

**The Historical and Ethnohistorical Context of Hunting and Fishing
Treaty Rights in Western and Northern Michigan.**

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**Expert Witness Disclosure
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Since September 1997, I have been under contract to Historical Research Associates, Inc. and to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as a consultant on historical issues involved in the case *United States et.al. v. State of Michigan*. The topic of my research has been the history of the Ottawa and Chippewa parties who negotiated in Washington, D.C. in 1836 and events surrounding that event. The principle focus of my research is the period 1800 to 1855. The opinions and conclusions that I have reached as a result of this research are presented in this report. I summarize those opinions in the following section and I follow that summary with a detailed explanation of the basis for those opinions.

I am paid at the rate of \$90 per hour. I have not previously testified as an expert historian in the cases identified in my resume, which is attached to this report. My background, experience and other qualifications also are listed in my resume, which is attached to this report as Appendix A.

Theodore Karamanski, PhD.

Date

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Summary of Opinions

1. It is my opinion that the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders understood the terms of the 1836 Treaty of Washington and the 1855 Treaty of Detroit.

Discussion: Prior to the 1836 treaty, the Ottawa and Chippewa people had experienced more than one hundred years of direct and sustained interactions with European and European-American governments. The *Anishnabeg* had extensive economic interactions with the French and the British through the fur trade. They used their alliance with the French to bolster their control over the lands of the Michigan peninsula and to expand their access to lands west of the Great Lakes. The *Anishnabeg* later used their alliance with the British to try and prevent the United States government from establishing its control over Michigan. *Anishnabe* warriors participated in wide-ranging military campaigns, from Tennessee to Pennsylvania to New York, as allies of first the French and later the English. Because of this long exposure, by 1836 Ottawa and Chippewa leaders understood critical aspects of European and American law, including private property, land surveys, treaty making, and the separation of powers between the federal and state government. Documents produced by the Ottawa and Chippewa in the wake of both the 1836 and 1855 treaty reveal that Indian leaders understood the recently concluded agreements and pressed federal officials to abide by the terms. There is clear evidence that the Ottawa and Chippewa people, in spite of the overwhelming power of the United States government, utilized the negotiations in a skillful manner to advance their own agenda.

2. It is my opinion that the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders clearly understood that Article 13 of the 1836 Treaty extended rights that were temporary and not perpetual.

Discussion: The right to engage in subsistence activities upon the ceded lands was one of usual rights offered in land cession treaties. While the wording is slightly different in the 1836 treaty, its meaning is similar to that found in other treaties made by the Ottawa and Chippewa. This right was consistently presented by federal officials as a limited right to be exercised “until” a point in the future. The right was limited in that it allowed hunting, fishing, the gathering of berries and maple sugar, as “privileges of occupancy.” The right to occupy the public domain extended only “until the land is required for settlement.” From contemporaneous correspondence, written before, during, and after the treaty, it is possible to determine the

meaning of this phrase to the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders who agreed to the treaty. The stipulated right was understood to expire when the land was “surveyed and sold” by the United States government. The term “settlement” was explained to the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders as a process. Through their long engagement with European-American society the Indian leaders understood settlement as a process and surveying and private ownership of land as important steps in that process.

3. It is my opinion that the goal of many Ottawa and Chippewa leaders, including those who signed the 1855 Treaty of Detroit, was to place themselves under the laws of the State of Michigan and to become citizens.

Discussion: Revisions to the 1836 Treaty by the United States Senate drastically altered the meaning of that document. Instead of clarifying the status of the Ottawa and Chippewa in the emerging State of Michigan, the treaty cast their status in doubt. Instead of being a vehicle to avoid removal, the 1836 treaty was a first step on the road to removal. During the period from 1836 to 1855, the Ottawa and Chippewa consciously strove to adapt their culture to European-American social and economic norms. The dual goals were to achieve a better way of life for their children and to avoid removal from the State of Michigan. The private ownership of land and the right to become a citizen were the specific steps Ottawa and Chippewa leaders believed would ensure their persistence in Michigan. After repeated requests by Ottawa and Chippewa leaders “to place themselves under the laws of the state,” the Michigan constitution was changed in 1850 to allow Indian citizenship. The 1855 treaty was designed to reconcile federal policy with the new realities in Michigan. The goal was to provide the Ottawa and Chipewa with the economic resources to complete their transformation from wards of the government to citizens. Indian leaders saw the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the State of Michigan as a protection from federal removal. As early as 1835 the Little Traverse Ottawa proposed to “submit themselves to the laws of that State” and once they learned the “benefits of civilization” intended to “embrace those salutary regulations with cheerfulness.”

Introduction

“Seven generations ago our Odawa ancestors were locked in a battle just to survive in whatever way they could,” recounted Frank Ettawageshik.¹ Speaking before a congressional subcommittee on tribal recognition in 1993, Ettawageshik drew a parallel between the challenges of the 1830s and the challenges faced by the Ottawa people in the late twentieth century. Then the Ottawa “were compelled to sell our lands, pressed to adopt a new culture, but in short we have survived.” The Ottawa and Chippewa peoples of Michigan are able to work today, in their families and through their communities to protect and preserve their traditional ways because of the success of native leaders seven generations ago.² With only land to bargain, nineteenth century Chippewa and Ottawa leaders managed to avoid removal from Michigan. Through thousands of individual decisions, the *Anishnabe* peoples accepted some of the new ways thrust upon them, kept traditional values alive, and continued the evolution of their dynamic societies.³ To understand the historical meaning of the 1836 and 1855 Ottawa and Chippewa treaties, it is necessary to appreciate the function of those treaty documents in the Indians’ struggle to control their fate and persevere in Michigan.

In the area east of the Mississippi River, the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan have been among the most successful native peoples in preserving their land and culture. Removal to the Far West was the fate of most of their neighbors, including the Huron, Miami, Shawnee, and

¹ Frank Ettawageshik, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Natural Resources, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, First Session on H.R. 2376, Hearing Held in Washington, D.C., September 17, 1993, *Michigan Indian Recognition* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 28. Throughout this report I will use the term Ottawa as it is the usage that appears in most of the documents relating to the Odawa people. The name Ottawa derives from *Ota’wa* and means “to trade.” Many native people prefer the name Odawa which derives from *O’daweh*, meaning “he/she who sells.

² Throughout this report I will use the term Chippewa. Other names used to refer to these same people are Ojibwa, Ojibwe, and during the early historic period, Saulteaux. The later name refers to the concentration of Chippewa at the site of the Sault Ste. Marie rapids. The names Chippewa, Ojibwa, and Ojibwe all can be translated to mean “puckered up.” This is generally accepted to refer to the stitching on Chippewa moccasins. However, William Warren the part Chippewa historian who in 1885 assembled the most complete collection of his people’s oral traditions, believed that the name actually meant “to roast until puckered up,” and referred to the torture of captured enemies. For more see, William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1984) 36-37.

³ Throughout this report I will use the term *Anishnabe* when referring jointly to the Ottawa and Chippewa (*Anishnabeg* plural). This term has been variously translated as meaning “original people,” “true people,” or as Henry Rowe Schoolcraft contended “common people.” William W. Warren argued “spontaneous man” was a more accurate translation. The term is not exclusive of the Ottawa or Chippewa but is shared in common with the nineteenth century Algonquian speaking people of what is now Michigan, including the Potawatomi. See Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 56-57.

the majority of the Potawatomi. Geography, in the terms of their northerly location, and the pattern of European-American settlement of Michigan, joined with the creative survival strategies of Ottawa and Chippewa leaders to make their persistence in Michigan possible. The treaties made between the United States and the Indians of Michigan were never the result of an equitable power relationship, but when viewed within the context of events on the Great Lakes frontier, it is clear that those treaties did address mutual needs. The Ottawa and Chippewa leaders of the period from 1836 to 1855 were neither heroic statesmen nor pawns of American negotiators. They were men, elevated to positions of significance in their bands by their embodiment of *Anishnabe* virtues and thrust into dangerous but necessary agreements with rivals of overwhelming power. Armed with the experience of more than 100 years of engagement with European culture they sought to use the process, sometimes to protect the old, sometimes to embrace the new, but always to endure as an autonomous people. It is simplistic to argue they sought to protect a “traditional way of life,” which is in the end no more than an ethnographic myth. As men of discernment rooted in a culture fully capable of growth and change they valued the maintenance both individual and group autonomy as key to their survival as a people. The enduring presence of their descendents in Michigan is a testament that the *Anishnabe* leaders of the mid-nineteenth century succeeded in making the best of a bad set of alternatives.

The “New Indian History” and the Inland Issue

All history should begin with the understanding that, as L.P. Hartley noted a half century ago, “the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.” Historical theory provides the explorer of this “foreign country” with a map. This report reviews and evaluates the documentary record of Indian experience in Michigan from the perspective of “the New Indian History.” This approach to the study of the past emerged in the mid-1980s. It is a joining of ethnohistory and social history. The “New Indian History” is only a recent phase of a long term commingling of the disciplines of anthropology and history in the study of America’s native peoples. The first phase of this partnership was given the name ethnohistory. This field, which began after World War II in the effort to study Indian treaty claims as part of the congressionally mandated Indian Claims Commission, was originally defined, in rather condescending fashion, as “original research in the documentary history of the culture and movements of primitive peoples.” The ethnohistorical method relied upon the written record produced by European-Americans to study Native American societies. Ethnohistorians approach these written records

with the understanding that they document the European-American writer's culturally biased interpretation of American Indian behavior. They attempt to use modern anthropological insights into Indian culture to evaluate skeptically the historical record of native peoples left by fur traders, missionaries, or government agents. The art of ethnohistorical interpretation lies in the critical evaluation of the outsider's descriptions of Indian words and actions and the equally as critical evaluation and application of sources that provide an ethnological context against which to interpret the European-American sources. At its best, ethnohistory led to some of the very first and finest studies of interethnic relations. Less fortunately, ethnohistory at times has yielded studies of American Indian peoples that are polarized between stories of cultural stasis and tribal disintegration. Such ethnohistories present Indian cultures as timeless and unchanging, until their inevitable collision with European-American society when a process of decline and acculturation was unleashed.⁴

The "New Indian History" marries the method of ethnohistory with the perspective of social history. Born in the 1960s, social history was an attempt to reinterpret the past "from the bottom up." Originally this approach was an expression of the social-crusading sentiment of the era, but overtime it came to symbolize a major reconceptualization of the American past that made the struggles of ordinary peoples central to the national story. Through studies of rural and urban communities, of ethnic groups, the enslaved, and the working class, social historians used an approach similar to ethnohistory in which they recovered the history of the "inarticulate" from sources left by others. What was different from the original ethnohistorical approach is a greater sensitivity to the importance of change over time and an appreciation of the subtle ways in which minority communities can exert influence, even in the face of greater political and economic power. From this combination of ethnohistory with social history, scholars have dramatically reinterpreted the story of American Indian history. Emerging from a timeless ethnographic stasis Indian societies are now appreciated for their dynamic and creative responses to their environment, other Indian peoples, and their encounter with European-American society.

At the heart of the "New Indian History" is the need to listen to the "Native voice." Historian Rebecca Kugel, an early practitioner of this approach, has observed: "While their

⁴ This discussion of the origins, strengths and weaknesses of ethnohistory is based in part on the prologue of James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 1-12.

words were nearly always recorded in English translation, a process by which important cultural references were doubtless lost, Ojibwe thoughts, perceptions, concerns, and sometimes even their sense of humor emerge clearly.” Listening to the actual voices of Indian leaders changes the way treaty negotiations should be understood. At the conclusion of her 1998 study of Ojibwe leadership during the treaty era, Kugel wrote, “the Ojibwe were never demoralized, passive victims whom the Americans could simply overawe or manipulate.”⁵ This same perspective of Indian leaders as capable “multidimensional human beings” is seen in the work of historian Susan Sleeper-Smith. In her 2001 book on the Potawatomi Indians in Michigan she concluded, “Indians were practiced in the arts not just of accommodation but also of resistance. In the face of overwhelming odds, Indian people were still far from powerless.”⁶ Like Kugel’s and Sleeper-Smith’s studies, this report is an attempt to find, amid the letters of agents and missionaries, the genuine voice of the *Anishnabeg*. What follows is informed by the work of the “New Indian History,” it is conducted with the methods of ethnohistory, and it is based on the actual words and deeds of the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders whose actions during the treaty era made possible their people’s persistence in Michigan.

⁵ 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) 3, 202.

⁶ Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001) 3.

The *Anishinabe* In Michigan

Anishnabe Origins in Michigan

At the time of the 1836 Treaty of Washington, the Ottawa and Chippewa had been residing in the lands that are now lower Michigan for roughly as long a time as European-Americans today have called the Great Lake State home. About 150 years before the treaty, the Ottawa and Chippewa emigrated to lower Michigan (the Chippewa resided in portions of the Upper Peninsula for a longer period).⁷ The early history of the Chippewa people, in the words of a nineteenth century tribal historian, “lies buried in darkness and almost utter oblivion.” According to oral traditions, originally the Chippewa resided near the Atlantic Ocean on the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River, and over the course of many generations, the people expanded westward to the Great Lakes.⁸ Cultural and linguistic evidence indicates that by 1600 the peoples that would later be known as the Ottawa and Chippewa resided on the shores of Georgian Bay and Lake Superior. Of course, for more than 11,000 years other Indian peoples resided in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. A complex set of events, set in motion in part by contact with French colonists and in part by the expansion of Iroquois influence, precipitated the movement of the Ottawa and Chippewa into lower Michigan. (See Figure 1 for places mentioned in the discussion that follows.)

The Ottawa Indians entered the historical record in 1615 when Samuel de Champlain encountered them in what is now Ontario. The Ottawa earned their reputation as traders by serving as the middlemen between the Indians of the Great Lakes and the Hurons, who were in direct contact with French fur traders. This role was seriously curtailed after 1649, when a series of hammer-blow attacks by the Iroquois forced both the Huron and the Ottawa to flee to the west. In this Diaspora they acted the parts of immigrants, refugees, and invaders. The Ottawa moved from Manitoulin Island in Georgian Bay west to Mackinac Island (1650), to Green Bay

⁷ Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 76-77; E. S. Rogers, “Southeastern Ojibwa,” *Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast*, edited by Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978) 760-771.

⁸ Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 76-77; Rogers, “Southeastern Ojibwa,” 760.

Reference Map of Michigan



Figure 1. Reference map of Michigan.

(1650s), to Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River (1655-1660), and to Chequamegon Bay on Lake Superior (1660-1670).⁹ In addition to these migrations, the Ottawa also undertook annual journeys from the Upper Great Lakes to Montreal. These Ottawa-led convoys of fur-laden canoes played a crucial role in keeping the fur trade alive during the violent years of the late seventeenth century. The Ottawa's success as middlemen with the French gave them prestige among the Indians of the west. Finally, as the Iroquois threat began to subside in the 1690s, the bulk of the Ottawa (some had remained at Green Bay and Mackinac) began to move back east, first to Mackinac Island, Saginaw Bay, and Manitoulin Island and later, in 1702, to Detroit.

It was not until the 1740s that the Ottawa established themselves at Little Traverse Bay, Grand Traverse Bay, and the Grand River, the areas they have been so strongly associated with ever since. At the heart of this change were the long and bloody Fox Wars, a conflict that involved most of the Indian peoples of the Great Lakes region and which stemmed from France's fur trade interests and intertribal rivalry over territory. The wars resulted in the complete withdrawal of the Fox and more importantly, their Mascouten allies, from Lower Michigan.¹⁰ The Ottawa and Potawatomi were among the chief beneficiaries of this exodus. According to Andrew Blackbird's traditional history of the Ottawa, the campaign against the Mascouten, which was led by a Chief Saw-ge-maw, climaxed in an attack at Little Traverse Bay and resulted in "the greatest slaughter or massacre the Ottawas ever committed." Blackbird dated this battle as occurring prior to French contact, although it is more likely that the tradition to which he referred relates to the events surrounding the Fox War. In 1712 Jacques-Charles Renaud Dubuisson, the French commandant at Detroit, reported to his superiors that an Ottawa and Potawatomi chief named "Saguinaw" had attacked a Mascouten village near the headwaters of the St. Joseph River. No reason is given for the attack. Saguinaw's attack triggered the Fox War and in the wake of the defeat of the Mascoutens and Fox at Detroit in 1712, Saguinaw's village

⁹ Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travel and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901), vol. XXXIII, 148-159; XLI, 76-83; L, 248-277; LVII, 248-251; Nicholas Perrot, *Memoire sur les moeurs, coutumes et religion des Sauvages de l'Amerique Septentrionle*, edited and translated in, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Vol. XVI, The French Regime in Wisconsin, 1634-1727* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1902), 10-21.

¹⁰ Some time before the Iroquois wars the Fox and the Mascoutens had resided in lower Michigan. The end of the Iroquois threat and French trade strategy drew them once more across Lake Michigan to the Lower Peninsula. For more on this see: Ives Goddard, "Mascouten," *Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast*, 668; R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993) 8-12.

relocated from Detroit to Mackinac. The Fox Wars played a role in clearing western Michigan of opposition to the Ottawa, even if they did not occupy the region for another generation. The Fox Wars reached their peak in 1730 and lingered on into the 1740s. The Ottawa relocated to Little Traverse in 1742.¹¹

The one hundred years between the beginning of the Iroquois wars and the end of the Fox Wars was a period of great turmoil in the Great Lakes region with most Indian peoples changing their territories numerous times. By the middle of the eighteenth century, a more stable pattern emerged, and the Ottawa were able to sink roots into the fertile soil of western Lower Michigan. Large semi-permanent villages were established along the shore of Little Traverse Bay, a region the French knew by the name L'Arbre Croche (Crooked Tree), Grand Traverse Bay, and along several of the major rivers draining the vast interior, most notably the Grand and Muskegon Rivers. The transition from a time of Diaspora and war to one of peace brought with it significant changes in the lifestyle of the Ottawa. Their old role as middlemen between the French and the Great Lakes Indians had long since been shattered. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, when a large number of Ottawa relocated to Mackinac, a new set of economic opportunities became available. In 1713 Mackinac became the distribution point for the Great Lakes fur trade. Canoe brigades bringing goods to regions farther west and traders planning to winter beyond the lakes required a steady supply of birch-bark canoes and large amounts of food. The French writer Bacqueville De La Potherie described the new lifestyle of the Ottawa at Mackinac:

When they chose to work, they make canoes of birch-bark, which they sell two at three hundred livres each. They get a shirt for two sheets of bark for cabins. The sale of their French strawberries and other fruits produce means for procuring their ornaments, which consist of vermilion and glass and porcelain beads. They make a profit on everything.

Supplying these items provided the Ottawa with all of the European trade goods they required. The abundant fishery of the Straits region helped to provide their subsistence needs. During the winter many of the Mackinac Ottawa would travel several hundred miles to hunt for meat and

¹¹ Andrew J. Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan; A Grammar of Their Language And Personal and Family History of the Author* (Ypsilanti, Mich.: Ypsilantian Job Printing House, 1887) 90-92; Father Joseph Jacques Marest, S.J. to Governor of New France, Philippe de Rigault, Marquis de Vaudreuil, June 21, 1712, translated and edited by Thwaites, *Wisconsin Historical Collections* [hereafter cited as WHC], XVI, 288-90; Jacques-Charles Renaud Dubuisson Report to the Governor General of New France, translated and edited by Thwaites, WHC, XVI, 267-287.

furs.¹² So successful were the Ottawa at carving out a new niche in the fur trade economy that the French were dismayed when the Ottawa proposed to relocate to Grand Traverse Bay or Grand River, areas with richer soil and more abundant forest resources. The French feared that if the Ottawa were located so far away Mackinac would be left short of supplies. A compromise was negotiated in which the Ottawa maintained a presence at the Straits and relocated the bulk of their people to L'Arbre Croche, a site that was still accessible to Mackinac.¹³

Understanding how the Chippewa were affected by the tumultuous changes of the early historic period is complicated by problems of synonymy. Most historians would agree that during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries Chippewa bands expanded their range southward, eastward, and westward from their base in what is now the Province of Ontario and at Sault Ste. Marie.¹⁴ The name Chippewa or Ojibwa was itself an emerging concept in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was a considerable movement of Chippewa, particularly westward, but it is also possible that some of this movement was not actually new colonization as much as it was the application of the name Chippewa to Algonquian speakers already resident in the region. Based on traditions recorded in 1852, William Warren argued that in the distant past the Chippewa split into two major groups at Sault Ste. Marie. One group expanded westward along the north shore of Lake Superior, while the other moved west along its southern shore, eventually driving into Wisconsin and Minnesota.¹⁵

While the Ottawa were forced westward by Iroquois attacks, the Chippewa successfully defended themselves against the Iroquois and embarked upon their own westward expansion, eventually at the expense of the Fox and the Dakota (Sioux). Not only did the Chippewa expand their range to the west, they responded so vigorously to the Iroquois invasion that they drove their enemies from the lands between Lake Huron and Lake Ontario. These battles were fought

¹² La Potherie, *Histoire del'Amerique septentrionale*, edited and translated by Emma Helen Blair, *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, volume I (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clarke, 1911) 282-3.

¹³ Speech of the Outaouacs of Missilmackinac, June 16, 1742, edited by Thwaites, *WHC, XVII*, 372; Charles de la Boische de Beauharnois to Outaouacs of Missilmackinac, July 8, 1741, *WHC, XVII*, 351-52; Beauharnois to Minister, October 5, 1741, *WHC, XVII*, 368.

¹⁴ Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa," *Handbook of North American Indians*, 760; Robert F. Ritzenthaler, "Southwestern Chippewa," *Handbook of North American Indians*, 743; Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 16-19; Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994) 4-5.

¹⁵ Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 83-84.

in cooperation with Ottawa and Huron bands which were anxious to reestablish themselves on the shores of Lake Huron. By 1690 the Chippewa and Ottawa were well established on Saginaw Bay, and by 1701 the Iroquois sued for peace with the Chippewa.¹⁶ This successful eastward and westward movement meant that the Chippewa controlled a larger territory than any other North American Indian tribe. In Michigan, the Chippewa were concentrated in several widely separated areas, including the Saginaw Bay region north toward Thunder Bay, the Straits of Mackinac, intermixed with Ottawa bands along Grand Traverse Bay, along the northern shore of Lake Michigan to Little Bay De Noquet, and along the south shore of Lake Superior from the St. Mary's Rapids to the head of Lake Superior.

The *Anishnabe* and the “Middle Ground”

For well over a century before they signed their first treaties with the United States, the Ottawa and Chippewa peoples interacted economically and politically with European powers. The *Anishnabeg* played a vital role in first French and later British attempts to use the Upper Great Lakes region as a source of profits and power. They were valued allies and regular trading partners, but they were also masters of their own domain, a power unto themselves. The *Anishnabeg* incorporated the newcomers from Europe into their Great Lakes world through a dynamic process of cultural exchange which historian Richard White has called “the middle ground.” The models of conquest, resistance, or even assimilation that have so often been applied to the history of Indian-White relations do not fit the experience of the *Anishnabeg* during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through the exercise of the “middle ground,” the native people of Michigan accustomed themselves to the alien notions of wealth, religion, prestige, and political organization embodied in the traders, missionaries, and military officers who visited their villages and whom they allowed to settle at a few discreet locations within their lands.¹⁷

A key feature of this primary period of Indian-White relations in the Great Lakes region was the development of mediums of cultural exchange. Frequently, the French and the *Anishnabeg* adapted old forms to perform new functions. Because the *Anishnabeg* so greatly outnumbered

¹⁶ Schmalz, *Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 30-31.

¹⁷ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) ix-xiv.

the French on the frontier, it was Indian cultural forms that initially provided the structure for exchange. The fur trade, for example, followed the pattern not of an open market, with the price being established through competitive bidding, but the Indian model of a gift exchange. The political relationship with the French utilized not the language of diplomacy but kinship ties. The *Anishnabeg* referred to the Governor General of New France as “their great father.” The concept of patriarchy among the French, who lived in a centrally organized monarchical society, and the Ottawas or Chippewas, where fathers were respected, but who had little power to command or discipline, was vastly different. The challenge for leaders from both cultures was to knowingly navigate within the confines of such anomalies and ambiguities. Seven generations of *Anishnabe* leaders practiced this process of cultural and political détente prior to the Treaty of Washington in 1836.¹⁸

Both the *Anishnabeg* and the French quickly adopted and modified for their own advantage the practices and values introduced by the other. The Chippewa and the Ottawa were slow to adopt the market values of their European trading partners, but this did not stop them from rapidly modifying their economic dealings with the newcomers. La Pothrie’s contention that the Ottawa “make a profit on everything” might not have been strictly true.¹⁹ The Ottawa still practiced the traditional pattern of reciprocity when dealing with other *Anishnabeg*, but they were more than capable of adopting European economic values when trading with the French and dickering for the best price possible. At the same time the *Anishnabe* practice of seeing all trade relations as an extension of kinship ties provided French and later British and American traders with an opportunity to establish family alliances with their trading partners by marrying Ottawa or Chippewa women. For Example, in 1793 trader John Johnston married *Oshaw-guscody-way-quay*, the daughter of a distinguished Chippewa war leader. Johnston’s new wife solidified his place within the Chippewa community and more importantly, she opened up to him a much deeper understanding of the language and social values of her people.²⁰ *Oshaw-guscody-*

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 36-37.

¹⁹ La Pothrie, *Histoire de l’Amerique septentrionale*, ed. Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, volume I, 282.

²⁰ Thomas L. McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour of the Lakes, of the Character and Customs of the Chippeway Indians, and of Incidents Connected with the Treaty of Fond Du Lac* (Baltimore: Fielding, Lucas, 1827) 183-5; Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoir of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontier* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1851) 107.

way-quay's family benefited from the union by gaining a kinsmen with regular access to trade goods. The children produced by the marriage all went on to play a role in either the fur trade or Indian-White relations, utilizing their knowledge of both cultures to act as social and political brokers. In this way, what began as the use of older cultural practices soon developed into a new process of cultural interaction that created new practices, new values, and in terms of the rise of a mixed blood population, a new people.

The off-spring of marriages between fur traders or military leaders and *Anishnabe* women led to the emergence of a new group of people on the frontier, the mixed-bloods or *Metis*. In Canada this group eventually developed into a distinctive ethnic and cultural group. On the Great Lakes frontier, the *Metis* played a critical role as either members of their mother's people or as participants in European-American society, and not infrequently, moving back and forth between the two. An example of the vital role assumed by the *Metis* in the region is the career of Charles Langlade. Born in 1729 at Mackinac of French and Ottawa parents, Langlade life was devoted to twin pursuits of New France: the fur trade and warfare. In 1739, at the age of ten, Langlade accompanied a French and Ottawa force on a long journey down the Mississippi to fight in the Chickasaw War. By the time he was in his twenties, Langlade was an officer in the French Army and a recognized war chief among the Ottawa. *Akewaugeketauso*, as his Ottawa kinsmen called him, played a role in most of the important battles of the French and Indian War, including Braddock's defeat, the Fort William Henry massacre, and the Battle for Quebec in 1759. The French Governor General Ange Duquense, sieur de Menneville, lauded him as a "very brave" man with "much influence on the minds of the savages."²¹

Langlade's life was a mixture of both ancestries. He married an Ottawa woman, assumed a leadership role in the Mackinac-area Ottawa community, and absorbed the lessons of *Anishnabe* warfare—going so far as to actually eat a slain enemy in 1752 in an effective act of intimidation. Langlade also was a fully integrated member of the European-American community. He took as his second wife a French Canadian woman from a prominent Mackinac trading family. His actions at the time of Pontiac's Rebellion reveal a cool, calculating man. He did nothing to shield Alexander Henry, a rival trader, from capture by intoxicated Chippewa and, according to

²¹ Augustin Grignon, "Seventy-two Years Recollections of Wisconsin," edited by Lyman C. Draper, *WHC, III*, 236; Ange Du Quesne to the French Minister, October 25, 1752, edited by Thwaites, *WHC, XVIII*, 130-131, footnote 68.

the latter, ignored the shivering man's pleas for a blanket to shield him from the cold. Yet, at a later time, Langlade very pointedly ingratiated himself with the British by intervening with the *Anishnabeg* to obtain the return of captured British soldiers. In the aftermath of the Chippewa attack on Michilmackinac, Langlade acted out the classic *Metis* role as middleman between the British authorities and the *Anishnabeg* of the Straits region. Men such as Langlade had a well-established role in the method by which the *Anishnabeg* interacted with the Europeans, and later the Americans. As individuals they pursued personal self-interest as well as the interest of their friends and kinsmen. The *Metis* who later participated in the 1836 treaty displayed this same culturally sanctioned mixture of self interest and community interest.²²

It can be deceptive to generalize about the level and significance of *Anishnabe* political interaction with and understanding of Europeans. The French and later the British were a real minority on the Great Lakes frontier. Away from nodes of European settlement, such as Detroit or Mackinac, the sight of a white man was rare. Individuals or families who so chose could make do with little or no contact with the Europeans. On the other hand, families with French, English, or *Metis* kinsmen might enjoy regular social interactions and might participate actively in fur trade gatherings or in European war making. The latter activity grew in importance during the 1750s. Between 1752 and 1760, Michigan *Anishnabeg* participated almost annually in far ranging campaigns against the English. Casualties suffered in these wars were the inevitable if negative result of basing relations with the French on kinship. At the time of war with England, there were strong social pressures to support the French, just as the French had to support the Ottawa and Potawatomi at the time of the Fox troubles in Detroit. Langlade's Ottawa kinsmen participated in war parties well beyond Michigan in 1739 and 1740 against the Chickasaw, in the 1750s against the English, and in the 1770s and 1780s against the Americans. In the course of doing so, men like Langlade's brother-in-law, Nissowaquot, had ample opportunity to interact with European military and civilian leaders, observe frontier conditions elsewhere, and meet with other Indians from distant lands. Most Chippewa and Ottawa war leaders negotiated and planned military activities with the leaders of New France. In this respect, participation in war

²² *Ibid*; Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures In Canada and the Indian Territories Between the Years 1760 and 1776* (Edmonton, Alberta: M.G. Hurtig, 1969) 88-93.

may have had the effect it has often had in history of broadening the horizons and providing a new understanding of other peoples—at least for those fortunate enough to survive the fighting.

The *Anishnabeg* and the Fur Trade

The fur trade had a much more pervasive impact on the lives of *Anishnabeg* in Michigan than their political interactions with the newcomers. Every time an *Anishnabe* exchanged beaver pelts for a copper kettle or a wool blanket, Michigan's native Americans participated in the expanding market of the Atlantic Community. This participation began in the seventeenth century, first through trade with middlemen and eventually through direct economic exchanges with European fur traders. The *Anishnabeg* were willing, knowing, and astute participants in the fur trade. Through the fur trade large numbers of *Anishnabeg* had sustained contact with Europeans and European-Americans gaining exposure to the latter's alien concepts of economic behavior and social morals. The fur trade was an economic activity that brought subtle changes in *Anishnabe* values and significant changes to their material culture. The fur trade illustrates the Ottawa and Chippewa's ability to accept and to shape change.

There is reason to doubt that it was the utilitarian value of trade goods that first made those goods attractive to the Indians of eastern North America. A copper kettle, for example, was a very significant improvement over the heavy earthenware or combustible bark cooking vessels of the pre-contact period. Nonetheless, when items like a copper kettle were first introduced, they were often used not for cooking, but because of their exotic nature, they were adapted to serve other purposes. There is evidence, for example, of kettles being cut up and used to manufacture jewelry. The value of the kettle may not have been its utility in cooking food over a direct fire but as a large mass of finely worked metal. The social value of such a utilitarian object as a kettle within Indian society illustrates an important truth about the fur trade: the first instinct of Indian consumers was to use the European objects to fulfill preexisting, not always material, needs.²³

In time, however, the utility of a copper kettle or iron tools, such as a knife, hatchet, or awl, was a major factor in the growth and persistence of the fur trade. In an address to the Miami, the

²³ Laurier Turgeon, "The Tale of the Kettle: Odyssey of an Intercultural Object," *Ethnohistory*, 44:I (winter, 1997), 1-29.

Frenchmen Nicholas Perrot expressed his confidence in the utility of French trade goods. After making a gift of a gun, he said:

It will also be more satisfactory in hunting cattle and other animals than are all the arrows that you use. To you who are old men, I leave my kettle; I carry it everywhere without fear of breaking it. You will cook in it the meat your young men bring from the chase, and the food which you offer to the Frenchmen who come to visit you. [Perrot then tossed several dozen awls and knives to the women] Throw aside your bone bodkins; these French awls will be much easier to use. These knives will be more useful to you in killing beavers and in cutting your meat than are the pieces of stone that you use.²⁴

Great Lakes Indians had developed their own material culture to aid food preparation, hunting, cleaning game, and making clothing, but, as Perrot observed, their bone or stone tools were inferior to the manufactured products of Europe. The Chippewa persisted with the use of split bone awls and needles into the early twentieth century. While such tools were used to manufacture traditional household items such as cattail mats or snowshoe webbing, their importance in everyday life had long been eclipsed by manufactured awls and needles, which saw much service by *Anishnabe* women in the crafting of garments from the broad cloth and blankets obtained from fur traders.²⁵

During the early phases of the fur trade, the exchange was based upon European tools, from iron tools to firearms. By the 1660s Ottawa traders were conducting a handsome trade with the Cree, “who gave them all their beaver robes for old knives, blunted awls, wretched nets, and kettles used until they were past service.”²⁶ The Ottawa’s willingness to trade their old tools to the Cree revealed both their ready ability to replace worn with new goods and the desire on the part of the Cree to have access to any type of metal tools. During the 1690s European cloths began to be an important part of *Anishnabe* dress, and by the eighteenth century textiles formed the backbone of the Great Lakes fur trade.²⁷ As early as 1718, a French report indicated that the type of clothing worn differentiated those peoples within the French sphere of influence from those beyond. “This nation is well clothed,” the French said of the Potawatomi near Detroit, “like our savages resident at Montreal.” On the other hand, the Fox Indians were described as

²⁴ La Potherie, *Histoire de l’Amerique septentrionale*, ed. Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, Vol. I, 331.

²⁵ Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1979), 34-39.

²⁶ Nicholas Perrot, *Memoire*, ed. by Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, vol I, 173-74.

²⁷ Dean L. Anderson, “Documentary and Archeological Perspectives on European Trade Goods in the Western Great Lakes Region,” Ph.D. Dissertation, 1992, Michigan State University, p.159-60.

having “scarcely any garments of cloth” or the Illinois as “[a]ll dressed in deer-skin, or in Robes of buffalo, wild-cat, wolf, pole-cat, beaver, or otter skins.”²⁸ Broad cloth and blanket sales represented an integration of European goods into the daily lives of the *Anishnabeg*. Clothing lacks the durability of a kettle or knife. As frugal as Chippewa women were in reusing old blankets as winter coats and refashioning adult items for use by children, cotton and wool garments had to be regularly replaced.²⁹ Until the rise of government annuities, the only way for the *Anishnabeg* to obtain textile products was through trade with the Europeans.

In the eighteenth century the Indians of the Great Lakes region were far from “dependent” on European trade goods. They were, however, reliant on regular contact with fur traders to satisfy several recurrent economic needs. One of these needs was firearms, which played a role in hunting and perhaps more importantly in war. While trade muskets were a durable good able to provide a single owner with years of use, they required regular resupply with gunpowder, and not infrequent service by a gunsmith. Clothing was the other great recurrent need. As early as the 1680s, the French thought the Indians dependent upon their trade. “You have forgotten that your ancestors in former days used earthen pots, stone hatchets and knives, and bows; and you will be obliged to use them again, if Onontio abandons you,” Nicholas Perrot admonished the Ottawa. “What will become of you if he becomes angry?” But Perrot overstated the significance of the French fur trade to the *Anishnabeg*. Their needs were not so great that they could not forgo the trade for a year or more. Nor were the French the only source of trade goods. Supplies of necessaries could often be obtained from Indian middlemen or from New France’s English rivals.³⁰

The fur trade joined Native Americans and Europeans in what historian Francis Jennings called an “unstable symbiosis.”³¹ In the short run the fur trade was a mutually advantageous exchange: fur traders were involved in a commerce that could be immensely profitable, and Indians received access to new technologies. Over the course of several generations, however,

²⁸ “Memoir on the Savages of Canada as far as the Mississippi River, Describing their Customs and Trade,” edited by Thwaites, *WHC*, XVI, 366, 371, 373.

²⁹ Densmore, *Chippewa Customs*, 33.

³⁰ La Potherie, *Histoire de l’Amerique septentrionale*, ed. Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley*, Vol. II, 76.

³¹ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest* (New York: Norton, 1976), 97-104.

the trade often worked in a way that was increasingly advantageous for the Europeans and impoverishing for the Native Americans. At the time the fur trade first entered the Great Lakes region, European society was rapidly moving toward a capitalist economic system. Socially, the accumulation of wealth from trade was lauded, while economically profits from the fur trade were reinvested in other commercial endeavors. During the profitable years of the late eighteenth century, money made trading furs in Michigan might well be reinvested in England in one of the new ventures of the Industrial Revolution. In that way wealth led to the creation of more wealth for the Europeans and the European-Americans.

For the *Anishnabeg*, on the other hand, individual accumulation of wealth was not lauded. Honor and prestige went not to those who had more wealth but to those who gave more to others. “Good hunters,” Antoine la Mothe, sieur de Cadillac complained, “profit the least from their hunting. They often make feasts for their friends or relatives, or distribute the animals they have killed among the cabins or families of the village.”³² Trade goods were similarly redistributed, leaving highly respected hunters with only the minimum supplies to get through the winter. Archeological evidence as well as historical evidence also indicates that a significant amount of trade goods was dedicated to honoring the dead.³³ Nicholas Perrot was shocked by the “lavish spending” of the feast of the dead. “During three days they lavish all that they possess in trade-goods or other articles; and they reduce themselves to such an extreme of poverty that they do not even reserve for themselves a single hatchet or knife.”³⁴ The Huron so strongly associated the feast of the dead with fur trade goods that they came to refer to the ceremony as “the kettle,” in reference to all the copper kettles interned with the bones of loved ones.³⁵

Not only did the *Anishnabeg* not accumulate wealth from the fur trade, but in order to participate in the trade, they risked over hunting fur-bearing animals such, as the beaver, thereby degrading their territory. The classic model of the environmental impact of the fur trade was for Indian peoples to develop a reliance on trade goods, which was followed by a drastic drop in the

³² Antoine la Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac, *The Western Country in the Seventeenth Century: The Memoirs of Lamothe Cadillac and Pierre Liette*, edited by Milo M. Quaife (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1917), 21.

³³ Charles E. Cleland, *The Lasanen Site: An Historic Burial Locality in Mackinac County, Michigan* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Museum, 1971), 88-92.

³⁴ Perrot, *Memoire*, ed. Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley*, vol., I, 88.

³⁵ Turgeon, “Tale of the Kettle,” *Ethnohistory*, 10-11.

population of beavers. “In truth, my brother,” a Montagnais hunter told the Jesuit Missionary Paul Le Jeune, “the Beaver does everything to perfection. He makes for us kettles, axes, swords, knives, and gives us drink and food without the trouble of cultivating the ground.” In order to keep the supply of trade goods coming, the Montagnais, as the Iroquois and Micmac before them, hunted the beaver in an unrelenting fashion. Le Jeune observed them break into beaver lodges and “kill all, great and small, male and female.” The missionary accurately predicted that the Montagnais “will finally exterminate the species in this Region, as has happened among the Hurons, who have not a single Beaver.”³⁶ The *Anishnabeg* avoided this model for a considerable time. This was in part because of the aggressive expansion of the Chippewa into territories to the west, the use of agricultural products in trade by the Ottawa, and fact that Michigan had been largely spared from over hunting during the seventeenth century by the Iroquois wars. By the nineteenth century, however, the deleterious effects of the fur trade began to impact seriously the Ottawa and Chippewa.

