates were not considered *ikwekaazo* or *ininiikaazo*, however, because their function in society was still in keeping with their sex. If widowed, the spouse of an *ikwekaazo* or *ininiikaazo* could remarry someone of the opposite sex or another *ikwekaazo* or *ininiikaazo*. The *ikwekaazowag* worked and dressed like women. *Ininiikaazowag* worked and dressed like men. Both were considered to be strong spiritually, and they were always honored, especially during ceremonies.

The role of *ikwekaazo* and *ininiikaazo* in Ojibwe society was believed to be sacred, often because they assumed their roles based on spiritual dreams or visions.¹⁹

With the arrival of Christianity and its condemnation of homosexuality, and with government efforts to suppress Native American religion and culture, it would appear that this same-sex institution among the Ojibwe disappeared.

The term “two-spirit” was adopted at a conference in Winnipeg in 1990 by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Native Americans to describe themselves. The new term replaced “berdache” and “gay.” According to a spokesperson for Two-Spirited People of Manitoba, the term was introduced by a woman of Cree heritage after a vision.²⁰ Anguksuar (Richard LaFortune) explains the adoption as follows: “The term *two-spirit*, which has come into recent popular usage, originated in Northern Algonquin dialect and gained first currency at the third annual spiritual gathering of gay and lesbian Native people that took place near Winnipeg in 1990. What we who chose this designation understood is that *niizh manitoag* (two-spirits) indicates the presence of both a feminine and a masculine spirit in one person.”²¹ Will Roscoe says the term was “an alternative to both berdache and gay. The term is the English translation of the Anishinabe/Ojibway term *niizh manitoag*.”²² He quotes Sue Beaver (Mohawk) explaining the philosophy behind the change:

We believe there exists the spirits of both man and woman within. We look at ourselves as being very gifted. The Creator created very special beings when he created two-spirited people. He gave certain individuals two spirits. We’re a special people, and that’s been denied since contact with the Europeans. . . . What heterosexuals achieve in marriage, we achieve within ourselves.²³

Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang give a somewhat different explanation:

The English phrase *two-spirit*, which originated primarily in urban Native American/First Nations contexts where English serves as a lingua franca to bridge cultural and linguistic differences, is not meant to be translated into Native American languages and terms. To do so may change the common meaning it has acquired since the early 1990s by self-identified two-spirit Native Americans.²⁴

Another work says this about adoption of the term at the 1990 conference:

The term *two-spirit* is translated from the words *niizh manidoowag*, from Ojibwa, a subgroup of the Algonquian language spoken in the Manitoba area. The concept and word *two-spirit* has no traditional cultural significance, and the Ojibwa words were not combined to create the term *niizh manidoowag*, or *two-spirit*, until this conference.²⁵

The Internet is rife with misleading information on “two-spirit,” as on much else. Numerous sites state that the term is a translation from Ojibwe, but the opposite seems closer to the truth. The Ojibwe term—if it existed—would literally be *niizh manidoo* (singular), *niizh manidoog* (plural). The plural form in every source I’ve seen, including the books cited, is given as *manidoag* (or *manidoowag*). So far as I have been able to determine, this plural does not exist, even among Manitoban Ojibwe. (The plural ending *-wag* is not used with *manidoo*, unless it is a dialect form I’m unaware of. The double *oo* indicates a long vowel in current orthography.) In any case, the term in Ojibwe is a neologism and does not reflect any preexisting concept or term in that culture.

The term “two-spirit” suggests a spiritual binary of male and female in one person, and implies that this is an integral feature of many, perhaps most, American Indian cultures and that such individuals have a special spiritual role to play in society. Its use to designate persons otherwise called gay or homosexual is clearly not consonant with the identity of individuals formerly referred to as “berdaches.”

The notion that homosexuals have a special role to play in society is not new. A similar concept was developed by early British gay activist, counterculturalist, and socialist Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), who believed that homosexuals, by combining both male and female elements, had a special role to play in leading society into a utopian future of harmony and socialism.²⁶

People can call themselves whatever they want, and the question of what word to use to describe same-sex behavior has a long history, going back at least to the middle of the nineteenth century.²⁷ If same-sex Native Americans want to use “two-

spirit” to describe themselves, that is their right. But the term seems problematic if it is used to apply to Native American cultures or same-sex identities across the board.

For one thing, by identifying sexual identity with spirituality, it would seem to exclude nonspiritual persons—atheists, for example. One Ojibwe friend says there is nothing spiritual at all about her lesbianism. Moreover, the concept of “two-spirit” is alien to Ojibwe culture, even though the *ikwekaazo* and *ininiikaazo* were accepted and even honored. “Two-spirit” cannot describe homosexual behavior per se because the sexual partner of an *ikwekaazo* or *ininiikaazo* lacked such an identity. That is clear from the fact that Ozaawindib, after having many “husbands,” was accepted by Wagetote as his third wife. (Even the terms “husband” and “wife” are somewhat misleading because conjugal relationships were fluid and not institutionalized the way white culture’s “marriage” implies.)²⁸

Moreover, the term is problematic in that it conflates a recent present-day identity with a social institution that no longer exists.

That the variety of male homosexual practice was not limited to a “two-spirit” or “berdache” framework is clear from Alexander Henry’s description of the Cheyenne and the Crow. The Cheyenne

all have manly and warlike countenances, and are remarkably stout, well-proportioned men. . . . Upon the whole they appeared to me to be a fierce and savage set of scoundrels, still more loose and licentious than the Mandanes; the men appeared to take pride in displaying their nudities. I am also informed that they are much given to unnatural lusts and often prefer a young man to a woman. They have many berdashes amongst them, who make it their business to satisfy such beastly passions. The men are always ready to supply a stranger with a bedfellow, if he has any property. They are very complaisant in giving him the choice of their women. . . .²⁹

Of the Crow, Henry says: “I am informed they are much addicted to unnatural and beastly lusts, and have no scruple in satisfying their desires with their mares and wild animals fresh killed.”³⁰

Early white explorers and traders, reflecting their Christian background, were struck—and in Henry’s case sometimes appalled—by the widespread practice of same-sex behavior, particularly the acceptance of individuals in most Native cultures they described as “berdaches,” now sometimes referred to as “third gender.” If these behaviors and gender variants had not been so common, they might have preferred to ignore them. Today, “two-spirit” has taken its place as one of the identities in the endlessly expanding acronym LGBTQIAA2S . . . Ozaawindib certainly was one of these

“third-gender” individuals, but using “two-spirit” to describe him is inaccurate and misleading.

Notes

¹ Ojibwe mythology is related in Edward Benton-Banai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (St. Paul: Red School House, 1988). On the role of *manoomin* (wild rice), see page 101.

² William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984 [1885]), 256. “Pillagers” (French *pilleurs*) is an equivalent of Ojibwe *makandwewiniwag* (literally, men who take by force; *makandwe* = rob people, take captives). Warren’s *History* is based on oral histories he did. He was elected to the territorial legislature. Because his father was white, he was not considered to be Ojibwe by the patrilineal culture of his day. Today, he would have been assigned a clan, probably *migizi* (bald eagle).

³ *Ibid.*, 376–77. The same Ojibwe proper names are spelled in many different ways in English sources. I am using the current usual spellings. Weshcubb was also known as “Le Sucre” (French for “sugar,” usually translated as “Sweet”).

⁴ Zebulon Montgomery Pike, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, to Headwaters of the Mississippi River, through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, though the Years 1806–7–8*, ed. Elliot Coues, vol. 1 (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1895 [1810]), 156–57. The “river Pacagama” refers to present-day Pokegama River, near Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 156–57n7. Sugar Point, on the north shore of Leech Lake, was the site of the last battle of the Indian wars, in October 1898, led by Bagone-geshig (Hole-in-the-Day), where the U.S. soldiers were defeated. See Cecelia McKeig and Renee Geving, *The 1898 Battle of Sugar Point: The Last Encounter between the U.S. Army and the Indians of North America* (Walker, Minn.: Cass County Historical Society, 2011).

⁶ “This Chippewa chief was known on the frontier not only for his leadership and prowess as a warrior but for the reputation of his son, a notorious A-go-kwa, or Indian homosexual, who, Colonel McKenney claimed, constantly disgraced his father” (James D. Horan, *The McKenney–Hall Portrait Gallery of American Indians* [New York: Bramhall House, 1986], 198).