For good as well as bad, the fur trade had become a regular and important part of Great Lakes Indian life nearly one hundred years before the establishment of the United States. It was not more important to the Chippewa than fishing in the Great Lakes or in the St. Mary’s River. The fur trade was not more important to the Ottawa than raising corn. But the fur trade was fully integrated into the annual subsistence cycle of the *Anishnabeg*, including their fishing and farming. During the winter most Ottawa and Chippewa families hunted fur-bearing animals to acquire food for camp and pelts for trade. The abundant fishery of the Straits region provided fish for subsistence, as well as a surplus that could also be exchanged for trade goods. The cornfields of L’Arbre Croche and along the Grand River were expanded to produce grain for trade with the French. Maple sugar produced at spring sojourns into the forest also was traded for European goods. Indeed European fur traders required *Anishnabe* canoes for their trade cargoes and moccasins for their feet, both of which were provided by the Ottawa and Chippewa in exchange for trade goods. The function of Michilmackinac and Sault Ste. Marie as key fur trade distribution centers ensured a consistent demand for a wide range of native products. It was, in part, because their involvement in trade with the Europeans was not limited to the

³⁶ Paul Le Jeune quoted in, Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations*, Vol. VI, 297-305.

hunting of fur bearing animals that the *Anishnabeg* did not face over-hunted trapping grounds as soon as other peoples such as the Menominee.³⁷

The Ottawa also expanded their relationship with the Europeans. By the eighteenth century, the Ottawa filled a vital economic niche by raising surplus grain crops for the European market. This participation in the market as farmers was more important than the trapping of furs. “The Ottawas of L’Arbre Croche, who, when compared to the Chipeways, appear to be much more advanced in civilization,” observed Alexander Henry, “grow maize, for the market of Michilimackinac, where this commodity is depended upon, for provisioning the canoes.”³⁸ In 1816, the American Indian agent William Puthuff reported that the Ottawa of northern Michigan produced “about twelve thousand bushels of corn and as many bushels of Irish potatoes per annum at the Island of Michillimackinac and the British post.” He went on to write: “Their corn is purchased principally for the use of the North west fur trade, with little encouragement they might be induced to locate themselves and much increase their agricultural labors, already do they supply our Market with considerable quantities of vegetables, Cabbages, Turnips, Pumpkins, Squashes, Cucumbers, Melons etc. etc.”³⁹ The Grand River Ottawa also utilized their grain crop to leverage trade goods. So vital was the annual yield of Ottawa farmers that in 1779, when the British feared the approach of American revolutionaries, they dispatched the sloop *Felicity* to cruise the lakeshore and bring all of marketable grain to Mackinac.⁴⁰

The Subsistence Pattern and *Anishnabe* Use of the Interior

The subsistence pattern of the Ottawa and Chippewa was never static. It changed as opportunities and challenges arose. Neither in the present and certainly not in the past, were the *Anishnabeg* dependent upon a single resource. Their lifestyle was based on the interrelated exploitation of fish, game, wild foods, and cultivated crops. While the range of resources exploited by the *Anishnabeg* during the historic period (1634-1855) was fairly constant, the emphasis or importance placed on various items changed over time as economic and environmental changes warranted.

³⁷*Ibid*, Vol. I, 282-3.

³⁸ Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 49.

³⁹ William Puthuff to Lewis Cass, 14 May 1816, *WHC*, Vol. XIX, 412-13.

⁴⁰ Milo M. Quaife, *Lake Michigan* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944) 103.

Fish played a role in the subsistence system of all *Anishnabeg*. For none was this more so than the Chippewa who reside near Sault Ste. Marie. The rapids were renowned for their whitefish, which in the words of one fur trader “are found here during the greater part of the season, weighing, in general, from six pounds to fifteen.” The Chippewa caught these with dip nets by maneuvering in a canoe among the rocks and riffles. A good fisherman could catch several hundred fish in an hour or two. These fish were smoked and served as the principal food supply throughout the year. But as Alexander Henry observed, even the Chippewa of the Sault left the fishing grounds during the fall “going westward, in the winter, to hunt.”⁴¹ The majority of the Sault Chippewa spent the winter at inland hunting camps. Peter Marksman’s Chippewa family spent the winter of 1830 living along the rapids, on the Indian’s reserved camping grounds.⁴² However, most of the Sault bands seem to have moved inland during the winter. Waishkey, a Lake Superior Chippewa who came to the Sault region in 1822 and who eventually was the founder of the Bay Mills community, spent the summer near the⁴³ rapids but claimed as his winter “hunting grounds” an inland area west of the reserved area.⁴⁴ Missionary Abel Bingham, based at Sault Ste. Marie in the 1830s, was required to make a snowshoe tour of the interior each winter to visit his scattered flock of converts.

For the majority of the *Anishnabeg* it was the Great Lakes fishery that was their most important single source of subsistence. Andrew Blackbird, who grew up in the 1820s and 1830s along the shore of Little Traverse, wrote:

And fishes of all kinds were so plentiful in the Harbor. A hook anywhereas in the bay, and at any time of the year, would catch Mackinaw trout, many as one would want. And if a net were set anywhereas in the harbor on shallow water, in the morning it would be loaded with fishes of all kinds.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 61-62.

⁴² John H. Pitezal, *Life of Rev. Peter Marksman: An Ojibwa Missionary Illustrating the Triumphs of the Gospel Among the Ojibwa Indians* (Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern, 1901) 40.

⁴³ Abel Bingham Journal, 14 January 1836, Abel Bingham Papers, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University.

⁴⁴ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft for Wayishkee, 26 May 1833, Chase S. Osborn Papers, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

⁴⁵ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 50.

Gill nets were routinely used by Ottawa and Chippewa fishermen and during the winter fish would sometimes be speared from holes cut in the ice.⁴⁶ For the Chippewa who lived along Lake Superior that body of water was a critical resource. Peter Marksman grew up along the south shore of the lake during the 1820s. In his memoir he recalled that in the fall of 1830, after spending the summer near the Sault Ste. Marie rapids, he repaired with his family to Naomikong Point. Through October and November they caught large whitefish before returning to the Sault. During the summer of 1832 his family camped at Whitefish Point where again they fished the waters of Lake Superior, setting lines with from a canoe.⁴⁷

The large rivers that drained Michigan's interior uplands were a source of spring and summer subsistence for the *Anishnabeg*. The Ottawa of the Grand and Muskegon River valleys did not exploit the Lake Michigan fishery and instead relied upon spears and nets to secure fish from the inland waters. In April 1790, Hugh Heward, a fur trader journeyed down the Grand River. Not far from modern Lansing, Michigan, Heward came across a group of Ottawa and Potawatomi "spearing Sturgeon."⁴⁸ Such glimpses of Indian life in the interior are extremely rare and it is difficult to say how important the inland river fishery was to the Ottawa. An 1859 newspaper report estimated that "Indians," presumably Ottawa, had caught a staggering fifteen hundred sturgeon on the Muskegon River, near Newaygo, Michigan.⁴⁹ By that time, however, the sturgeon were being barreled and sold in commercial markets and the volume of fish speared does not likely represent subsistence practice.

Small-scale farming and the gathering of wild fruits played a very significant part of the *Anishnabe* subsistence system. Wild cherries and berries were gathered as delicacies and were used to flavor meats. Acorns gathered from the floor of the forest would also be used in Indian cuisine. In October, cranberries ripened and families would often resort to bogs where the berries abounded. These berries would also be used to season foods or they could be sold commercially. The women likewise gathered blueberries and whortleberries. Among the Ottawa, crops of corn and beans, planted each spring were both a critical subsistence food, as

⁴⁶ Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 56-57.

⁴⁷ John H. Pitezal, *The Life of Rev. Peter Marksman: An Ojibwa Missionary Illustrating the Triumphs of the Gospel Among the Ojibwa Indians* (Cincinnati: Western Methodist Book Concern, 1901) 40-42.

⁴⁸ Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The John Askin Papers* (Detroit: Burton Historical Records, 1928), Vol. 1, p.350.

⁴⁹ *Grand Rapids Daily Eagle*, 21 May 1859.

well as a source of market exchange. The Chippewa of Lake Superior were less likely to rely upon maize as a food source, although by the 1830s they had adopted the potato as an agricultural product that could provide a reserve source of food for the winter.⁵⁰ Some insight into the relationship between the hunting of game, trapping, farming and fishing can be seen in the 1838 report of Lucius Garey. In 1838 he managed the sparsely inhabited reserve on the Manistee River. Only about twenty-six Ottawa families lived in the region. About those he said:

They cultivate from forty to forty-five acres of land on which they raise to each family from twelve to twenty bushels potatoes, a small quantity of peas and beans, and a variety of garden vegetables. Their corn they put in sacks for winter use which is kept in their lodges and houses or hid about in the ground, or cut in their pieces and dry them. Their other means of subsistence consists in fish and wild game. I think about one-fourth part of their living consists in the article of fish. They take each family annually from one hundred to one hundred and fifty muskrats, two or three deer, one or two bears, and occasionally a beaver and otter.⁵¹

Garey's estimate of fish consisting of "about one-fourth part" of their total subsistence indicates the importance of that article to the Indians who resided in Michigan's river valleys. The estimate of only "two or three deer" taken per family is surprisingly low.

Because subsistence practices were enmeshed in *Anishnabe* cultural identity, changes in subsistence activities reflected the alteration or adaptation of deep values--understandings of how the Ottawa and Chippewa people viewed their lives and organized their environment. By the mid-eighteenth century such a shift was underway as the Ottawa and Chippewa increased their participation in the trapping of furs and the production of fish and grain in exchange for trade goods. As the acquisition of blankets, guns, and alcohol became more important to individual *Anishnabeg*, access to fur bearing animals became more important to individual family economy. The result was a significant change in the way that the Ottawa and Chippewa conceived of the resources of the forest and the creation of a new pattern of organizing access to fur bearing animals. This new system featured the division of the Michigan interior into individual family hunting zones.

⁵⁰ Johann Georg Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985) 319-22; Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 45-6; Francis Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979) 39-40.

⁵¹ Lucius Garey, Manistee Indian Reserve subreport, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1838* (New York: AMS, 1976), ?.

Anthropologists and ethnohistorians documented the existence of, and discussed the significance of, the family hunting territory system for most of the twentieth century. Initially, it was believed that family-hunting zones emerged in prehistory and were an adaptation to the environment of the northern forest.⁵² However, in 1954 anthropologist Eleanor Leacock proposed that it was the stimulus of the fur trade that led the people whom she studied, the Montagnais of Quebec, to move toward a system of privately allocated resources. More intensive hunting for commercial markets led to a scarcity of game while the new European trade goods fostered more economic self-sufficiency among families, which, in turn, weakened traditional band bonds.⁵³ In recent years historians and anthropologists have broadly accepted the thesis that family-hunting zones emerged as a response to the fur trade.⁵⁴ The appearance of family hunting zones in Michigan seems to have occurred by the middle of the eighteenth century and was accompanied by a decrease in the mobility of the Ottawa and Chippewa and a greater emphasis on production for the market. Commenting on the shift in values that led up to this change, historian Richard White has observed that “[b]y the late seventeenth century, for example, any hungry man was entitled to kill game even outside his usual village or tribal hunting territory, but if a hunter did not have hunting rights in a territory, he was obliged to give the furs of the animals he killed to those who did.”⁵⁵

There is substantial evidence that both the Ottawa and the Chippewa had a land tenure system that was in many ways similar to private property. Johann Georg Kohl, a German geographer who spent the summer and fall of 1855 on Lake Superior living with the Chippewa, remarked:

⁵² Frank G. Speck, “Family Hunting Territories and Social Life of Various Algonkian Bands of the Ottawa Valley,” *Anthropological Series 8, Memoirs of the Canadian Geological Survey* 70:1-10; Irving A. Hallowell, “The Size of Algonkian Hunting Territories: A Function of Ecological Adjustments,” *American Anthropologist* 51, (1), 35-45.

⁵³ Eleanor B. Leacock, “The Montagnais ‘Hunting Territory’ and the Fur Trade,” *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association* 78:6-24.

⁵⁴ Harold Hickerson, “Land Tenure of the Rainy Lake Chippewa at the Beginning of the 19th Century,” *Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology* 2:37-63, for more on this period of time also see, Arthur J. Ray, “Some Conservation Schemes of the Hudson’s Bay Company, 1821-1850: An Examination of the Problems of Resource Management in the Fur Trade,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 1, 1, (1975):42-59; Charles A. Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, 1974), 206-211; Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: their role as trappers, hunters, and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 203.

⁵⁵ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 104.

The beaver dams—so persons conversant with the subject assured me—all have owners among the Indians, and are handed down father to son. The sugar camps, or “screries,” as the Canadians call them, have all an owner, and no Indian family would think of making sugar at a place where it had no right. Even the cranberry patches, or places in the swamp and bush where that berry is plucked, are family property; and the same with many other things.

Because of this widespread division of the interior into family zones, Kohl believed “the irruption of the white men into their country must have been a tremendous insult and infringement of law in the eyes of the Indians.”⁵⁶

The most intimate look at family hunting territories in Michigan is the memoir of Alexander Henry, a New Jersey born fur trader who was captured by the Chippewa at Michilimackinac in 1763. Henry spent the winter of 1763-1764 as the “adopted son” of Wawatam, a Chippewa hunter. “At our wintering-ground,” Henry wrote, “we were to be alone; for the Indian families, in the countries of which I write, separate in the winter season, for the convenience, as well of subsistence as of the chase, and re-associate in the spring and summer.” The Chippewa family went by canoe from the Straits region, down the shore of Lake Michigan, stopping to pay a social call at L’Arbre Croche, to the mouth of the Big Sable River. Initially, they made camp fifteen miles up the river and proceeded to hunt beaver, raccoon, elk, and deer. The family remained there until mid-December. By that time they had secured a considerable supply of venison and more than two hundred beaver and raccoon pelts. These were cached and the family proceeded overland into the interior. They moved about seventy miles from Lake Michigan, perhaps to within the vicinity of Houghton Lake. They continued to enjoy a successful hunt at one point killing a bear that Henry estimated at “five hundred weight.” Deer and elk hunting were particularly fruitful in February when the crust on the snow allowed the hunters to run down their prey with greater ease. On one occasion they slew twelve elk (“stag” in Henry’s words) in the course of two hours. Eventually the camp boasted “four thousand weight of dried venison,” all of which had to be laboriously packed out to the shore of Lake Michigan. The venison and the furs were both intended not for subsistence but for the market at Michilimackinac. With the advent of the maple sugar season, the family moved closer to the lakeshore to the site of the family sugar bush. The women took charge of the sugaring and “the

⁵⁶ Johann Georg Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway* (St.Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1985) 421.

men cutting wood for the fires, and hunting and fishing [this was Henry's only reference to fishing or fish during the course of the winter]."⁵⁷

It is in the context of the meeting of Wawatam's extended family that Henry made his most specific statements regarding Chippewa land tenure. "In the midst of this, we were joined by several lodges of Indians, most of whom were of the family to which I belonged, and had wintered near us. The lands belonged to this family, and it had therefore the exclusive right to hunt on them. This according to the custom of the people; for each family has its own lands." Henry suggests that the territory along the Big Sable River was occupied jointly by several related or allied households during the course of the winter, each keeping apart for reasons of trapping and perhaps subsistence, but coming together again during the maple sugar time.⁵⁸

A second less intimate account of Indian use of the interior of western Michigan can be found in *The Autobiography of Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard*. Hubbard was a Vermont born fur trader who came to the Great Lakes region in 1818 as an employee of the American Fur Company. In 1819 Hubbard was given charge of the Muskegon River trade for the company. Hubbard's account provides some insight into Indian subsistence activities within the interior of the treaty area.

Hubbard had been ordered by the American Fur Company to establish a post some sixty miles up the Muskegon River. But after getting a late start from Michilimackinac and suffering numerous weather delays, Hubbard and his voyageurs did not reach the mouth of the Muskegon until the 10th of December. The lake there was already frozen and proceeding up river was impossible. Reluctantly, Hubbard established his post at the mouth of the river, "though it would be very inconvenient, being from thirty to fifty miles distant from the Indian hunting grounds, where we should be compelled to go to trade." Hubbard went on one of these snowshoe trips to the hunting camps. In the course of the expedition, they successfully visited three hunting camps but then became lost in the winter woods and only barely made it to a fourth camp. Each camp was located one long day's travel from the next, perhaps between ten and twenty miles apart. Some of the camps were composed of a single lodge others of several lodges. Some of the

⁵⁷ Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures In Canada and the Indian Territories Between the Years 1760 and 1776* (Edmonton, Alberta: M.G. Hurtig, 1969), 121-142.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 142.

camps seemed to be enjoying a prosperous winter with plenty of meat and good trapping returns, while the camp of a single family was in a near starvation condition following an accident that all but disabled the head of the household. During the course of his journey among the hunting camps, Hubbard subsisted on the same food as the Indians. He ate corn, bear, rabbits, porcupines, and partridges. In one of the camps he described “a sufficiency of food, though at times our rations were limited.” Although Hubbard’s account is a memoir, and not an exact journal it is worth noting that he made no mention of eating fish or of the Indians themselves eating fish or fishing. On the other hand, back at the trading post on Muskegon Lake, fishing through the ice was the principal source of subsistence for the fur traders.⁵⁹

The captivity narrative of John Tanner, a young American boy captured by Saginaw Chippewa raiders in 1789, also provides insights into *Anishnabe* subsistence practices and concepts of land tenure. After living for several years with the Saginaw Chippewa, Tanner was sold to an Ottawa, Netnokwa, and removed with her family to the region around the Straits of Mackinac. After harvesting their corn crop near the village of Shabawywyagun (Cheboygan), “we went three days up the river to the place where we intended to pass the winter. We then left our canoes and travelling over land, camped three times before we came to the place where we set up our lodges for the winter.” This hunting camp would appear to have been in a family hunting territory as the next year it was reoccupied. “As the winter approached, they...went, at length, to our wintering ground, at the same place where we spent the former winter. Here I was set to make martin traps as the other hunters did.” The next year his Ottawa family took Tanner to the Red River valley in the present province of Manitoba. During the journey the two eldest men in the family died. Chippewa and Ottawa hunters in the Red River area vowed to help Tanner’s remaining family through the winter. Nonetheless, Tanner and his Ottawa brother, both adolescents, tried to provide for their mother. “The Indians gave Wa-megon-a-biew and myself a little creek where there was plenty of beaver and on which they said none but ourselves should hunt....We remained in this place about three months, in which time we were as well provided for as any of the band; for if our game was not sufficient, we were sure to be supplied by some of our friends as long as anything could be killed.” A total of three lodges occupied that winter

⁵⁹ Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard, *The Autobiography of Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard*, introduction by Caroline M. McIlvanie (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), 81-106.

hunter territory. Several years later, when Tanner relocated to the Rainy River country, he sought and received permission from the local Chippewa to hunt in a portion of their territory. “The chief of that country, from whom I had previously obtained permission to hunt in a little piece of ground which I had selected, and a promise that none of his people should interfere with me there now endeavored to dissuade me from going to spend the winter by myself.” Tanner rejected the chief’s advice and wintered uncomfortably with his young children, without the services of women to prepare hides, make clothes, and cook food.⁶⁰

Ethnohistorical evidence suggests that there was a considerable portion of the central interior of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan that was not divided into family hunting zones and seems to have been seldom visited by the Ottawa and Chippewa. In a 1972 report to the Indian Claims Commission the ethnohistorian Ermine Wheeler-Voegelin estimated that there was an area of approximately 2,476,339 acres covering parts of Osceola, Missaukee, Roscommon, Crawford, and Clare counties that constituted an “unused and unoccupied region.”⁶¹ Wheeler-Voegelin based this conclusion on several factors, the most important being the almost complete lack of historical accounts of Ottawa or Chippewa hunting or fishing activity in this area. Wheeler-Voegelin’s analysis is supported by the region’s environmental features. It is composed of inland highland and is therefore subjected to what one naturalist called “the most severe climate in Lower Michigan.” It is a region, when compared to regions closer to the shore of the Great Lakes, that offered inferior hunting and agricultural prospects to the Ottawa and Chippewa.⁶²

Historical sources which do document *Anishnabe* use of the interior suggest that those activities were limited to about seventy miles inland from the shore of Lake Michigan. John Tanner described his journey to a northern Michigan hunting camp as taking nearly a week. They traveled three days up stream by canoe. “We then left our canoes and travelling over land,” Tanner wrote, “camped three times before we came to the place where we set up our

⁶⁰ John Tanner, *A Narrative of the Adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault Ste. Marie) During Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians in the Interior of North America* (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1956, reprinted by Penguin Books, 2000): 16, 18, 31, 207.

⁶¹ Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, “An anthropological report on Indian use and occupancy of northern Michigan,” *Chippewa Indians, Volume 5* (New York: Garland Press, 1974) 13-14, 62.

⁶² Patrick J. Comer, Dennis A. Albert, *et al*, *Michigan’s Native Landscape: As Interpreted from the General Land Office Surveys 1816-1856* (Lansing: Michigan Natural Features Inventory, 1995) 37-41.

lodges for the winter.”⁶³ Alexander Henry, who provided the most detailed description of *Anishnabe* use of the interior, described his family moving into the interior in three stages. Early in the fall they hunted beaver near the mouths of rivers and streams that they passed during their journey from L’Arbre Croche to the Big Sable River. Upon arriving at the Big Sable, Wawatam, Henry’s Indian father, “took a dog, tied its feet together, and threw it into the stream, uttering, at the same time, a long prayer, which he addressed to the Great Spirit, supplicating his blessing on the chase.” The family then established a lodge about “fifteen miles above the mouth of the stream.” Here they hunted beaver, raccoon, and white-tailed deer until the 20th of December when they resolved upon “A hunting excursion to the interior of the country.” They cached the furs they had already garnered and advanced overland about forty or fifty miles. Here, through January and February, they hunted bear and elk with great success. The reason most Indian hunters did not venture deeper into the interior is also indicated by Henry. By early March his Indian family had several hundred furs, “five hundred weight” of bear fat, and “four thousand weight of dried venison, which was to be carried on our backs, along with all the rest of our wealth, for seventy miles, the distance of our encampment from that part of the lake shore, at which in autumn we left our canoes.” The movement of the furs and meat meant for trade at Mackinac required many days of “patient toil.”⁶⁴ The problem with such a laborious process was not limited to “toil” but it was also a question of time. If the trip back to the lakeshore took too long the *Anishnabeg* ran the risk of missing a portion of the very important maple sugar harvest.

Both the growing economic importance of trade goods and the increasing scarcity of fur bearing animals inclined the *Anishnabeg* to adopt the family hunting zones. The system had the added advantage of reducing conflicts among families and bands. As early as 1787, the Ottawa at L’Arbe Croche complained about the poor quality of hunting in their area. This did not mean that men were willing to forsake hunting for farming, but they worried that even with the landscape divided into family hunting zones, “no more animals remain to call us out to the Woods.”⁶⁵ In 1807 an Ottawa visionary *Le Maigaouis*, the Trout, blamed the *Anishnabeg* themselves for the decline of game populations. “You complain that the animals of the Forest

⁶³ Tanner, *Narrative*, 16.

⁶⁴ Henry, *Travels*, 121-141.

⁶⁵ Ottawas of Arbe Croche, Council at Abrbe Croche, 3 August 1787, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* [hereafter cited as *MPHC*] (Lansing, Mich.: Pioneer Society of Michigan, 1887), *Volume 11*: 494.

are few and scattered. How should it be otherwise? You destroy them yourselves for their Skins only and leave their bodies to rot or give the best pieces to the Whites.” In a vision the Great Spirit had informed Trout “I am displeased when I see this, and take them back to the Earth that they may not come to you again. You must kill no more animals than are necessary to feed and cloathe you.”⁶⁶ Trout’s vision reflected a growing anxiety among the *Anishnabeg* over their future. Economically, the fur trade, which had provided a regular supply of vital clothing and tools, was becoming more difficult to sustain. Politically, their alliance with the British was being forced aside by the Americans. After one hundred and fifty years of managing first the French and then the British, the Ottawa and Chippewa were faced with a new people and yet another set of challenges.

⁶⁶ Substance of a Talk delivered by the Indian Chief Le Maigaouis, 4 May 1807, quoted in Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, 486.

Early *Anishinabe* Relations With The United States

The United States and the *Anishnabeg*: Early Encounters

Although there are few great battlefields in Michigan, the *Anishnabeg* fought long and hard to keep their Great Lake homelands secure from the authority of the United States. The Ottawa and Chippewa participated in military expeditions against the Americans from 1777 until 1815 and fought battles as far afield as the Hudson River Valley and as near as Mackinac Island. These campaigns were waged in alliance with Great Britain. They were in part an expression of kinship with the colonial authorities who controlled the fur trade and honored *Anishnabe* leaders with annual gifts. But young Chippewa and Ottawa men also risked their lives for their own reason: to protect their people from the expansion of the United States. The *Anishnabeg* and the Americans first met not as trader and trapper, or missionary and convert, as the English and the French encounter began; rather the relationship with the United States began in war. In 1829 a Winnebago leader explained the difference between the way the Indians of the Great Lakes encountered the Americans and their earlier relations with the British and the French. The Europeans, the Winnebago explained, “never asked us to sell our country.” But when the first American came “no sooner had he seen a small portion of our country, than he wished to see a map of THE WHOLE of it; and, having seen it, he wished us to sell it ALL to him.” The antagonism between the *Anishnabeg* and the United States is reflected in the word they used to refer to the Americans: *Chemokmon* or “long knives,” a reminder of the swords they wielded in battle.⁶⁷ Two generations of *Anishnabe* warriors made it their duty to keep those “long knives” from the lodges of their women and children.

The Ottawa first took the field against the Americans in July of 1777 as part of a force of 500 Indians serving with General John Burgoyne’s British Army. Accompanied by the redoubtable Charles Langlade, the Ottawa participated in several raids and battles during the invasion from Canada into New York, but they were alienated by the arrogant English commander’s demeanor

⁶⁷ Speech of Huwanikga (the Little Elk) quoted in, Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Metis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737-1832* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 1; Sometimes the word is spelled as *Kitchimokomans*, see Johann Georg Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1985), 367.

and returned to Lake Michigan prior to Burgoyne's humiliation at Saratoga. In 1779 Langlade again accompanied his L'Arbre Croche kinsmen in an effort to harass the Americans who had taken control of the French settlements of southern Illinois and Indiana. But a lack of supplies and a lack of enthusiasm, particularly on the part of the Chippewa, stalled the expedition at the St. Joseph River.⁶⁸ At the conclusion of the war, Langlade was dispatched by the British crown to visit the Lake Michigan Indians and win their acquiescence to the Treaty of Paris.

News that the British had surrendered *Anishnabe* territory caused a severe tension in the former's relationship with the Ottawa and Chippewa. In June 1784, there was an aborted conspiracy among the Indians of the Straits area against the English garrison at Michilimackinac. Then, in September, the noted Chippewa war chief Matchekewis, who in 1763 had led the capture of the fort, upbraided the Captain Daniel Robertson and complained that all British were "Lyers, Impostures &c. that had encouraged him and others to go to Canada &c. to fight and loose their Brothers and Children." Robertson reported that the chief angrily threatened that "the Indians ought to chase us and our connections out of the country." No hostilities occurred, although the British were kept in a constant state of alarm when Indians visiting the fort exhibited an "appearance of some uneasiness." At least twenty men were kept on guard each night throughout the summer. In fact, the Ottawa and Chippewa did hold several councils to discuss the significance of the victory of the Americans in their revolution. The British may have been defeated, but the *Anishnabeg* certainly were not. The commandant at Michilimackinac reported that deputations of Shawnee arrived in Michigan that summer "to renew the Friendship subsisting between them & the Lake Indians." While the British worried about "intrigues" from which they were kept apart, the Ottawa and Chippewa forged an alliance with the Indians of the Ohio country to maintain their opposition to the Americans.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Joseph Tasse, "Memoir of Charles de Langlade," *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, VII, 171-3; Report of Lieutenant Thomas Bennett, 1 September 1779, *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XVIII, 398-401; Major Arent De Peyster to Sir Guy Carleton, 4 June 1777, *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XVIII, 405-6.

⁶⁹ Captain Alexander McKee to Sir John Johnson, 2 June 1784, *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XVIII, 434-444; Captain Daniel Robertson to Major Matthews, 7 September 1784, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. XI, 452-3. Another source of tension between the Indians of the Lake Michigan region and the British was the creation in 1785 of the General Society of the General Store that combined the trade of most Michilimackinac merchants. The sudden end to competitive trading angered Indians who felt trade protocol required gifts and loose credit. At the same time the flow of gifts from British colonial authorities dried up as the American Revolution came to an end. A special commission to dispense gifts toured the lakes in the summer of 1787 which served to restore good relations between the Ottawa, Chippewa, and the British. See Indian Council, Michilimackinac, 11 July 1787, *MPHC*, Vol. XI, 490-6.

The loose confederation of eastern and Great Lakes tribes that opposed the young United States was the most formidable military opposition posed by native people in American history. The Indians of the Ohio Country were at the heart of the alliance, the Shawnee, Miami, the Maumee Ottawa, and Delawares. In strong support were the Indians of Indiana and lower Michigan, including the Potawatomi, Weas, Piankashaws, Wyandot, and Kickapoo. Less directly threatened but committed to the support of the other Algonquian speaking tribes were the Great Lakes peoples led by the Ottawa and Chippewa. Even the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy were joined in cooperation against the *Chemokom*. In spite of this unanimity, the United States initially found that at least some of the confederation chiefs willing to try negotiation. In January 1785, the Fort McIntosh Treaty established a reserve of territory in northwestern Ohio for the Delaware, Wyandot, and Ottawa while opening a large part of the rest of the state to American settlement.⁷⁰ A year later at a treaty concluded at Fort Finney the United States agreed to “allot to the Shawnee nation, lands within their territory to live and hunt upon.” The treaty, however, opened to Americans a large tract of land in central Ohio.⁷¹ These agreements made clear that negotiations with the Americans would involve land cessions, and that they had left the Indians with precious little land in the Ohio country with which to bargain. To make matters worse, once the treaties were struck, the American government was unable to control the actions of its citizens on the frontier. At a December 1786 council, representatives of the Indian confederacy petitioned the Congress: “we beg that you will prevent your Surveyors and other people from coming on our side of the Ohio River.”⁷² When still they came there was no restraining young warriors from taking up the hatchet. Indian attacks on American troops and “settlers” in Kentucky, southern Indiana, southern Illinois, and in Ohio itself were frequent after 1785. What followed was a vicious war of ambush and retaliation that excepted no one because of their age, gender, or good intentions.⁷³

⁷⁰ Treaty with the Wyandot, etc. 1785, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, edited by Charles J. Kappler (New York: Interland Publishing, 1972), 6-8.

⁷¹ Treaty with the Shawnee, 1786, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 16-17.

⁷² Indian Speech to the Congress of the United States, December 1786, *MPHC*, Vol. 11, 469.

⁷³ “Brigadier General Josiah Harmar to the Secretary of War, 7 August 1787,” *Outpost on the Wabash, 1787-1791: Letters of Brigadier General Josiah Harmar and Major John Francis Hamtramck and other letters and documents from the Harmar Papers in the William L. Clements Library*, edited by Gayle Thornbrough (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1957) 34-44; Harmar to Major John Francis Hamtramck, 7 August 1788, *Ibid.*, 99; Hamtramck to Harmar, 12 August 1788, *Ibid.*, 105-08.

Repeatedly, the Indian confederacy defeated the attempts of the United States to pacify the frontier. In October 1791, a combined force of allied Indian tribes destroyed the Army of General Arthur St. Clair. More than 600 American dead lay on the battlefield, and thousands more were wounded and sent flying in a headlong retreat. The victory was the greatest ever achieved by Indian warriors. Ottawa and Chippewa from western and northern Michigan participated in resisting the Americans in Ohio. They played a prominent part in the 1794 Fallen Timbers campaign. It was Ottawa and Chippewa from the Mackinac area that led the attack on Fort Recovery, one of General “Mad Anthony” Wayne’s advance bases. After initial success the American troops resisted the *Anishnabe* attack. Stung by the loss of twenty-five warriors and complaining that the Shawnee had not supported their attack on the fort at the critical juncture, most of the Mackinac contingent withdrew from the fight prior to the great battle at Fallen Timbers. In that battle the American army routed the allied Indians and set the stage for the Treaty of Greenville the following year.⁷⁴

The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 exacted the first land cession to the United States from the *Anishnabeg* of northern and western Michigan. Major General Wayne’s victory compelled them to cede “[t]he post of Michilimackinac, and all the land on the island, on which that post stands, and the main land adjacent, of which Indian title has been extinguished by gifts or grants to the French and English governments; and a piece of land on the main to the north of the island, to measure six miles on lake Huron, or the strait between lakes Huron and Michigan, and to extend three miles back from the water of the lake or strait, and also the island De Bois Blanc, being an extra and voluntary gift of the Chippewa nation.” The Treaty also specified that “[t]he said tribes of Indians, parties to the treaty, shall be at liberty to hunt within the territory and lands which they have now ceded to the United States, without hindrance or molestation, so long as they demean themselves peaceably, and offer no injury to the people of the United States.” In return for these grants, the *Anishnabeg* were restored to peaceful relations with the United States and offered an annuity of \$1,000 to the Ottawa and \$1,000 to the Chippewa.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Guillaume la Mothe to Joseph Chew, 19 July 1794 and Captain William Dyle to Charles Langlade, 26 July 1794, *WHC*, Vol. XVIII, 442-446.

⁷⁵ Treaty with the Wyandot, etc. 1795, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 39-45.

A total of six Ottawa and eleven Chippewa leaders signed the Greenville Treaty. Among the *Anishnabeg* known to be from northern and western Michigan who signed the agreement were Mashipinashiwish (known as “Bad Bird”), a Chippewa from the Straits region; Massass, a northern Chippewa; and Nahshogashe, a Chippewa chief described as being “from Lake Superior.” In 1834 Chusco, an Ottawa Mide priest who then lived at the Straits, told Henry Rowe Schoolcraft that he and about twenty men from L’Arbre Croche “had the courage to go” to the treaty. Among them was another chief from the Mackinac area, Chemokoman.⁷⁶ However, neither Chusco nor Chemokoman signed the treaty. The celebrated Chippewa war chief Matchekewis was reputed to have fought at Fallen Timbers and participated in the Greenville Treaty but his name does not appear among the signers.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the defeat at Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Greenville did not mean an end to armed resistance to the Americans. After Jay’s Treaty in 1795, the Americans were able to improve their military position even further by occupying the vital Great Lakes posts of Detroit and Mackinac and bringing troops directly into the *Anishnabe* heartland. The Ottawa and the Chippewa were by no means reconciled to this intrusion and continued to be in close communication with the Shawnee and other tribes who remained in opposition to the United States.

The leader of a renewed Indian resistance was Tenskawatawa (one that opens the door), a Shawnee shaman who became known to the Americans as “the Prophet.” In 1805, after leading a life of dissipation, Tenskawatawa returned from a near death state with a vision from the Great Spirit. His message called for a revival of traditional practices and a rejection of the products and practices of the Europeans. The Americans were reviled by Tenskawatawa, and he foresaw for them an apocalyptic end. Tenskawatawa’s teachings dramatized a division among Algonkin Indian peoples between those who sought accommodation and adaptation to the powerful Americans and those who looked to cherished traditions to sustain their resistance to the *Chemokom*. For those looking to resist further land cessions, Tenskawatawa’s brother, the redoubtable war chief Tecumseh, reformed the Indian confederacy of the 1780s and 1790s.

The message of revival and resistance fell on fertile ground in northern Michigan. The Ottawa visionary Trout helped to popularize Tenskawatawa’s teachings. He visited the Shawnee

⁷⁶ Schoolcraft, *Memoirs*, 477-78.

⁷⁷ Lyman Copeland Draper, “Notice of Matchekewis, Captor of Mackinac, 1763,” *WHC*, VII, 189.

Prophet in 1807, and he became a powerful voice for the traditionalist revival. “All the Ottawas from L’arbe au Crohe adhere strictly to the Shawney Prophet’s advice they do not wear Hats, Drink or Conjure, they intend all to Visit him this Autumn, which will occasion a great scarcity of corn at this post & makina.” observed a fur trader in 1807. Fur traders and American military officials alike were mystified by the sudden lack of interest among the Ottawa and Chippewa in alcohol. “I saw upwards of 60 of them at one time together,” recounted trader John Askin, “”spirits, rum & whisky was offered for nothing to them if they would drink but they refused it with disdain.” The American garrison commander at St. Joseph tried to tempt Ottawa from the prophet’s teachings by offering visiting Indians “some of his milk.” They refused his gift of something to drink and noted the irony that “they didn’t see why their Father should be so generous with offers of giving them some [whisky], especially as they could eat all the provisions he might give them.”⁷⁸

Andrew Blackbird, based on the oral testimony of his father and uncle, recounted in his *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians* that the Prophet instructed them to:

Worship the Great Spirit according to the old style as their forefathers did, and to abandon everything else which the white man had introduced into the tribes of Indians, to abandon even the mode of making fire, which was by flint and steel, and to start their fires by friction between the two pieces of dry wood as their forefathers made their fires before the white people came to this country, and to eat no flesh of domestic animals, but to eat nothing but wild game, and use their skins for their wearing apparel and robes as the Great Spirit designed them to be when He created them.

Blackbird also recorded that the Prophet advised the Ottawa and Chippewa to go live farther west away from the interference of the white man. “A great many Ottawa believed and went far west accordingly....Saw-gaw-kee—Growing Plant—was the head chief of the Ottawa nation of Indians at that time, and was one of the believers who went with the parties out west.” So many went west, according to Blackbird, “that the Ottawas were terribly reduced in numbers in the country of Arbor Croche.”⁷⁹

The Chippewa were also inspired by the message of the Shawnee Prophet. The movement spread throughout Michigan and was embraced with enthusiasm by villages along Lake Superior and the north shore of Lake Michigan. They undertook the dances, diet, and social morals

⁷⁸ John Askin, Jr. to John Askin, Esq., 1 September 1807, *The John Askin Papers, Volume II, 1796-1820*, edited by Milo M. Quaife (Detroit: Detroit Library Commission, 1931) 568-570.

⁷⁹ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 78-80.

proscribed by the Prophet and the Ottawa visionary Trout. During the summer of 1808, many Ottawa and Chippewa journeyed to the Indiana Territory to hear Tenskwatawa's message for themselves. But the Prophet was unprepared to host the large number of visitors who flocked to Prophetstown in the Wabash Valley on the banks of Tippecanoe River. Famine struck Prophetstown, and 160 of the Ottawa and Chippewa were reported to have died. Among those who succumbed was an important L'Arbre Croche chief named Little King. His death and the loss of so many others disillusioned the visiting Ottawa and Chippewa with Tenskwatawa's validity as a visionary. In April of 1809, they flaunted his authority by murdering a woman and child and then dared with impunity Tenskwatawa to use his power, temporal or spiritual, against them.⁸⁰

The experience of the large number of Ottawa and Chippewa who visited Prophetstown may have been disturbing. What they found were factions of badly divided Miami, Shawnee, and Delaware communities. Those who sought to accommodate the Americans had split with those who embraced Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa's message of resistance. The Indians who followed the traditionalist lifestyle and preached resistance faced starvation. Yet, those who sought accommodation received annuities from the Americans that kept their people alive. At the same time, the toll demanded by the Americans for peace was very high indeed. At the Treaty of Fort Wayne, signed in September of 1809, three million acres of Indian land passed to the United States. However, within such a framework of hard choices, there was room to negotiate. The Potawatomi, who participated in the treaty and received a large share of the gifts and annuities offered by the Americans, did not have to cede much of their land, as the most of the cession came at the expense of the Miami.⁸¹ The sojourn of the Ottawa and Chippewa in Indiana must have also been very instructive, as it illustrated that there was no sacred medicine to resist the Americans. When William Henry Harrison attacked and defeated the Prophet at Tippecanoe in 1811, that point was emphatically made. In addition to that, as anthropologist Charles Cleland has observed, the *Anishnabeg* "were, for the first time, able to clearly observe the meaning of the American idea of land ownership and see that it meant exclusive possession

⁸⁰ White, *The Middle Ground*, 512-3; David R. Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983, 74-78.

⁸¹ Treaty with the Delaware, Etc., 1809, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 101-02.

rather than shared use.”⁸² The men and women who returned to L’Arbre Croche, Mackinac, and Sault Ste. Marie left Indiana knowing that war was an unpromising alternative, that negotiation required unity, and that the “Long Knives” would exclude them from the land.

The War of 1812 afforded the *Anishnabeg* one final opportunity to resist the United States by military means. War between Great Britain and the United States gave the Indians of the Great Lakes region the opportunity of going into battle with a powerful ally. Unfortunately, the British had proven themselves a notoriously unreliable ally at the end of the American Revolution and again in 1794-95, when they chose to make peace with the Americans rather than support their Indian allies. This recent history, together with the defeat of the Prophet at Tippecanoe, meant that many Ottawa and Chippewa responded coolly to English overtures to take up the tomahawk. Several hundred Ottawa and Chippewa from the Straits region participated in the British capture of Fort Michillimackinac in 1812. Other Chippewa aided the Americans at the outbreak of war. The support of Indian allies gave the British a handful of victories early in the war. Ottawa from both L’Arbre Croche and Grand River fought with the British under Tecumseh’s direction until 1813, when the great warrior fell in the Battle of the Thames.⁸³ Tecumseh’s death and the Americans’ recapture of Detroit effectively ended most *Anishnabe* involvement in the war.

***Anishnabe* Life in Ante-Bellum Michigan**

Although the War of 1812 ended with American control of Michigan reestablished, peace did not bring a drastic change to the lives of the Ottawa and Chippewa. The fur trade had been the principle form of interaction between the *Anishnabeg* and the French, and later the English, and following the war American merchants, with the blessing of their government, stepped into the same role. A deceptive continuity marked Ottawa and Chippewa life. Even their old English allies remained, just across the border, inviting the *Anishnabeg* to visit kinsmen in British North America and to collect gifts offered each summer. What was different, what could barely be noticed from one year to the next during the years between 1815 and 1820, was a slowly growing American presence in the region. First, it was American fur traders slowly and gradually

⁸² Charles E. Cleland, *Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan’s Native Americans* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992),166.