⁷ *Ibid.* It would seem that the Weshcubb at Prairie du Chien was a son of Le Sucre: “Weshcubb, the Sweet, is a chief of Red Lake, north of the sources of the Mississippi. He is the son of Le Sucre, a chief who is mentioned by General Pike, in his narrative of his voyage up the Mississippi, in 1806. The similarity of the names of the father and son would seem to indicate the existence of some family trait of character, which was designed to be described by their respective names, which have reached us in English and French translations. The father died on Lake Superior, while on his return home from a visit to Michilimackinac. The son is represented as worthy of the place he holds in the estimation of his tribe. He is considered a just and good man, but has never evinced much capacity, nor shown a disposition to lead war parties. The family is noted for a singular freak of the son of Weshcubb [Le Sucre], who feigned or fancied himself a woman, and assumed the female dress and employments. The cause of this transformation, so especially remarkable in a savage, who considers the woman an inferior being, and in the son of a chief, who can aspire to the office of his father, if worthy, but not otherwise, is not known. It might have been suggested by a dream, or induced by monomania, or by some bodily infirmity. He, however, joined war parties, and after serving in seven expeditions, was at last killed by the enemy”

(<http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/weshcubb-chippewa-chief.htm>). Conflicting information about these identities is widespread on the Internet. Ojibwe sons of chiefs often took their father’s name after the father died. For a discussion of Ojibwe naming practices, see David Thorstad, “The Sad Legacy of

Moose Dung and Red Robe,”

http://www.williamapercy.com/wiki/index.php/David_Thorstad#Native_American.

⁸ Alexander Henry and David Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, vol. 1, ed. Elliott Coues (New York: Adamant Media Corporation, 2007 [facsimile of 1897 edition published by Francis P. Harper]); John Tanner, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner: (U.S. Interpreter at the Saut de Ste. Marie,) during Thirty Years Residence among the Indians in the Interior of North America*, ed. Edwin James (London: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830).

⁹ Native American religions were illegal in the United States until August 11, 1978, when Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. In his speech to the Muslim world in Cairo on June 4, 2009, President Barack Obama said that “freedom in America is indivisible from the freedom to practice one’s religion.” He didn’t acknowledge that religious freedom for the original Americans had existed for barely three decades.

¹⁰ Tanner, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, 105–6. Wagetote resolved Tanner’s dilemma by taking Ozaawindib as a wife. Tanner earlier describes him as follows: “. . . we met with an old Ottawwaw chief, called Wa-ge-to-tah-gun, (he that has a bell,) more commonly called Wa-ge-toat. He was a relative of Net-no-kwa; and had with him at that time, three lodges and two wives” (98). Henry’s editor notes that “Tanner mentions Henry repeatedly, by name,” and that Tanner knew most of the Indians Henry mentions personally, among them Ozaawindib: “We have already identified Henry’s sodomist, or berdash, son of Wiscoup, or Le Sucre, with Tanner’s agokwa, son of Weshkobug, the Sweet,” and “Tanner’s memory must have been prodigiously tenacious for events and incidents of his own life, or he never could have told Dr. James such a story in after years, when he had only gradually come into his white man’s mind’s estate after its Indianization since childhood” (Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, 1:97n, 1:98n).

¹¹ Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, 1:53. Ozaawindib, Le Sucre, Wagetote, and Weshcubb are all given entries in a list of “Ojibwa Personal Names” in *The Aborigines of Minnesota: A Report Based on the Collections of Jacob V. Brower, and on the Field Surveys and Notes of Alfred J. Hill and Theodore H. Lewis*, vol. 2 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1911), as follows: “O-zaw-wen-dib, An agokwa, or man-woman, and slave . . .” (724); “Sucre (Le), Sweet (We-esh-coob or Wesh-ko-bug), Chief at Leech Lake and at Red Lake; wounded in the Crow Wing battle, 1768; about 1815 refused, at Mackinaw, to join the British, but in 1806 had delivered to Gen. Pike a British medal . . .” (727); Wa-ge-to-tah-gun, That has a bell, Chief, Rush Lake river . . . ; called also *Wa-ge-to-te*” (729); “Wesh-cubb, Sweet, Red Lake chief, portrait is shown by McKenney and Hall; son of Le Sucre mentioned by Pike in 1806. The father died on Lake Superior while returning from a visit to Michilimackinac; father of Beardash” (731).

¹² Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, 1:163–65. (A similar account is in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, V. 1885, 458f.). Frequent drinking bouts by the Indians are a running theme in Henry’s journal.

¹³ Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, 190.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Some Internet sites erroneously identify Tanner’s Ozaawindib with the Leech Laker of the same name who showed Henry Schoolcraft the source of the Mississippi River in 1832 — a key story in the Minnesota narrative (as in the video at the interpretive center at the Mississippi Headwaters in Itasca State Park). There is strong evidence that this Ozaawindib, who lived on Star Island in Cass Lake on today’s Leech Lake reservation, was actually a Swede named Jacob Fahlström. See Emeroy Johnson, “Was Oza Windib a Swede?,” *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* 35:3 (July 1984): 207–20:

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/npu_sahq&CISOPTR=3970&CIS

[OBOX=1&REC=4](#). There is a monument to Fahlström in downtown St. Paul, but it does not mention his possible later avatar as Schoolcraft's Ozaawindib.

¹⁶ Anton Treuer, *The Assassination of Hole in the Day* (St. Paul: Borealis Books, 2011), 26. Note, however, that according to Henry (cited earlier), Ozaawindib used bow and arrows in the battle with the Sioux (Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, 1:163–65). Treuer discusses sex and gender roles among the Ojibwe on pages 25–29. See also Rebecca Kugel, *To Be the Main Leaders of Our People: A History of Minnesota Ojibwe Politics, 1825–1898* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 71–73. On the berdache tradition, see Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 67–70: “From American Indian perspectives, berdaches are not women, not even socially defined women. We can understand this by realizing that berdaches do certain things which women do not do, and vice versa” (67).

¹⁷ Thomas L. McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes, of the Character and Customs of the Chippeway Indians . . .* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas Jr., 1827), 315–16, quoted in Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 300.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the third sex and the word *homosexual*, see John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864–1935)*, rev. ed. (Ojai, Calif.: Times Change Press, 1995), and Hubert Kennedy, *Ulrichs: The Life and Works of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs: Pioneer of the Modern Gay Movement* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988).

¹⁹ Treuer, *The Assassination of Hole in the Day*, 27. One Ojibwe lesbian says that the terms she heard from elders were *nikahnadakwe* and *nikahnadainini* (special kind of woman, special kind of man) (personal communication, November 19, 2013). In current spelling, *niikaan* would be the equivalent of “my [a male’s] male friend.”

²⁰ Personal communication, March 30, 2014. For a discussion of “two-spirit” and related subjects, see Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998); Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds., *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997); and Richard LaFortune (Anguksuar) and Debra Williams, *Two Spirit: Native Media & Community Briefing* (Minneapolis: Two Spirit Press Room, August 2005).

²¹ Anguksuar (Richard LaFortune), “A Postcolonial Perspective on Western [Mis]Conceptions of the Cosmos and the Restoration of Indigenous Taxonomies,” in Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, *Two-Spirit People*, 221.

²² Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, 109.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, “Introduction,” in *Two-Spirit People*, 3.

²⁵ Jodi O’Brien, ed., *Encyclopedia of Gender and Society*, vol. 2 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2009), 64.

²⁶ See Lauritsen and Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864–1935)*, 93–99. A similar view was shared by pioneer gay activist Harry Hay, founder of the Mattachine Society and the Radical Faeries.

²⁷ Just a few words that homosexuals have used to describe themselves include *Urning*, Uranian, homosexual, third sex, pederast, same-sexer, *Lieblingminne*, love of friends, homophile, and gay. The list is much longer, of course, if words used by heterosexual opponents or the law are included.

²⁸ Some (heterosexual) courtship and marriage customs among the Ojibwe are discussed in Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979 [1929]), 72–73.

²⁹ Henry and Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Northwest*, 1:347–48.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:399.