⁸³ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa* , 23; Darius B. Cook, *Six Months Among Indians, Wolves and other Wild Animals in the Forest of Allegan County, Michigan in the Winter of 1839 and 1840* (Niles, Mich.: Niles Mirror Office, 1889), 68-71.

replacing men based in Montreal, then American officials and American troops expanded their presence, and with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, thousands of American settlers began to enter *Anishnabeg* territory. They came not as kinsmen, not as allies, but as a new resident population.⁸⁴

The changes to the fur trade were more a matter of form than substance. The Montreal based Southwest Company, which had dominated the Great Lakes trade since 1811, was gradually pushed aside by the American Fur Company. Federal law forbade British citizens from trading in American territory, but exemptions were so liberally handed out that most of the veteran fur traders who wintered in Ottawa and Chippewa territory before the war continued with their commerce. Young Americans, such as sixteen-year old Gurdon S. Hubbard or Lyman and Truman Warren, both in their early twenties, ventured into the upper Great Lakes trade as apprentices to learn the business from experienced fur traders.⁸⁵ Competition remained brisk between rival traders for the furs of the *Anishnabeg*. The United States government may have made more of an effort, but it proved even less able to prevent the excesses of the Indian trade than its European predecessors.

The worst of these excesses was the use of alcohol. In 1855 an elderly Chippewa woman told the cartographer Johann Georg Kohl, that alcohol became increasingly more abundant as the fur trade evolved. “At first the Indians did not love the Yaganash [English]. He also brought much *ishkotewabo* (fire-water) with him. The Frenchman had also fire-water with him, but not so much as the Englishman.” After the Americans took over the woman complained, “things have now grown much worse in the country. When the Indian had many furs, he drank much fire-water. And my grandfather, who was old, very old, old, often told me this sorrowful story. He often told me that more than one-half of the Indians died of this ‘whisky water.’”⁸⁶ The memoir of John Long, an English fur trader operating north of Lake Superior in the 1760s, reveals the baleful impact of alcohol on the Chippewa. Long was repeatedly “importuned” for liquor, and he had a large supply of rum to meet the demand. At the conclusion of a trading session, Long’s Chippewa customers expected him to provide several gallons of rum for a “frolic.” After one

⁸⁴ Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami*, 372.

⁸⁵ Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard, *The Autobiography of Gurdon S. Hubbard* (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), 4-5; Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 9.

⁸⁶ Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami*, 371-2.

such encounter “which lasted three days and nights; five men were killed, and one woman dreadfully burnt.” On other occasions, Long witnessed Chippewa tomahawking intoxicated kinsmen, drunken mothers falling over and breaking the backs of their cradleboarded infants, and, of course, the trader himself was threatened to provide more rum. Long responded to the latter situation by administering a dose of laudanum to belligerent customers. Laudanum was regarded by Long as “an essential article in the commerce with the Indians” because “it proves the only method of overcoming their intoxicated senses, and making the life of a trader more tolerable, by putting a stop to their impetiveness.”⁸⁷ Missionary Frederic Baraga writing seventy years later from the Grand River found the social havoc of drunkenness unabated.

It is a terrible sight to see an Indian drunk, but especially the women. They are then real furies. One finds here very many Indian women who have no nose. When I first came here and noticed this out I did not know the reason for it. I made inquiries and learned that, when drunk, they attack each other like raging wolves and bite off each other's noses. Others miss fingers on their hands, which they have lost in similar bacchanalian battles.

Baraga claimed that the reason missionaries had such a difficult time with Indian conversions was that whisky-trading merchants had given Christianity a bad name.⁸⁸

Under the Americans, alcohol was officially forbidden in Indian Country. A permit was required even if a trader wanted it for “personal use.” But this law was regularly violated. Like most of United States’ Indian policy, “official” good intentions were undone by the inability of the government to enforce its will on its own citizens. With fewer than a half dozen agents and subagents in the entire Michigan Territory, the law was widely flaunted. What made alcohol abuse worse during the period between 1815 and 1836 was the increased competition among traders. There were more merchants on the frontier during this period because of the gradual improvement of transportation connections between the east and the west.

Ottawa and Chippewa demand for alcohol was never as great as the rate of consumption of spirits by European-Americans during the ante-bellum era. But because of the long importance of alcohol in western societies, the European-Americans had social mechanisms to discourage drunkenness. In the white community, beer, wine, and even whiskey were foodstuffs often

⁸⁷ John Long, *Voyages and Travels of an Indian Interpreter and Trader* (London: Robson, Debrett, and Egerton, 1791), 104-5, 111-112.

⁸⁸ Frederic Baraga to Leopoldine Foundation, 1 February 1834, Bishop Baraga Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives, South Bend, Indiana.

consumed as part of a meal. Drinking outside of meal functions, however, was often viewed as a sign of moral weakness. In addition, there were legal sanctions that led to the arrest of those guilty of public drunkenness and disorderly conduct.⁸⁹ Temperance societies appealed to individuals or families suffering from alcoholism. Ottawa and Chippewa society lacked such formal and informal relief mechanisms. Alcohol was not a part of traditional daily life, and drinking was largely restricted to binges occasioned by encounters with European or European-American fur traders. Originally, trading took place at the end of the winter trapping season, a time when the Ottawa and Chippewa celebrated the conclusion of the most difficult season of the year. But as more and more traders competed for their furs, trading took place throughout the year, and the opportunity for alcohol abuse increased.

Just how rooted alcohol was in the fur trade is evidenced by the experience of William H. Puthuff, the first American Indian agent at Mackinac in the ante-bellum era. Shortly after arriving on the island, Puthuff tried to crackdown on the sale of alcohol at L'Arbre Croche by Elizabeth Mitchell, an Ottawa women who was married to the surgeon of the former British garrison on the island. Because of this overt British connection, Puthuff seems to have regarded her as a fitting example of his intention to enforce the law. He posted a notice on the Mackinac church door that Madame Mitchell was to cease all intercourse with the Indians. This was certainly a stern order to give to a woman who was a full-blooded Ottawa and one of the largest property owners on Mackinac Island. But Puthuff's order did little to deter scores of other fur traders who simply were more discreet in their activities. Nor could official action obscure the fact that there was a strong demand for alcohol among the *Anishnabeg*. In the fall of 1816, Puthuff himself engaged in the sale of alcohol. He needed Ottawa corn to make it through the approaching winter. Desperate to secure his food supply, he dispatched an Ottawa woman to L'Arbre Croche to trade spirits for corn. The fur traders quickly noted the agent's hypocrisy. Ramsay Crooks of the American Fur Company complained that it was the government agent himself who was "the first to break the law prohibiting the introduction of this pernicious liquid."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ For more on the extensive use of alcohol in European-American society see, W.H. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁹⁰ Ramsay Crooks and Robert Stuart to John Jacob Astor, 24 January 1818, *WHC*, XX, 21.

As the Puthuff case illustrates, the use of alcohol was so central to the Indian trade that almost everyone who sought furs used spirits to grease their commerce—including *Anishnabeg* themselves. Elizabeth Mitchell was not the only *Anishnabe* to use alcohol in trade with other Indians. Magdelaine Laframboise, a *Metis* of French-Canadian and Ottawa origin, traded spirits and other goods to her mother's people on the Grand River. Another Ottawa, Cosa, was described by Gurdon Hubbard of the American Fur Company as having "a good reputation as a trader." While operating together on the Kalamazoo River, Cosa encouraged Hubbard to use high-wine as a way to pry furs away from Indians who might otherwise trade with the competition. Cosa himself, however, could also become quite addicted to drink, and on one occasion Hubbard came to blows with him over the latter's demand for spirits. Magdelaine Laframboise also knew the dangers of selling alcohol. In 1809 her husband Joseph was killed by an Indian insulted by the latter's refusal to grant a gift of alcohol. Nonetheless, spirits remained a part of her selection of trade goods until she retired from the Grand River trade in 1823.⁹¹

The escalating significance of alcohol in the fur trade of the ante-bellum era had a direct impact on the creation of treaties with the United States. Initially, binge drinking at trading time had little economic impact on the *Anishnabeg*, because they produced a surplus of furs and other goods for trade with the Europeans. But as the quality and amount of furs available in Michigan declined during the ante-bellum period, Indians lost the surplus buying power to afford both alcoholic "frolics" and necessary cloth and expendable supplies to maintain their families through the winter. Gurdon Hubbard described this dilemma at a trading post he operated in Illinois in 1826. After settling their debts at his American Fur Company post and receiving a new supply of blankets and other goods, the Indians visited the camp of two whiskey traders. With no more furs to trade they proceeded to trade back their blankets for alcohol. Even after they had traded everything they had of value, they sought to continue the flow of whiskey and threatened any trader who refused to supply their demands.⁹² When everyone was sober, they faced the sad reality that blankets and other goods that were very much needed were gone as well as their furs. The only way to obtain the needed supplies was by an additional credit advance

⁹¹ *Ibid*; Elizabeth Therese Baird, "Reminiscences of Early Days on Mackinac Island," WHC, XIV, 34-39; Hubbard, *Autobiography*, 107-112.

⁹² Hubbard, *Autobiography*, 162-5.

from the trader. This cycle contributed to a gradual escalation in the amount of debt advanced to each Indian family. Treaties were a means to settle longstanding debts that could no longer be satisfied by annual hunts.

The sale of whisky and rum to the Indians had a terrible social impact on the *Anishnabeg*. While alcohol was an important and debilitating aspect of the fur trade, the cornerstone of the commerce was the exchange of essential items, such as clothing, tools, and firearms. By the early nineteenth century, European-made woolen goods, and broad cloth had replaced much of the traditional attire of the *Anishnabe*. European-made tools, such as knives, awls, and needles, figured prominently in the production of the remaining traditional items in their households. These tools increased the effectiveness of *Anishnabe* production of moccasins, cradleboards, and wooden bowls.⁹³ Fire arms were a fixture for hunting, particularly of big game. Steel traps had become common for securing smaller fur bearing animals.⁹⁴ Both hunting items and household goods tied the Ottawa and Chippewa into regular economic exchanges with the European-Americans. Each year a supply of new blankets and broad cloth were needed to replace worn items. Fire arms required powder, lead, and gun flints. By the 1830s the *Anishnabeg's* reliance on these manufactured items had become so strong as to be characterized as a dependency.⁹⁵ In 1836 that dependence played a large role in shaping the choices made by Ottawa and Chippewa leaders in their negotiations with the United States.

⁹³ Barthelemi Tradiveau, *Memoire concernant le commerce avec differentes nations sauvages...mars 1784*, manuscript in the Research Center, Chicago Historical Society.

⁹⁴ Petition of the Chippewa Indians of Michilimackinac to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress, 15 October 1834, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 475-478.

⁹⁵ This is also the conclusion of Richard White a leading historian of this period, see White, *The Middle Ground*, 483-4.

The Treaty of Washington

The Crisis: The Background of the 1836 Treaty of Washington

For the historic *Anishnabeg*, the 1836 Treaty of Washington was an attempt to negotiate a set of possible solutions to a series of economic, environmental, and political problems that together constituted a crisis for their people. The treaty was an agreement which they entered into knowingly and through which they attained many of their goals. It was also a hard bargain by the United States, particularly after the Senate's unilateral revisions. At Washington, the Ottawa and Chippewa agreed to trade land for an opportunity to retain their autonomy and to continue to control their lives as distinct communities. Not only did *Anishnabe* leaders attempt to address the convergence of political and economic challenges before them, they also sought a consensus solution that would allow room for both traditionalists, as well as experimentation European-American ways. The treaty was an opportunity to control the forces of change by embracing the moment.

1. The Environmental Crisis. By 1836 the *Anishnabeg* had participated in the fur trade in Michigan for more than 150 years. Wherever it occurred in North America, the fur trade had a drastically negative impact on the population of fur bearing animals. Often, in the course of a generation an area would go from being an abundant trapping ground to over-hunted. Michigan endured as a fine trapping territory for many years because a number of factors, including the depopulation of the area during the Iroquois wars, the small size of its native population, and the limited involvement of its people in fur trapping. But during the ante-bellum period, Michigan finally began to experience a considerable decline in the number of beaver and other fur bearing animals available for the fur trade.

“Our lands are almost all gone, our hunting has failed,” a Chippewa leader complained in an 1834 petition to Congress. “When our young men go out, they can not see any animals.”⁹⁶ While statements such as this need to be viewed cautiously because native leaders often exaggerated their misery when soliciting government services, by the 1830s changes in animal

⁹⁶ Petition of the Chippewa Indians of Michilimackinac, 15 October 1834, N.A. RG75, M-234, Roll 421, frames 475-478.

populations in both the upper and lower peninsulas were having an impact on *Anishnabe* lifestyles. Hunting did not decline uniformly across northern and western Michigan; rather, populations of beaver, marten, bear and deer seem to have been more reduced in some areas than in others. The area around Sault Ste. Marie was particularly unproductive. In January 1836, the American Fur Company agent there complained: "There is nothing doing in the Fur trade." He went on to say, "Indians in our vicinity do not hunt," and he predicted that the amount of furs traded by both him and his competition would not likely amount to "more than one pack of all kinds of peltries."⁹⁷ By 1834, the Sault area Chippewa attempted to put into effect a ban on fur hunting, presumably to allow the depleted stocks of small mammals to recover from years of over-trapping. Unfortunately, this effort at game management seems to have failed when, in the words of the Chippewa chiefs, "several of us has broken this Rule."⁹⁸

The Grand River Valley, on the other hand, seems to have sustained successful hunts through the decade of the 1820s and into the 1830s.⁹⁹ When beavers became rare, Ottawa and Chippewa hunters naturally turned their attention to other animals that could earn them trade credits. Deer, which previously had been important as a source of meat and leather for domestic use, gradually emerged as a replacement pelt to barter with traders. In 1835 the Grand River produced 1,069 deer hides for the American Fur Company, 162 mature bear hides as well as the hides of 111 cubs.¹⁰⁰ The commodification of white-tailed deer, elk, and bear put a great strain on these game populations and eventually on *Anishnabe* subsistence patterns in the interior regions. In February of 1764, the Chippewa family with whom Alexander Henry was living reported killing twelve elk in less than two hours.¹⁰¹ By 1835 no elk hides were received in trade from

⁹⁷ Gabriel Franchere to Ramsay Crooks, 15 January 1836, American Fur Company Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., microfilm 120, reel 23, p.1190.

⁹⁸ Chippewa Fishing Rules, 2 October 1837, Johnston Family Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁹⁹ Jeanne Kay, "The Land of La Baye: The Ecological Impact of the Green Bay Fur Trade, 1634-1836," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1977, 269; Furs & Skins from the Northern Department, American Fur Company, 1835, American Fur Company Papers, SHSW, Reel 18, p.7-8.

¹⁰⁰ Furs & Skins from the Northern Department, American Fur Company, 1835, American Fur Company Papers, SHSW, reel 18, p.7-8.

¹⁰¹ Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 139.

Michigan.¹⁰² More important than the loss of biodiversity, however, was the loss of an important food source, with the result that starvation seems to have become more frequent.

Starvation appears to have been more frequent in the harsh winter forests of the Upper Peninsula. As early as 1828, reports of “a gradual failure of game” were received from the Lake Superior country.¹⁰³ Reports of actual starvation among the Indians there were common in the 1830s. Writing in 1831 of the fate of Indians along the shores of Bay De Noc, fur trader Stanislaus Chappue reported “they nearly all starved to death.”¹⁰⁴ Fur traders did try to augment the Chippewa’s declining subsistence base by introducing the cultivation of new food crops such as potatoes.¹⁰⁵ Even so, providing the Indians with food as well as clothing became a major part of the fur trade during the 1830s. After complaining of the “slender hunts” of the Chippewa during the 1834-1835 season, Ramsay Crooks of the American Fur Company stressed the importance of transporting to the traders on Lake Superior “the requisite goods and provisions” necessary to equip the Indians.¹⁰⁶ In 1832 Lieutenant James Allen described the Chippewa of the Upper Peninsula as overly dependent on John Holiday, their local American Fur Company trader: “Their country is exhausted of game, deer, bears, &c., that once furnished them with food.” Allen further noted that, “their fisheries are impracticable at times, from the rigors of the winter, and many of them would undoubtedly suffer from starvation were it not for the relief alluded to, which is given them for their furs.”¹⁰⁷

2. The Economic Crisis. The diminished capacity of Ottawa and Chippewa hunting grounds to provide the means to sustain families led to increased reliance upon fur traders as a means of support. This accelerated the indebtedness of Indian hunters already suffering from declining numbers of desirable fur bearing animals. In March of 1836, Gabriel Franchere, the American

¹⁰² Furs & Skins from the Northern Department of the American Fur Company, 1835, American Fur Company Papers, SHSW, reel 18, p.7-8.

¹⁰³ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to Lewis Cass, 31 October 1828, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Sault Ste. Marie, 1822-1833, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, RG 75, M-1, Roll 65, frame 211-212.

¹⁰⁴ Kay, *The Land of La Baye*, 291.

¹⁰⁵ Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 299.

¹⁰⁶ Ramsay Crooks to Benjamin Clapp, 22 August 1835, American Fur Company Papers and Letters, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., microfilm 120, reel 23, p.770-772.

¹⁰⁷ James Allen, “Journal and Letters of Lieutenant James Allen,” *Schoolcraft’s Expedition to Lake Itasca: The Discovery of the Source of the Mississippi*, edited by Philip P. Mason (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1958) 174.

Fur Company agent at Sault Ste. Marie, informed his superiors that while he had many old debts, “I have no new ones, not trusting an Indian since last spring.”¹⁰⁸ An Indian not trusted by a trader was likely to be one without access to supplies vital for his family. As credit tightened, trader’s demands for the payment of outstanding debts became more insistent. In 1833 George Porter, the Governor of the Michigan Territory, received several complaints from the Grand River Ottawa that fur trader Louis Campeau physically assaulted indebted Indians whom he suspected were holding furs. Campeau even went so far as to flog Kunnoteenish-kunk, a Grand Rapids area headman. Public humiliation was therefore heaped upon the mounting challenge of providing for their families.¹⁰⁹

To make matters worse, in the 1830s, the world market for furs was changing in ominous ways. Silk was replacing beaver as the preferred material for hats, and the increased quality and abundance of machine-made cloth cut into the market for fur garments. The prices of staple Great Lakes furs such as muskrat plummeted after 1832. Congressional investigations of the fur industry reported that it was “in a state of great depression.” The decision in 1834 of John Jacob Astor, the owner of the American Fur Company, to quit the fur business was seen by many as the beginning of the end. The American Fur Company managed to survive when Astor’s former associates, headed by Ramsay Crooks, purchased the Great Lakes operations. But they needed to make changes to remain profitable. Among those changes was to focus more of their activities on the Lake Superior basin and to reduce the company’s presence at Mackinac and on Lake Michigan.¹¹⁰ In December 1836 Crooks announced his plan to “terminate trade at Grand River, Milwaukee and Green Bay” and to sell their buildings at Mackinac.¹¹¹

Policy changes triggered by the United States government contributed to the economic crisis of the mid-1830s. In 1834 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs ordered the closing of a federally funded blacksmith shop on Mackinac Island. Since the days of the French, the services of a

¹⁰⁸ Gabriel Franchere to Ramsay Crooks, 1 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, Sault Ste. Marie Outfit Letterbook, 1835-1837, Bayliss Library, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

¹⁰⁹ Gosa to Governor George Porter, 1 February 1833; Leonard Slatter to Governor Porter, 1 February 1833; Kunnoteenish-kink to Governor Porter, 17 May 1833, “Territorial Papers, 1831-1836, including the Schoolcraft Papers,” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXXVII (1909, 1910), 256-261.

¹¹⁰ John Dennis Haeger, *John Jacob Astor: Business and Finance in the Early Republic* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 236-7.

¹¹¹ Ramsay Crooks to William Brewster, 21 December 1836, Baraga Papers, Archives, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind.

blacksmith and a gunsmith were made available to the Ottawa and Chippewa at this key summer gathering place. The ending of this service was a severe economic blow to a people with no tradition of advanced metalworking. Critical elements in the *Anishnabe* subsistence system required regular maintenance, including steel traps, maple sugar pots, and firearms. Without access to a blacksmith, broken items could not be repaired and would require replacement, which constituted a real burden considering the economic pressure the Ottawa and Chippewa were already under because of the decline of the fur trade. In a petition sent to Congress in October of 1834, a spokesman for the Ottawa and Chippewa observed that the *Anishnabeg* “all feel, more than in days past, the scarcity of things. And if you withdraw the shop, the hunters will have to throw away many of their traps & guns, for want of a Blacksmith to mend them.”¹¹² A small budget savings by the United States government resulted in considerable economic discomfort for the *Anishnabeg*.

A third economic challenge that confronted the Ottawa and Chippewa flowed from the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. Because of this waterway, the Great Lakes were made much more accessible to the people and products of the eastern United States. This created both opportunities and challenges in a rapidly diversifying economy. European-American raised food stuffs became cheaper in the region, in part because of easier transportation from the developed regions, but also because of the growth of European-American farms along the Great Lakes. During the 1830s the use of sailing ships on the Great Lakes expanded, reducing the use of canoe or bateau brigades. This was disquieting for the Ottawa, who for generations had marketed their corn surpluses to fur companies outfitting voyageurs. At the same time there was a growing commercial interest in Great Lakes fish as a product to be sent back from the frontier. At a time when game populations in many parts of Michigan were in decline, Great Lakes fishing had become an increasingly important source of food for the *Anishnabeg*. Along the south shore of Lake Superior, fish were also an important item to exchange in return for trade goods.¹¹³ Yet, here too there were clear signs that the commercial system of the fur trade, which had held sway over the Great Lakes for 150 years, was changing. In 1835 a chief of the Tahquamnon River

¹¹² Chippewa Indians of Michilimackinac to the Senate and the House of Representatives, 15 October 1834, N.A. RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 475-478.

¹¹³ Gabriel Franchere to Ramsay Crooks, 2 December 1835, Saulte Ste. Marie Outfit Letterbook, 1835-1837, American Fur Company Papers, Bayliss Library.

band of Chippewa complained to federal authorities that white fishermen were crowding his people out of their historic fishing grounds. The “white men’s nets destroy the ground for taking fish with spears.”¹¹⁴ In 1832 the fur traders Edward Biddle and John Drew applied to the United States government for the “exclusive privilege” of fishing at the site of two rich traditional fishing sites on the north shore of Lake Michigan. This attempt to exclude Indians from a portion of the fishery was vigorously opposed by a coalition of Ottawa and Chippewa residents of the Straits region. In the end, the exclusive rights sought by Biddle and Drew were not granted, but the incident was a clear sign of the changing nature of the economy.¹¹⁵

3. The Political Crisis. The Ottawa and Chippewa faced two interrelated political crises: 1) the challenge posed by the rapid growth of European-American population in the Michigan Territory and 2) an internal crisis caused by divisions within *Anishnabe* communities.

The decade of the 1830s was a time of rapid population growth in Michigan. During this time the *Anishnabeg* went from being a dominant element in the population of the Michigan territory to an isolated minority. The territory had been largely bypassed by the initial wave of European-American settlement that surged into the Midwest following the War of 1812. Illinois and Indiana both attained statehood shortly after the war. After 1825, however, the Erie Canal deflected the flow of settlers further north, and thousands of emigrants from New York and New England flocked to Michigan. Between 1830 and 1834, the population of the Michigan Territory nearly tripled and topped 87,000. Just three years later, when statehood was attained, Michigan boasted a population of 174,543.¹¹⁶ The impact of this demographic revolution on the 5,500 Ottawa and Chippewa within the area of the 1836 treaty was in part muted by the concentration of European-Americans on the lands south of the Grand River. Yet, even so, the Grand River Ottawa suffered from the loss of traditional hunting grounds south of the river to white settlers. In 1836 the Kalamazoo District Land Office averaged an astounding \$12,000 in land sales per day. The *Kalamazoo Gazette* reported that on some days \$70,000 worth of land sales occurred.

¹¹⁴ Major W.V. Cobbs to Commissioner E. Herring, 5 February 1835, M-234, roll 770, p. 616.

¹¹⁵ George Johnston to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, 9 October 1832, National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received, volume 3, Saulte Ste. Marie Agency, 1822-1833, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, M-1, Roll 68, frame 258-259, p.518-519; Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to Commissioner E. Herring, 7 June 1833, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Mackinac, 1833-1836, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, frame 003-004.

¹¹⁶ Willis F. Dunbar and George S. May, *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995) 165.

So rapid was the expansion of European-Americans into the Michigan Territory during the period leading up to the treaty that twenty percent of all public land sales in the United States in 1836 took place in Michigan.¹¹⁷

The true import of the demographic revolution in Michigan would not have been lost on the Ottawa and Chippewa. Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie were the two great hubs of the Great Lakes frontier. Indians from throughout the region passed through these points on their annual trip to Canada to receive British gifts. The *Anishnabeg* learned the news of doings from across the breath of the northern Indian Country from the British. The presence of army garrisons and trading centers at those points also made certain that developments in Washington, D.C. were widely discussed. It was, therefore, well known among the Ottawa and Chippewa that treaties with the United States had extinguished Potawatomi title to nearly all of their lands south of the Grand River. The agreements gave the Potawatomi the opportunity to clear their debts with traders as well as cash with which to purchase needed blankets and gun powder. More ominously, the treaties, combined with rapid white population growth, paved the way for the removal of 14,000 Potawatomi to the region west of the Mississippi. In 1833 the government actually attempted a forced removal of the Potawatomi westward. Although the bungled operation only succeeded in sending seventy-six Indians west, it had a chilling effect on all members of “the three fires,” as the alliance between the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi was called. Many Potawatomi sought refuge in northern Michigan, with one large group eventually removing to the Upper Peninsula.¹¹⁸ Fear of being forcibly removed from their Michigan homelands was a major concern for all *Anishnabe* leaders.

The fate of the Potawatomi was well known among the *Anishnabeg* of northern and western Michigan. Catholic missionaries had been very active among the Potawatomi and the Ottawa, and the church hierarchy attempted to intervene in the attempted removal of the former from Michigan. Bishop Frederic Rese proposed the resettlement of the Potawatomi on Ottawa lands in northwestern Michigan. While it seems that United States authorities were willing to accede to the plan, the united opposition of the Ottawa chiefs frustrated it. “Why should these poor

¹¹⁷ Susan E. Gray, *The Yankee West: Community Life on the Michigan Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 44.

¹¹⁸ Susan Sleeper-Smith, “Silent Tongues, Black Robes: Potawatomi, Europeans, and Settlers in the Southern Great Lakes, 640-1850,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1994, 182-3.

Indians,” wrote Simon Saenderl, a Slovenian missionary among the Ottawa, “desire to lose a part of their livelihood, when they have not enough for themselves and are forced to go to distant places for it?”¹¹⁹ While the mass migration of Potawatomi to Ottawa territory was rejected, it is likely that small groups of Potawatomi, perhaps those with kinship ties to L’Arbre Croche, did make their way to Little Traverse.

The missionary activities of the Catholic Church and Evangelical Protestant churches played a major role in the second great political challenge faced by the *Anishnabeg* during the 1830s. The Ottawa and Chippewa lived in largely autonomous local communities. Individual villages set their own political course within the larger *Anishnabe* community, and individuals determined their own lifestyle within each village. There were few instruments of social conformity among the Indian people of Michigan. Therefore, when Christian missionaries began to proselitize actively among the *Anishnabe*, men and women accepted or rejected the missionaries’ message in light of their individual inclination. But Christian missionaries offered more than simply a new way to worship; religious values were integrated into most aspects of Ottawa and Chippewa life. The conversion to Christianity was in many ways a break with both the *Anishnabeg* present and past. It was also very often a conscious choice to find a path that would allow the Ottawa or Chippewa to create a new synthesis, i.e., a strategy that would allow them to flourish in the European-American order that was so clearly on the horizon. Eventually, Christianity would be a powerful vehicle of adaptation and rebirth for the Ottawa and Chippewa, but during the transitional period of the 1830s, the *Anishnabeg* were divided between Christians and traditionalists.

The most successful Christian community among the *Anishnabeg* was the Ottawa villages between Little Traverse Bay and the Straits of Mackinac. At the time of the 1836 Treaty, the region was divided into five distinct and autonomous villages: L’Arbre Croche, Middle Village, Tchingahen, Cross Village, and Cheboygan. According to Catholic missionaries, their converts predominated in four of the villages, while Tchingahen was described as a community of “heathens” over whom the missionaries had “no influence.” The region between Little Traverse and Grand River was likewise one with few if any Christian converts. Father Simon Saenderl

¹¹⁹ Father Simon Saenderl to Bishop Frederic Rese, 9 June 1834, Diocese of Detroit Collection, University of Notre Dame Archives, South Bend, Indiana, hereafter cited as Notre Dame Archives.

advised his bishop that “[a]lmost the whole Territory from Grand Traverse to Grand River is populated by heathens, who become the stubborner the more their numbers decrease.”¹²⁰ Along the Grand River was a second if smaller colony of Catholic Ottawa. Catholic churches were also established at St. Ignace, Mackinac Island, and Sault Ste. Marie, although these congregations were not restricted to the *Anishnabeg* and were only staffed intermittently. Protestant missionaries were active in Michigan as well. The Presbyterians operated a mission and school on Mackinac Island. The Baptists were based at Sault Ste. Marie and near Grand Rapids. While Catholicism, with its prayers for the souls of the dead and priestly rituals, was more open to Indian religious practice, all Christian denominations expected *Anishnabe* converts to surrender their medicine bags and forsake polygamy.

Not only did missionary activity have the effect of dividing the Ottawa and Chippewa into Christian and traditionalist factions, but Christian denominations created further divisions. The Presbyterians on Mackinac Island worked as hard to refute the doctrine of Catholicism as they did to make converts among the Chippewa. For their part the Catholics were loath to turn the other cheek when Protestant rhetoric became overbearing. Baptist missionaries on the Grand River were accused of utilizing the blacksmith shop at Grand Rapids solely for the benefit of their converts, even though the shop was supported by money from the 1821 Chicago Treaty.¹²¹ Missionaries of the same sect even proposed competing political strategies to their converts, as in the case of Baptist Isaac McCoy, who tried to convince the Ottawa to remove west of the Mississippi, and Baptist missionary Leonard Slater, who opposed removal. Denominational disputes sometimes intruded themselves into family matters, as in 1836 when the Ottawa chief Mackadebenessy faced opposition from Father Francis DeBruyn, when he proposed to have his Catholic-educated daughter live with her sister at the Presbyterian mission.¹²² Missionaries brought many advantages to the *Anishnabeg*, but the presence of these newcomers in the villages of the Ottawa and Chippewa exasperated already strained political relations within the Indian community.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Isaac McCoy, *History of the Baptist Indian Missions* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970) 319-320.

¹²² Father Francis DeBruyn to Bishop Frederic Rese, 17 June 1836, Diocese of Detroit, Notre Dame Archives.

A less pervasive, but still significant, division among the various groups of Ottawa and Chippewa were the payments received by some bands from their participation in previous land cession treaties. The treaties of Chicago in 1821 and 1833 provided for annuities and services, such as blacksmith shops, for the Ottawa of the Grand Valley. Although these payments and services came at the cost of their hunting grounds south of the Grand River, their greater ability to purchase trade goods was envied by other *Anishnabeg*.

Land For Time: The Origins of the 1836 Treaty

By 1836 the Ottawa and Chippewa were caught between the collapse of their fur trade economy and the rush of a new diversified European-American political and economic order. They had been in jeopardy of this since the end of the War of 1812. But events during the early 1830s, such as the decline of game populations, the sale of the American Fur Company, the expansion of missionary activity, and the flood of European-American settlers, lent an urgency to the efforts of *Anishnabe* leaders to develop strategies to adapt to a new era. Selling land to obtain the time and the resources with which to undertake such an adaptation was a bitter reality recognized by many Ottawa and Chippewa. Land represented their best bargaining tool, but it was not their only source of leverage. They also had their souls, and they used these to enlist missionaries as a new set of European-American allies. In their past the Ottawa and Chippewa had been forced to make changes in how and where they lived. This had been particularly true, for example, during the Iroquois wars, for example, and through their gradual participation in the fur trade. This ability to change and adapt was severely challenged during the 1830s and 1840s.

From a European-American perspective, the Ottawa villages of the L'Arbre Croche coast were the most progressive *Anishnabe* community. Ottawa astuteness at commercial relations and their prudent conduct during times of war had long before won them recognition. It was the chiefs of L'Arbre Croche, more than any other *Anishnabe* leaders, who understood the great challenge posed by the United States, and they pioneered the search for accommodation. In 1816 Indian agent William Puthuff noted that they had "progressed considerably in the arts of agriculture, their villages are populous and well settled....with a little encouragement they might be induced to locate themselves and much increase their agricultural labors." While the United States government did nothing to encourage the Ottawa, the chiefs of the region solicited federal

assistance for “cows, Hogs, Fowls,” and a “blacksmith to make repair their farm utensils, Traps, guns, etc. and that he may instruct them to build houses and live as whites live.”¹²³ A year later the Ottawa informed the agent of plans by Indian traditionalists, attributed to the Shawnee Prophet, to recreate the anti-American alliance. In contrast, the Ottawa “tendered their assistance to the American Government.”¹²⁴ Puthuff’s reports indicate that in the first two years after the War of 1812, the chiefs of L’Arbre Croche rejected attempts at traditionalist revival and looked to adapt their community to the new order.

Pressure to make a change came from the United States. In 1820 Lewis Cass made an official United States visit to the Upper Great Lakes. He sent Indian Agent George Boyd to L’Arbre Croche to demand the St. Martin Islands, which the Americans desired because they deemed it a superior source of gypsum, for the manufacture of plaster. The Ottawa must have thought this a exceedingly eccentric request, but in the interests of friendship they agreed to cede the islands to the United States in return for a modest assortment of merchandise.¹²⁵ It was ominous, if not unexpected, that the Americans in their first formal council with the elders of L’Arbre Croche made a territorial demand. What was more surprising was a second aim of Cass’ mission. He presented to the Ottawa the Reverend Jedediah Morse, one of America’s leading Congregational divines, and the personal representative of Secretary of War John C. Calhoun. In a classic “hell-fire” sermon, Morse told the Ottawa that the Great Spirit “is angry with the red people, and is destroying them, while he prospers the white people.” He bluntly told the Ottawa that the reasons for the widely varying fates of each people was Jesus Christ and the Bible. “This book causes the wide difference which exists, as you see, between white man and Indian.” The choice for the Ottawa, Morse bluntly concluded was “*Civilization or ruin.*”¹²⁶

The message Morse and Cass delivered to the *Anishnabeg* in 1820 was none too subtle. It was a challenge to either join American society or be destroyed by it. That point was reinforced a year later when the Ottawa and Chippewa were invited to Chicago to participate in a treaty to achieve “the extinction of Indian title within the Territory of Michigan.” Neither the Chippewa

¹²³ William H. Puthuff to Governor Lewis Cass, 14 May 1816, *WHC*, Vol. XIX, 413.

¹²⁴ William H. Puthuff to Governor Lewis Cass, 20 August 1817, *WHC*, Vol. XIX, 473.

¹²⁵ Kappler, ed., “Treaty with the Ottawa and Chippewa, 1820,” *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 188.

¹²⁶ Jedediah Morse, *A Report to the Secretary of War of the United States on Indian Affairs* (New Haven: S. Converse, 1822), Appendix, 9-14.

of the Upper Peninsula, nor the Ottawa of L'Arbre Croche sent chiefs to the council. It was fortunate they did not. A single Grand River Ottawa chief signed the Chicago Treaty and it cost all of the bands in the valley their access to the lands south of the Grand River. Although treaty commissioner Lewis Cass was pressed by the War Department to secure title to all of Michigan he respected the independence of the northern bands and focused merely on securing the cession of the "nearer and more important" lands of southern Michigan. Even so news of the Chicago Treaty was a chilling reminder for the Ottawa and Chippewa of the need to change and adapt to circumstances.¹²⁷

In his 1820 speech to the Ottawa Jedediah Morse referred to the Civilization Fund established by Congress to help speed the education and Christianization of American Indians. But Christianity came to L'Arbre Croche, not through the initiative of the United States, rather it was the Ottawa themselves who conceived and carried out their own program of accommodation and renewal. Sometime in the early 1820s, an Ottawa named Andowish who had lived among the Stockbridge Indians, returned to L'Arbre Croche. The Stockbridge were largely made up of Mahican people, who had adopted Christianity and had partially adapted the rural European-American lifestyle. In 1818 they left their base in upstate New York and came to the Midwest, first to Indiana, and later to Wisconsin. Andowish told his Ottawa kinsmen about the religious practices of the Stockbridge. He may have been intrigued with the prospect of the Stockbridge lifestyle as a means of adaptation to European-American society, but what is known for sure is that a wave of interest in Christianity spread along the L'Arbre Croche coast. Apokisigan [aka Apawkausegun], chief of the Seven Mile Point band, visited *Metis* relations on Mackinac Island and solicited their help in obtaining a missionary. The Indian sponsored evangelization took a turn toward Catholicism, perhaps because of the memory of Jesuit missionaries among the Ottawa during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Perhaps it was because of the role of the *Metis*, who were largely of French-Canadian origin, and because of the role of Ausegonock [aka Assiginack], an Ottawa from Little Traverse who had converted to Catholicism while living on Drummond Island. Ausegonock returned to his home, in his nephew's words, "expressly to act as missionary in the absence of the priest." Ausegonock preached on Sundays and instructed

¹²⁷ Lewis Cass to John C. Calhoun, 1 February 1822, Ohio River-Great Lakes Ethnohistory Archive, Ottawa File, Glenn Black Archaeological Laboratory, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Hereafter, this source will simply be cited as Great Lakes Ethnohistory Archive.

people in Catholic teachings regarding the “Virgin Mary and all the saints and angels in heaven.”¹²⁸

In 1799 an attempt by Father Gabriel Richard to reestablish a Catholic mission at L’Arbre Croche was rebuffed by the Ottawa. At that time only one baptized Ottawa could be identified in the community. After the Indian-initiated revival had begun, Father Richard drafted a petition to the President of the United States on behalf of the Ottawa, “to bring us your very affectionate children to civilization and to the knowledge of Jesus the Redeemer of the red Skins as well as of the white people.”¹²⁹ After several years of lobbying by Richard, the Secretary of War finally made a small appropriation from the civilization fund to cover partially the cost of building and operating a mission school at L’Arbre Croche. Not until 1829, however, was Father Jean Dejean appointed as the resident pastor to the Little Traverse Ottawa. Under Dejean, the Catholic Ottawa formed their own village. When Bishop Frederic Rese visited this site in 1833, the mission was said to include of sixty-one houses and 1200 inhabitants. The people were largely temperate, industrious, and well-instructed, including some who could read and write.¹³⁰

The spread of Christianity along the L’Arbre Croche coast¹³¹ was part of a broader series of changes that were underway among the Ottawa of the region. Andrew Blackbird, who remembered being baptized as a young boy by one of the first missionary priests, asserted that at that same time “many Indians began to be stationary; they did not go south [to winter trapping grounds], as heretofore, but remained and made their winter quarters at Arbor Croche.”¹³² Catholic mission doctrine asserted that an Indian could become Christian “without changing his mode of life, has only to give up his superstitious customs, to believe the truths of faith, to perfect those ideas of morality already divinely imprinted in his heart and finally, to do good and avoid evil.”¹³³ Nonetheless, becoming part of a Christian Indian community like that established

¹²⁸ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 46-47.

¹²⁹ Petition of Ottawa residing at Waganakisi (L’Arbre Croche) to the President of the United States, 12 August 1823, Chronological File, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc.

¹³⁰ John Gilmary Shea, *History of the Catholic Missions among the Indian Tribes of the United States, 1529-1854* (New York: T.W. Strong, 1854) 389.

¹³¹ This term is used to describe the arc of Ottawa villages on the Lake Michigan shore from Little Traverse Bay to Waugoshance Point.

¹³² Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 46-47.

¹³³ Samuel Mazzuchelli, *The Memoirs of Father Samuel Mazzuchelli O.P.* (Chicago: Priory Press, 1967) 129.

at Little Traverse entailed facing consistent encouragement to change traditional *Anishnabe* social practice. Andrew Blackbird remembered that the priest “visited the Indians a good deal during the week days, purposely to instruct them in the manners and customs of the white man, ordering things generally how to be done, and how women should do towards their domestic callings, not to work out of doors, and to take good care of what belonged to their household.” Religion also became a means to fight alcohol abuse. No liquor was allowed to be landed at the settlement. At news of the approach of a boat, the war chief Aupawkosigan “would call out his men to go and search for the liquor, and if found he would order him [sic] men to spill the whisky on the ground by knocking the head of a barrel with an axe, telling them not to bring any more whisky into the Harbor, or wherever the Ottawas are, along the coast of Arbor Croche. This was the end of it, there being no lawsuit for the whisky.”¹³⁴

In accepting Christianity, Ottawa and Chippewa were making a conscious and considered attempt to change their lives for the better. It would be cynical and simplistic to view baptism or church attendance as simply a strategy for mollifying United States Indian Agents. It is true that Christianity brought tangible benefits to its practitioners, most notably education and a formal social mechanism for fighting drunkenness—both of which were lacking in traditional communities. Access to these valuable resources was perhaps reason enough for some Indians to convert, but for others the decision was a spiritual one. The conversion of Chusco, an *Anishnabe* Midewiwin priest, in 1834 is a case in point. While working at his maple sugar camp on Bois Blanc Island, he experienced a spiritual reawakening that “haunted” him until he accepted Christianity. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and the Presbyterian minister Reverend William Ferry instructed the fifty-something year old man. Chusco surrendered his “medicine bag, manitos, and implements of sorcery.” Chusco quit drinking following his conversion, but otherwise his lifestyle remained the same.¹³⁵ The surrendering of medicine bags was a profound moment for *Anishnabe* converts, a moment when they broke with the spiritual world of their traditional kinsmen. In addition to the rejection of drunkenness, Christian *Anishnabeg* were sometimes expected to cut their hair short, and abandon the vision quest and other rituals, but it was the loss

¹³⁴ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 50-51.

¹³⁵ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontier: With Brief Notice of Passing Events, Facts, and Opinions, A.D. 1816 to A.D. 1842*, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1851) 447, 449-450, 572.

of the medicine bags that was the most serious step for a convert. When the bags were taken from their necks and tossed into the fire, the converts donned Christian crosses to demonstrate publicly their transformation.¹³⁶

Through the 1820s and 1830s, Christianity grew slowly but steadily among the *Anishnabeg*. By 1836 the Catholic Church claimed, with some exaggeration, 1,200 converts among the Ottawa at Little Traverse, which was almost the entire population.¹³⁷ At Grand River Catholic missionaries reported 200 converts out of a population he estimated as “over 900.”¹³⁸ That missionary also reported Catholic congregations among the Beaver Island Ottawa, and at Grand Traverse and Manistee with a total of 107 converts.¹³⁹ Protestant missionaries operating within northwest Michigan boasted of less success, yet they had three schools in operation. The number of true converts among the Ottawa and Chippewa is perhaps impossible to estimate accurately but it is clear that a significant number, probably a larger percentage of Ottawa than Chippewa, did accept the new faith and with it made a commitment to adopt a new lifestyle. These people had less commitment to the endangered fur trade lifestyle than the traditionalists. Christian *Anishnabeg* played an important role in the negotiation and ratification of the 1836 treaty because that document facilitated a social and economic transition they had already begun.

What Christian Indians wanted was the time and the means to affect a significant change in their lives. Because an *Anishnabe* converted to Christianity did not mean that he or she stopped being a member of his or her family, band, and clan. One of the most important aids to evangelization was the work of converts among their own families to convince loved ones to join them in the new faith. Reverend Jeremiah Porter described “an Indian boy of eighteen” who lived “a christian tho’ a hunter’s life.” He prayed every morning and evening in his father’s lodge for three months. The boy’s father appears to have been a Midewiwin priest who “never believed in the white man’s God, till this son became a Christian: now he wishes all his children

¹³⁶ *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* (Paris: La Librairie Ecclesiastique de Rusand, 1830) 481-6.

¹³⁷ *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* (Paris: La Librairie Ecclesiastique de Rusand, 1836) 308-9.

¹³⁸ Frederic Baraga to Governor George Porter, A list of Catholic Indians in the Mission of Grand River, 5 November 1833, Baraga Papers; Baraga to Leopoldine Foundation, 26 July 1833, Baraga Papers; Father Andrew Viszoczky to Leopoldine Foundation, 20 October 1835, Baraga Papers.

¹³⁹ Baraga to Leopoldine Foundation, 25 August 1833, Baraga Papers.

to become so.”¹⁴⁰ Abel Bingham tried long and hard to convert one of the headmen of the Tahquamenon band of Chippewa. The man put off his conversion, however, until he would be able to bring his “young men” into the faith with him. At a baptism a few months later, the man took that occasion to try to convince his non-Christian kinsmen to convert. Bingham was struck by the fervor of his appeal, “the whole was delivered with an animation, I never before witnessed in him.”¹⁴¹ Some Christian converts reported difficulty in trying to maintain their faith when they went into the interior with their kinsmen to participate in the seasonal round.¹⁴² While many Christian Ottawa had made significant alternations in their subsistence patterns by abandoning distant winter hunting grounds they likely still had kinsmen who continued in an older pattern. Chippewa converts seem to have continued their previous economic pursuits, although the precarious nature of that lifestyle was apparent to Abel Bingham, who, in January 1836, completed a tour of Indian camps and found his people “almost in a starving state.”¹⁴³ During the 1830s, many Ottawa and Chippewa people were trying to change both their lifestyle and their religion. *Anishnabeg* embarked on that path of change needed time to adapt, both for themselves and for their family members who might still be resisting the new order. A treaty was one way to secure the breathing space and the financial resources necessary to make the change.

Traditional Ottawa and Chippewa, who wanted no part of the experiments with the white man’s God or the farmer’s plow, had at least one alternative to hunger and want. Emigration was an option that many Ottawa and Chippewa had taken long before there was a crisis in their homeland. The westward expansion of the Chippewa continued through the first half of the nineteenth century. In the 1820s and 1830s this meant the large region west of Lake Superior, which is currently occupied by southern portion of Manitoba, northwestern Minnesota, and eastern North Dakota. John Tanner, a young European-American captured by the Chippewa, went west sometime before the War of 1812 with a family group of mixed Ottawa and Chippewa background. One of the men in the party had been born in the Red River country, and although

¹⁴⁰ Jeremiah Porter to James Porter, 5 May 1831, Jeremiah Porter Letters, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University.

¹⁴¹ Abel Bingham Journal, 27 May 1832, 1 July 1832, Abel Bingham Papers, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 2 January 1833.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 14 January 1836.

he died before the journey began, the others continued on their own.¹⁴⁴ Tanner lived the life of a hunter and trapper for more than ten years, establishing his own Chippewa family in the west. Mackadepenessy, one of the signers of the 1836 treaty, lived for almost twenty years in Manitoba, until about 1813, when he returned to L'Arbre Croche, the region of his birth. Mackadepenessy's brother also emigrated to Manitoba. Andrew Blackbird reported that large number of L'Arbre Croche Ottawa went west at the time of the Shawnee Prophet's ministry.¹⁴⁵

Even more common than emigrating to the western frontier of the *Anishnabe* world was merely crossing the artificial boundary between British North America and the United States. Before returning to L'Arbre Croche to lead the Catholic revival there, Ausegonock had been an interpreter working for the British on Drummond Island. He ended his life once more in British territory on Manitoulin Island. In 1835 Henry Rowe Schoolcraft reported that Potawatomi and Ottawa, who had sold their lands south of the Grand River at the 1821 Chicago Treaty, were faced with "the rapid extension of Settlements up the peninsula of Michigan." As a result, a considerable number of these Indians were making their way "to the islands of lake Huron...to which some of them have already proceeded, and where inducements appear to be held out, by authorities of the British Indian department, for their settlement."¹⁴⁶ A very large percentage of Ottawa and Chippewa from the Straits region made the annual journey to Manitoulin Island to renew ties with kinsmen there and to accept presents from the British. Even the Catholic Ottawa took part in this annual visit. In June 1835 the missionary Baraga observed that there were only sixteen or seventeen people left at L'Arbre Croche village and "not a single one" between there and Cross Village.¹⁴⁷ *Anishnabeg* who were uncomfortable with their options in the Michigan Territory could, and some did, exercise their option to leave. To those inclined to do so, the short-term benefits that a treaty would bring, might seem attractive.

Most Chippewa and Ottawa came reluctantly to the idea of a land cession. Yet, by the fall of 1833, the Ottawa at L'Arbe Croche seem to have felt the necessity of exploring the prospect for

¹⁴⁴ Tanner, *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, 16-29.

¹⁴⁵ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 27-29.

¹⁴⁶ Schoolcraft to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Elbert Herring, 20 June 1835, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Mackinac, 1833-1836, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, frame 105.

¹⁴⁷ Baraga to Bishop Frederic Rese, 25 June 1835, Baraga Papers.

some type of accommodation. In November 1833, Indian Agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was approached by several “Ottawa chiefs” with the proposition that they go to Washington, D.C. in order to meet with President Andrew Jackson to discuss “the subject of their lands in the Peninsula.”¹⁴⁸ One of the chiefs was Pabamitabi, a venerable leader who had served as the spokesman for his people on other occasions. He was joined by Wing, who was known for his pro-American stand during the War of 1812¹⁴⁹ and by a chief identified by Schoolcraft as “Pakuzzigan,” who was likely the leading Catholic Ottawa chief, Apokisigan. Only a year before Pabamitabi, in a formal reply to a Schoolcraft address, had noted that his people had ceased “war & wandering.” “We live upon our own lands. And feel anxious to continue upon them & leave them to our posterity. We do not wish to part with them.”¹⁵⁰ The intentions of the Ottawa in wishing to discuss “the subject of their lands” with the President cannot be fully divined, but in a second meeting with Schoolcraft on February 5, 1834, Assiginack, the influential lay Catholic evangelist, cited a litany of *Anishnabe* economic concerns. Their lands were “denuded of game,” they “were poor and indebted to traders,” and European-American “settlements would soon intrude on their territories.” In reiterating the Ottawa request for a meeting with the President, Assiginack hinted at the outlines of what may have been the bargain he hoped to broker. He referred to abandonment of Drummond Island by the *Anishnabe*. This island had been a thriving place when it was the site of a British garrison and the base for the Crown’s Indian agent, but it was determined by an international boundary commission to be in United States territory and was vacated by the British in 1828. By 1833, no longer neither a source of gifts nor a base for traders, Drummond Island was but thinly inhabited, and the Ottawa sought to sell their title to the United States or at least receive “compensation for it.” From this expression of willingness to sell a small part of their territory eventually grew the very large cession of 1836.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Schoolcraft to Governor Porter, 21 November 1833, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Mackinac, 1833-1836, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, frame 018.

¹⁴⁹ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 26.

¹⁵⁰ Reply of the Ottawas [to a speech by Schoolcraft] by Pabamitabi, 1 September 1832, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 31, frame 126-127, p.267-69.

¹⁵¹ Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, 465.

The response by United States officials to these initial overtures of a cession was cool to say the least. After losing track of the request for several months, Governor George Porter, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Michigan, forwarded the letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Elbert Herring. The latter dismissed the proposal by noting that there was no money “to defray the expenses of such an object.”¹⁵² Yet the sense of urgency among the Ottawa only grew more acute during the summer of 1834, when in a general round of budget cuts, the United States announced the closing of the Sault Ste. Marie and Mackinac blacksmith shops. At the time the Mackinac shop was “overburdened with mending,” its closing was a severe economic blow to the *Anishnabeg*.¹⁵³ The Catholic Ottawa at new L’Arbre Croche (near modern Harbor Springs, Michigan) were somewhat insulated from that economic impact through the intervention of their missionary Frederic Baraga, who was able to open a small blacksmith shop headed by a Redemptorist missionary who offered an unlikely combination of skills: bookbinding [for prayer books] and iron tool repair.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the Ottawa were left to contemplate the meaning of the American’s withdrawal of such a longstanding sign of friendship. Over the course of the next year, the Ottawa from L’Arbre Croche attempted to press the United States for compensation for the cutting of wood on their lands by American citizens, only to have such requests dismissed by Commissioner Herring. The Ottawa also berated Schoolcraft because their requests for a Presidential meeting had not been granted. “We have twice asked you in council to go and see the President, but it has not been granted. We request you to be the interpreter of our wishes to him.”¹⁵⁵

The insistence of the L’Arbre Croche Ottawa on a meeting with President Andrew Jackson reflects the mixture of hope, fear, and frustration that marked Ottawa deliberations during 1834 and 1835. On the one hand, they had the hope of federal assistance for a blacksmith shop, livestock, and agricultural equipment. On the other hand, they had begun to enumerate the increasing frequency of European-American trespasses upon their lands in the hope of

¹⁵² Commissioner Herring to Superintendent Porter, 16 April 1834, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 34, frame 113, p.227.

¹⁵³ Schoolcraft to Governor Porter, 5 June 1834, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 34, frame 147-148, p. 306-307.

¹⁵⁴ Baraga to Leopoldine Foundation, 17 December 1832, Baraga Papers.

¹⁵⁵ Speech of Pabamitabi of L’Arbe Croche, 18 August 1834, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, frame 79.

establishing a claim for compensation. Perhaps a face to face meeting with the President could reestablish the reciprocal bond they had enjoyed for so many years with the French and later the British Governor-Generals. They were frustrated that their future hung on the whims of the United States government and that their contact with that power was managed by frontier flunkies like Schoolcraft, who did not have the power to make policy. The Ottawa wanted direct contact with the American's leader. Knowing that almost every negotiation they ever had with the Americans included some cession of land Ottawa leaders had disingenuously proposed to sell Drummond Island. This was a place at which a number of Ottawa, including the Catholic leader, Assiginack had resided, but it was clearly outside the territory of the Little Traverse Ottawa, and they had little right to offer its sale. Clearly the Ottawa were fearful of being forcibly removed from Michigan. As early as the fall of 1833, rumors of removal were rife among the Ottawa.¹⁵⁶ It was believed that Territorial Governor George B. Porter would force a treaty upon them in that summer. So concerned about this were the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa that they dispatched a large delegation to the Grand River. In June of 1834, formal deliberation took place at a council grounds near Grand Rapids "in a small round valley which has the form of a large amphitheater." Several large fires were kindled on the valley floor and tobacco was scattered about the fires. Over one fire was hung a large kettle of maple sugared water. With great gravity, the Grand River and L'Arbe Croche bands vowed to each other never "to cede their lands to the United States, and not to make themselves and their children unhappy."¹⁵⁷ Such a unified front proved difficult to maintain once actual negotiations began.

By July 1835 the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa joined the rising chorus of protest concerning the blacksmith shops.¹⁵⁸ While Ottawa requests for assistance or compensation excited little interest in Washington, an offer in June of 1835, probably by the Chippewa, to sell Drummond Island did open Commissioner Herring's eyes to the possibility of a larger cession. The offer for Drummond Island came from "deputies sent from Ottawa Island [as Manitoulin Island was

¹⁵⁶ Frederic Baraga to Leopoldine Foundation, 7 March 1834, Bishop Baraga Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives, South Bend, Indiana [hereafter cited as Baraga Papers]; Frederic Baraga to Bishop Frederic Rese, 27 November 1833, Baraga Papers.

¹⁵⁷ Baraga to Leopoldine Foundation, 26 June 1834, Baraga Papers.

¹⁵⁸ Major Cobbs to Commissioner Herring, 2 July 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Mackinac Agency, 1828-1880, RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 699.

sometimes referred to as].”¹⁵⁹ Their offer may have been triggered by reports that the Ottawa of L’Arbre Croche, who had no real claim to the island, had tried to sell it to the United States. The Chippewa who had previously resided on the barren island may have been inclined to offer it in cession because they had recently relocated to Manitoulin Island as part of the establishment of a British Indian colony.¹⁶⁰ Only after the offer languished on the Commissioner’s desk for two months, did Schoolcraft receive his superior’s approval to explore the terms of sale for Drummond Island. In granting this permission Elbert Herring added: “You are also requested to ascertain if the Indians residing north of Grand River are willing to part with any portion of their lands, and if they are, to what extent, and upon what terms.”¹⁶¹ This was the first expression of interest by Washington in any of the *Anishnabeg*’s attempts to receive relief, compensation, or to make a cession. Schoolcraft seized the moment and tried to get the question of the sorely missed blacksmith shops back on the table. He advised his deputy in Sault Ste. Marie that the best way to secure a new “smiths shop” would be if the Indians of that region were to:

transmit an offer through you to the department, to sell a portion of the lands connecting the two posts of Mackinac and Fort Brady including the national boundary of Upper Canada, which may be advantageous to possess. This offer should come from them as soliciting a boon. Reservations might perhaps in the event of its acceptance be assented to including their villages, and the right to hunt and live on the tract until it is required. The shop may then probably come in as one of the equivalents, and they may further secure a small annuity.¹⁶²

It is worth noting that this letter suggests a larger cession than Drummond Island, although by no means all of the Chippewa’s lands. Yet, momentum was building for a sale larger than rocky Drummond Island. In only two months from making this suggestion, Schoolcraft had in hand confirmation from his sub-agents that a number of Chippewa leaders would agree to “cede their lands to the United States” in exchange for a payment and “[t]o have the full right to hunt on the

¹⁵⁹ Schoolcraft to Elbert Herring, 20 June 1835, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Mackinac, 1833-1836, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, frame 105.

¹⁶⁰ Reverend F. O’Meara, *Mission to the Heathen: Report of a Mission to the Otahwabs and Ojibwas on Lake Huron* (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1846) 4.

¹⁶¹ Commissioner Herring to Schoolcraft, 29 August 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 72, frame 108, p.217.

¹⁶² Schoolcraft to Major Cobbs, 23 September 1835, M-1, roll 69, p.121.

ceded lands, as long as they are unoccupied, and to make such other reservations as they think proper.”¹⁶³

By November 3, 1835, Schoolcraft had in hand “replies from the eastern, middle, and northwestern portions of the country, favorable to the cession, on liberal considerations, with reservations, and a defined right of hunting on the lands sold.” Who made these replies, what chiefs, representing which bands, was left unstated by Schoolcraft. The language used by Schoolcraft in this letter and that used in the preliminary understanding obtained with the Chippewa is very similar, which would indicate two things: 1) The basic outline of the treaty, annuities, reservations, and a limited right to hunt on ceded lands was dictated to Indian leaders by Schoolcraft. 2) The basic terms of the preliminary agreement were explained in a fairly consistent manner, if only to the handful of Indian leaders consulted. There was in 1835 a general expectation of a treaty in Michigan, and the Indian Agent was using the fallout from the closing of the blacksmith shops, Indian trespass claims, and offers to sell Drummond Island to speed movement toward a comprehensive settlement. Schoolcraft was quite accurate when he reported to Washington that “[e]vents for several years have been preparing the peninsula Indians for the question, which has been much discussed by them, during the year.”¹⁶⁴

Schoolcraft played a crucial role in moving the issue of the *Anishnabeg*'s future in Michigan from one of general concern to a specific set of proposals. Left to his own devices it is likely that Schoolcraft would have gradually pushed for a treaty conference to be held in Michigan in the summer of 1836. However, the agent was not the only one who wanted to control the pace of events.

¹⁶³ Captain John Clitz to Commissioner Herring, 17 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 421, frame 701-702. The chiefs that are named as agreeing to the cession “on behalf of their young men” were Whaiskee (more commonly Waishkee), the uncle of sub-agent William Johnston who actually made the cession proposal, Showono, and Ocunogeed, see William Johnston to Schoolcraft, 17 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 72, frame 156, p.324.

¹⁶⁴ Schoolcraft to Herring, 3 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Mackinac, 1833-1836, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, frame 129, for more on longstanding *Anishnabeg* fear of a treaty see also Baraga to Leopoldine Foundation, 7 March 1834, 26 June 1834, Baraga Papers.

The L'Arbre Croche Ottawa had deep distrust for Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.¹⁶⁵ Their desire to deal directly with Washington was the principle reason that the 1836 treaty negotiations were held at a location so remote from the people whose fate was being decided. This unintended result was set in train in late October 1835 when Apokisigan and Mackadepenessy, both among the leading chiefs at L'Arbre Croche, and Augustin Hamlin departed Little Traverse for the nation's capital. Hamlin was an Ottawa-French *Metis* who had been educated at Catholic schools in Cincinnati and the Vatican City in Rome. Their departure was likely prompted by Schoolcraft's solicitation of *Anishnabe* sentiment toward a treaty. In his letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in which he reported general Ottawa and Chippewa support for a treaty Schoolcraft noted

The objections made by the Indians of L'Arbe Croche (who occupy however but a limited portion of the country,) are of a character, growing out of their ignorance of their true position, and are susceptible of being removed.¹⁶⁶

The Ottawa of Little Traverse had repeatedly attempted to initiate a meeting with American authorities regarding their future status. It is easy to appreciate their dismay when, after having been rebuffed in their attempt to go to Washington, Schoolcraft approached them with the outlines of a land cession. At a council held at Little Traverse, Augustin Hamlin heightened anxiety further by openly calling Schoolcraft's credibility into question. He accused the agent of stealing supplies sent to the Ottawa from Washington, D.C. and maneuvering to profit from the sale of their lands to European-American farmers. This council led to the decision by the Ottawa to go to "the seat of the government" themselves.¹⁶⁷ "In the fall of 1835," recalled Andrew Blackbird more than fifty years later, he climbed to the top of a tree near the shore of the Lake. "I was clear at the top of those trees, with my little chums, watching our people as they were about going off in a long bark canoe, and, as we understood, they were going to Washington to see the Great Father, the President of the United States, to tell him to have mercy on the Ottawa and

¹⁶⁵ This may have stemmed in part from a religious difference. The Catholic Church in Michigan suspected Schoolcraft, an Evangelical Protestant, was biased against them. See Father John B. DeBruyn to Bishop Frederic Rese, 27 and 30 August, 1836, Detroit Diocese Papers, Notre Dame Archives.

¹⁶⁶ Schoolcraft to Herring, 3 November 1835.

¹⁶⁷ William Johnston to Dear Sir, 24 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 72, frame 159-160; Clitz to Schoolcraft, 26 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent, Mackinac, 1833-1836, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, 1814-1851, RG 75, M1, roll 69, f.129.

Chippewa Indians in Michigan, not to take all the land away from them.” Among the crowd assembled to watch “our principal men going off” were “our old Indian women weeping.” As the canoe prepared shove off, “they all took off their hats, crossed themselves and repeated the Lord’s prayer; at the end of the prayer, they crossed themselves again, and then away they went towards the Harbor Point.”¹⁶⁸

Anxious to control events, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft also departed for Washington, D.C. in November of 1835. It was Lewis Cass’s decision, likely reached after his December 5th meeting with the delegation from L’Arbre Croche, that a negotiation would be held to obtain the cession of all the Indian lands north of the Grand River. This decision set in motion a furious round of activity in which the government tried to secure representatives of the various Ottawa and Chippewa bands either to attend a treaty conference in Washington or to sign a power of attorney delegating authority to those in Washington. Fur traders like Rix Robinson in the Grand River valley and John Drew at Mackinac were enlisted to assemble and escort Indian chiefs to the capital. The Grand River Ottawa were particularly unwilling to participate in the treaty. Fear of removal and a desire to stay on their lands made the task of recruiting a Grand River delegation difficult. According to Henry Connor, the United States Indian Agent at Grand Rapids, the Ottawa chiefs who had signed the Chicago Treaty had suffered ostracism and threats of violence, which made the current chiefs “all dread the consequences of treating away from their whole Band.”¹⁶⁹ Nor were United States representatives the only ones trying to convince the *Anishnabeg* to participate in the Washington treaty. Several of the Ottawa chiefs who had earlier departed for the capital and Augustin Hamlin returned to Michigan, and by late January they held councils with Ottawa on the Grand and Muskegon Rivers with the goal “to get them to attend the treaty at Washington.”¹⁷⁰ Eventually, the pressure from both Indians and whites resulted in the assembly of an Ottawa delegation from Grand River, as well as a delegation of Chippewa from the Sault. Across the frozen heartland, under what must have been miserable conditions, they made their way east, sometimes by sleigh through the snow or by stagecoach through the mud.

¹⁶⁸ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 51.

¹⁶⁹ Henry Connor to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, 8 February 1836, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 422, frame 017-020.

¹⁷⁰ Rix Robinson to Charles C. Trowbridge, 1 February 1836, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 72, frame 194-95, p.410-411.

The prior visit of the L'Arbre Croche delegation to Washington, D.C. determined not only the location of the treaty negotiation but its timing. Their motivation for pushing the pace of treaty preparations is revealed in the memorial they presented to Secretary of War Lewis Cass. The memorial may have been composed while the Ottawa were in Detroit, where they consulted with the Catholic bishop, and was penned by Augustin Hamlin. It is a statement of their reasons for insisting on coming to Washington. This document sheds considerable insight on the negotiating strategy of the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa on the eve of the 1836 Treaty. It is an extremely valuable document because it reflects more closely than any other document the thinking of one of the Ottawa and Chippewa groups on the eve of the treaty. The memorial began with a complaint that their visit was necessary because “[t]ruth and falsehood blended together, has been so often represented to us in our country, that we scarcely know the difference between the two.” They then laid out what might fairly be considered their basic position:

The principal objects of our visit here were these: we would make arrangements with government for remaining in the Territory of Michigan in the quiet possession of our lands and to transmit the same safely to our posterity. We do not wish to sell all the lands claimed by us and consequently not to remove to the west of the Mississippi.

It is important to note the prominence of the removal threat in the thinking of the Ottawa. It would appear that this fear drove the Ottawa to initiate negotiations with the United States and that avoidance of removal was their main goal within those negotiations. There is also a clearly stated willingness to sell to the United States some of their lands. In what may be regarded as an opening proposition in a negotiation, the Ottawa delegation made a specific offer of lands to the United States:

But if the government wishes, we might sell some Islands on Lake Michigan,¹⁷¹ and also our claims (with some reservation) on the North side of the Straits of Michilimackinac, a tract of land beginning somewhere near the Menominees on the west and terminating at Pt de Tour on the east. The claims which we have on that side of the Straits we claim them by the right of conquest.

¹⁷¹ According to Schoolcraft's speech at the 1836 Treaty, these islands were the "Manito Islands," the present North and South Manitou Islands that are part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. See: Records of a Treaty concluded with the Ottawa & Chippewa Nations, at Washington D.C. March 28, 1836, Papers of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

This offer to sell a large portion of the Upper Peninsula, lands largely inhabited by the Chippewa, is a grander version of their earlier offer to sell Drummond Island, an attempt, at least in part, to satiate the land hunger of the Americans with someone else's land.¹⁷²

Throughout the memorial Augustin Hamlin expressed the Ottawa's profound attachment to their lands in Michigan:

It is a heart-rending thought to our simple feelings to think of leaving our native country forever. The lands where the bones of our forefathers lay thick in the earth; the land which has drunk, and which has been bought with the price of, their native blood, and which has been there after transmitted to us. It is, we say, a heart-rending thought to us to think so; there are many local improvements which make the soul shrink with horror at the idea of rejecting our country forever—the mortal remains of our deceased parents, relations, and friends, cry out to us as it were, For our compassion, our sympathies and our love.¹⁷³

Such statements were expressions of the Ottawa's love of their lands along the L'Arbre Croche coast, where they had resided since the 1740s. While the emotional attachment was genuine, such rhetorical flourishes also served a negotiating strategy, to make clear to the United States how dear the Ottawa regarded every part of their lands and to suggest that a partial cession would come only reluctantly and at a high price.

That the Ottawa expected to make a radical break with their past, in spite of emotional ties, is made clear in the passage that immediately follows that quoted above.

But, we are aware of this plain fact, that we Indians cannot long remain peaceably and happily in this place where the tribe is at present if we persist in preserving that way and manner of life which we have hitherto loved although now...[illegible passage]...incompatible with that of a civilized man: and Therefore we would wish to exchange the former for the latter. We have already made some progress in this pleasing path, and tasted some of its comforts; and it is our desire and will to advance more and more on it.

With a change in the Ottawa way of life already under way, the leaders of L'Arbre Croche looked to a new relationship with the United States and the Michigan Territory. The Ottawa continued:

With these things in view, we propose to submit ourselves to the Laws of that country within whose limits we reside. Only perhaps a few years hence, our people could not very well submit themselves to the laws of that State, we are confident however, that when the benefits of civilization would become generally diffused among them they would embrace those salutary regulations with cheerfulness.

¹⁷² Memorial of the Ottawa delegation by A. Hamlin [sic] Jr., 5 December 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 722-725.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

These sentences reveal the Ottawa's understanding of the distinction between federal and state authority. By saying that they would embrace state regulations "with cheerfulness" in the future, the letter suggests that Ottawa were aware of the conflict in Georgia between the sovereignty of the state government and the Cherokee nation. That conflict was then rapidly moving toward the infamous forced removal of the Cherokee. In the winter of 1835 the Ottawa were desperate to avoid that fate and hopefully looked to a future, in which they would reside on a portion of their lands, practice "civilized" pursuits, and be recognized as free and responsible citizens.¹⁷⁴

The challenge for the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa was a short term one: how to bridge the gap between their current experiments in European-American lifeways and an ability to coexist as full participants in that system. Avoiding removal was the first requirement, but of almost equal significance was the ability to receive the support of the government for their long-term adaptation program. Therefore, the Ottawa closed their memorial with a plea for assistance from Washington, D.C.:

But there are some obstacles which stand in our way, and which we are, at this moment unable to surmount, and therefore, it is also the object of our visit here, to obtain some assistance from government in these matters. We would wish to be assisted in our Agricultural pursuits. We would be happy to obtain implements of husbandry, and a fund for procuring things in this line. Again, we would wish to represent to government the need of assistance we have in the education of our young people and children in the necessary and useful branches of arts and sciences.

A portion of the Grand River Ottawa through the 1821 Chicago Treaty obtained the benefits requested above. The L'Arbre Croche Ottawa likely understood that only through a treaty of their own could they receive expanded United States government aid for their "civilization" program.¹⁷⁵

The memorial prepared by Augustin Hamlin and sent to Secretary of War Lewis Cass in December of 1835 is unique because it was written by the *Anishnabeg* themselves. Hamlin, although educated in Rome was an Ottawa mixed-blood and a formally authorized spokesman for his people.¹⁷⁶ With him at the time he wrote the letter two of the leading L'Arbre Croche chiefs, Apokisigan and Mackadepenessy. Both men had had extensive dealings with the British

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Appointment of Augustin Hamlin, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, (1888), XII, p.622.

and American governments. They were both deeply engaged in the effort to transform Ottawa society. What Hamlin wrote reflected their thinking. Most of the documents which shed light on the intent and understanding of the Ottawa and Chippewa are written by European-Americans and filter through their perspective the ideas and aspirations for the *Anishnabeg*. The December 1835 memorial moved from the Ottawa to Washington, D.C. without going through an American filter. Of course, in evaluating the significance of the memorial it is important to realize that the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa were much more committed to undertaking a cultural transformation, a process that was well underway, than other Ottawa and Chippewa groups—although they were by no means the only Indians who perceived the need to change. From this *Anishnabe* statement of intent on the eve of the treaty, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Ottawa had no intention of ceding all of their territory in Michigan.
2. They were, however, willing to cede a portion of their lands.
3. The fear of removal oppressed the Ottawa and impelled them to seek a treaty.
4. The L'Arbre Croche Ottawa planned to “better and perfect our condition by their [European-American’s] example.” They regarded it as “a plain fact” they would not long into the future follow their traditional pursuits.¹⁷⁷

What the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa and likely other Christian *Anishnabeg* sought to do in their negotiations with the United States was to avoid removal and receive assistance for becoming “civilized,” to trade land for time.

Negotiating the Treaty of Washington, March 28, 1836

The negotiation of the 1836 Ottawa and Chippewa Treaty illustrates the unequal power relationship between the *Anishnabeg* and the United States government. While the Ottawa played a role in determining the time and location of the negotiation the most important decision was that of Secretary of War Lewis Cass, to treat for all lands in the Michigan peninsula north of the Grand River—a decision made in the face of the stated objections of both the L'Arbre Croche and Grand River Ottawa to make such a large cession. The basic terms of that cession--reservations, annuities, and a stipulated right to hunt--had been outlined by Schoolcraft months before the treaty proceedings began. Instructions from Cass to Schoolcraft, who was appointed

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

to serve as treaty commissioner, further directed that no individual reservations would be granted. It was, in Cass' words, the government's policy to "extinguish the Indian title, as our settlements advance, to keep the Indians beyond our borders." Cass also specified a twenty-year period over which annuities would be paid and proposed a method by which traders' debts were to be compensated.¹⁷⁸ What took place in Washington in March of 1836 was a convocation designed to work out the fine print and to ensure that influential figures on the frontier would understand and support the treaty. It was in that fine print that the future of all the leading players on the frontier--Indian hunters, fur traders, missionaries, and *Metis*—would be determined.

On March 14, 1836, the hastily assembled representatives of the Michigan *Anishnabeg* were ushered into the White House for an audience with President Andrew Jackson. The President, whose administration had aggressively pursued the policy of removing American Indians from their homelands east of the Mississippi River, greeted the men who had come to find a way to stay in Michigan. Before the President were between twenty-four and twenty-seven Ottawa and Chippewa men, as well as nine *Metis* and white men who escorted the Indian delegates.¹⁷⁹ The secretary for the treaty proceeding described the escorts "in charge of the Indian chiefs & Delegates." Their number included fur traders Rix Robinson, John Drew, Louis Moran, George Moran, Robert Stuart, and William Lasley, as well as the Baptist missionary Leonard Slater and the ex-seminarian and *Metis*, Augustin Hamlin. John Holiday, a veteran fur trader from Lake Superior, was the official translator. President Jackson, in the words of Holiday's *Metis* daughter, who was also present, "received them handsomely." Jackson explained the good wishes he and the American people had for the Ottawa and Chippewa, and he shook hands with each delegate. In return, one or more of the delegates made an "eloquent speech," that regrettably was not transcribed.¹⁸⁰

The Ottawa and Chippewa men who met with President Jackson were seriously divided in their orientation and purpose. In addition to the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa, whose views have been explored in detail, there were at least three other *Anishnabe* factions. The Grand River Ottawa

¹⁷⁸ Secretary of War to Henry R. Schoolcraft, 14 March 1836, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll, 72, frame 219, p. 462-465.

¹⁷⁹ *Democratic Free Press* (Detroit), April 6, 1836.

¹⁸⁰ Mary Holiday to Ramsay Crooks, 17 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, New York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., Microfilm at Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, Roll 23, frame 1385.; Records of a treaty, March 28, 1836.

were opposed to a cession, fearful of a forced removal, and suspicious of the intentions of the L'Arbre Croche band.¹⁸¹ The Chippewa of the Sault region arrived in Washington prepared to make a partial cession of their lands in return for a blacksmith, annuities, and a right to hunt on the ceded lands until "the U.S. may want the same."¹⁸² In addition, there were the *Anishnabeg* from the Straits region and the bands from the area between Grand Traverse and the Muskegon River, where Ottawa and Chippewa peoples lived in close proximity to one another or in actual mixed bands. Their disposition toward the question of a land cession is less certain. With the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa and the Chippewa of the Sault committed to a cession, the ability of the Grand River Ottawa to resist such a treaty was greatly diminished. Within these rival geographical groupings were other conflicting interests. A number of the Grand River Ottawa were Christians, with some Catholics and others affiliated with the Baptist minister Leonard Slater. A treaty offered tempting economic assets to Indians committed to the "civilization" process, as many Christian Indians were. This is, after all, what attracted the largely Catholic L'Arbre Croche delegation to push for a treaty.¹⁸³ The *Metis* were yet another native group with a particular interest in the negotiations. Past treaties often reserved tracts of land for future *Metis* use. Therefore, those *Metis* present, such as Mary Holiday and Augustin Hamlin, had a potential economic interest in a treaty.

The European-Americans present at the treaty were also divided in their purposes. The representatives of the powerful American Fur Company, which included the interpreter John Holiday, Robert Stuart, and Rix Robinson, all had a vested interest in seeing that a cession take place so that their company could collect on an estimated \$30,000 in bad debts. The large size of this financial stake made it crucial not so much that the treaty be made, but that the treaty made be one that allowed for all of their claims to be paid. Fur trade companies wanted to have debts paid at face value. They did not want to have to prove every claim, nor did they want to have to

¹⁸¹ Chiefs of the Grand River to President Andrew Jackson, 27 January 1836, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-234, Roll, frame 145-148.

¹⁸² Cobbs to Herring, 4 January 1836, M234, roll 770, f.200.

¹⁸³ The interpretation that the L'Arbe Croche Ottawa were committed to a treaty prior to the negotiation beginning is well established in the documentary record leading up to the treaty. Particularly revealing is the brief note in the Schoolcraft Papers. It is a sheet of paper with the names of eight Indian leaders. Next to the names, in what appears to be Schoolcraft's hand, are the words "These are the persons interested in making a treaty on certain conditions." Of the names the names at least seven of the eight are L'Arbre Croche representatives who were in Washington, Schoolcraft Note, 15 March 1836, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C. microfilm copy, Reel 24.

explain how much of each Indian's debt was the result of illegal alcohol sales. A lax method of settling claims as opposed to a rigorous one could mean the difference between thousands of dollars of profit. Therefore, the American Fur Company was immediately set against the treaty when Henry Schoolcraft, in his opening address to the treaty conference, stated:

With respect to the debts you owe to the traders, the President proposes to appoint a Commissioner to go into your country next summer, to ascertain and pay the amount of every just debt and claims against you, so that every one may receive ample justice.¹⁸⁴

The American Fur Company would have rather had no treaty in March, 1836, than one that compromised some of their extensive claims. Yet, also present at the treaty negotiation were a group of smaller fur traders. Rix Robinson described them as "Muskegon Traders" and "under-trappers who followed us here."¹⁸⁵ Their stake would have been smaller, and they had less ability to hold on to bad debts than the American Fur Company. Therefore, they would have been less willing to see the Washington meeting adjourn without coming to some sort of a settlement.

On personal level many of the fur traders were conflicted concerning a treaty of cession. Among those present at the treaty were men who had Indian wives and *Metis* children. This group included interpreter John Holiday, John Drew, Rix Robinson, Louis Moran, Charles Oakes Ermatinger, William Lasley, and Henry Levake (La Veque).¹⁸⁶ A land cession would greatly affect family relations and the future prospects of their children. Indeed, their own future as fur traders would be jeopardized if the treaty resulted in removal. The traders, however, did not simply look at the treaty from the perspective of their own interests. There were among them men who cared deeply about the future of their Indian relations and customers. By the time of the treaty, John Drew, for example, had worked in Indian country for thirty-six years.¹⁸⁷ Drew and the other traders were selected for their job of escorting the Indians in part because the

¹⁸⁴ Records of a treaty, Washington, March 28, 1836.

¹⁸⁵ Rix Robinson to Ramsay Crooks, 23 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, Microfilm at Central Michigan University, Roll 23, frame 1411.

¹⁸⁶ John Holiday of the American Fur Company was the official interpreter at the council. He was a long time Chippewa speaker. The Ottawa would have understood his Ojibwa translations. Augustin Hamlin, a member of the Ottawa delegation was fluent in several languages including English and Ottawa. He was described by one observer as one of the interpreters at the council, so he may have performed that function for the L'Arbe Croche Ottawa. See *Democratic Free Press* (Detroit), 20 April 1836.

¹⁸⁷ John Drew to William Woodbridge, 5 October 1817, *WHC*, Vol. XIX, 482-3.

Anishnabeg trusted them. They were men who lived up to the Indian expectation that they would honor and support their kinsmen, while it was understood that in economic affairs they were oriented to the European-American world. In 1833 Drew had angered the Ottawa and Chippewa of the Straits when he and his partner Edward Biddle tried to obtain an exclusive right to fish at several important Indian fishing grounds. But this action, which is an example of how traders were trying to reposition themselves in the changing economy of the region, did not mean that Drew had forsaken his responsibilities under the old practices of the “middle ground.” Nicholas Biddle and John Drew kept a house on Mackinac Island that was at the disposal of Ottawa and Chippewa visiting the island. They provided lodging, firewood, and food for visiting Indians because hospitality was an honored *Anishnabe* custom. As many as forty to sixty barrels of flour were used each year to bake bread for visiting Indians.¹⁸⁸ One of Biddle and Drew’s clerks maintained that the “Same System of charities” that was practiced at the partner’s outlying trading posts at places such as Grand Traverse Bay.¹⁸⁹ Virtually all traders provided emergency food and gave gifts of clothing, but veteran fur traders such as Samuel Abbott also recognized that Biddle and Drew’s charity “far exceed what is necessary for the purpose of trade.”¹⁹⁰ Agatha Biddle, the wife of Drew’s partner, was a full-blooded Ottawa woman, as was his own wife. These women, like most of the fur traders, coexisted in both the Indian and European-American worlds. Their great value to the *Anishnabeg* at a moment of trial like the spring of 1836 was that they could help to bridge the gap between those two worlds.¹⁹¹

Various alliances were formed, shifted, and dissolved during the course of the treaty negotiation. The principal alliance was between the fur traders and the Indians under their care. It was basically a pragmatic union designed to ensure that since there was going to be a treaty, it would be one that would suit the fur traders and the Indian delegates alike. The Grand River Ottawa, the only group really against a cession, had only a slim hope to derail the Washington

¹⁸⁸ William McGulpin testimonial for Biddle & Drew, 26 September 1837, original in National Archives, Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-574, Special File #156, transcript in Mackinac Island State Park Commission historical files, Mackinaw City, Mich.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Guntrey testimonial for Biddle & Drew, 26 September 1837, transcript in Mackinac Island State Park Commission historical files, Mackinaw City, Mich.

¹⁹⁰ Samuel Abbott testimonial for Agatha Biddle, 19 October 1837, transcript in Mackinac Island State Park Commission historical files, Mackinaw City, Mich.

¹⁹¹ Keith R. Widder, *The Battle For the Soul: Metis Children Encounter Evangelical Protestants at Mackinac Mission, 1823-1837* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999) 52.

negotiations. The American Fur Company's concerns about debt claims and *Metis* anxiety about their compensation were the only thin wedges they could apply against the treaty supporters. In turn the fur traders may have counted on using the Grand River bands well-known opposition to try and draw out the negotiations in order to win greater financial concessions. Although the major elements of the treaty had been largely determined already, it was not within either the Indian's nor the trader's, nor the *Metis*'s, interest to come to terms with the government to quickly or easily. Politicking among the interested parties had been going on throughout 1835 back in Michigan, it continued as traders escorted the band leaders to Washington, and accelerated on March 15, 16, and 17, when the conference adjourned to consider Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's statement of the government's proposed terms.¹⁹²

The actual "negotiation" of the treaty formally began on March 18, 1836. The council was held in the Masonic Hall in Washington, D.C. The old building was located not far from the capital building at 10th and E Street. It was a public meeting and interested citizens, both men and women, drifted in and out during the proceedings. On one occasion a school group observed the deliberations for a time. The Ottawa sat opposite the Chippewa and the interpreter and Schoolcraft sat in front of them. On a table was a map of Michigan for reference during the discussions.¹⁹³ Schoolcraft regarded the map as an important tool. Nine years before he publicly criticized the failure to utilize cartographic aids in treaty negotiations. Post-treaty disputes over what was or what was not ceded were, in Schoolcraft's opinion, "resulting from a bad interpreter, or the want of a ms. or sketch map."¹⁹⁴ The issue of quality interpretation was of course; even more fundamental to reaching an agreement that was understandable to both parties.

There were at least a dozen individuals involved in the negotiation of the 1836 treaty who possessed a good understanding of Ojibwa/Ottawa and English. Schoolcraft, the treaty commissioner, likely had a good knowledge of the language of the Chippewa. By the time of the treaty he had served on the frontier for sixteen years. He had a Chippewa-Irish mixed blood wife

¹⁹²Ramsay Crooks to William Brewster, 21 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, Microfilm at Central Michigan University; Mary Holiday to Ramsay Crooks, 17 March 1836; Rix Robinson to Ramsay Crooks, 23 March 1836.

¹⁹³ *Democratic Free Press* (Detroit), 20 April 1836.

¹⁹⁴ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, "A Defect in Making Indian Treaties," *Schoolcraft's Ojibwa Lodge Stories: Life on the Lake Superior Frontier*, edited by Philip P. Mason (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997) 59.

and he had spent many years making a systematic study of the Chippewa language.¹⁹⁵ The official interpreter was John Holiday, a veteran American Fur Company trader who had a Chippewa wife and who had spent more than twenty years living with the Chippewa. Holiday had been employed by the company as both a trader and as an interpreter. He appears to have been an individual trusted by both the Chippewa and the Americans. In 1824 was selected by the Lake Superior Chippewa to intervene on their behalf following the murder of an American fur trader. On that occasion Holiday translated the Chippewa's messages to Schoolcraft.¹⁹⁶ Also present at the negotiation was Mary Holiday, the interpreter's bilingual mixed-blooded daughter. She was raised in Indian country and had the benefit of both an *Anishnabe* and American education.¹⁹⁷ Another mixed blood with the ability to function as a translator sat in the Ottawa delegation, Augustin Hamlin. This "Indian," ironically may have been the best-educated person participating in the treaty making process. In addition to French, English, and Ottawa, Hamlin had a smattering of Italian and probably a good understanding of Latin. At the time of the treaty he was serving as a teacher in the L'Arbre Croche schools. Later, in the 1840s, he served as an

¹⁹⁵ Throughout the 1820s Schoolcraft lived in close proximity to his mother-in-law, Oshauguscodaygua. In 1826, she was described by Indian Commissioner Thomas L. McKenney as "a genuine Chippeway." He noted "she understands, but does not speak English." See Thomas L. McKenney, *Sketches of a Tour of the Lakes* (Baltimore: Fielding Lucas, 1827), 182-3. Schoolcraft's experience as an Indian Agent and his family connection through his wife Jane Johnston taught him the importance of a deep understanding of Ojibwa. In July 1822, he wrote of his frustration with his "ordinary office interpreter, who I find, is soon run a-muck by anything but the plainest and most ordinary line of inquiry." In trying to gain an understanding of the "exact ideas of their beliefs" Schoolcraft came to believe he needed something better than a "trade interpreter." He wrote, "Fortunately, I have in my kind and polite friend Mr. [John] Johnston, who has given me temporary quarters at his house, and the several intelligent members of his family, the means of looking deeper into the powers and structures of the language, and I am pressing these advantages, amidst the pauses of business, with all my ardor and assiduity." The Johnston family was totally bilingual and provided Schoolcraft with what he regarded as "a higher and more reliable standard than usual." In 1822, Schoolcraft noted, "The study of the language [Ojibwa], and the formation of a vocabulary and grammar have almost imperceptibly become an absorbing object." It is, therefore, likely that fourteen years after beginning his study of Ojibwa and living with his wife and near his Chippewa in-laws that Schoolcraft had a knowledge of the language. See Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, 106-07.

¹⁹⁶ In 1818 and 1820 Holiday served as an interpreter for the American Fur Company's Anse Quiwinan Department. See Bruce White, "Preliminary Roster of Fur Traders in the Fond Du Lac and Upper Mississippi Regions, 1795-1822," *The Fur Trade in Minnesota: An Introductory Guide to Manuscript Sources* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1977), 44. The 1826 Chippewa-United States Treaty award land to "Omuckackackeence, wife of John Holiday, and to each of her children, one section. See Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 272. For Holiday's role as an intermediary for the Chippewa see, George Johnston, "Reminiscence," *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* (1889), XII.

¹⁹⁷ Mary Holiday's mother was Chippewa and she seems to have been raised speaking Chippewa. When she entered the mission school at Mackinac Island in 1824 her principle language was Chippewa, although she knew some English. In a short time she began to serve as a translator for Minister William Ferry, who could speak no Chippewa. In 1828 a young Chippewa convert wrote that it was after hearing Mary Holiday "praying in Indian for the salvation of the poor ignorant Indians" that made her accept the gospel. See Keith R. Widder, *Battle for the Soul: Metis Children Encounter Evangelical Protestants at Mackinac Mission, 1823-1837* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999) 114, 159.

official translator for the United States government. The Baptist minister Leonard Slatter who accompanied the Grand River delegates had a solid, if less than fluent knowledge of Ottawa. According to one pioneer memoir, some time in the late 1830s Slatter attempted to translate a letter from the United States government to the Ottawa. When he was done with the translation an Ottawa man complained, “When the Great Father sends word to men, why does he use a women’s tongue!” Slatter it seems had learned his Ottawa by making his household—his wife, children, and their Ottawa women domestics—speak Ottawa rather than English. Therefore, the minister learned largely female manners of address. Aside from the issue of improper gender forms, however, Slatter seems to have a good understanding of Ottawa and it is likely that he came to the treaty at the request of the Ottawa to serve as a councilor.¹⁹⁸

Rounding out the large number of multilingual participants and observers to the treaty were a group of fur traders with bilingual capabilities. These included John Drew, Charles Oakes Ermatinger, and Rix Robinson who had *Anishnabe* wives and Louis Moran and Henry Levake, both of whom had or would later serve as translators.¹⁹⁹ All of the fur traders had long experience living and dealing with the Indian peoples of the Great Lakes region. It is likely that there were also other bilingual individuals present, but whose names were not recorded in the treaty record. Joseph Troutier, for example, latter was credited as having “assisted in forming the treaty.” He was a small trader based at Muskegon in 1836. He likely had some knowledge of Ottawa because he had spent most of his life in the fur trade. Troutier was likely one of a number of small competitors of the American Fur Company disdainfully dismissed by Rix Robinson as

¹⁹⁸ Just how bilingual the Slatter household was is indicated by the claim made by those who knew them that Slatter’s children were said to have grown up knowing Ottawa before they knew English. See William M. Ferry, “Ottawa’s Oldest Settlers,” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXX, 574-5; Mary M. Lewis Hoyt, “Life of Leonard Slatter,” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXXV (1905), 142-155.

¹⁹⁹ For the length of time Drew worked as a trader see, John Drew to William Woodbridge, 5 October 1817, *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XIX, 482-3. For the scale of his trading operation see: Account Against the Ottawa and Chippewa at L’Arbre Croche for Biddle & Drew, 1833-1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 835-843. For Drew’s Indian family see: Kappler, *Indian Treaties*, 453-4. For Henry Levake, William Lasley, and Joseph Trotier’s Indian families see Kappler, *Indian Treaties*, 454. For Levake’s service as a spokesman for the Chippewa see: Francis Audrain to Schoolcraft, 13 June 1833, National Archives, RG 75, M-1, Roll 71, 48. For Moran’s service as a translator see: Alex Buell to Luke Lea, 26 March 1851, RG 75, M-234, Roll 426. For Charles Oakes Ermatinger’s career see: W. Stewart Wallace, “A Biographical Dictionary of the Nor’Westers,” *Documents Related to the Northwest Company* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1934) 438. For Rix Robinson’s two Ottawa wives and his trading career see: George H. White, “Sketch of the life of Hon. Rix Robinson: A Pioneer of Western Michigan,” *MPHC*, XI, (1887), 186-200.

“Muskegon Traders” and “under-trappers who followed us here.”²⁰⁰ Perhaps the most intriguing of the unofficial bilingual observers of the treaty was Charles Butterfield. He appears to have been the mixed-blood son of a Sault Ste. Marie businessman and a Chippewa woman. In 1836 he was a very young man, who may have been recruited to make the trip either by Ramsay Crooks of the American Fur Company or by the Sault chiefs. James Schoolcraft warned his brother in Washington that Butterfield was there “in the character of a ‘Spy’.” The Sault chiefs are known to have trusted Butterfield and he was used by them as an interpreter during the years that followed the treaty. He may well have been their eyes and ears in distant Washington.²⁰¹

The 1836 negotiations seem to have benefited from the presence of a large number of individuals with the language ability and cultural knowledge to serve as effective interpreters for the Ottawa and Chippewa delegations. In addition to an experienced official interpreter in John Holiday, a man who had a well established relationship with the Chippewa, the various bands had access to kinsmen and private citizens of long experience to translate and explain the meaning of all that was proposed by the United States government. Many of these same individuals, men such as Hamlin, Drew, Moran, Levake, Butterfield, and Robinson, as well as a much broader network of kin were also available at the time the Articles of Assent were signed in Michigan.

A formal peace pipe ceremony began the actual treaty session. For the *Anishnabeg* this was an opportunity to reflect and seek spiritual guidance, similar to the American custom of beginning a meeting with an invocation. The first Indian spokesman is unnamed in the treaty proceedings. But because of the tenor of his anti-treaty sentiments it was likely a member of the Grand River Ottawa delegation. The leader of that group was a man the treaty proceedings called Mukutaysee. This was most likely Muckatosha or Blackskin a village leader from south of the Grand River. He was an old man with considerable experience as a leader and as a warrior. During the War of 1812 he had fought vigorously against the Americans and in later years settlers remembered “it was the frequent boast of old Black Skin that he applied the torch

²⁰⁰ Everett, *Memorials of the Grand River Valley*, 436-7; Rix Robinson to Ramsay Crooks, 23 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, Central Michigan University, Roll 23, frame 1411.

²⁰¹ James Schoolcraft to Henry Schoolcraft, 9 March 1836, James Schoolcraft to Henry Schoolcraft, 12 March 1836, Reel 24, Schoolcraft Papers. For more on Butterfield’s relationship with the Sault chiefs see: Letter of Oshawanon, Keewaindee, Kaybaynodin, and Macodayoquot, 1 July 1839, Johnston Family Papers, William Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

to Buffalo.” By the 1820s, however, Muckatosha seems to have reconciled himself to cooperating with the Americans. Missionary Isaac McCoy reported he was one of the Ottawa notables who welcomed him upon his arrival at the Grand River.²⁰² Muckatosha began by stating that he had only come to Washington to answer President Jackson’s request and out of concern for what the L’Arbre Croche Ottawa might do. While rejecting the basic concept of a land cession, Muckatosha also said that he was uncomfortable with Schoolcraft’s proposed treaty because it would not allow reservations of land to *Metis* and the Indian’s “white friends.” “One reason why we do not wish to dispose of our lands,” he said, “is this, we fear that the whites, who will not be our friends, will come into our country and trouble us and that we shall not be able to know where our possessions are. If we do sell our land it will be our wish that some of our white friends have lands among us and be associated with us.”²⁰³

Muckatosha’s objections were immediately seconded by Megiss Ininee (Shell Man or Wampum Man), another Grand River Ottawa. He was a younger man but he was experienced with treaty proceedings having been a signatory to the 1819 Saginaw treaty. Megiss Ininee expressed his displeasure with L’Arbre Croche’s willingness to make a cession and with the inclusion of the Chippewa in the treaty negotiation. Pointing toward the map on the table Megiss Ininee declared Ottawa lands looked “very small” and that the Grand River people “concluded not to sell any.”²⁰⁴

After having his people’s motives imputed twice by the Grand River Ottawa, Apokisigan, the leader of the L’Arbre Croche delegation, rose to his own defense. He was described by an observer as “a noble looking fellow, dressed in full Indian costume, with his face painted, and his hair queerly arranged.”²⁰⁵ Such a description seems at odds with Apokisigan’s long role of leadership in bringing Catholicism and educational services to L’Arbre Croche. Of all the *Anishnabe* leaders in Washington he was the most eager to make a land cession. Yet, while he sought resources to expand L’Arbre Croche’s experiments with Christianity and agriculture, he was distrustful of Commissioner Schoolcraft. Touched to the quick by Muckatosha, he

²⁰² John Schenck, *History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties* (Philadelphia: D.W. Ensign, 1881) 30; Isaac McCoy, *History of the Baptist Indian Missions* (New York: Johnson Reprints, 1970) 296.

²⁰³ Records of a treaty, March 28, 1836.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*; for Megiss Ininee’s participation in the 1819 Saginaw Treaty see Kappler, *Indian Treaties*, 187.

²⁰⁵ *Democratic Free Press* (Detroit), 20 April 1836.

responded with a pointed retort. “I wish to say some chiefs present have sold lands and have much benefited,” he said, in clear reference to the Chicago Treaty of 1821 in which some Ottawa had ceded their lands south of the Grand River. Under Article Four of that treaty, the Grand River Ottawa received an annuity and the services of a teacher and blacksmith.²⁰⁶ In contrast, Apokisigan implied that the L’Arbre Croche Ottawa had not ceded lands and had received no treaty benefits to help them, “we have not received as much as one pipe of Tobacco.”

Apokisigan’s response, however, was seemingly undercut by Mackadepenessy [Blackbird] another Christian chief from L’Arbre Croche. He said he was “opposed to the sale of their lands, at another time he would say more on this subject.” Mackadepenessy’s “few words” must have struck the assembly like a bombshell. Mackadepenessy had been Apokisigan’s close ally in building the L’Arbre Croche “civilization program.” He had personally sent petitions for a missionary to the President of the United States and gave his son William to the Catholic Church to be educated as a priest in Rome. He was in agreement on the desirability of a land cession when he accompanied his nephew Hamlin and Apokisigan to Detroit and Washington, D.C. in late 1835. It is hard to believe that Mackadepenessy had a genuine change of heart regarding the cession. He was a man with considerable experience dealing with the white man. He had lived and worked among the whites for many years as a young man when he ranged beyond Lake Superior to the far northwest fur country. He also had many dealings with British Indian officials and participated in the 1820 cession treaty with the Americans. Mackadepenessy was likely trying to improve the terms of the deal offered by Schoolcraft. He may have been doing this in concert with other L’Arbre Croche delegates or he may have spoke at the behest of fur traders like John Drew. One thing is certain; Mackadepenessy’s words cast into question the prospect of a cession because the determination of the L’Arbre Croche Ottawa to expand their “civilization” program by making a cession had always been the engine driving the treaty process.²⁰⁷

Treaty Commissioner Schoolcraft knew as well as anyone the lobbying that the traders and others had been doing with the Indian delegates, and he shared with them an economic interest in

²⁰⁶ Treaty with the Ottawa, Etc. 1821, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 198-201.

²⁰⁷ Records of a treaty, March 28, 1836.

having a generous settlement of trader debts.²⁰⁸ Schoolcraft's wife, the former Jane Johnston, was the daughter of a prominent fur trading family in Sault Ste. Marie. The estate of her late father, John Johnston, stood to gain several thousand dollars if traders' claims were not closely investigated. Nonetheless, Schoolcraft had specific instructions from Secretary of War Cass regarding private reservations and traders debts and for the sake of his career, he dared not risk losing Cass's approbation. Unlike the traders, Schoolcraft as Commissioner had an understandable interest in seeing the Washington negotiation succeed and culminate in a treaty. When faced with a serious threat to the treaty process Schoolcraft, therefore, played his trump card. He knew that the Apokisigan wanted a cession and that the majority of the Ottawa delegates likely would side with him, so he called Mackadepenessy's bluff. Addressing the Ottawa, Schoolcraft said he would tell the President that "they had given no for an answer to his call, it was uncertain when he would listen to them again." He then turned to the Chippewa, who had committed to a cession before coming to Washington and whose delegation was headed by Waishkee [Jawba Wadiek], Schoolcraft's wife's uncle, and said he would make a treaty with them in four days. The Ottawa could have that time to reconsider their refusal to sell. He concluded by advising the Ottawa that he hoped "that when they went home, they would not feel ashamed at seeing their Chippewa Brothers, in possession of many goods, and much money and themselves entirely destitute and very poor."²⁰⁹

Schoolcraft's threat broke the log jam. Augstin Hamlin immediately took the floor and complained, in English which most of the *Anishnabeg* could not understand, that white men had "dictated to them what to say" and that the opposition to a cession expressed at the council was neither "their words" nor "their feeling in their hearts." Hamlin said he was "confident it was their wish to dispose of their lands and derive present benefit." Hamlin's remarks were then translated for all to hear, and Schoolcraft adjourned the conference, although not before providing the *Anishnabeg* access to a private conference room that was not to be disturbed by "any person."²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Mary Holiday to Ramsay Crooks, 17 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, Clarke Library, Central Michigan University, Reel 23, frame 1385; Rix Robinson to Ramsay Crooks, 23 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, Reel 23, frame 1411.

²⁰⁹ Records of a treaty, March 28, 1836.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

A key to Schoolcraft's resolution of the crisis was his confidence in the support of the Chippewa delegation. That delegation consisted of Waishkee and his younger half-brother Waubogeeg (Keewyzi). This is ironic because it had not been Schoolcraft's intention to have either man in Washington. They had been consulted in Michigan concerning the land cession, and Schoolcraft seems to have thought that their presence was unnecessary. Waishkee decided on his own "authority" to journey to Washington, most likely to see for himself what his white kinsmen were arranging. James Schoolcraft, the brother of the Indian Agent, was somewhat flippant about Waishkee's decision. "His going can do no harm, and if no good to the Indians, he will have the gratification of seeing a portion of the world new to him, and no doubt wondrous."²¹¹ From Waishkee's perspective, however, the move may have been an important exercise of his responsibility as a leader. He had participated in three previous treaties and well understood the importance of protecting his people's interests. The prominent role played in the treaty by Schoolcraft, the husband of his niece and confidant of his sister, may have made him feel all the stronger that he would be held to account by his people for this treaty. Just as surprised as the Schoolcraft brothers by Waishkee's decision were the other chiefs of the Sault bands. Speaking for several other elders, Gitchee Kawgaosh inquired of the American agent at Fort Brady: "Why did he leave without notifying *me*, and the other men of *influence* of my tribe, of the nature of his mission?" Kawgaosh bristled that Waishkee, through his family connections, should have greater influence than the others. He went on to complain that he, as a member of the Crane clan, long based at the Sault, would have been a better representative than Waishkee, whose family had originally come from the La Pointe region.²¹² That complaint, however, could not obscure the fact that Waishkee was a respected and experienced leader of the Sault Chippewa who acted independently of both Schoolcraft and the leaders of other bands.²¹³

When the conference reconvened on March 23, 1836, there was no longer even the pretense of resistance to a cession. Even the Grand River Ottawa, in the words of Megis Ininne, "offered

²¹¹ James Schoolcraft to Henry Schoolcraft, 10 March 1836.

²¹² Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, 533.

²¹³ There is some evidence to suggest that Waishkee's presence in Washington was the result of the influence of the missionary Abel Bingham. A letter by William Johnston to Henry Schoolcraft states that several other chiefs were consulted "except that Mr. Bingham and [Rev. James]Cameron took such an active part to send those two" [Waiskee and Keewyzi]. See William Johnston to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, 16 February 1836, Schoolcraft Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Microfilm Reel 24.

to sell provided his great Father would give them such reservations as would benefit them and their children.” What brought about this change is open to speculation. Certainly Schoolcraft’s threat to make a separate treaty with the Chippewa and the image of the Ottawa leaders returning home with no new assistance for their people was a disturbing one. We know that the ranks of the fur traders were split by this proposition, and the smaller independent merchants broke ranks with the American Fur Company and urged acceptance of the treaty.²¹⁴ A critical moment came when the Ottawa and Chippewa of the Straits region agreed to the cession. During an adjournment in the council the Mackinac chiefs sent private communications to Schoolcraft indicating their willingness to make a cession. In separate letters, Aince a Chippewa from Oak Point, and Chingassamoo (Big Sail), an Ottawa from Cheboygan, agreed to a cession with reservations and made an appeal for a grant of land to their fur traders.²¹⁵ The American Fur Company’s Rix Robinson complained: “Mr. Drews Indians all deserted him and consented to form a Treaty.”²¹⁶

The *Anishnabeg* of the Straits region may have been influenced by Schoolcraft’s receipt of a cession agreement signed by thirty-two “Chiefs & men of the Ottawa & Chippewa tribes.” This agreement had been drafted by Captain John Clitz, the Acting Indian Agent, and signed by the *Anishnabe* chiefs sometime in late 1835 or early 1836. Schoolcraft had alluded to its anticipated arrival in his opening remarks to the delegates on March 15. When the negotiations resumed on March 23rd he “gave notice that he had received the paper from Mackinac, which he spoke of a few days since in council, which contained many names of their people offering to sell their lands, with some Reservations.”²¹⁷ In the document the undersigned chiefs agreed to a cession on the “following bases, namely:”

²¹⁴ Robinson to Crooks, 23 March 1836, American Fur Company Papers, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, Reel 23, frame 1411.

²¹⁵ Aince to Schoolcraft, 24 March 1836, Reel 24, Schoolcraft Papers; Big Sail to Schoolcraft, 24 March 1836, Reel 24, Schoolcraft Papers.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ In his opening remarks Schoolcraft said, “It is understood that the Indians living near Michilimackinac on the west side of the straits, have signed a paper, containing the basis on which they feel disposed to cede a portion of these lands. But this paper was never received. Its purport will be made known to you when it arrives.” Records of a treaty, March 28, 1836.

1. The purchase money to be divided between the Ottawa & Chippewas, according to numbers, to be ascertained by each head of a family, or single person, enrolling his name at the Agency.
2. The United States to ascertain & pay, out of the purchase money, our just debts, due to our traders, and to our metif [sic] relatives, who have proved our best friends, & suffered losses, or otherwise incurred the obligation of fair & just claims on us.
3. The government to provide a country for our residence east of the Mississippi and north of the parallel of latitude of the Straits of Michilimackinac.
4. A reasonable sum to be pledged for the purposes of education & agriculture, & separated in its application.

The extent of the cession, & the amount to be received for it, we leave to be determined by our delegates, & our Agent now at Washington. The privileges of hunting upon the land, and of residing upon it, **until it is surveyed and sold** [emphasis added] by the government, to be secure.²¹⁸

The receipt of this agreement may have reminded the Mackinac area delegates of the support back home for a treaty and the real need for the economic assets it would bring.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Agreement of Chief & men of the Ottawa & Chippewa tribes, no date. The agreement is undated. A typescript copy from the 1978 trial is dated December 29, 1835. I find this problematic because the document refers to “chiefs & delegates at Washington.” But the delegates from the Mackinac region did not leave for Washington until February 17. It could be that the document was prepared in anticipation of the departure of the delegates and is in fact a power of sale agreement. This interpretation is supported by the fact that at least three of the Indians (Ainse, Jawba Wadiek, Waub Ogeeg) who signed the agreement also went to Washington, D.C. and signed the treaty, so the agreement had to predate their departure for the capital. There is no date on the agreement itself. There is an illegible note attached to the manuscript that appears to be initialed “H.R.S.” On that sheet is another briefer note that appears to read “Approved by the Sec. Of War 28 [illegible] 1835.”

²¹⁹ Information on the drafting and signing of this agreement can be found in a letter by William Johnston to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. From Washington Schoolcraft had sent instructions to Johnston (his brother-in-law) to “procure as many signers to the Power of Sale as I possibly could.” Schoolcraft sent these instructions on January 1, 1836, which indicates that the Power of Sale document must have been drafted earlier, sometime in late 1835. On February 16, 1836 Johnston reported back to Schoolcraft that “The Indians are fearful of putting their names to it, especially those of L’Arbre Croche (Catholics). A few were here [Mackinac Island] at this time but I could not persuade them. Only the Black Bird, one of their principle men, with three or four others, signed from that quarter. Also one from the Beaver Islands. But through the means of Ance, Shaw wa we [this name is not fully legible] & Big Sail I have succeeded in getting as many as I have. The Indians of the North Shore of lake Michigan are in favor of it, also those of Cheboiegun river, and those of Muctche je ke wis band at Thunder Bay. This Chippewa Chief they will get on their way down, they hold as their Head Chief, and owner of all that part of the peninsula. These Chiefs will be willing to dispose of all their lands. But they will have to be spoken to singly, commencing with Black Bird, then Mutche je ke wis & Big Sail, then Ance and Shaw wa was for when they are together they are afraid of each other, for they mentioned to me they would do so, if they could procure land for their children either by grant or purchase from government after they have transferred it. The time having been so limited, and so few visiting the Island at this season is the cause of our having so few names. But there is [illegible word] the least doubt that they will be willing, at least those belonging to the bands of the chiefs who compose the delegation in the spring. Biddle and Drew could not exert sufficient influence on the Indians [perhaps of the Grand Traverse region]

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The reason for the change of heart among the Grand River Ottawa is more difficult to discern. Clearly they were the only *Anishnabeg* who opposed a cession. Their economic plight was less severe than other *Anishnabeg*. They had limited access to the services of a blacksmith and received \$1,000 annually from the United States for their lands south of the Grand River. On the other hand, they were the Indians most directly in the path of European-American settlement. As Muckatosha said to the treaty council, his people “fear that the whites, who will not be our friends, will come into our country and trouble us.”²²⁰ Certainly, European-American settlement was advancing rapidly toward their fields and villages. A treaty, even one bought at the bitter cost of a major land cession, could clarify their status relative to the white newcomers and provide the additional resources for eventually relocating away from the expanding population. A European-American observer of the treaty commented that “[t]he great argument to which they felt themselves compelled to yield was necessity. They knew that they must yield, or submit eventually to a forced expulsion, or else destruction.”²²¹

One explanation for the Grand River Ottawa’s change of heart was that the missionary, Leonard Slater, who escorted the delegation, was bribed into counseling them to accept a cession. This accusation comes from the pen of Reverend Isaac McCoy, a former colleague and rival of Slater. McCoy had founded the Grand River Baptist mission but only as a temporary step in moving the Ottawa west of the Missouri River. Slater had actual charge of the Grand Rapids mission while McCoy was perfecting his plans for Ottawa removal, and he angered his former mentor when he refused to encourage migration westward. Slater believed that the Ottawa could be Christianized and gradually taught to function as agriculturists in the American style. Besides smacking of vindictiveness, McCoy’s account of events is inconsistent with the treaty record. McCoy contended that Slater came to him “much distressed, and solicited my advice respecting the course he should pursue.” He had been offered “several thousand dollars” if a treaty could be effected. In the final treaty, Slater did receive a payment of \$6400. In McCoy’s account, this meeting took place on March 24, 1836. Yet, according to the treaty record, the Grand River

so as to get them to sign, for I was disappointed in the aid I expected from Capt. Clitz, for I think he has within a few days manifested rather an [illegible word] disposition.” William Johnston to Henry Schoolcraft, 16 February 1836, Schoolcraft Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Microfilm Reel 24.

²²⁰ Records of a treaty, March 28, 1836.

²²¹ *Democratic Free Press* (Detroit), 13 April 1836.

Ottawa already had “offered to sell” their lands, agreeing to the proposition in open council on March 23rd.²²² An interpretation at least as plausible of Slater’s support for the 1836 treaty was that he regarded it as a useful prelude to his plan, which was put into effect in November 1836, to relocate his mission to privately owned land that would insulate the Ottawa from any threat of forced removal. The financial award provided in the treaty made that safe haven possible by providing funds for buying land.²²³

If anyone operated against the professed interests of the Ottawa in Washington that spring it was the Reverend McCoy. The missionary had repeatedly tried to attract the Grand River Ottawa to participate in his Indian colony on the western plains. In the wake of the negotiation of the Treaty of Washington, McCoy worked to have the treaty changed to facilitate the removal of the Ottawa and Chippewa to the western Indian Territory.²²⁴ One of the major elements in the treaty negotiated by Schoolcraft and the chiefs of the Ottawa and Chippewa was the establishment of a series of large reservations. Most of these reservations were located near the sites of existing Indian villages—such as the L’Arbre Croche coast, Grand Traverse Bay, and Sugar Island. The exception was the establishment of “one tract north of the *Pieire Marquette* river,” which was to be reserved for the Grand River Ottawa in anticipation of their eventual displacement from their homelands. A total of five reservations were established in the lower peninsula and nine reservations in the upper peninsula. There was no time limit placed on the *Anishnabeg*’s tenure on these reservations. Schoolcraft and Cass likely saw these as temporary, subject to reduction by future treaties. This had been the pattern of treaty making with the Potawatomi, Miami, and other bands of Ottawa and Chippewa.²²⁵ For the *Anishnabeg*, the reservations were a guaranteed resource base during a time of transition. But in an arrogant exercise of power the United States Senate amended the treaty worked out by Schoolcraft and the *Anishnabeg*.

²²² *Ibid*; Isaac McCoy, *History of the Baptist Indian Missions* (New York: Johnson Reprints, 1970) 494-5.

²²³ Leonard Slater to Schoolcraft, 28 December 1836, National Archives, Letters Received by the Agent at Mackinac, vol. 1, July-December 1836, RG 75, M-1, Roll 41, p. 562-5.

²²⁴ McCoy, *History of the Baptist Missions*, 496-7.

²²⁵ Treaty with the Potawatomi, 1832, Treaty with the Potawatomi, 1836, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 372-375, 450.

The Senate revisions to the draft treaty worked considerable mischief on the interests of the Ottawa and Chippewa. The most important revision was that which put a five year limit on the tenure enjoyed by the Ottawa and Chippewa on their reservations. In return for this massive taking of land, the United States proposed to increase the amount of money due to the *Anishnabeg* of northwest Michigan by \$200,000.²²⁶ This change had a major impact on the meaning of the treaty. Instead of having a guaranteed land base for their people in Michigan for a generation or so, the chiefs were confronted with a treaty that left their status in Michigan more unsettled than before. A forced removal to an undesirable location, the thing the Ottawa and Chippewa were most interested in avoiding, became more, not less, likely because of this change in the treaty.

Removal westward had been contemplated both by the *Anishnabeg* and by Schoolcraft during the preliminary negotiations that led up to the treaty. Among the terms specified in the power of sale agreement signed by the *Anishnabeg* of the Straits region was one that “The government to provide a country for our residence east of the Mississippi and north of the parallel of latitude of the Straits of Michilimackinac.”²²⁷ The key element in that provision was that the area made available for relocation was one that was congenial to the woodland hunting, maple sugar gathering, and maize cultivation to which they were accustomed. The original version of the Treaty of Washington included a clause that one of the areas for possible removal was the region “north of St. Anthony’s Falls [St. Paul, Minn.]”²²⁸ The wording suggested that relocation was contingent, “if they desire it,” and would be “among the Chippewas.” The Senate revision replaced that possibility with an offer of “final settlement” in the region “South West of the Missouri River.”²²⁹

A final unpropitious amendment to the treaty was a change in the manner in which the Indians were to pay their debts to traders. Schoolcraft had originally negotiated for a commissioner, operating in consultation with the Ottawa and Chippewa, to investigate all claims. This was changed so that all claims were adjudicated “with the aid and assistance of their agent.”

²²⁶ Treaty with the Ottawa, Etc., 1836, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 450-3.

²²⁷ Agreement of the Chiefs & men of the Ottawa & Chippewa tribes, n.d.

²²⁸ Articles of a treaty made and concluded at the city of Washington, March 28, 1836, M-668, Roll 8, f.92.

²²⁹ Treaty with the Ottawa, Etc., 1836, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 453.

Any funds remaining from the \$300,000 dedicated to pay traders debts was, according to the Senate revision, to be spent by the Ottawa and Chippewa “to such other use as they may think proper.”²³⁰ The trouble with this amendment is that it ignored a supplement to the original treaty that President Andrew Jackson instructed Schoolcraft to negotiate with the Ottawa and Chippewa. Under that supplemental article, any money left from the \$300,000 debt fund was to “vested by the Government in stock.”²³¹ Schoolcraft contended that this provision had been requested by the *Anishnabeg* so as to ensure that some of the financial benefits of the cession would be enjoyed by their descendents.²³² But in the wake of the Senate revisions, there were two competing provisions concerning the fate of the monies left over from the debt fund. This became the most contentious provision of the 1836 Treaty of Washington.²³³

Why did the Senate amend the treaty? As far as the motivations of those involved can be determined, the answer to that question is: politics and policy. To Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who felt proud of the treaty, low ambition for high office motivated Hugh Lawson White, Chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, to change the treaty in such a way as to embarrass the Jackson administration.²³⁴ It is true that White, a Senator from Jackson’s home state of Tennessee, had recently broken with the President. Politicians in the mid-South resented Jackson’s selection of Vice President, Martin Van Buren, a New Yorker, as the anointed successor to “Old Hickory.” White allowed himself to become the focus of an effort to put another Tennessee man in the White House. By the spring of 1836, however, the bloom was off the rose of White’s candidacy, largely because of Jackson’s personal intervention and exercise of party discipline. The Senator may well have simply tried to cause mischief in retribution for Jackson’s actions against him.²³⁵

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² Schoolcraft to Cass, 1 April 1836, National Archives, Ratified Treaty No.201, Documents Relating to the Negotiations of the Treaty of March 28, 1836, With the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, T-494, f.365.

²³³ In later years Schoolcraft would hold by an interpretation of the treaty that followed the supplemental article he negotiated with the chiefs in Washington, while a number of Ottawa, led by Augustin Hamlin demanded payment of the money as provided for in Article five of the final treaty.

²³⁴ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years With the Indian Tribes on the American Frontier, A.D. 1812-A.D. 1842* (Philadelphia: Lippencot, 1851) 538.

²³⁵ For more on the political background on Hugh White’s actions see, Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-58.

There were policy reasons for amending the treaty as well. Just prior to considering the 1836 Ottawa and Chippewa Treaty, the Senate had debated the controversial Treaty of New Echota. That treaty, which set in motion the tragic “Trail of Tears” for the Cherokee, stimulated a debate in the United States regarding the role of removal in American Indian policy. The Jackson administration had stood staunchly behind the removal policy. On December 29, 1835, the President insisted on adding a supplementary article to the New Echota Treaty that rescinded preemption rights and reservations for the Cherokee.²³⁶ Senator White’s amendment, therefore was very much in keeping with overall Indian policy. In corresponding with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs a year later, Schoolcraft himself expressed the policy reasons for the change in the Ottawa and Chippewa treaty. “It was felt to be bad policy on the part of the government to purchase small tracts,” he wrote on February 27, 1837, “which would be absorbed by the extension of settlement in a few years, and lead to the necessity of renewed negotiations, at each of which, the price of the lands would not only be enhanced, but their creditor and half-breed claimants, renew their claims, with the power, of influencing the Indians to refuse or accede to the terms, as the private interests of these individuals might dictate.”²³⁷

It is likely that the Reverend Isaac McCoy also played a role in putting a five-year limitation on the reservations. McCoy was in Washington at the time and he lobbied the Senate Indian Affairs Committee for revisions to the treaty. In his memoirs, McCoy took credit for adding to the treaty compensation for the Baptist Mission Board for improvements that they made at the Grand Rapids mission. But he also noted that the treaty was changed to induce “the Ottawas to take a permanent residence in the Indian territory, after the expiration of five years.” McCoy admitted that this change was “an unwelcome amendment to many.” But he regarded long-term reservations and the option of removal to the northern lakes region as unmitigated evils. The reason for those provisions to begin with, in his opinion, was “the wish of many to keep them in the region of the lakes, receding constantly from the advancing settlements of the white man, becoming poorer and fewer, and more degraded every day, and consequently more easily cheated out of their money.” The missionary’s fingerprints may be seen in the provision for

²³⁶ Treaty with the Cherokee, 1835, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 448-9.

²³⁷ Schoolcraft to C. A. Harris, 27 February 1837, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 422, frame 631-634.

compensation for the Baptist mission (no mention was made of Catholic missions) which was added to Article Eight, the revised removal clause of the treaty. McCoy wrote that he was “gratified” when the option of northern relocation was struck from the treaty and the reservations were reduced to five years.²³⁸

It was left up to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to explain to the Ottawa and Chippewa that the treaty they had signed in Washington had been significantly altered. This was done at a convocation of Ottawa and Chippewa leaders at Mackinac Island in the summer of 1836. The meeting, which Schoolcraft described as “a general council,” began on 12 July 1836. Some of the Indian leaders were probably and justifiably shocked by the Senate’s action. Schoolcraft reported to Secretary of War Cass that “the cession of the reservations at the Expiration of five years, has been strenuously opposed by a part of the chiefs.” There were others, however, who seem to have taken the news in stride and signed their consent without further discussion.²³⁹ The majority appear to have adjourned the council for one day so that the *Anishnabeg* could discuss the changes among themselves. On July 14 and 15, the chiefs and leading men again met with Schoolcraft. Some signed their assent at that time others waited until July 16.

Only two Ottawa leaders are known to have formally refused to approve the revised treaty. According to United States Army Captain John Clitz they were “old Possagon and Little Knife (Ottawa).”²⁴⁰ Little Knife appears to have been the Ottawa leader Mokomanish. That he opposed the treaty was likely no surprise. He had led one of the last Ottawa war parties against the Americans in the War of 1812 and had been awarded a silver ceremonial sword by the British.²⁴¹ More noteworthy is the reference to “old Possagon.” This was none other than Apokisigon, one of L’Arbre Croche’s leading men. It had been Apokisigon who had worked most aggressively to bring Catholicism to his people and to make a treaty of cession with the United States. The old chief, however, had made clear, as early as 1832 that as much as he

²³⁸ McCoy, *History of the Baptist Missions*, 497-8.

²³⁹ Articles of Assent to the Amendments of the Resolution of the Senate of the United States, 12 July 1836, M-668, Roll 8, f. 106.

²⁴⁰ Clitz describes the council as taking place “at the Agency on the 12’ and 15’ Instant”, Captain John Clitz to Adjutant General Ines, 16 July 1836, National Archives, Letters Received by the Adjutant General, Main Series, M-567, Roll 120, p.386.

²⁴¹ J. Grath Taylor, “Assiginac’s Canoe,” *The Beaver* (Oct/Nov, 1986),50-52; Lieut. Col. Robert McDonall to Capt. A. Bulger, 2 May 1815, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXIII, 512-3.

wanted to lead his people to a new way of life he was devoted to protecting their lands at Little Traverse. On the eve of his 1835 visit to Washington he affirmed that his delegations “principal objects” were to “make arrangements with government for remaining in the Territory of Michigan.” The delegation went on to write: “We do not wish to sell all the lands claimed by us and consequently not to remove to the west of the Mississippi.”²⁴² Apokisigon understood that the Senate revisions took from the Ottawa a guarantee of their persistence in Michigan. He understood that the treaty no longer achieved his primary goal in entering into negotiations. Because he understood the treaty’s implications for Ottawa land tenure, Apokisigon refused to give it his consent. Forty years later his grand daughter recalled that for him the revised treaty was a betrayal and he turned his back on the treaty he had done so much to set in motion.²⁴³

If many of the chiefs were “strenuously opposed,” as Schoolcraft wrote, by the five-year limitation on the reservations, why did they, unlike Apokisigon, assent to the Senate revisions? According to Schoolcraft, a powerful factor was the Agent’s explanation of the “practical operation of the provision, contained in the 13th article of the Treaty, which secures to them indefinitely, the right of hunting on the lands ceded, with the other usual privileges of occupancy, until the land is required for settlement.”²⁴⁴ This explanation seemed to promise the Ottawa and the Chippewa that they would not be disturbed in their traditional use of the ceded lands for many years to come. As reassuring as that might have been, the *Anishnabeg* still had economic problems that could only be addressed by the payments promised in the treaty. Mackadepenessy, who had been Apokisigon’s partner, in bringing change to the Ottawa and in pursuing an agreement with the Americans did formally agree to the revised treaty. By 1836 he was a year-round resident of L’Arbre Croche, so it is doubtful that Schoolcraft’s reassurance that he would be able to continue to hunt on ceded lands would have much interested him. It is more likely that it was the treaty economic and political opportunities that swayed him. Since the War of 1812 Mackadepenessy had pursued diplomatic overtures to the first the French government, then the

²⁴² Reply of the Ottawas [to a speech by Schoolcraft] by Pabamitabi, 1 September 1832, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll31, frame 126-7,p.267-69; Memorial of the Ottawa delegation by A. Hamlin, Jr., 5 December 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 722-725.

²⁴³ Ella Petoskey, “Northern Michigan Historical Sketch, 1877,” manuscript, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

²⁴⁴ Schoolcraft to Cass, 18 July 1836, National Archives, Records of the Superintendent and Agent, Mackinac Agency, Letters Sent by the Agent, July 18, 1836 to June 26, 1839, RG 75, M-1, Roll 37, p.3-5.

British, and finally, with reluctance to the Americans. He may well have felt that for all the ominous implications of the Treaty of Washington, the Ottawa needed to have an agreement with the United States. Because of the United States government's power and potential for unilateral action, Mackadepenessy and other *Anishnabe* leaders may have feared a failed treaty more than a flawed one.²⁴⁵

A flawed treaty was all the more acceptable to Ottawa and Chippewa leaders who were planning a future that included land ownership and citizenship, not dependence on the "Great Father." As early as December 1835, when the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa visited Washington, D.C., some *Anishnabeg* leaders embraced submitting themselves "to the Laws of that country within whose limits we reside."²⁴⁶ The \$600,000 that was to be paid out over the next twenty years provided the means to own land in fee simple. So that even if the rights of citizenship were not accorded to the Ottawa and Chippewa they could attain the very significant protections that were due property owners. Of course, for most of the chiefs at the council the purchase of land near their homes was not realistic because such purchases could not be made until surveys had been extended to northern Michigan, something that would not happen for years. Nonetheless, the possibility of land ownership was very likely discussed in the context of the approval of the Articles of Assent. Ogemainini, one of the L'Arbre Croche leaders at the Mackinac council, had already petitioned the President for legal title to public domain lands.

Ogemainini was known to whites in Michigan as Joseph Wakaso. He was the son of Wakezoo, an esteemed Ottawa elder, and the nephew of Mackadepenessy, one of the leaders of the Ottawa "civilization" initiative. Unlike many of the Catholic Ottawa, Ogemainini and his band had not forsaken the pursuit of the seasonal round. While they spent their summers at Middle Village on the L'Arbre Croche coast, they wintered in Allegan County, along the Black River. Rather than trusting in reservations or in their reserved right to hunt on ceded lands Ogemainini wanted his band to own these lands. In his April 1836 petition to the President, Ogemainini was careful to explain he did not want a reservation for his band, because "we will be obliged to sell at some future time, whether we wish or not." Rather he wanted to have legal

²⁴⁵ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 53; For Mackadepenessy's 1825 letter to the head of the Society of Jesus and the King of France see: *Annales De L'Association De La Propagation De La Foi*, IX (November, 1826), 121-131. For Mackadepenessy's request to visit London and meet personally with British government officials see: Thomas Anderson to William McKay, 29 November 1828, *MPHC*, XXIII, 150-1, 156.

²⁴⁶ Memorial of the Ottawa delegation by A. Hamlin, Jr., 5 December 1835.

title to a portion of the public domain in Allegan County, “so that we can feel secure of maintaining our rights in Courts of Justice, as the White Man, who holds the President’s patent on his farm.” According to Ogemainini, all the members of his band were “unanimous” in their desire to hold private title to their land as well as to have “Schools, Churches, and Roads.” Only in this way, he wrote, will “the poor Indian at last feel that he has a home, and that he may lay his bones where he will feel that the bones of his descendents for ages to come will.” Ogemainini’s petition was endorsed by seventy Allegan County white settlers who welcomed making the Ottawa band permanent residents of their community.²⁴⁷

Ogemainini saw the future of his band as citizens, “under the Laws, Government, and Jurisdiction of the United States.” That other band leaders were thinking along the same lines is indicated by their actions after the treaty was signed. In 1838 George Johnston, the Chippewa-Irish mixed blood who worked for the Office of Indian Affairs, told the missionary Peter Dougherty that the Grand Traverse chiefs already had “money laid aside and design to purchase their lands as soon as they come on the market.”²⁴⁸ Clearly, a future based on citizenship and landownership was contemplated by many of the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders who signed the Articles of Assent. Acceptance of the Senate’s revisions was based on a much more sophisticated understanding of their future than Schoolcraft’s simple explanation of the “practical operation” of their temporary right to reside on the ceded lands.

What the Ottawa and Chippewa signed when they agreed to the Senate’s changes was a document called the Articles of Assent, which was probably drafted by Schoolcraft, and it set forth the terms under which the *Anishnabe* leaders agreed to accept the revised treaty.²⁴⁹ On July 22nd this agreement was signed by thirteen “of the Southern Chiefs and principle men,” who had arrived late for the council.²⁵⁰ During July of 1836 a total of ninety-six Ottawa and Chippewa signed the Articles of Assent. They included at least one woman, who was identified among the

²⁴⁷ Wakaso to President of the United States & the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress Assembled, National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan, M-1, Roll 72, f.229-30.

²⁴⁸ Peter Dougherty, “Diaries of Peter Dougherty,” edited by Charles A. Anderson, *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 30 (1952), 107-8.

²⁴⁹ Articles of Assent, 12 July 1836.

²⁵⁰ Schoolcraft to Cass, 22 July 1836, National Archives, Ratified Treaty No.201, Documents Relating to the Negotiation of the Treaty of March 28, 1836, RG 75, T-494, Roll 3, f. 376.

signatories as “A Chieftainess.” Many small bands, such as the Chocolate River Chippewa or Plate River Ottawa, who were not represented in Washington, were consulted through the Articles of Assent. Crane Clan leaders from Sault Ste. Marie, such as Kawgayosh (Gyaushk), who had resented not being at Washington approved the revised treaty. A significant number of those leaders who negotiated the treaty and signed the Articles of Assent were men who were Christian converts or soon would be. These included Akosa and Aishquagonabee of Grand Traverse, Mackadepenessy and others from L’Arbre Croche, Waishkey, Keewyzi, and Chegud, from the Sault, Wasaw Bequm from Grand River, Chusco the former *Mide* priest from Michilimackinac, and others. For these men the treaty was simply part of a much larger set of changes, both intimate and public, that they were in the process of embracing. It is also worth noting that there is no evidence of drinking or alcohol abuse during the proceedings. Nor did the government dangle gifts or gratuities before the delegates to secure a ready acceptance of the revisions. The Articles of Assent were signed in open and sober consultations with the genuine leaders of the Ottawa and Chippewa people.

Andrew Blackbird, only a boy at the time, latter wrote that the treaty was finalized “not with the free will of the Indians, but by compulsion.”²⁵¹ Yet, there is no evidence of direct compulsion on the part of the government’s agents at the Mackinac Council in July 1836. The compulsion that young Blackbird recalled came indirectly, from the Ottawa’s knowledge of the United States’ program of Indian removal. They knew of the attempted removal of the Potawatomi from Michigan and the plans then underway to remove the Ottawa of the Maumee.²⁵² It is also very likely that they knew of the Cherokee’s pending removal. The controversial Treaty of New Echota had been before the Senate while the Ottawa and Chippewa delegates had been in Washington. A letter the Catholic missionary John DeBruyen wrote to his bishop in June of 1836 reveals how oppressive and immediate the fear of removal was for the Anishnabeg. The priest had not yet heard that the Senate had made major revisions to the treaty nor that they had approved it. Still he was full of foreboding regarding the future of the Ottawa. “New things succeed new things until all is destroyed,” he gloomily wrote Bishop Frederick

²⁵¹ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa People*, 51.

²⁵² Schoolcraft, *Memoirs*, 483-4; Grant Foreman, *The Last Trek of the Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 90-91.

Rese. He told the bishop that it was unlikely the Senate would approve the treaty negotiated in Washington. If that was the case DeBruyen believed “the Indians will, within 20 days, meet at Mackinac, where it will be proposed that they, after 50 days, depart from the territory.”²⁵³ Where DeBruyen came up with this timetable is not known. It is, however, likely that he was repeating a rumor that was making the rounds in northern Michigan. Fear that the failure of the treaty would lead to immediate removal could very well have been skillfully placed in the back of the minds of *Anishnabe* leaders by parties anxious to see the treaty with its payments go forward. To the extent there was compulsion in the approval of the treaty it stemmed from the prospect of removal as well as the economic and environmental factors that made the continuation of their old way of life impossible.

For the United States, the treaty secured a large part of the Lower and Upper Peninsula of Michigan, thought at the time to total 16 million acres, for settlement by private citizens. Schoolcraft estimated that “about twelve and a half cents per acre was given for the entire area, which included some secondary lands and portions of muskegs and waste grounds about the lakes—which it was, however, thought ought, in justice to the Indians, to be included in the cession.”²⁵⁴ The purchase price was much more than the three cents an acre paid to France for the Louisiana Purchase thirty-three years before and more than the two cents per acre the United States paid Russia for Alaska thirty-one years later. Indeed, the \$2 million payment was one of the larger financial settlements made between the federal government and the Indians of the eastern United States.

When Schoolcraft returned to Michigan, he was in high spirits over the treaty. “A new era had now dawned in the upper lake country, and joy and gladness sat in every face I met,” he later gushed in his personal memoir. “The Indians rejoiced, because they had accomplished their end and provided for their wants.”²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Father John DeBruyn to Bishop Frederick Rese, 17 June 1836, Diocese of Detroit Papers, Notre Dame Archives.

²⁵⁴ Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, 535.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

What Did the Ottawa and Chippewa Understand Regarding the Treaty of 1836?

A broad review of the documents surrounding the negotiation and signing of the 1836 Treaty of Washington indicate that the Indian leaders who made the treaty understood that save for reservation lands, the right to use the ceded lands would end when those lands were “required for settlement.” The process by which the Treaty of 1836 was negotiated and ratified insured that there would be some uncertainty among the ordinary *Anishnabe* people regarding other aspects of the cession. The treaty had been negotiated far from the lodges of the people most affected. In addition, the deal worked out by the Ottawa and Chippewa chiefs had been alerted after they left Washington. From the Indians’ perspective the treaty process had been initiated to secure and clarify their presence in Michigan, yet when they left the Mackinac Island after signing the Articles of Assent, their future appeared more uncertain than ever. The threat of removal had been delayed, not eliminated. They had obtained much needed resources to facilitate further the lifestyle changes they had begun, but they had no secure land base on which to make those improvements. Uncertainties growing out of the five-year limitation placed on the reservations would dominated Indian-white relations for the next fourteen years and eventually necessitated a new round of treaty making in 1855.

The Ottawa and Chippewa people were justly uncertain of the relationship between the treaty and removal. A second area of uncertainty and later conflict, as noted, was how were the benefits of the treaty to be dispersed to the *Anishnabeg*, particularly the extra money in the debt fund. It is important to note, however, that there is no evidence that the signatories of the 1836 treaty were at all uncertain about the meaning of Article 13, the clause that afforded them subsistence rights on the ceded lands. This right was explained to the Indians clearly and consistently, before the treaty, during the treaty, and immediately after the treaty. While the Ottawa and Chippewa frequently and vigorously expressed their disagreement with the United States’ interpretation of the removal clause in the treaty and the method of dispersing the debt fund, there is no record of *Anishnabe* disagreement with the United States’ interpretation of Article 13.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ For *Anishnabe* complaints or uncertainty concerning other aspects of the treaty see, for example, Chippewa Indians to the President, 14 July 1836, National Archives, Ratified Treaty No. 201, Documents Relating to the Negotiation of the Treaty of March 28, 1836, RG 75, T-494, Roll 3, frames 372-375; Reply of the Sault Ste. Marie, Carp River, Tequimenon River and Grand Island Indians to the Invitation of the Government to Visit the Country West of the Mississippi River, 6 June 1838, M-234, Roll 415. In an 1839 report to Congress Schoolcraft himself ... continued on next page

During preliminary discussions between United States Indian agents and representatives of the Ottawa and Chippewa the issue of a stipulated right to hunt was consistently described to the *Anishnabeg* as a limited and temporary right, most commonly to last so long as the land remained in federal ownership. There are four pre-treaty documents that indicate how the reserved right was explained and how the Ottawa and Chippewa might have understood it. The first such document is Schoolcraft's November 3, 1835 letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in which he indicated that a number of Ottawa and Chippewa bands were open to a cession, if it included reservations "and a defined right of hunting on the lands sold. And the designation of a future place of permanent residence by the government."²⁵⁷ While there is no further elaboration in this letter as to how that right to hunt would be "defined," it is suggested by the sentence that follows, that under "permanent" arrangements for the future, that the right will be enjoyed only temporarily.

There are three other pre-treaty documents that shed light on this issue. Two are dated November 17, 1835, and are from deputy agent Captain John Clitz to Commissioner Herring and from interpreter William Johnston to Schoolcraft. The letters convey almost exactly the same information. Clitz reported a number of Chippewa chiefs were willing to make a partial cession but wished to reserve "a full right to hunt on the ceded lands, as long as they are unoccupied." William Johnston reported the same news to Schoolcraft using the same language, "they to have a full right to hunt, on the ceded lands, as long as they were unoccupied." These documents communicate, in the government agent's words, the terms by which the Chippewa would make a cession. It is clearly a broader understanding than that later used by the United States government. It is attributed to two Sault Ste. Marie chiefs, "Isu bawaudick or Washiskee and Showono" and a Sugar Island chief, "Ocunogeegeed."²⁵⁸ A month or two later a much larger group of Ottawa and Chippewa leaders used more exact and more limiting language in proposing

threw into question how thoroughly he explained the Senate's revision. He wrote that the policy change was "not so fully known at the public councils held with them in the summer of 1836," see *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1839* (Washington, D.C.: National Cash Register Microcard Edition, n.d.), 476-7.

²⁵⁷ Schoolcraft to Herring, 3 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 402, f. 202.

²⁵⁸ Capt. John Clitz to Commissioner Herring, 17 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 701-702; William Johnston to Schoolcraft, 17 November 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Agent, Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 72, frame 156, p.324.

cession terms to which they would agree. In a power-of-sale agreement sent from Mackinac to Washington, thirty-two chiefs and men stipulated for “The privileges of hunting upon the land, and of residing upon it, **until it is surveyed & sold by the government, to be secure** [emphasis added].” Among the chiefs who approved the use of this language was Waishkee (first born) [Washiskee], whose understanding had been reported in the November 17th letters and who would go on to participate in the negotiation and signing of the 1836 treaty.²⁵⁹ Like the November 17, 1835 letters, the words quoted above were written by agents of the United States government, in fact the same agents who drafted the November 17 letters. Unlike those earlier letters, the Ottawa and Chippewa chiefs actually gave their formal assent to the substance and wording of the document, although it should be noted it is unlikely that any of the chiefs present could read English for themselves.

The exact wording of this power-of-sale agreement is significant as it states a very specific termination point for the right of hunting and residing upon the land—when the ceded lands were surveyed and sold. Is this a concept the *Anishnabeg* would have understood? Several sources indicate that the Ottawa and Chippewa were familiar with the process of surveying land. In August of 1834, the Ottawa chief Pabamatabi lectured United States agents regarding the need to respect surveyed property lines: “The lines were to be drawn 9 miles each way from the fort [Fort Mackinac]. We will send men to go with the surveyor. And we have but one request to make. It is when the lines are run, the white man will keep within them and we will promise not to go over them. If any wood is cut upon our land hereafter, we should be paid for it, and we authorize you to take care of our land.”²⁶⁰ Not only did the *Anishnabeg* understand the concept of surveying land they understood its implications for their own land tenure. In March of 1825 John Mullett, a Deputy United States surveyor working in the region between the St. Joseph and Grand Rivers, was accosted by several groups of Ottawa and Potawatomi. The area had been ceded to the United States at the 1821 Chicago Treaty, and the Ottawa occupied it on terms similar to the 1836 treaty. The *Anishnabeg* were occupying sugar camps “and evinced a determination not to permit my surveying,” Mullett wrote, “in some instances they would follow

²⁵⁹ Agreement of the Chiefs and men of the Ottawa and Chippewa tribes, n.d.

²⁶⁰ Speech of Pabanmitabi, 18 August 1834, National Archives, Letters Received by the Superintendents, Michigan Superintendency, 1818-1835, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, p.79.

me, pull up the posts and efface the marks at other times would peremptorily order me to leave the country, and with threats and menaces step in before me [and] lay hold my compass.” Mullett was forced to quit the vicinity after an Ottawa and a Potawatomi tried to kill two of his men.²⁶¹

At the Washington treaty conference, there is little in the record regarding the stipulated right to hunt. This is because the issue had been largely settled in pre-treaty discussions. In Schoolcraft’s opening address to the delegates, when he laid out the government’s proposed terms for the treaty, he made the only reference to the issue during the council: “The usual privilege of **residing and hunting** [emphasis added] on the lands sold till they are wanted will be granted.”²⁶² The wording is much less definite than the terms (“surveyed and sold”) spelled out in the Ottawa and Chippewa chiefs agreement to make a cession, yet it does clearly convey several common elements. The right was portrayed as a temporary right, granted until the lands were “wanted.” In both of these formulations, the hunting right is linked to the Indians’ continued right to reside upon the land. Hunting, as understood in these documents, is a basic subsistence necessity of the Ottawa and Chippewa while they occupy unsettled portions of Michigan. The *Anishnabeg*, it is proposed, can live on the lands that the United States has not yet sold, and with that understanding comes the necessity of also allowing them to hunt, fish, collect maple sugar, gather berries, cut wood for fires, strip birch bark, and the host of other activities that were necessary to subsist in what was regarded as the Michigan wilderness. I believe the Ottawa and Chippewa regarded the hunting right as an important term of the treaty because they understood it as a means of facilitating their continued occupation of unsold lands. Without the right to practice traditional subsistence patterns, for all but the most agriculturally advanced mission Ottawa, the right of “residing” upon the land was meaningless.

The Senate revisions to the Washington treaty created another opportunity for Schoolcraft to explain the document, including the stipulated hunting right, to the Ottawa and Chippewa. There is no direct record of these proceedings, but the council on Mackinac Island produced several documents of note and stimulated correspondence that provides insight into what may have been said regarding the hunting right prior to the final and formal approval of the treaty by the Ottawa

²⁶¹ John Mullett to Lewis Cass, 21 March 1825, *Territorial Papers of the United States: The Territory of Michigan, 1820-1829*, Vol. XI, edited by Clarence E. Carter, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 667-9.

²⁶² Records of a treaty, March 28, 1836.

and Chippewa. The Articles of Assent are the most authoritative of these documents because it was formally signed by the *Anishnabe* leaders and should be considered as a legal part of the treaty. In Article One of this document, the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders acknowledged that although the reservations were guaranteed only for five years, the treaty permitted “them to **reside** upon their reservations, after the period heretofore mentioned, **until** the lands shall be required for **actual survey and settlement**, (as the white population advances from the South towards the North;)...” [emphasis added]²⁶³ This passage represents clear evidence that the *Anishnabeg* understood their usufructury rights under Article 13 of the treaty would terminate upon the survey of the land and its passage from federal ownership. On the one hand, the passage seems to anticipate that the survey of the land will be rapidly followed by its settlement and that the two actions happening together will mark an end to the hunting right. On the other hand, like other formulations of the usufructury right discussed above, that right is linked to the continued residence by the Ottawa and Chippewa on a portion of the ceded territory where the right is to be exercised.

The Articles of Assent also afford indirect evidence that the *Anishnabeg* did not believe that Article 13 was a perpetual right. A large portion of the text of the document concerned the right of the Ottawa and Chippewa “to migrate west.” The document affirmed that the Chippewa controlled “a large area of country on the border of Lake Superior and between that Lake and the Mississippi”—referring to their recent conquests at the expense of the Dakota [Sioux]. This region “it is anticipated may afford to many of them, facilities for reuniting with other portions of their Tribe.” At the same time, the *Anishnabe* leaders reserved the right to investigate the quality of the lands offered to them via the treaty by the United States in the region “South West of the Mississippi.” Relocation there they understood would be “at the Expense of the United States.” The articles conclude by stating that although some people may chose to accept the lands offered in the southwest, “the remainder of them [the *Anishnabeg*] should reunite with their kindred tribe in Lake Superior, and the region west of it and would not, in any consequence, have signed the treaty without said option.”²⁶⁴ These passages suggest that a significant number of Ottawa and Chippewa leaders anticipated that they would in future reside not in Michigan,

²⁶³ Articles of Assent, 12 July 1836.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

exercising usufructuary rights, but would migrate to what is now Minnesota, out of the path of European-American expansion. Although the Senate revised Article Eight of the treaty in such a way as to direct them solely to the southwest, the Ottawa and Chippewa chiefs, through these articles, clearly reserved for themselves the right to participate in the westward expansion of *Anishnabe* territory. This interpretation is further supported by a second formal document to emerge from *Anishnabe* deliberations concerning the Senate revisions. It is a petition by forty-eight Ottawa and Chippewa chiefs, mostly from the Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie regions, to President Andrew Jackson. It requests the President to “negotiate with the Chippewas west of Lake Superior and north of the mouth of the Rum river on the headwaters of the Mississippi for the purchase of a location for our future permanent residence.”²⁶⁵

In the wake of the Washington negotiations and the Mackinac Council, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft had a number of other occasions to describe how he explained the stipulated right to hunt to the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders. These documents are obviously of lesser value than those discussed above because they are further removed from the actual time of the negotiations. These documents are also of less value than those such as the power of sale agreement, the Articles of Assent, and the Petition to the President—all of which originated with, or were formally approved of by, the Ottawa and Chippewa. Nonetheless, Schoolcraft’s post-treaty statements are of great importance, because he was the only person who was present at both the Washington negotiation and the Mackinac Council who has left a written record of what was said on those occasions. As the official commissioner, it was Schoolcraft’s job to explain the government’s cession terms to the *Anishnabeg*.

On February 20, 1837, three men met near the rapids of the Grand River. They had been appointed by a meeting of settlers in the region to receive clarification from Indian Agent Henry Schoolcraft concerning the rights of the Ottawa Indians within the ceded area. D.A. Lyman, A.D. Rathbone, and A.H. Finney addressed the following questions “upon the 13th Art’ of the Indian treaty for Lands north of the Grand River”:

*Have the Indians an Exclusive right to the occupancy of those Lands until they are surveyed and offered for Sale?

²⁶⁵ Chiefs of the Chippewa and Ottawa tribes to President of the United States, 14 July 1836, National Archives, T-494, Roll 3, frame 372-375.

*In Case Squatters settle upon those Lands, have the Indians a right to demolish their buildings & drive them off?

*In fine what is Your opinion of the 2d Art. [the five year reservations] Touching the entire claims of the Indians—and the meaning of 2d art?²⁶⁶

Schoolcraft forwarded the letter to C.A. Harris, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs along with his own extensive opinion concerning the issues, which had been raised. “The main question in the cession made by the Indians at Washington,” he wrote, “may be said in a great measure to have turned on the right stipulated to be secured to them, to hunt upon, and occupy the lands, ceded, until they were required for settlement. I caused the operation of this provision to be carefully explained to them, stating that as fast as the lands were **surveyed and sold** [emphasis added], and thus converted into private property, this right would cease. But that it would continue to be enjoyed by them, on all portions of the territory ceded, not surveyed and sold.” Later in the letter he clarified the treaty language further by adding, “I employed the term ‘settlement’ in its ordinary meaning to denote the act or state of being settled, and as answering, as nearly as the terms of the two languages would permit, to the tenor of my agreement with them.”²⁶⁷

Schoolcraft’s 1837 version of how Article 13 was explained to the Ottawa and Chippewa is consistent with contemporary documents such as the pre-treaty power of sale agreement and the Articles of Assent. All three of these versions share the use of the critical word “until,” which indicates the right is temporary not perpetual. Each of these also uses the benchmark of the land being “surveyed,” incorporated in the United States’ quadrangle division of all its lands for purposes of location and sale to private individuals, as the event triggering the termination of the usufructuary right. Schoolcraft also suggests that the right was understood as one that was tied to the continued residence of the Indians in the area where it would be exercised. “The interest attached to the inquiry,” he advised Commissioner Harris, “arising from the question of ‘preemption’ and will probably pass away, with the appraisal of the improvements and the removal of the Indians, to their five year reservations on the Manistee river.” Schoolcraft,

²⁶⁶ D.A. Lyman, *et al.* to Schoolcraft, 20 February 1837, National Archives, Records of the Michigan Superintendency and Mackinac Agency, Letters Received, 1836-1851, RG 75, M-1, Roll 42, p.177.

²⁶⁷ Schoolcraft to Commissioner Harris, 27 February 1837, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-234, Roll 422, frame 631-634.

however, saw the issue coming up “at future periods, during the progressive settlement of the lands purchased.” He suggested that both he and the *Anishnabe* leaders believed, “from the best information then extant, that portions of the large and imperfectly explored territory ceded, were uninviting to agriculturists, and would be chiefly valuable for lumber and mill privileges, and to these tracts the Indians adverted, as places of **temporary residence** [emphasis added].” The stipulated hunting right was a necessity for a temporary period before the future status of the Ottawa and Chippewa was determined.²⁶⁸

In April of 1837, as a result of the appeal of the Grand Rapids settlers, the United States Attorney General issued an opinion regarding Article 13. Benjamin Franklin Butler ruled that the treaty “must be regarded as reserving the use of the ceded lands, for all purposes of Indian occupancy as it existed prior to the treaty, until such lands shall have been actually disposed of to individuals, by the United States.” It may be presumed that Butler had Schoolcraft’s communication and perhaps the treaty record to consult in preparing his opinion. The Attorney General saw the article as a temporary right, although for him the right had to be yielded when the lands were disposed of by the United States government. “Such disposition,” he wrote, “may be made by sale under the general laws, or by special grants, or in any other way that Congress may direct, and whenever an actual disposition of any particular tract shall be made, the usufructuary right of the Indians, will cease as to such tract.”²⁶⁹ This opinion was likely circulated among the preemption settlers in the Grand River valley and it is not unlikely that some knowledge of it may have reached the Ottawa, through their fur traders Rix Robinson and Louis Campeau, both of whom were deeply interested in real estate matters in that rapidly developing area. Schoolcraft also had the Attorney General’s opinion published in Michigan’s most widely read newspaper, the *Democratic Free Press* of Detroit.²⁷⁰ For several years the Attorney General’s opinion became the basis for federal policy regarding usufructuary rights in the treaty area. It is unclear, however, what knowledge the *Anishnabeg* may have had of the ruling. They lodged no complaints regarding Article 13 rights.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Benjamin F. Butler to Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett, 20 April 1837, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 422, frame 394-396.

²⁷⁰ *Democratic Free Press* (Detroit), 10 May 1837.

Two years later Henry Rowe Schoolcraft used less exact wording in describing the stipulated hunting right. In his 1839 report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Schoolcraft avowed that Article 13 reserved “the usufructuary right of living and hunting upon and cultivating the ceded portion of the soil, until it was **actually required for settlement** [emphasis added].”²⁷¹ The language used here again suggests that the right is tied to a temporary period in which the *Anishnabeg* will be “**living and hunting**” [emphasis added] upon the ceded lands. This formulation, however, is indefinite as to when that right of occupancy and hunting will be terminated. The use of the words “actually required” indicates that it need not be the construction of a physical settlement itself, but only when the lands were required for settlement. At the same time the wording indicates that should settlement not be forthcoming the right would continue as long as the Indians needed to occupy the land.

In his *Personal Memoirs* Schoolcraft used similar language to describe what he told Ottawa and Chippewa leaders regarding their rights under Article 13. In that document he observed that the treaty granted “the mass of Indian population the right to live upon and occupy any portion of the lands until it is **actually required for settlement** [emphasis added].” This formulation also reflects the belief that the right is not a perpetual one, but instead one that will end. Hunting is not even mentioned because this wording clearly suggests that the stipulated right is a right for temporary occupation. Again, the right will terminate when the land upon which the Indians are living and exercising their privileges is “required” for actual settlement. However, there is no elaboration to indicate how the need for actual settlement is to be indicated. A problem with this account of the meaning of the usufructuary right is that the *Personal Memoirs* were not published until 1851, fifteen years after the events described.²⁷² While both the 1839 report and the 1851 memoir are consistent with Schoolcraft’s earlier descriptions of the right they are less definite in articulating the termination point for the stipulated usufructuary right than documents prepared just before and just after the treaty. This lesser precision may well reflect the passage of time from the events described and the diminished need for exact wording in narrative accounts than in official treaty documents, as well as the simple fact that Article 13 was not a subject of controversy on the Michigan frontier.

²⁷¹ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1839*, 476-7.

²⁷² Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, 534.

There is a final post treaty document that sheds light on how Schoolcraft may have explained the practical operation of Article 13. The document is from the pen of Peter Dougherty, a Presbyterian missionary to the Chippewa of Grand Traverse Bay. In an 1841 letter to a mission official in New York City Dougherty reported on the attempt of the Ottawa and Chippewa to draft a petition to have their five-year reservations extended. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and his brother-in-law George Johnston (who had worked at the Grand Traverse station) argued this was unnecessary. “The plea of the Schoolcrafts against the petition” wrote Dougherty, “is that the treaty secures the privilege of residence on any lands not sold.” The missionary went on to explain, “But their situation in that condition would be most unfavorable for the good of the Indians. Because it only secures the privilege of removing from place to place along the swamp[s] which are unsold.”²⁷³ The letter presents Dougherty’s version of what Schoolcraft and George Johnston contended. That version, however, is consistent with what Schoolcraft had argued on earlier occasions. The right is not simply a hunting or fishing right but a “privilege of residence” that was conditional: to be exercised on “any lands not sold.” The letter further indicates what the Grand Traverse bands may have believed what their Article 13 rights were five years after the treaty. As an unofficial spokesman for the *Anishnabeg*, Dougherty offered no objection to Schoolcraft’s interpretation of the hunting right, which indicates that band leaders Aishquagonabee and Akosa, both of whom participated in the treaty negotiations, also had no objection.

After reviewing in detail these accounts of what was told to the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders by government agents, and what they avowed in signed documents, regarding their rights under Article 13, what conclusions are warranted?

1. The usufructuary right was a temporary right to be enjoyed until the lands were needed for another purpose by United States citizens or the Ottawa and Chippewa removed to another portion of the Upper Midwest region.
2. The usufructuary right was explained in the context of a right of temporary residence to be exercised on a particular class of lands. As the article itself states, hunting is allowed “with the other usual privileges of occupancy.”

²⁷³ Peter Dougherty to David Wells, 26 May 1841, Peter Dougherty Papers, 1838-1870, microfilm copy, Reel 1, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

3. The termination point of the usufructuary right was most clearly and definitively defined as being when the lands were sold—in the words of the documents “surveyed and sold” by the United States. I regard the wording used in the Articles of Assent and by Schoolcraft in his 1837 letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs as the most conclusive documents regarding this issue. The former reflects the avowed understanding of the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders at the moment they accepted the treaty, while the latter was the treaty commissioner’s formal effort to clarify what he actually explained to the *Anishnabeg* regarding Article 13. The other formulation that appeared in the Treaty and several other documents, “until actually required for settlement,” was not necessarily very different than “surveyed and sold” because federal land policy anticipated that legal settlement could not take place until lands were purchased from the General Land Office. Lands could not be purchased until they were first surveyed. Completion of a survey was one of the primary “required” steps toward settlement.

4. Both Schoolcraft and the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders anticipated that most of the Indians would be able to exercise their rights under Article 13 for a number of years to come due to the nature of the lands in the northern region of the peninsulas and the pace of settlement.

Article 13 was not a subject of controversy at the time of the negotiation of the treaty of 1836 nor in the years that followed. The United States, the State of Michigan, and the *Anishnabeg* shared a common understanding of the rights secured therein.

How Would the Ottawa and Chippewa Have Understood “Settlement”?

While terms like “surveyed and sold” were sometimes used to explain when the right of temporary residence on the ceded lands would cease, the actual wording of Article 13 contains the phrase, “until the land is required for settlement.” It is important, therefore, to explore what the term “settlement” would have meant to the leaders who made the 1836 treaty. In his 1837 letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Schoolcraft explained that, “I employed the term ‘settlement’ in its ordinary meaning to denote the act or state of being settled, and as answering, as nearly as the terms of the two languages would permit, to the tenor of my agreement with

them.”²⁷⁴ This statement suggests that Schoolcraft used the term settlement to explain a process. Of course, a settlement could be a place, but what Schoolcraft explained was “the act or state of being settled.” The more than 150 years of previous contact between the *Anishnabeg* and European-Americans provided a context for the former to understand both what a place called a settlement was, as well as the series of land use actions that might constitute the process of “settlement.”

Most *Anishnabeg* had some experience with European-American settlements as a place and because of that they learned of the bundle of concepts and practices that made up settlement as a process. The villages of Mackinac and Sault Ste. Marie were located in the heart of their homelands and provided an example of the meaning of settlement. This included practices such as the abstract division of the land, the exploitation or reservation of forest, mineral, and fish resources, the building of structures or planting of crops on the land. Sault Ste. Marie, an ancient gathering place of the Chippewa, had a stockaded mission complex as early as 1668. The twelve-foot high cedar posts of the fort enclosed two buildings, a chapel and the priest’s residence. Outside the stockade was “a large clearing well planted.”²⁷⁵ A similar mission station was established at the Straits of Mackinac by 1671. Trading houses and even French military forts later came to each site. Far ahead of the bulk of the European-American frontier both Sault Ste. Marie and Mackinac developed as settlements. Thousands of *Anishnabeg* lived and worked around these settlements and in so doing gradually learned European-American systems of land tenure. Part of this experience was the understanding that Europeans regarded as part of their settlement more than just land, like that of the Jesuit mission of 1668, which they enclosed behind a fence or stockade.

The first step in settlement with which they had experience was the abstract division of the land. At a very early date the Ottawa and Chippewa came to appreciate the way control over land passed from one party to another with no visible change on the ground. This is demonstrated by Schoolcraft’s account of the “negotiation” of the 1820 Sault Ste. Marie Treaty. The United States claimed the right to build a fort near the rapids because the Indians had long

²⁷⁴ Schoolcraft to Harris, 27 February 1837.

²⁷⁵ Rene de Brehart de Galinee, quoted in Louise Phelps Kellogg, editor, *Early Narratives of the Northwest, 1634-1699* (New York: Scribner’s, 1917) 205.

before granted such a right to the French. Governor Lewis Cass proposed to “treat for settling the boundaries of the grant.” Schoolcraft wrote that “Some [of the Chippewa] appeared in favor of settling the boundary.” Eventually the Chippewa ceded a two-mile by four-mile area for a fort. Two years later, when the United States Army came to actually build a military installation, Colonel Brady, according to Schoolcraft’s *Memoirs*, “told the Indians that he should not occupy their ancient encamping and burial-ground on the hill [all of which were in the ceded territory], but would select the next best site for his troops. This announcement was received with great satisfaction, as denoted by a heavy response of approbation on the part of the Indians.” This passage indicates that because of their cession in 1820 the Chippewa understood that the United States had a right to place its military post anywhere within the two-mile by four-mile area, but that they were pleased that the new installation would not disturb an ancient burial ground.²⁷⁶ The treaty had divided the land at the rapids between that controlled by the Chippewa and that where the army had the right to do as it chose. From the division of the land flowed the building of the fort two years later and between those acts the Chippewa saw the “act or state of being settled.”

The Ottawa and the Chippewa understood settlement as a process, as a series of actions related to the alienation of land and resources, not simply as the construction of a place called a “settlement.” At the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, the *Anishnabeg* granted the United States “the post of Michillimackinac, and all the land on the island, on which that post stands, and the main land adjacent” as well as lands on the mainland north of the Straits “to extend three miles back from the water.”²⁷⁷ It was not until 1834, however, that the boundary of the cession was surveyed. Nonetheless, the Ottawa spokesman Pabanmitabi indicated that his people still

²⁷⁶ Schoolcraft, *Travels*, 136; Schoolcraft, *Memoirs*, 97.

²⁷⁷ Treaty with the Wyandot, etc., 1795, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 40. A central tenant of American frontier historiography has been the variety of experiences that are encompassed by the terms “frontier” and “settlement.” Both the words “frontier” and “settlement” have been used to refer to specific places as well as to a social process. Historians and social scientists frequently use the term “settlement pattern” to describe the type of geographic places that are founded and developed as part of an adaptation of human society to a specific environmental niche. Historically a “settlement” is merely a process by which natural environments become cultural landscapes. Depending upon the environmental and social conditions historians have documented farming settlements, cattle raising settlements, mining settlements, and—as was the case for most of northern Michigan—logging settlements. Many of the first settlements in North America were actually based upon commercial fishing. Neither historiography nor the actual experience of early settlements in America support the idea that “settlement” only referred to a specific type of agricultural land use.

recognized the cession, “your soldiers drew lines across our lands, and they were agreed to.” Pabanmitabi went on to say,

We have but one request to make. It is when the lines are run, the white men will keep within them and we will promise not to go over them. If any wood is cut upon our land hereafter we should be paid for it, and we authorize you to take care of our land. [emphasis in the original] And to grant the necessary papers permitting the cutting of wood and hay. It is now valuable to you. You could not live on the Island without.²⁷⁸

This passage demonstrates the Ottawa’s understanding of property rights, a key element in the settlement process. Pabanmitabi recognizes the legal importance of the invisible surveyed boundary and the resource rights held by those who hold lands that are otherwise unimproved. By demanding that his people be compensated for wood cut in *Anishnabeg* forests and hay cut in their clearings, he recognizes the importance of such resources to an expanding white population. Indeed, Pabanmitabi argues that whites could not live on little Mackinac Island were it not for the forest resources of adjacent Indian lands. This shows that he appreciates that settlement entails more than simply the erection of buildings, but the appropriation of resources, often from noncontiguous tracts of land.

During the years leading up to the 1836 cession the *Anishnabeg* often complained to the government when their land was subject to trespass by whites cutting timber or fodder. Typical was the appeal made in 1832 to subagent George Johnston by Mezatagon, a Chippewa woman. She complained that a man named W. Stone trespassed on a prairie where Mezatagon had earlier given permission to another white family to harvest hay. Mezatagon first sought the mediation of her chief, and husband, Ainse (who in 1836 negotiated the treaty). He gave Mezatagon a wampum belt to present when she filed her complaint in Mackinac. The purpose of the belt Johnston recorded was “to remind his Father the agent, that Indian claims & privileges would at all times be attended too at this office, and that this was promised to his chiefs by the government.”²⁷⁹ In this example, the Chippewa used a traditional means of diplomatic communication, a wampum belt, to assert a property right claim. The Chippewa asserted their

²⁷⁸ Speech of Pabanmitabi, 18 August 1834, National Archives, Letters Received by the Superintendents, Michigan Superintendency, 1818-1835, RG 75, M-1, Roll 69, p.79.

²⁷⁹ George Johnston to H.R.Schoolcraft, 19 October 1832, N.A. RG75, Letters Received by the Agent in Mackinac, M-1, Roll 68, frame 260, p.522.

control over a stretch of prairie land and their right to allow some whites the use of the land and their right to bar others from the same use.

Generations of involvement in the fur trade had taught the Ottawa and Chippewa that seemingly wilderness tracts could be claimed and resources reserved for private use. To restrict access to valuable fur trapping grounds the *Anishnabeg* developed a system of family trapping territories (see pages 19-23). Infringement on someone else's territory was considered a violation of proper conduct. In his *Memoirs* Henry Rowe Schoolcraft recorded an incident that reveals something of the Indian concept of land use and tenure.

Some years ago, a Chippewa hunter of Grand Traverse Bay, Lake Michigan, found that an Indian of a separate band had been found trespassing on his hunting grounds by trapping furred animals. He determined to visit him. But found on reaching his lodge the family absent, and the lodge door carefully closed and tied. In one corner of the lodge he found two small packs of furs. These he seized. He then took his hatchet and blazed a large tree. With a pencil made of a burned end of a stick, he then drew on this surface the figure of a man holding a gun, pointing at another man having traps in his hands. The two packs of fur were placed between them. By these figures he told the tale of the trespass, the seizure of the furs, and the threat of shooting him if he persevered in his trespass. This system of figurative symbols I am inclined to call pictography, as it appears to me to be a peculiar and characteristic mode of picture-writing.²⁸⁰

Clearly the use of the word “trespass” is the result of Schoolcraft's narration of the story he had much earlier heard from the Chippewa. Yet, the actions, both taken and threatened, by the Grand Traverse Chippewa man reveal an understanding of the way ownership accords exclusive use of resources. The incident suggests an Indian understanding of the legal doctrine of trespass. The section of forest lands enclosed by the man's family trapping territory might not have been marked in anyway, nonetheless it was earmarked for the exclusive use of one family and the Chippewa man felt justified in using the threat of violence to enforce his control over that land.

The *Anishnabeg*'s sophisticated understanding of land tenure included the concept mineral or timber easements. This is demonstrated by an exchange that took place during the negotiation of the 1820 cession of the St. Martin Islands. The American spokesman, Agent George Boyd, told the men of L'Arbre Croche “that their great Father, the President, wanted these islands for his children, not for their soil, or timber, but for the *Plaster*—and this he intended to *give* to his children.” One of the Ottawa's “old venerable Chiefs” rose in reply to the agent. He said, “if our Father does not want the *soil*, nor the *timber* of these islands, but the *Plaster* only, we will

²⁸⁰ Schoolcraft, *Memoirs*, 695.

keep the soil and timber, and he shall be welcome to the Plaster.”²⁸¹ Missionary Jedediah Morse, who recorded the chief’s words, thought this response an example of “Indian sagacity and shrewdness,” however; the final treaty of 1820 required the full cession of the islands with no reserved right.

While the *Anishnabeg* understood settlement as including the division and diverse utilization of the land they do not seem to have accepted that the 1836 treaty extended this process to the waters of the Great Lakes. In July of 1840, acting Indian Agent James Schoolcraft received a deputation of “chiefs of the northern coast of Lake Michigan.” The chiefs “made a formal complaint against certain fishermen, who as they conceive, are encroaching on their rights.”²⁸² The case was referred to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, T. Hartley Crawford, who opined that it was up to state authorities to “afford protection to the Indians against any infraction,” if any occurred, of their rights under Article 13.²⁸³ What is important about this exchange is that it illustrates that neither the Lake Michigan Chippewa nor the United States government regarded fishing activity by whites as meaning that the north shore of Lake Michigan was “required for settlement” and that the *Anishnabeg* therefore had to yield to the whites. The incident reveals once again how both European and Native Americans shared a similar understanding of the meaning of settlement and Article 13. Land could be divided, privatized, its resources apportioned, the open expanse of the Great Lakes, however, could not be settled.

That the process of settlement included more than simply building towns like Mackinac or Sault Ste. Marie, and that the *Anishnabeg* embraced this broader understanding is further supported by an address by their chiefs at Mackinac in 1843. The chiefs had come together for an annuity payment and made a request for a meeting in Washington, D.C. William Johnston, a Chippewa-Irish mixed blood who in the past had acted as the chief’s authorized representative, recorded the sentiments of the council. He wrote that the *Anishnabe* chiefs requested that the debt fund surplus be released so they could have “Money to purchase land (for a few of them) together and locating it in a body, apart from any point that would interfere with the

²⁸¹ Morse, *A Report on Indian Affairs*, Appendix, 8-9.

²⁸² James Schoolcraft to T. Hartley Crawford, 11 July 1840, N.A., RG 75, M-1, Letters Sent by the Agent at Mackinac, Roll 38, p.295.

²⁸³ T. Hartley Crawford to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, 21 August 1840, N.A., RG 75, M-1, Letters Received by the Agent at Mackinac, Roll 49, p.75-77.

improvements or progress of American enterprise.” While Johnston wrote down these words, they indicate some understanding on the part of the chief’s council that European-American settlement was a process of “enterprise” that included a variety of “improvements.”²⁸⁴

The Ottawa leaders who negotiated the 1836 cession saw their own future as one that would embrace the process of settlement, not the old way of the hunt. In an 1835 letter to the Secretary of War, Augustin Hamlin, writing for Apokisigan and Mackadepenessy, foreswore the old subsistence way of life as “incompatible with that of a civilized man.” In proposing to treat for the right to remain in Michigan the Ottawa leaders said of their anticipated change of life, “we would wish to exchange the former for the latter.” They saw becoming “civilized” as a process. “We have already made some progress in this pleasing path, and tasted some of its comforts; and it is our desire and will to advance more and more on it.”²⁸⁵ The men who made the Treaty of 1836 identified settlement with the pursuits of “civilized” life and they made the treaty to make possible for themselves that lifestyle.

Historical records do not indicate that the Ottawa and Chippewa envisioned the exercise of hunting and fishing rights as a perpetual right. Rather that they saw the right guaranteed in Article 13 was a temporary grant of the “usual privileges of occupancy.” That the Ottawa and Chippewa understood this will be demonstrated in greater detail latter in the report (see pages 105, 111-12, 117-18) through a discussion of the their post-1836 program of using treaty payments to make cash purchases of land. They did not attempt to rely upon Article 13 to secure their “privileges of occupancy” rather they entered into the well-known process of settlement. The *Anishnabeg* watched and waited for the land surveys to be completed, went to land offices and inspected the tract books, and selected lands that eventually became their homes. They understood the settlement process.

Many times in the years that followed Ottawa and Chippewa leaders challenged the United States Government’s interpretation of aspects of the 1836 treaty. The Indian leaders, however, never offered an objection to the interpretation of Article 13 espoused by Schoolcraft and adopted by the United States. There is little evidence that they understood the stipulated right in

²⁸⁴ William Johnston to Robert Stuart, 28 October 1843, N.A. RG 75, M-1, Letters Received by the Agent, Mackinac Superintendency, Roll 55, f. 0217, p.529-31.

²⁸⁵ Memorial of the Ottawa delegation by A. Hamlin, Jr., 5 December 1835.

a different way than Schoolcraft. They had negotiated a treaty to further their own ends. They were forced by circumstances to accept a significantly altered agreement, but they gave their assent knowingly. They understood the treaty. As Mackadepenessy (Blackbird), the Ottawa chief who had helped to negotiate the treaty in Washington said in 1837: “All that is written in the treaty, we agreed to, and we expect its fulfillment.”²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ Speech made at Michilimackinac July 24th 1837 by Mukkuday Benais [Mackadepenssy] & Wakazo on the part of the Ottawas and Mukkones Eogon on the part of the Chippewas, enclosed in Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to Carey Harris, 24 July 1837, National Archives, RG 75, Roll 422, M-234, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency. The occasion for Mackadepenessy’s address was a council at Mackinac Island where the Ottawa and Chippewa had been assembled to be asked to accept a portion of their 1837 annuities not as silver coin, as was specified in the treaty, but in the form of trade goods. Mackadepenssy’s comments are a chastisement of the government for not sticking to the exact terms of the treaty.

Events in Michigan Following The Treaty of Washington

In the Wake of the Treaty

It was the policy of the United States government to prevent collisions of interest between European-American settlers and American Indians. The sentiment behind this policy was expressed in the *Minnesota Pioneer* in December of 1853: “It is a fact, well established by experience, that the Indian and the white man cannot dwell together in unity, and in nothing has the philanthropic justice of our Government been more apparent than in the removal of the Indians from land to which Indian title has been extinguished, before they become contaminated by intercourse with whites on the ceded lands.”²⁸⁷ This axiom was accepted as true even by the L’Arbre Croche Ottawa. In an 1835 letter to Lewis Cass, they stated: “we are aware of this plain fact, that we Indians cannot long remain peaceably and happy in this place where the tribe is at present if we persist in pursuing that way and manner of life as such we have hitherto lived.”²⁸⁸ The Ottawa of Little Traverse understood that only by changing their mode of life could they hope to “dwell together in unity” with the rising tide of European-American settlers. The great challenge to Indian-white relations in Michigan after the 1836 treaty was to see if such experiments in “civilization” could defeat the conventional wisdom that Indians and whites could not live in peace. For the *Anishnabeg* working with missionaries, the treaty secured the means to complete a transition from their “old manner of living” to a European-American lifestyle. That was no easy task, nor was the challenge before hunters and other traditionalists who tried to maintain the old ways in the wake of the cession of their lands.

One thing that buoyed the Ottawa and Chippewa as they prepared for the winter of 1836-37 was their greatly improved material circumstances. Poor hunting, crop failures, and disease

²⁸⁷ *Minnesota Pioneer* (St. Paul), 29 December 1853, quoted in Lyle M. Stone and Donald Chaput, “History of the Upper Great Lakes Area,” *Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast*, Vol. 15, Edited by Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 608.

²⁸⁸ Augustin Hamlin and the L’Arbre Croche Deputation to Lewis Cass, 5 December 1835, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 722-725.

stalked the *Anishnabeg* during 1835 and the first half of 1836.²⁸⁹ Therefore, the dispersal of money and goods at the initial treaty payment was much appreciated. According to Article Four of the treaty, the Ottawa and Chippewa were pledged \$150,000 in “goods and provisions” to be delivered to Mackinac Island following ratification.²⁹⁰ Indians began to gather on the island in August, although due to delays the payment was not made until late September 1836. Initially Mackinac traders sought to cash in on the payment by plying the arriving Ottawa and Chippewa with abundant liquor and “scenes of rioting and drunkenness” marred the convocation. Schoolcraft with the support of the men, white and red, who had negotiated the treaty, put an end to those sales. For the final two weeks prior to the payment a journalist noted “not an instance is known of a drunken Indian.”²⁹¹

Gradually the rocky beaches of Mackinac Island filled with the mat covered lodges of hundreds of Ottawa and Chippewa families. It was one of the largest gatherings of *Anishnabeg* the storied Straits region ever saw. Schoolcraft estimated 4,000 Indian men, women, and children in attendance. An additional 500 mixed bloods were also present. The government assumed the cost of feeding the Indians during their wait and delivered for their winter use \$2,000 worth of flour, rice, corn, and pork. A cash annuity of \$42,000 was paid out to everyone on a *per capita* basis. In addition, \$30,000 in cash was paid out to the various classes of chiefs.²⁹²

With so much wealth flowing into the hands of a people who had known only increasing poverty in the previous decade, there was bound to be some excess. Andrew Blackbird later recalled that the chiefs complained that “there was a great deal of waste in distributing the goods among them, as there were lots of remnants, and much of it left after distribution which they never knew what became of.” In later years many Ottawa and Chippewa believed that government officials had either appropriated some of the goods for themselves or to their “friends and relatives.”²⁹³ Schoolcraft remembered the event quite differently. “The Indians went away with their canoes literally loaded with all an Indian wants, from silver to a steel trap,”

²⁸⁹ Gabriel Franchere to Lyman Warren, 2 February 1836, American Fur Company Letterbook, Sault Ste. Marie Outfit 1835-1837, Bayliss Library, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.; Franchere to Ramsay Crooks, 21 July 1836, AFC Letterbook, Bayliss Library.

²⁹⁰ Treaty with the Ottawa, Etc., 1836, Kappler, *Indian Treaties: 1778-1882*, 452.

²⁹¹ *Michigan State Register* (Detroit), 1 November 1836.

²⁹² Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, 543.

²⁹³ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa People*, 51.

he wrote in his memoirs.²⁹⁴ A list of the goods ordered for distribution at Mackinac reveal a wide array of items, most of them necessities of life in the woods, including enough wool blankets to give one to each person in attendance, large quantities of cloth to make garments, twine for fishing nets, 1300 guns, 6000 pounds of gun powder, 10,000 gunflints, as well as knives and other implements. Schoolcraft ordered two thousand “large brass kettles” to be included in the distribution of goods.²⁹⁵ That so many of these items were ordered is suggestive. Kettles were among the most indispensable of trade goods, and they were also among the most durable. A kettle could easily be used for several years, if not decades. Is the fact that Schoolcraft ordered so many kettles indicative of the waste of the distribution process or the extreme need of the *Anishnabeg*? Evidence points to the latter conclusion. In October 1836 Samuel Abbott, American Fur Company agent at Mackinac, reported that he had no more brass or tin kettles in his store. “At the payment of the Indians,” Abbott wrote, “the demand for kettles was very great and I sold every one the Company had, and could have sold many more.” That a long lasting item like kettles were in great demand by the Ottawa and Chippewa indicates that in the years before the treaty they had suppressed their acquisition of even the most essential items. The treaty had come at a very high price, but it was a price that had to be paid.²⁹⁶

The Grand River Area in the Post Treaty Period

The most important feature of the massive distribution of cash and goods was that it gave the Ottawa and Chippewa the means to sustain themselves on the ceded lands. In the Grand and Muskegon River Valleys this set the stage for just the sort of potential conflict that United States Indian policy sought to minimize and the Ottawa themselves dreaded. Prior to the 1836 Treaty, there were very few whites in that part of Michigan. A handful of early European-American arrivals trickled into the valley of the Grand during the early 1830s. By 1833 nodes of settlement could be found at Lyons, Ionia, Grand Rapids, Grandville, and Grand Haven. The first blacksmith shops as well as gristmills, the critical infrastructure for agricultural settlement, were in place prior to the treaty. It was not, however, until the spring of 1836 that the area began to

²⁹⁴ Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs*, 543.

²⁹⁵ Estimate of Goods and Provisions required to be delivered at Michilimackinac, 26 April 1836, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 422, frame 185-197.

²⁹⁶ Samuel Abbott to Gabriel Franchere, 6 October 1836, AFC Letterbook, Bayliss Library.

change dramatically. Perhaps in anticipation of the treaty, more likely spurred by the hot real estate market in Michigan, settlers began to arrive in large numbers. One early settler remembered, “1836 was *the* big year; for settlers, too numerous to particularize came pouring in.” Perhaps as many as 1,000 new arrivals made their homes in the Grand River Valley that year. In a single year whites went from being a distinct minority in the valley to the dominant group.²⁹⁷

As early as 1830 the General Land Office had predicted that “extinguishment of the Indian title to the remainder of the territory north of the Grand River” would be a powerful stimulus to “emigration and settlement.”²⁹⁸ Well before the 1836 cession, the survey and sale of extensive tracts of land occurred north of the Grand River and just west of the ceded lands. In what would become Ionia County, most of the highly coveted river bottom lands along the north bank of the Grand were claimed by 1835. (See Figures 2 and 3.) Shortly after the 1836 treaty, the Commissioner of that office ordered all the ceded lands surveyed. He concentrated the first surveys on those lands that were anticipated to “meet the wants of actual settlers, and such as would, from the fertility of the soil and other advantages, probably be in demand when brought onto the market.”²⁹⁹ Wasting no time, Deputy United States Surveyors Robert Clark and Noah Brookfield began surveying north of the Grand River on January 14, 1837. Deep snow forced them to stop on several occasions and Clark died while running a line through the cold forest. Within a few months another surveyor had been given Clark’s contract, and the work went on.³⁰⁰

The European-American settlers occupied lands, which had been previously used by the Ottawa. At the site of the early settlement of Lyons, whites occupied a 1,100-acre Indian clearing. The Elisha Newman, the first settler in the Portland area occupied a temporarily vacant Ottawa village site at the mouth of the Looking Glass River. His family lived in an empty wigwam until a crude cabin was built. Newman made the Indian village site his homestead. His

²⁹⁷ Franklin Everett, *Memorials of the Grand River Valley* (Chicago: Chicago Legal News Company, 1878), 1-7, 21, 55-56. Everett was a local schoolmaster who arrived in Grand Rapids in 1846. He knew many of the early settlers of the area and used their reminiscences for his history.

²⁹⁸ “Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office,” *Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Twenty-First Congress, December 7, 1830* (Washington, D.C.: Duff Green, 1830) 58.

²⁹⁹ Report of the Commissioner of Public Lands, *Message of the President....December 12, 1837*, 4.

³⁰⁰ Robert Clark to Robert T. Lytle, 17 January 1837, p. 73-76; Noah Brookfield to Lytle, 5 March 1837, p. 277-280; John Mullett to Robert T. Lytle, 20 May 1837, p712-14, Letters Received by the Surveyor General of the Territory Northwest of the River Ohio, National Archives of the United States, M-479, Roll 22.

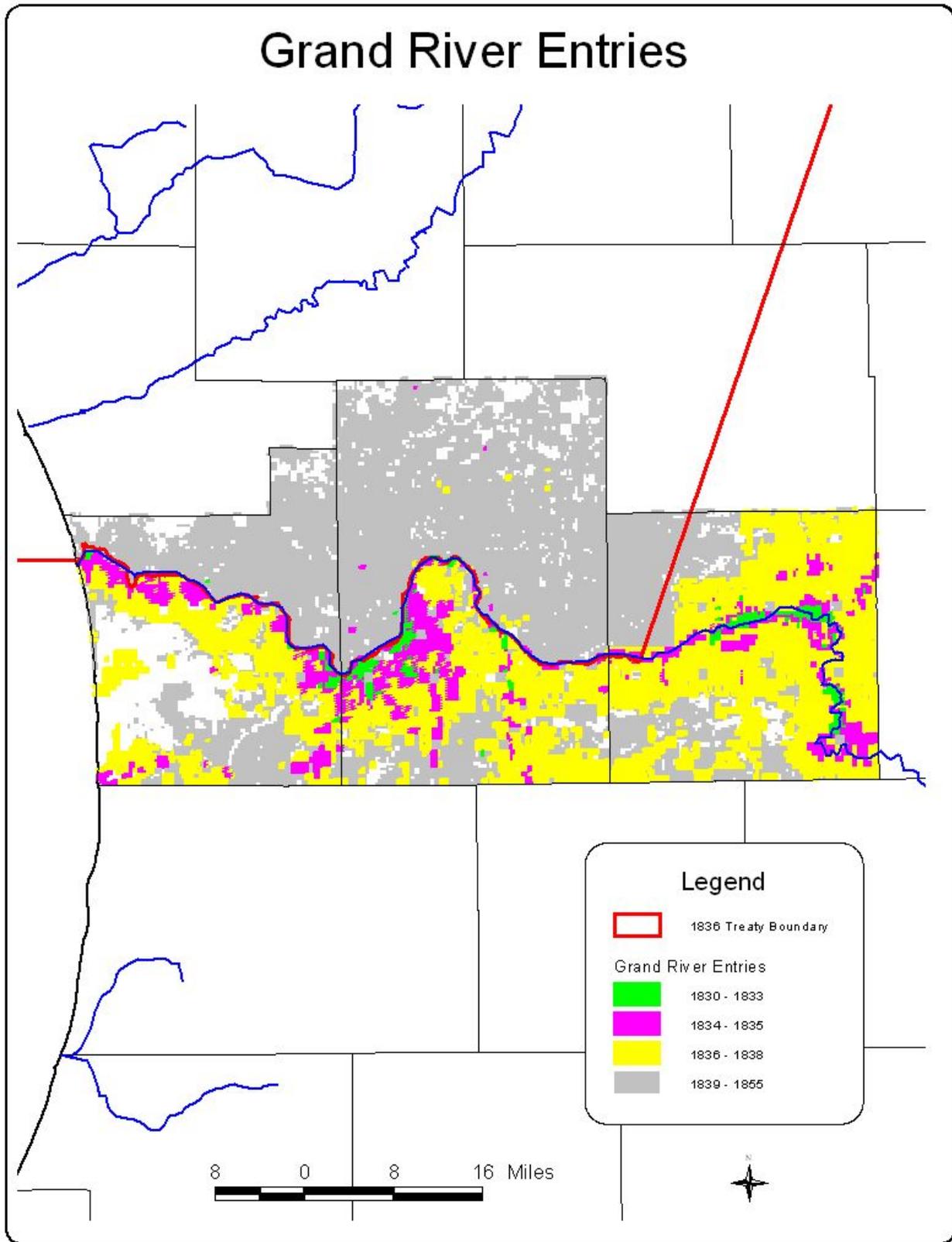


Figure 2. Grand River entries.

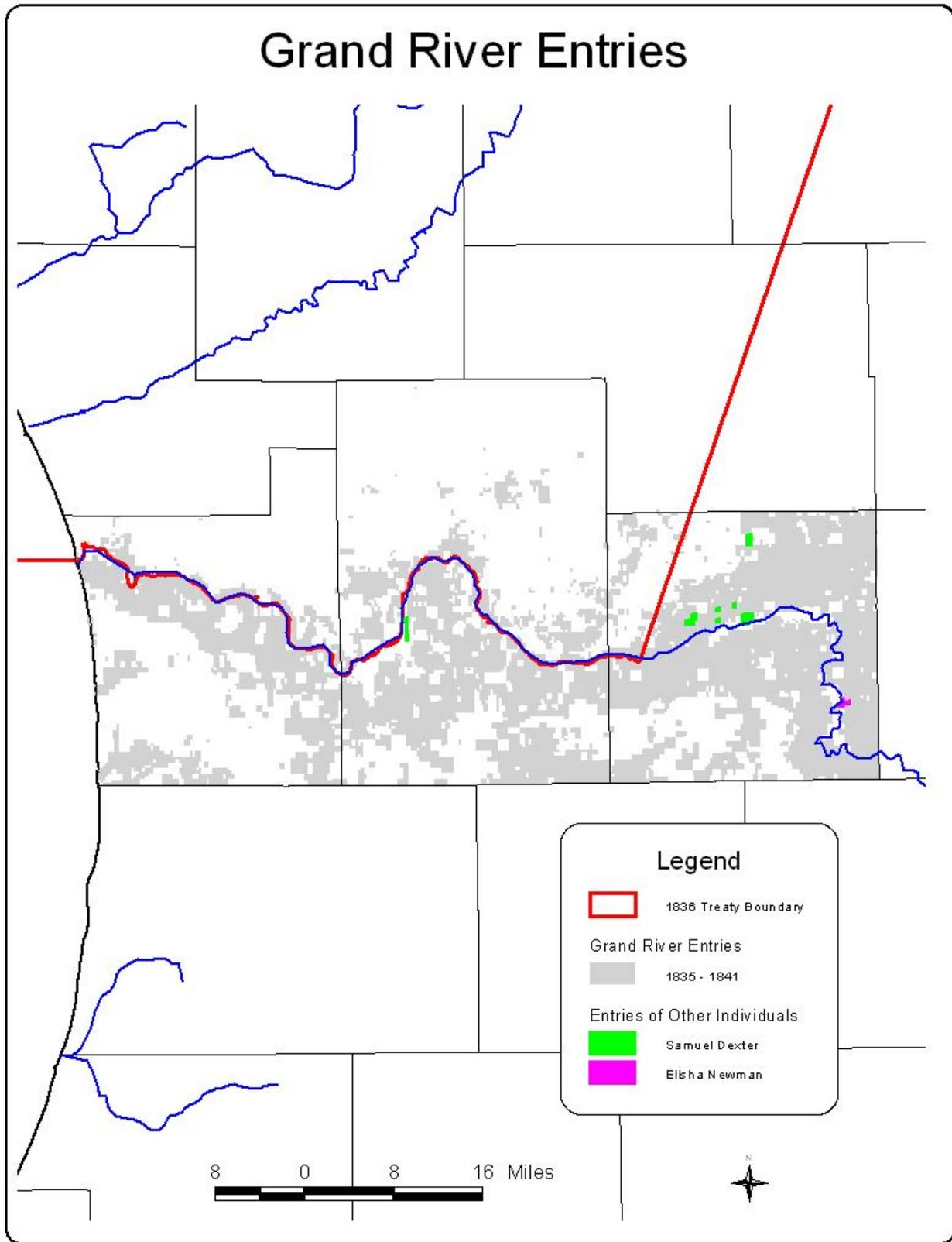


Figure 3. Grand River entries.

brother, who was with him at the time, later recalled: “On our arrival here we found the post was clear. The Indians, of whom there was a small tribe under the charge of Squagan as their chief, had their home at this point, but had left and gone below Bogue’s [a trading post] on the flats of the Grand.” In May of 1833 Samuel Dexter led a group of families from upstate New York to the Grand River Valley. At the present site of Ionia, Michigan they came upon a large Indian village, with cleared and planted fields adjacent. The settlers bargained with the Ottawa and although they had already bought the land from the General Land Office, purchased Indian’s improvements. “We bought five wigwams for twelve shillings each,” Phoebe Yeomans wrote to her sister. Thanks to the Indian plantings Yeomans could boast, “We have corn, potatoes, beans, and melons and a variety of their garden stuff.”³⁰¹ (See Figure 3.)

The peaceful occupation of Indian lands by the settlers indicates the eagerness of the Ottawa to avoid conflict with whites. In the case of the Dexter colony at Ionia, the Indians yielded land that had been ceded in the 1819 Treaty. According to that treaty they had retained the right to hunt upon the lands but only while it remained the property of the United States government. When Dexter arrived they did not challenge his right to the land. The fact that Dexter arrived with sixty-three other people may have intimidated the Ottawa, but they enjoyed cordial relations with their new neighbors thereafter. The Ottawa seemed to understand the need to accommodate the advance of settlement. “We are not afraid of them;” Phebe Yeoman’s wrote two months after her arrival, “they often fetch venison, baskets, cranberries, etc.” Elisha Newman who occupied an Indian village site near Portland nonetheless enjoyed good relations with the local Ottawa. He traded with them regularly. When he fenced in an Indian graveyard at the confluence of the Looking Glass and Grand Rivers, thereby protecting the graves from the ravages of roving cattle and hogs, the Indians were alleged to have “kissed his hand in token of their appreciation of the kindness he had shown.” In the face of settlers such as Dexter or Newman, who had made purchases of surveyed government land. the Ottawa did not assert a higher claim to the land.

³⁰¹ John S. Schenck, *History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties Michigan* (Philadelphia: D.W. Ensign, 1881), 137-8, 322; N.B. Rice, “Early History of Portland,” *History of Ionia County Michigan*, edited by E.E. Branch (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen, 1916), p.189-95. Rice grew up in the Portland area and personally knew Elisha Newman and other early settlers. Phebe Yeoman’s to Abigail Adams, 11 July 1833, in *History of Ionia County*, 485-6.

This suggests that they understood the concept of settlement and recognized the limits placed on their usufructuary rights as outlined in the 1819, 1821, and 1836 treaties with the government.³⁰²

When white settlers tried to occupy Indian land without clear legal title, the Ottawa on occasion asserted their right to the land. Philander Tracy, a relative of Rix Robinson, occupied a tract of Indian fields near the mouth of the Flat River. The house he built there was constructed of lumber from the mill at the Baptist Indian mission and erected with the aid of Indian laborers. While some of the Indians were willing to help Tracy build his house, others were concerned about their long-term access to the gardens along the Flat River. These agricultural fields had been fenced at no small labor to the Indians to protect their corn and melons from the roving livestock of white settlers. In 1839, the Ottawa filed a preemption claim on the land and “tenured their money” to secure the tract. The land office in Ionia did not know what to do with the claim, and they appealed to Washington, D.C. While the case was under consideration, Tracy attempted to file a preemption claim of his own on the tract. He attempted to make the Indian clearings his own by sowing the cornfield with oats. The Ottawa retaliated by destroying the oat crop and threatening to drive Tracy from the tract. In the end, the General Land Office rejected the Ottawa preemption claim as well as Tracy’s attempt to appropriate Indian improvements. Instead, the land was reserved from sale. The Ottawa continued to occupy and farm the site, waiting the day when the lands would come on the market and they could be legally purchased.

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Pioneer accounts record very few instances of confrontation over conflicting land or resource use. One incident recorded in several accounts of the era which related to hunting rights, seems to have occurred in the late 1830s or early 1840s in the vicinity of Tupper Lake, south of the 1836 Treaty line. The Indians accused settler John Nead of stealing several of their raccoons. At that time raccoon furs were among the most valuable furs in Michigan. There was considerable demand for their skins in Europe, where they were used in the dress uniforms of the Russian Army. Nead denied the charge and became so incensed he fired his gun at one of his Ottawa accusers. Fortunately, he missed. The Indians threatened to retaliate against Nead, who went

³⁰² *Ibid*, 192, 486.

³⁰³ Henry A. Richmond to James Shields, Commissioner, General Land Office, 1 May 1846, National Archives, Letters Received by the Agent at Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 40; *History of Kent County, Michigan* (Chicago: Charles C. Chapman, 1881), 1183-4.

into hiding for some time. The incident blew-over with no further action. Unfortunately, our only sources for the incident are secondary accounts. Yet, the incident is telling in a number of ways. It indicates the potential for violence that lurked beneath the surface of Indian-white relations. It also suggests how the Indians perceived their usufructuary rights. They were willing to yield to property owners, even when it meant giving up village locations and cleared agricultural fields. They also seem to have raised no objections to the increasing numbers of white hunters who killed large numbers of deer. In the unclaimed forest, however, they intended defend their trapping rights. It is possible that Ottawa had divided the hunting grounds around Tupper, Morrison, and Jordan lakes, reputed among settlers as the Indian's favorite hunting grounds, into specific trapping areas. Nead wittingly or unwittingly intruded into a family trapping area and therefore was regarded by the Indians as having "stolen" the raccoons.³⁰⁴

A similar reaction was elicited during the winter of 1839-1840, when two white hunters established a temporary camp with the view of trapping wolves and other animals. Although this occurred south of the Grand River, their experience is illustrative of the nuanced way the Indians viewed white newcomers. One of the trappers, Darius Clark, was a journalist who latter published a memoir of his winter in the woods. The area into which they moved had been ceded in the 1821 Chicago Treaty which included the provision that the Indians had the right to continue to hunt in the area while the lands were in the possession of the United States government. One evening the men returned to their hut to find a side of pork had been stolen. They tracked the perpetrator through the snow and intimidated him into promising to go to the town of Yankee Springs and replace the stolen meat. This the Indian did the next day, ending any trouble between him and the trappers. Unfortunately, a few days later, they discovered that some of their supplies had been stolen a second time. Again, they followed the thieves' footsteps through the snow till they arrived at a small Indian hunting camp. With rifles primed and pistols at the ready, they stormed into the camp and demanded that their furs, blankets, and food be replaced. Although there were several armed young Indian men in the camp, they avoided confrontation with the trappers. They returned what they had left of the men's property and went the next day to Yankee Springs to purchase that, which could not be replaced. Thereafter, the

³⁰⁴ Schenck, *History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties*, 316; Branch, ed., *History of Ionia County*, 158-9.

trappers enjoyed cordial relations with the Ottawa and Potawatomi in the area, exchanging visits and holding feasts for one another.³⁰⁵

There are few pioneer accounts of the Indians stealing from early settlers. What motivated the two thefts experienced by Clark was neither avarice nor want. The Indians clearly had the means to meet their own basic needs, as evidenced by their ability to go to Yankee Springs and replace stolen goods. The thefts seem to have been a calculated harassment of unwanted interlopers. Clark reported that the leader of one band told him: “He no like white man on Indian hunting ground, at first. He had no home no more for him or his. He thought bad of us when we came with our rifles to stay.” When Clark had identified the second group that had robbed him, the Indians justified their theft by saying that the trappers “were not settlers, but intruders upon their hunting and trapping grounds.” This suggests that the *Anishnabeg* had a very clear idea of what was a settler, and it did not include hunting as the principle activity. The initial difficulty Clark experienced with the Indians stands in stark contrast to the descriptions of cooperation that dominate the memoirs of settlers in the Grand Valley. Alonzo Sessions, one of the first settlers in the area, later recalled, with a bit of nostalgia, that “the Indians soon became friends, and often supplied the material most in need when hunger came and famine threatened.”³⁰⁶

There may have been other clashes between European-Americans and the Indians in the ceded area. Certainly there were whites who formally objected to the continued occupation of the ceded lands by the Ottawa Indians. In January 1837, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft reported conflicts between settlers and Saginaw Chippewa hunting and maple sugaring along the Coldwater River as well as north of the Grand. Nothing more than “mutual threats” seems to have occurred. Commissioner of Indian Affairs C.A. Harris urged Schoolcraft to inform the Indians that their right to use the ceded lands was predicated on the willingness of the Indians to “demeanor themselves peacefully and offer no injury to the United States.” Upon learning of the clashes, Michigan Governor Stevens T. Mason offered the cooperation of the State in ending

³⁰⁵ Darius B. Clark, *Six Months Among the Indians, Wolves and Other Wild Animals, In the Forests of Allegan County, Mich., In The Winter of 1839 and 1840* (Niles, Mich.: Niles Mirror, 1889), 24-25, 34-37.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 35, 92; Everett, *Memorials of the Grand River Valley*, 61.

“the disturbances between Whites and Indians.” Before the month was out, the State legislature had memorialized the Congress on the advisability of removing all Indians from Michigan.³⁰⁷

On the frontier, the settlers themselves were confused as to the rights of the Ottawa and Chippewa in the ceded area. Some indication of the nature of the “collision” between settlers and Indians can be gleaned from the February 1837 inquiry made to Indian Agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. As was discussed earlier, D.A. Lyman, A.D. Rathbone, and A.H. Finney were appointed by a “meeting of the Citizens of the Grand River District” to obtain clarification of the rights reserved for the Indians under Article 13 of the Treaty of 1836. “Have the Indians an Exclusive right to occupancy of those Lands until they are surveyed and offered for Sale,” they asked. “In Case Squatters settle upon those Lands, have the Indians a right to demolish their buildings & drive them off?”³⁰⁸

The question of Indian rights under Article 13 eventually went to the U.S. Attorney General’s Office. B.F. Butler interpreted the Indian stipulation as “reserving the use of the ceded lands, for all the purposes of Indian occupancy as it existed prior to the treaty, until such lands are actually disposed of to individuals, by the United States.” The Attorney General’s Office clearly sanctioned the continued use of large portions of Michigan not only for hunting and fishing but also for horticulture and maple sugaring. Such activities could legally take place on all lands save those actually removed from the public domain, including preemption claims. Butler went on to specify how the disposition of those lands ended the Indian’s right of use. “Such disposition may be made by sale under the general laws, or by special grants, or any other way that Congress may direct, and when ever the actual disposition of any particular tract shall be made, the usufructuary right of the Indians, will cease as to such tract.”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ *Memorial of the Legislature of the State of Michigan in Relation to Indians Living Within the Limits of Said State*. 24th Cong., 2d sess., 1837. S. Doc. 112.

³⁰⁸ Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs Of A Residence Of Thirty Years With The Indian Tribes On the American Frontiers: With Brief Notices Of Passing Events, Facts And Opinions A.D. 1812-A.D.1842* (New York: Arnold Press, 1975), 552; C.A. Harris, Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Indian Agent, 27 January 1837, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, Letters Received, 1836-1851, RG. 75, M-1, Roll 42, p.92-93; Stevens T. Mason, Governor of Michigan to Henry R. Schoolcraft, 13 February 1837, National Archives, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, Letters Received, 1836-1851, RG. 75, M-1, Roll 42, p.153-6; *Memorial of the Legislature of the State of Michigan in Relation to the Indians Living Within the Limits of Said State, to the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, January 27, 1837*, Senate Documents, 2nd Session, 24th Congress, 1836-1837, Document 112, p.1-4; D.A. Lyman, A.D. Rathbone, and A.H. Finney to H.R. Schoolcraft, 20 February 1837, Records of the Michigan Superintendency, RG. 75, M-1, Roll 42.

³⁰⁹ B.F. Butler, U.S. Attorney General’s Office to J.R. Poinsett, Secretary of War, 20 April 1837, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-234, Roll 422, frame 394-396.

In effect, the U.S. Attorney General's opinion stated that only sale or Congressional action could terminate the Indian's use rights within the ceded lands. Practically, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs warned that access to the lands was conditional on peaceful "demeanor." While there is no direct evidence that the published opinions of either United States official were known to the *Anishnabeg*, the actions of the Indians comported with the government's understanding of their rights and practical political constraints of their circumstance. The Ottawa in the Grand River area acquiesced to legitimate land purchases, even of land upon which they lived and farmed, but sought to protect their hunting and trapping grounds from roving white hunters.

The potential for violent conflict was well appreciated by both the Ottawa chiefs and the newly arrived white settlers. Settlers, most of whom had come from Ohio and New York State and who were raised on tales of "savage" Indians, often were intimidated by their first contact with the Ottawa and Chippewa. When an Indian unceremoniously boarded a boat piloted on the Grand River by two "greenhorns," the men thought they were going to be killed. With relief they discovered that their "guest" only wanted something to eat. "Without waiting to say 'Amen'," the men "gave the Indian some food, and he left." Many pioneer women experienced Indians unannounced entering their cabins and asking for a meal to be cooked. This was sometimes done out of fear. Only later when the Indians repaid the kindness with pails of fruit, sides of venison, or furs did the newcomers appreciate the principle of reciprocity built into *Anishnabe* social relations. A child during the 1830s recalled that the women of the town of Ionia were once panicked into ringing the alarm bell when they saw a large group of Indians coming towards the settlement. They thought an attack was underway, only to discover that the town was the agreed-upon meeting point for Ottawa going to collect their treaty payments. In spite of this suspicion of Indians, the desire of both whites and Indians to get along peacefully helped each community to breach the cultural divide that separated their worlds.³¹⁰

The response of both the Ottawa chief and leading settlers to a genuine occasion of violence indicates the strong sentiment toward cooperation. In the spring of 1838, the cabin of Ansel D. Glass, which was located in a remote part of Ionia County, about four miles from the nearest settler, was found burned. Neighbors had not visited Glass, his wife, and two children for a

³¹⁰ Everett, *Memorials of the Grand River*, 72; Branch, ed., *History of Ionia County*, 496-97.

month when the charred cabin was discovered. An alarm was immediately sent out across the county, while in the ruins, the bodies of Mrs. Glass and her children were discovered. Ansel Glass was never found. Those investigating the site speculated that Indians had done the deed and that Ansel Glass's body likely lay secreted in the forest somewhere. Cobmoosa, chief of the Flat River Ottawa, visited the ruined cabin and tried to deflect the settlers' ire from his people. He admitted that the crime looked to have been done by Indians, but he threw suspicion on three Saginaw Chippewa who had been in the vicinity that winter. Chief Cobmoosa embellished the story to the extent that he reported that a Chippewa chief had been paid-off with a keg of whiskey and a young bride to protect the identity of the murderers. Although two Chippewa were briefly arrested, the grand jury never could determine who to charge with the crime. "No effort was spared by the Indians to allay the fears of the settlers," an early historian recorded. "By every imaginable act of kindness they tried to conciliate good will." Even more helpful in quieting fears was the tale told by one influential resident of the county that Ansel D. Glass had been seen alive and well in Wisconsin. This cast the incident in an entirely different light. A warrant was issued for Glass, but funds were not available to serve it.³¹¹

The Glass murders placed the Grand River Ottawa in a dangerous position. They well understood that conflict with white settlers would spur sentiment for removal. Cobmoosa's cooperative response to the crime and the good will he and his people had earned in the five years since settlers began to arrive did much prevent a hasty, ill-advised response by the white residents. A militia captain, who was at the crime scene when Cobmoosa and a group of his people inspected the remains, remembered that the Ottawa leader presented an image of the "most impressive dignity." Cobmoosa spoke to his people, "although his address was not understood by the whites, the eloquence of tone and action was comprehended and felt by all." By blaming Saginaw Chippewas for the crime, rightly or wrongly, Cobmoosa chose a people removed from the immediate retribution of the settlers of Ionia County, as well as a believable scapegoat, since the Saginaw had earned a bad reputation the year before on the Coldwater River. For their part white settlers wanted to believe the Glass incident was an aberration, not the beginning of hostilities. The value of their lands and the progress of their communities

³¹¹ Everett, *Memorials of the Grand River*, 113-4; Schenck, *History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties*, 267; Rix Robinson to Stevens T. Mason, Governor of Michigan, n.d., National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 403, frame 80-82.

depended upon the favorable reputation of the Grand River Valley. An insecure frontier and Indian hostilities would hurt them in the short-run. The story that Glass himself was the murderer and that he escaped to Wisconsin was floated by “a prominent man in the county” in order to “allay the settler’s fear of the Indians.” According Franklin Everett, author of the 1878 *Memorials of the Grand River Valley*, the prominent man did not want to give his name but told the author that “he was satisfied that the Indians of the Valley did not do the deed, and, to reassure the people, manufactured the story.” Whatever the origins of the Glass tragedy, the response by Ottawa and white leaders determined that it was an isolated instance of violence, not the beginning of a tragic struggle.³¹²

Historian Richard White used the term “middle ground” to describe the web of accommodations, compromises, and mutual dependence which characterized Indian-white relations during the fur trade era, 1650-1815. Although the fur trade web of relationships was clearly on the wane after the War of 1812, a new, less durable type of “middle ground” grew up in the lower peninsula of Michigan in the wake of the Indian land cessions and the beginning of white settlement. This new chapter in the history of Indian-white relations was based on the frontier farming, annuity payments, hunting, and the gathering of wild food products. Along the Grand and Muskegon Rivers, this “middle ground” lasted for roughly twenty years, from roughly 1833 to 1857. It was made possible by two things not fully anticipated by American leaders at the time of the Indian land cession treaties in 1833 and 1836: 1) the persistence of the Anishnabeg in the treaty area; 2) the slowdown in white settlement spurred by the Panic of 1837. Because of this national economic depression, the Ottawa were not deluged under a wave of white settlement. As the economy slowed, Indians found a way to carve out a new niche in the rising agricultural economy of Michigan and thus avoid removal from the state.³¹³

The Panic of 1837 had a profound effect on Michigan. It brought the influx of new settlers to a virtual halt. Michigan went from having the fastest growing population of any state or territory in America at the time of the 1836 Treaty to being one of the slowest growing regions in the Midwest. Franklin Everett, who came to Grand Rapids in 1846, complained that Michigan had a

³¹² Everett, *Memorials of the Grand River Valley*, 113-4.

³¹³ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Historian Susan E. Gray has documented this same pattern in the Kalamazoo Valley during the same period of time see: *The Yankee West: Community Life on the Michigan Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 67-90.

poor reputation in the East. “Her name was in bad odor;” he wrote, “her soil was decried, and she was passed by by those who sought homes for themselves, or for a chance to invest their money.” Immigration, economic development, and internal improvements all were severally curtailed until the time of the Civil War. Farmers on the frontier were economically and socially isolated when the economic boom of the 1830s went bust. Indians went from being a feared force that had to be accommodated only temporarily, to valued economic partners and, in some cases, trusted neighbors. Wholly unexpectedly, the Treaty of 1836 contributed to this development in three ways: i) by allowing the Indians to occupy unsold lands in the ceded area; ii) by providing the Indians with instruction in agriculture and European-American norms; and iii) finally by giving the Indians, through their annuity payments, an extremely rare and vital item on the impoverished frontier—hard currency.³¹⁴

Treaty payments at Grand Rapids played a considerable role injecting specie into the nascent white settlements and their businesses. European-American farmers also benefited by selling vegetables and other farm produce to Indians for cash. Alonzo Sessions, the 1835 pioneer to the Grand Valley, recalled that “when the early settlers got into a condition to produce surplus food, for a time after pay-day they [the Indians] were very good customers, and a limited commerce with them was constant and beneficial on both sides.” So rare was cash money on the frontier that when farm crops were sold to white merchants, all the farmers received was what was called “store pay,” credit slips redeemable only for goods at a local store. Indians and whites would occasionally even join in celebrating holidays, as they did at a memorable Fourth of July party in Lyons, Michigan in 1834. At an 1841 Fourth of July party held on William Vance’s farm the local Ottawa came “in full paint and feather toggery, quite as jubilant as anybody and quite as active as their white brethren in making a grand success of the occasion.” Ottawa women also supplied wild berries and other crops gathered in the forest. The Indian’s maple sugar was a popular substitute for cane sugar, which demanded a hefty price at the local stores. Henry Sessions, a boy during the 1830s, later remembered that Indians were “frequent” visitors to the family homestead. His father, Alonzo, became “great friends” with the Ottawa leader

³¹⁴ Willis F. Dunbar, *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), 242; F. Everett, *Memorials to the Grand River Valley*, 375.

Cobmoosa. “I recollect my trading to him wheat for a double-barreled shotgun, with which I used to hunt turkeys and other game.”³¹⁵

As much as proximity to white settlements created a profitable exchange and cordial social relations for the Indians, there was also a serious down side to having numerous European-American neighbors. Such proximity made the outbreaks of diseases of European origin more likely. Indians had less immunity to these diseases than did whites. The memoirs of white pioneers recount the outbreak of smallpox among the Grand River Ottawa, although there is no way to gauge the seriousness of these incidents.³¹⁶ Also negative for the Indians was the impact of white settlers on the fish and game resources of the Grand Valley. The Panic of 1837 made many settlers, previously uninterested in trapping, turn to the chase as a way to raise cash. Furs were one of the few products that frontier stores would buy for cash. A wheat crop might yield only “store pay,” while a string of furs could raise the cash every landowner needed to make their annual tax payment. The game animal most actively pursued by the early white settlers was the white-tailed deer. For homesteaders it was a source of meat for their table and hides for barter at the store. Some hunters would take large numbers of deer. A local history recorded that the better deer hunters would average thirty deer per “season.” One early settler boasted of seldom returning from a hunt without four deer, which suggests that he hunted more for hides than food. In the 1840s, a glove factory operated near the Slater Ottawa mission. Local deer hides provided the bulk of the raw material.³¹⁷

Indian fishing grounds were also adversely affected by the close proximity of white settlers. During the winter of 1836-1837, which was marked by hard times for both whites and Indians, the settlers survived largely by eating sturgeon. Even for later settlers, the sturgeon were a fallback means of subsistence. One man perennially short of cash lived for some time almost entirely on sturgeon. A neighbor once overheard him complain, in an imaginary conversation with his parents back east: “Oh, if you old folks could only know how we’re living out here in Michigan! Just think of it! Stinking fish and johnny-cake!” The daughter of one settler recalled

³¹⁵ John S. Schenck, *History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties*, 140; E.E. Branch, ed., *History of Ionia County*, 147, 495-6; F. Everett, *Memorials to the Grand River Valley*, 67-68.

³¹⁶ E.E. Branch, *History of Ionia County*, 491; F. Everett, *Memorials to the Grand River Valley*, 261.

³¹⁷ Schenck, *History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties*, 307, 316; Branch, ed., *History of Ionia County*, 158; Susan Gray, *The Yankee West*, 90.

that fish were “abundant” and that sturgeon of “immense size” were frequently caught. Boys came to use the resilient cartilage of the sturgeon’s nose to put some bounce in their homemade balls.³¹⁸

As the white communities slowly grew, their impact on fish and game resources reached beyond subsistence and commercial harvesting to negatively affecting whole habitats. Water dams for milling flour and sawing wood disturbed spawning grounds and altered water flow. Fenced farm fields replaced oak openings. Indian game management techniques, such as the setting of fires to burn annually certain oak lands to make a better habitat for white-tailed deer, seem to have been abandoned very quickly in the face of white settlement and the increased chance of property destruction from fire. J.S. Hooker was seven years old when he came to the Grand Valley in 1837. He claimed that the Indians manipulated the habitat of the forest by burning the woods twice each year. The controlled burn did not destroy mature trees, but did succeed in removing the underbrush and making way for new young vegetation. It is not clear how the end of Indian burning effected the habitat of the white-tailed deer, but it was another example of how older ways had to be changed in the face of growing white settlements.³¹⁹

The United States had no intention of allowing the Ottawa to remain long in the Grand River Valley. Under the terms of the 1836 treaty, lands southwest of the Missouri River were to be selected for the “final settlement” of the *Anishnabeg*. In Schoolcraft’s mind the Grand River bands were going to be the first of the Ottawa to be sent west, and the agent made sure that they were represented in the delegation sent west to inspect the proffered lands.³²⁰ In the short term, Schoolcraft planned to have the Grand River bands concentrated farther north on the 75,000-acre reservation made at the mouth of the Manistee River. Here, the United States established a civilization station where a model farm, carpenter shop, and blacksmith shop all operated to serve and instruct the *Anishnabeg*. But the reserve was a complete failure. In 1838, the huge reservation only contained eight Indian families.³²¹ The Grand River bands rejected every

³¹⁸ Everett, *Memorials to the Grand River Valley*, 262; Schenck, *History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties*, 250; Branch, ed., *History of Ionia County*, 193.

³¹⁹ Everett, *Memorials to the Grand River Valley*, 182; Branch, ed., *History of Ionia County*, 458.

³²⁰ Schoolcraft to C.A. Harris, 12 June 1838.

³²¹ George M. Blackburn, “Foredoomed to Failure: The Manistee Indian Station,” *Michigan History* (Spring, 1969) LIII, 1, p. 45.

overture to relocate there. In retrospect, it is clear that the Manistee location was ill considered. Even one of blacksmith working there complained that the site was “low sandy country,” which promised “little to the cultivator and consequently is not a point where the Indian can probably be induced to settle for the purpose of tilling the ground.”³²² Finally, in 1839 the Manistee station was closed without ever serving the people it was intended to teach.

Although the Grand River Ottawa recognized the implications of the growing white population for their traditional subsistence cycle, they choose to adapt to a more intensive agricultural life on their own terms, not those of the government. Even Indians who joined the farming colonies established by missionaries continued to engage in winter hunting and spring maple sugaring. The missionaries often objected to these annual movements onto the unsettled portions of the ceded lands, yet the Ottawa were reluctant to abandon fully their old ways. It appears their goal instead was to borrow the white man’s farming techniques to fill the growing gap in their old subsistence system: to add something new without losing traditional practices. This intention to change only a little was, however, the first step in gradually embracing a way of life that brought profound changes. Like the changes the Ottawa made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, slowly accelerating their involvement in the fur trade and the gradually increasing their reliance on maple sugaring, the Indians embraced a more sedentary lifestyle by turns, slowly through the 1840s and 1860s.

The expiration of the five-year reservations in 1841 does not seem to have alarmed the Grand River Ottawa. In October of that year they sent a petition to their new Indian Agent, Robert Stuart. They were very concerned about receiving their full annuities—in “cash”—as well as improving access to the blacksmith and agricultural assistance secured via the 1836 treaty. The reservation did not concern them because there were “very few if any Indians on or near the reservation.” The undersigned chiefs reported that

Our number are thirteen hundred & Eighty two and by far the greatest portion of us are residents in the Valley of the Grand River and its tributaries while a small number are scattered on the Muskegon River, White River, the Pierre Marquette & Manistee Rivers with a few Scattering families Elsewhere.

³²² Peter Dougherty Diary, 1838, volume 1, p.20; Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

The petitioners recommended the creation of an agency at junction of the Thornapple and Grand Rivers. They saw two benefits to be derived from such a government establishment, first, “A number of us have bought land with our money as we were advised to do by our great Father and are beginning to cultivate it but we need assistance.” A second advantage was to have an agent who would “mediate in any difficulties that may arise between ourselves or between us and the white”.³²³ Several chiefs numerated in the 1836 treaty signed the petition.

Those Grand River Ottawa who refused to commit to agriculture gradually were forced to remove themselves northward, away from the growing settlements in the valley. An unknown number, in disgust, went to Canada to try life under the flag of Great Britain. The Ottawa historian Andrew J. Blackbird, writing a generation later, estimated that as many as half of the Michigan Ottawa moved to Canada during this period. Some moved to northern Michigan with the intention of committing to an agricultural way of life. In 1841, Wakazo’s band of Ottawa established an agricultural settlement near the mouth of the Big Sable River. Under the terms of the 1836 Treaty, they were furnished with draft animals and farming implements to begin a new life. The Muskegon River Ottawa were like most of the Indians of west central Michigan, divided as to the best course. The band headed by a chief who was called Backbird by the whites, purchased seventy acres of land, while a second band yielded in the face of white settlers and moved away in 1839, when the first public land sales were made.³²⁴

Those Ottawa who remained in the Grand Valley as farmers seem to have gotten along well with their white neighbors. An agricultural colony established near Danby, Michigan flourished between 1846 and 1856. On 108 acres of purchased land, the Ottawa, with the assistance of resident missionaries, succeeded in becoming accomplished farmers and adopted white religion, dress, and dwellings. Local white farmers provided the labor and lumber to build the mission church. The Ottawa used ponies, furs, and annuity money to hire white farmers to build cabins for them. The Ottawa received European-American style dwellings, and the local settlers appreciated a rare opportunity for cash labor. On July 4th, 1850 a joint Ottawa-settler celebration

³²³ Ottawa Indians to Robert Stuart, 30 October 1841, National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received, 1836-1851, Michigan Superintendency, M-1, Roll 51, frames 156-158, p. 503-506.

³²⁴ William M. Ferry, “Ottawa’s Old Settlers,” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXX, 578. Ferry was the son of missionary William M. Ferry and came to Grand Haven in 1834. Andrew J. Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan* (Ypsilanti, Mich.: Ypsilanyian Job Printing House, 1887) p.97-98; Everett, *Memorials to the Grand River Valley*, 430, 510.

was held. After appropriate speeches had been made, a great makeshift table was assembled. More than four hundred people had gathered in the grove on the north bank of the Grand River. The missionary then arranged all of the guests at the table “and the order was that the Indians and whites were to stand alternately—first a white man and then an Indian, then a white woman, and then an Indian woman, and this the tables were filled, and one and all passed dinner together, except one old Indian medicine man, whose name was Pashe-nin-nie. He stood off alone by a large log and looked on.”³²⁵

This support by white settlers of Indian civilization efforts was not an isolated case. During the 1840s the Flat River Ottawas’ attempt to remain at their village site, where they had extensive cleared fields, won the support of most of the adjacent white farmers. Their attempt at a preemption claim on the land was rejected by the General Land Office in 1839. Yet between 1839 and 1846, while the Ottawa waited patiently for the land to come on the market so they could make the purchase, their claim was acknowledged by all of the nearby settlers. Just as white settlers tacitly agreed not to bid on each others land claims, so to did most of the settlers agree to respect the Indian’s preemption claim. “I am of the opinion,” Indian Agent William A. Richmond wrote, “not a man in the whole county could have been found who would have come forward and bid against them for that piece of land.”³²⁶

Treaty payments, which were conducted in Grand Rapids through the mid-1850s, injected much needed cash into the frontier economy and made the Indians valued consumers. Most of the Indian payments were made in silver, and the desire to separate the Ottawa from their money led to the annual payments becoming a disgraceful spectacle. In 1841, approximately 1,400 Indians gathered at Grand Rapids for the disbursement. The swarm of white “traders” attracted to the town prompted the *Grand Rapids Enquirer* to quip “we have no hesitation in saying that there is two of the latter to one of the former.” As much as \$12,000 dollars in silver coin could be distributed in a single day. “Traders from foreign places have literally thronged our town,” observed the *Enquirer* in 1842, and loads after loads, and packs after packs of refuse goods have been deposited in the most conspicuous places to attract attention, and receive the Indians’

³²⁵ M. Hickey, “Reminiscences of Rev. M. Hickey, Clergyman of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Residing at Detroit, Michigan,” *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, vol. IV (1906), 23-33.

³²⁶ Branch, *History of Ionia County*, 456-7; William A. Richmond to James Shields, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1 May 1846, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent at Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 40.

money in exchange as soon as drawn.” A depressing amount of the payment went to liquor venders, who broke open the heads of their kegs confident they would sell out the entire barrel. The dissipation would begin as much as ten days in advance of the payment when the Ottawa would begin to arrive “on their gaily-bedecked ponies.” Some of the Indians were snared by the traders and “made drunk on the first day of their arrival and kept so till the day of the payment.” The traders grabbed these immediately after the payment and divested of the “value” of every dollar of diluted whiskey they had consumed. As the outraged editor of the *Enquirer* observed, those Indians, who did not know the value of money, were “kindly relieved of the burthen, and left again to wander in his native wilds--blanketless to be sure—but with a noble consciousness that the civilizing influences of the *pale faces* can no longer disturb him.”³²⁷ Nor was drinking restricted to the time of the payment. Upon visiting a village on the Flat River in 1842, missionary Leonard Slater observed that “eleven adults had died from intoxication since the last payment at the Rapids.”³²⁸

The payment, which was such a boon to the white community, had a mixed effect on the Ottawa and Chippewa. Clearly, not all of the Indians were seduced into drunken debauchery. White families from Grand Rapids would visit in safety the Indian encampment during the days leading up to the payment. Many of the Indians were “quiet and inoffensive as can well be imagined.” In 1846, the *Grand River Eagle* described the payment in Grand Haven as a success for the Indians. “They came—conducted themselves like civilized men—and returned to their chosen hunting ground much better provided than heretofore to enjoy a comfortable winter.” The amount of drunkenness that took place at the payment seems to have declined over time. The newspapers noted that some Indians were saving their money to make land purchases. Nonetheless, in 1849 the *Grand Rapids Enquirer* noted “The condition of the natives seems to be growing worse. With few exceptions they present increasing evidence of dissipation and poverty.” The editor predicted that when the time came for the removal of the Ottawa, there would be so few left as to hardly be worth the “expense of deportation.”³²⁹

³²⁷ *Grand Rapids Enquirer*, October 26, 1841, November 2, 1841, October 28, 1842.

³²⁸ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1842* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 478.

³²⁹ *Grand River Eagle*, November 17, 1848, October 14, 1851; *Grand Rapids Enquirer*, October 24, 1849.

Northern Michigan in the Wake of the Treaty of 1836: The Upper Peninsula

Similar to the Grand River Valley Ottawa, the Ottawa and Chippewa of northern Michigan adjusted to the changes and opportunities created by the 1836 treaty and used its provisions to secure their place in Michigan. Unlike the Grand River Ottawa, they were seldom in the direct path of American agricultural settlers. “The Chippewas, at least those north of the Straits of Mackinac,” Henry Schoolcraft wrote in 1838, “do not, at present, feel the inconvenience of intrusion from settlers. The country is not yet surveyed, and it will require some time before it can be brought into market.”³³⁰ For them the challenge to change ideas and institutions was less urgent. Nonetheless, the years between 1836 and 1855 were marked by increasingly intense contact with Christian missionaries and more diverse involvement with the market economy of the European-Americans.

The survey and sale of public lands in northern Michigan proceeded much slower in the Upper Peninsula than in areas in the direct advance of the farmer’s frontier. The Commissioner of the General Land Office had ordered the survey of the entire ceded area, but the actual funds to pay the surveyors’ contracts were slow in coming. Not surprisingly, it was more difficult for the surveyors to work in the “trackless wilderness” of northern Michigan. In some areas the forest was so thick as to prevent the passage of packhorses; in other areas the surveyors complained of “swarms of musquitoes[sic].” The remoteness of the region made the surveys more expensive because all supplies had to be brought from a great distance.³³¹ It is little wonder that the initial surveys of northern Lower Michigan were notoriously inaccurate and in the late 1840s had to be completely resurveyed.³³² Inaccurate and downright fraudulent surveys particularly impeded the settlement of the Grand Traverse region. Originally described as mostly swamps, it was not until the 1850s that the region was known to have the potential to be among the finest agricultural regions in the state. In the wake of the Panic of 1837, the pace of surveys was slowed further. The Commissioner of the General Land Office advised Congress in 1841

³³⁰ Henry Schoolcraft, Report on the Condition of the Indians within the Superintendancy, 30 September 1838, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendancy, RG 75, M-234, Roll 423, frame 152-179.

³³¹ Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1838, *Report of the President...25th Congress*, 38.

³³² Annual Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1847, *Report of the President...30th Congress*, 75.

that although his office had not yet completed the survey of Michigan, his surveyors “were now far in advance of the settlement in the southern peninsula. And from the large amount of land there, now ready for market, and the diminished sales at the land offices, there does not appear to be any call for a further extension of the surveys at present.”³³³ Thus, in the five years that followed the Treaty of Washington, there was little disruption of the traditional pursuits of the Ottawa and Chippewa in northern Michigan.

The northern portions of the Lower Peninsula and the ceded portion of the Upper Peninsula were destined for a different type of settlement pattern than the Grand River Valley. At an early date state and federal officials recognized that mining, lumber, and fishing would dominate settlement. The General Land Office found the Upper Peninsula to be “an almost unbroken wilderness, but rich with mineral deposits.” In 1844, the Commissioner recommended: “The formation of new settlements in the peninsula should be encouraged by the gradual extension of the surveys there, having reference to those portions of it which would be most suitable for either commercial, agricultural, or mineral purposes, and most salable when brought on the market.”³³⁴ A year later Douglas Houghton, the State Geologist of Michigan, was contracted to undertake a special survey of the mineral district that was then being settled at the western edge of the cession. A testament to the difficulty of extending surveys into this region was Houghton’s death by drowning at the conclusion of his survey. Lost with him were the notes and maps of a portion of his survey. Nonetheless, in 1845, the Commissioner reported that 462,741 acres in the Upper Peninsula had been surveyed and offered for sale. The tracts attracting the most attention were those adjacent to “mineral deposits and valuable fisheries in that region of the country.”³³⁵ United States surveyors were specifically ordered to “subdivide such fractional townships within his district as might be found to embrace fishing grounds that were occupied, and likely to command a ready sale when brought into market.” By 1848, a Land Office had been opened in Sault Ste. Marie to sell the surveyed lands.

Fishing was the first of northern Michigan’s economic mainstays to flourish. Even before the treaty, commercial fishing stations had been established along the north shore of Lake Michigan

³³³ Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1841, *Report of the President....27th Congress*, 49.

³³⁴ Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1844, *Report of the President....28th Congress*, 48.

³³⁵ Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, 1845, *Report of the President....29th Congress*, 2-3.

and the south shore of Lake Superior. In the summer of 1835, a tourist from New York City visited an American Fur Company fishing station at Whitefish Point. He described the post as consisting of “three log huts and four Indian lodges...all inhabited by the company’s fishermen.”³³⁶ From this reference it can be inferred that even before the 1836 treaty some Chippewa had begun to move into wage labor. Only a dozen or so people lived at the Whitefish Point site, but it was the first of a series of fishing stations established on Lake Superior during the period between 1835 and 1842. For a time fishing seemed to offer new opportunities for all of the classes of people associated with the old fur trade economy, including European-American traders, *Metis*, and Chippewa who all worked at the fishing stations. In addition to these and other white owned fishing stations, *Anishnabeg* participated in their own commercial fishing activities. In October 1837, as the fall fishing season was underway, Baptist missionary Abel Bingham requested that Indian Agent Schoolcraft supply the Chippewa with cart and team to aid their commercial fishing. “We want a cart very much for their use,” Bingham wrote. “Shegud & others, have gone into the fishing business like white men, and when they get a load of fish they come down with it, & want a team to haul it from their boat to their merchants; and also to haul their salt to their boats.”³³⁷ The reference to salt is important. The traditional Chippewa method of preserving fish for subsistence purposes was by smoking. Salted fish were destined for a European-American household. Bingham’s reference to the “merchants” with whom the Chippewa were dealing indicates that the latter also formed a business relationship for marketing their fish. As wage laborers and as independent business operators, as well as subsistence users, the Chippewa of the eastern Upper Peninsula looked to the Great Lakes fishery as a way to sustain themselves in the post treaty economy. The treaty itself envisioned this when in Article 4 it provided for 500 fish barrels annually for the *Anishnabeg* for twenty years.³³⁸ However, by 1848 the commercial fishing activity of the Chippewa far exceeded what the treaty envisioned. In that year the Sault Indians were reported to have sold over 1,200 barrels of fish. Abel

³³⁶ Chandler R. Gilman, *Life on the Lakes: Being Tales and Sketches Collected During a Trip to the Pictured Rocks of Lake Superior*, (New York: George Dearborn, 1836) vol.I, p. 252.

³³⁷ Abel Bingham to Schoolcraft, 23 October 1837, National Archives, Letters Received by the Mackinac Agency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 42, p.383-386.

³³⁸ Treaty with the Ottawa, Etc., 1836, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 451-2.

Bingham boasted that several of the Chippewa had “done the best at the business of any men in these parts.”³³⁹

The gradual transformation of Chippewa life in the Upper Peninsula was anticipated by the 1836 treaty. In the years following the treaty, leaders who approved of the cession embraced the altered circumstances thrust upon them and in ways both superficial and profound began slowly to adopt new cultural practices. For Chabowaywa, who signed the Articles of Assent as the chief of the *Anishnabeg* at the Les Cheneaux Islands, an outward sign of his openness to change was the construction of a “log house” to serve as his winter residence. Chabowaywa’s house was described in 1840 by a passing explorer as “neat,” and it was surrounded by traditional bark lodges, gardens, and a “stable,” presumably for livestock.³⁴⁰ Missionaries were particularly desirous of expanding the use of log houses because they believed that such fixed residences would make the Chippewa more stationary. Missions in the Upper Peninsula, such as Little Rapids near Sault Ste. Marie, built log houses for converts. Anna Brownell Jameson, a well-known author with a strong interest in the lives of Indian women, commented that the reason more Chippewa did not adopt log houses was cultural. During her 1837 visit to the Upper Great Lakes region, Jameson observed that Chippewa leaders on Manitoulin Island requested that the British build them log houses. When she asked why the Chippewa would not build the houses themselves she was told: “It requires more strength than the women possess; and for the men to fell wood and carry logs were an unheard-of degradation.”³⁴¹ By the late 1840s, however, many Chippewa were beginning to build log houses on their own. It is therefore, likely that, like so many other aspects of *Anishnabe* culture, gendered notions of work had changed. In 1848 the Reverend John Pitezel visited Chief Monomonee at Naomikong where the latter lived with his extended family in “quite good log-houses.” In 1848 the local Indian Agent reported that the treaty blacksmith shop made for the Chippewa doors and window sashes for six houses.³⁴² Chief

³³⁹ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1848* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 558.

³⁴⁰ Bela Hubbard, *Lake Superior Journal: Bela Hubbard’s Account of the 1840 Houghton Expedition* edited by Bernard C. Peters (Marquette: Northern Michigan University Press, 1983), 15.

³⁴¹ Anna Brownell Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* vol.III (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), 236-7.

³⁴² U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1848* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 558.

Waishkee's family, who resided in a traditional bark lodge in 1838, were a decade later living in a log house in association with Canadian and American loggers. By 1845 there were four cabins built with treaty revenues for the Tahquamenon Chippewa.³⁴³ However, when Pitezel visited there in 1848, the chief still resided in a wigwam. This chief, however, unlike Monomonee and Waishkee, had yet to adopt another mark of acceptance of the new order, Christianity.³⁴⁴

In addition to wage labor, participation in market exchanges, and residence in log houses, Christianity was a mark of acceptance of a new order. Shegud (Cheegud), who was a signatory to the Articles of Assent, became a deacon in the Baptist Church, and as mentioned above, a commercial fisherman.³⁴⁵ The transition of Waishkee, who played such an important role in the negotiation of the 1836 treaty, reflects the spiritual journey of many Chippewa in the post treaty years. Like other Indian leaders, Waishkee opened his lodge to Christian missionaries, although it remains unclear if he ever opened his heart to their message. Anna Jameson who visited the chief's lodge in the summer of 1837, described him as a Christian and noted that he observed the Sabbath by abstaining from work and passing the day quietly with his family. Waishkee sent his youngest son east to New York where he attended a Christian boarding school, although the boy died of tuberculosis a year later.³⁴⁶ Louis Waishkee, who may have been an elder son, was originally trained in the traditional religion of his people. At an 1852 Methodist Camp meeting, Louis Waishkee testified as to his conversion: "I have been taught in all the arts of the old Indian ways; but I have cast them all away. Religion grows better and better." Chief Waishkee's wife, known to the missionaries as "Mother Waishkee" also testified. "One of my sons died and on his death-bed exhorted me to be faithful," she recounted: "I know that God loves me. I am thankful to see my children turning to God." One of those children was Waub-o-jeeg (Waub Ogeeg), a signatory of the 1836 treaty, the Articles of Assent, and the chief of Chippewa at "Wayshkee Bay." He too became a Christian and was actively engaged in the temperance society.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1845* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 504.

³⁴⁴ John H. Pitezel, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life* (Cincinnati: Western Book Concern, 1860), 188-191.

³⁴⁵ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report, 1848*, 559.

³⁴⁶ Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, 187-90.

³⁴⁷ Pitezel, *Lights and Shadows of Missionary Life*, 355-361.

Christianization and commercial fishing promoted a more fixed residential pattern, which in turn led to real estate purchases by the Chippewa. Despite the success of the Little Rapids Mission, John Pitezel reported that during the late 1840s the Chippewa desired to move from its environs. There were two strong incentives for this move. First, commercial fishing prospects were more attractive closer to Whitefish Bay. Second, the Chippewa wanted to own the land they were building on and improving. That was not possible at Little Rapids where the land was part of a federal reserve. In his memoirs, Pitezel recounts that while the missionaries tried to discourage the Chippewa from leaving Little Rapids,

the Indians were anxious to locate somewhere, in which there was a prospect of making a permanent home that they could call their own. They could not be persuaded that the Government would allow them to do this at Little Rapids. Their desire was to buy land and hold it in *fee simple*, without molestation.³⁴⁸

The initial location chosen by the Chippewa was an outstanding fishing site near Naomikong Point on the shores of Whitefish Bay. The mission purchased sixty acres there, and the Methodists could report that “[t]he Indians had bought all around us, and were building considerably.”³⁴⁹

Through the assistance of missionaries like Abel Bingham and John Pitezel, the Chippewa also began to take steps to expand their participation in agriculture.³⁵⁰ By the late 1840s, a string of small villages of log houses and cleared fields were spread out along the shore of the fishing grounds of Whitefish Bay. The missionaries were convinced that commercial fishing was an important part of the Chippewa’s future and they were delighted that “[t]hey were gradually laying aside the chase and turning their attention to agriculture and other industrial pursuits.”³⁵¹ The Ottawa at L’Arbre Croche, who had anticipated such a change in lifestyle by several decades, used the treaty revenues to expand their niche in the regional economy and secure their land base in northwestern Michigan. Although they had not entered the treaty process with the intention of ceding all of their lands, these Catholic Ottawa had determined to blend into the

³⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 221.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 275.

³⁵⁰ Bingham to Schoolcraft, 23 October 1837.

³⁵¹ Pitezel, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life*, 367.

emerging market economy of the European-Americans. Yet, between that articulated intention and the actual execution of the plan, the Ottawa at L'Arbre Croche faced many hard choices.

Northern Michigan in the Wake of the Treaty of 1836: the L'Arbre Croche Coast

The biggest problem faced by avowed agriculturists like the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa was that of uncertainty. They had sought a treaty to achieve certainty regarding their future in the Michigan Territory. The agreement, however, as amended by the Senate, left muddled the future status of these bands. The five-year limitation on reservations deprived them of the incentive to build for the future, while the prospect of removal to the region southwest of the Missouri River loomed on their horizon. There is some evidence to indicate that fear of removal was a major factor in determining the actions of the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa during the five years following the Treaty of Washington. Fear of immediate removal may well have been the reason that they signed the significantly altered Senate modified treaty. Father John DeBruyn, writing from L'Arbre Croche to his bishop in Detroit in June 1836, indicated that most people felt that the draft Treaty of Washington would not receive the sanction of the United States Senate and that the Ottawa would be forced to leave the territory in fifty days.³⁵² If this was in fact the Ottawa's fear of what would happen without a treaty, it is perfectly understandable that they would embrace even the harsh terms of the Senate revisions, which at least put off the threat of removal. In the wake of the treaty, removal was a spur to encourage some of the leaders of the Catholic revival at L'Arbre Croche to abandon Michigan and migrate to Manitoulin Island.³⁵³

In 1836, British authorities in Upper Canada (modern Ontario) announced their plan to concentrate the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa at a large Indian colony on Manitoulin Island, the largest freshwater island in the world. *Anishnabeg* from both sides of the international border were encouraged to relocate there. Ausegonock, the Ottawa lay pastoral minister who had helped to trigger the Catholic revival at L'Arbre Croche when he moved there from Drummond Island in the early 1820s, elected to leave northern Michigan and return to life under the British crown, for whom he had worked as an interpreter in his youth. Facing the continued threat of forced removal in the United States, a significant number of other Catholic

³⁵² Father John DeBruyn to Bishop Frederick Rese, 17 June 1836, Detroit Diocese Papers, ND Archives.

³⁵³ Schoolcraft, Report on the Condition of the Indians, 30 September 1838.

Ottawa, who were attracted by repeated entreaties from the British, made the decision to control their own fate and moved to the Manitoulin colony.³⁵⁴ For the Ottawa migration to Manitoulin Island was a return to ancestral lands. The colony, however, did not develop as they may have hoped. In 1838, the Indians actually had to rescue the British agent and his staff of assistants, who were on the island to instruct the *Anishnabeg* in agriculture, from starvation. Eventually, the village of Wikwemikong was established by the Catholic converts, who made up the bulk of the island's inhabitants.³⁵⁵ In less than a decade, however, disillusionment set in. Manitoulin was not as favorable a location as Michigan for a lifestyle based on fishing and farming. As early as 1845, a significant number of the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa who had sought refuge at Manitoulin, returned to Michigan to take their chances with United States authorities.³⁵⁶

For those who elected to remain in Michigan, the years between 1836 and 1855 were a period of experimentation, continued cultural evolution, and a discouraging increase in alcohol use. No *Anishnabe* communities struggled more consciously than those of the L'Arbre Croche coast to blaze a cultural and economic path that would allow them to remain as a distinct community within the State of Michigan. Most of this dynamic internal struggle took place beyond the eyes of European-American observers, particularly the federal Indian agents. Missionary accounts offer a limited window into the process, and it is through their records that an outline can be pieced together of what was attempted, what was feared, and what was endured by the Ottawa of this region.

The Ottawa of the L'Arbre Croche region had chosen Catholicism as one of their mechanisms to develop a rapprochement with the emerging European-American society. For cultural and historical reasons this made sense. The Roman church, after all, had maintained a presence in their villages during the 18th century. The "black robes" were reminders of the era of French influences in the region, a period when the Ottawa had managed very well to maintain their autonomy. Catholicism was a cultural bond they would share with the majority of their European-American kinsmen, the French-Canadian, and *Metis* traders and fishermen at Mackinac. But Catholicism was a problematic selection of sects to the Anglo-Americans who

³⁵⁴ Father Francois Pierz to Bishop Lefevere, 2 January 1843, Diocese of Detroit Papers, ND Archives.

³⁵⁵ Ruth Bleasdale, "Manitowaning: An Experiment in Indian Settlement," *Ontario History* 66 (1974), 147-57.

³⁵⁶ Father Francois Pierz to Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere, 9 July 1845, Diocese of Detroit Papers, ND Archives.

dominated the military and political positions of power in the United States. Catholicism was stigmatized in the United States as a backward, superstitious version of Christianity and was openly distrusted as a vehicle of foreign influence within America's borders. Catholicism in the early and mid-19th century was a minority religion, practiced largely by the poorest and least educated classes. Yet, in the decade leading up to the 1836 Treaty, to the consternation of Protestant officials like Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Catholicism flourished along the L'Arbre Croche coast while Evangelical missionaries struggled to make a handful of converts.

In the wake of the treaty, priests and lay leaders in the L'Arbre Croche region sought to use the resources afforded by the cession to expand the existing program of education and adaptation. Government funds were used to operate schools at the core villages of La Croix, Middletown, and L'Arbre Croche. In addition to these schools the missionaries used personal and church funds to establish schools for the *Anishnabeg* at Manistee, Grand Traverse, and Cheboygan.³⁵⁷ The educational program at these schools reflected the strengths and weaknesses of using the Catholic Church as a vehicle of cultural evolution. The emphasis of the instruction in the schools was on teaching Ottawa and Chippewa children to read and write with the goal of allowing them to read their prayers. Most instruction was in the Ottawa language, which the Catholic missionaries took much greater pains to learn than their Protestant rivals. In the words of Father Francois Pierz, the emphasis was to "teach the children to read and write in the language of their fathers, and also the prayers and catechism." Female students were also instructed in manual arts such as sewing. Only a handful of students, some of them adults, were instructed in French or English.³⁵⁸ The result of this was that a large number of young people were taught fundamentals, such as their A, B, and C's, and were able to undertake basic reading. But because instruction was in Ottawa, it was difficult for students to advance very far in their learning because the only materials for them to read were a handful of religious tracts written by Father Frederic Baraga. The strategy of the Catholic missionaries was first to teach the Ottawa in their own language and then to use that as a building block for the learning of English.³⁵⁹ Teaching the *Anishnabeg* to read their own languages was in accord with Article 4 of

³⁵⁷ Father Francois Pierz to Bishop Lefevere, 28 January 1850, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁵⁸ Pierz to Bishop Lefevere, 9 July 1845, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁵⁹ Regis M. Walling and N. Daniel Rupp, editors, *The Diary of Bishop Frederic Baraga: First Bishop of Marquette, Michigan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 24.

the 1836 Treaty.³⁶⁰ Reading and writing advanced much more quickly when conducted in Ottawa making these tools available to the mass of the population rather than merely a gifted handful of young people who could master English.³⁶¹ As a result of this approach, Catholic mission schools, after several years, were able to rely upon Ottawa men and women to assume some of the burden of initial instruction. With Ottawa teaching Ottawa to read in formal classroom settings, the “civilization” program became something that grew from within the community; it was not simply a set of new ways imposed from without. Nor was education and literacy something that separated parents from their children.³⁶²

The program broke down when the time came for students to move from learning to read and write in Ottawa to learning English. Father Pierz himself and his assistant Father Ignatius Mrak, while proficient in German, Latin, French, and (in time) Ottawa, could not speak or write English.³⁶³ A large number of the Catholic missionaries to the *Anishnabeg* were men from Austrian Empire in Central Europe. In this sense, Protestant charges that the Catholic Church was a foreign institution were entirely correct. Men and women capable of teaching English and willing to reside in the Indian towns along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan were apparently difficult to recruit. Augustin Hamlin performed this service for a time, and although he got on well with earlier missionaries at L’Arbre Croche, he was fired by Father Pierz in 1843. The missionary complained to the Bishop that Hamlin was “a good for nothing” who was “lazy” and lax in holding classes in a regular manner. Hamlin had also requested a raise in pay.³⁶⁴ This did nothing to endear him to Father Pierz, who regularly spent the bulk of his personal salary paying for mission teachers. Catholic missionaries bitterly resented the lack of support their schools received from federal officials. They harbored deep suspicions of Protestant cliques within the government and complained that money from the education fund should have been dispensed not to each denomination active among the Ottawa and Chippewa, but on a per capita basis of how many students actually attended classes. In 1850, with a mixture of pride in what he had

³⁶⁰ Treaty with the Ottawa, Etc., 1836, Kappler, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 452.

³⁶¹ Elbert Herring, “Remarks on Statement C [Civilization Fund],” *Report From the Office of Indian Affairs, 1832* reprint edition (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 171-2.

³⁶² Pierz to Lefevre, 9 July 1845; 5 November 1848, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁶³ Pierz to Lefevre, 10 October 1851, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁶⁴ Father Otto Skolla to Lefevre, 17 November 1843, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

accomplished and frustration that he lacked the resources complete the job, Father Pierz informed his superiors that the Catholic missions on Lake Michigan had converted 3,000 *Anishnabeg* while all his Protestant rivals combined had converted only 300.³⁶⁵

The shortcomings of the Catholic Church's "civilization" program were apparent to the many Ottawa leaders and parents. When parents stopped sending their children to L'Arbre Croche village school, Father Pierz exhorted them not to give up on learning. They retorted, however, that "their children learn very little," and Pierz had to admit that "it is a pity there are no books to give to the savages."³⁶⁶ Protestant schools that offered instruction in English were seen by some Ottawa parents as a more appropriate vehicle of advancement. As early as 1839, the Ottawa were leaving the Catholic mission to seek English language instruction.³⁶⁷ Among the first to reorient his children to Protestantism was the L'Arbre Croche chief Mackawdebenessy. He had been one of the earliest and strongest supporters of the Catholic missions. His son, William Blackbird (Petawwanequot), was educated for the priesthood, in Cincinnati and in Italy, only to die in Rome on the eve of his ordination. Stories circulated among the Ottawa that William Blackbird had died under mysterious circumstances. This incident may have triggered the father's disillusionment with the Catholics. Mackawdebenessy refused to let his son Andrew be educated for the priesthood and he sent his daughter to the Presbyterian mission school on Mackinac Island.³⁶⁸ Andrew Blackbird, who converted to Protestantism eventually, went to Ohio where he received preliminary instruction at a boarding school in Twinsburg. At the time he was there (the late 1840s) there were three other L'Arbre Croche Ottawa in residence at the school, including another chief's son, Francis Petoskey.³⁶⁹ Father Pierz complained that "the young coming from the protestant school in Ohio do not work and do not practice religion," and he unfairly dismissed them as "lazy and wandering" men, who, along with the "traders," had a

³⁶⁵ Pierz to Lefevre, 26 September 1850, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁶⁶ Pierz to Lefevre, 5 November 1848, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁶⁷ Peter Dougherty to David Wells, 28 February 1839, Reel 1, Dougherty Papers.

³⁶⁸ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa People*, 32-44. Church records contend that William Blackbird died from internal injuries that resulted from a serious accident that had occurred before his arrival in Rome. See: P. Chrysostomus Verwyst, *Life and Labors of Rt. Rev. Frederic Baraga* (Milwaukee: M.H. Wiltzius, 1900), 463-4.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

negative influence on his parishioners.³⁷⁰ What Pierz did not state, however, was that the young men had the ability to read and write in English, a skill vital to their families and band. Interest in experimenting with the Protestant path to civilization culminated in 1851, when a group of Ottawa families established a new village near the present site of Petoskey, Michigan. They requested a Presbyterian missionary and an English language school, which by 1853, with the assistance of Andrew Blackbird, were duly established, giving the Ottawa of Little Traverse a choice of Christian denominations.³⁷¹

While the literacy program of the Catholic missions was problematic, there were other aspects of the alliance with Catholicism that rebounded to the advantage of the people of L'Arbre Croche. The priests provided vaccinations against smallpox that somewhat reduced the Ottawa's vulnerability to that dreaded killer. During the winter of 1846-1847, the missionaries vaccinated 900 people between Cheboygan and Grand Traverse Bay.³⁷² In 1846 Pierz used his own funds to construct a sawmill at La Croix. The mill provided board lumber for the construction of frame houses and aided in the education of Ottawa men as carpenters. Other young men were taught to be coopers.³⁷³ While Pierz played an important role, providing resources and serving at times as a stimulus, it was the initiative of the Ottawa that transformed their communities. The missionary praised the Ottawa's aptitude for "artistic work" and claimed "with their own hands and without any aid from white men, they have built large villages with beautiful homes and magnificent churches. Upon my encouragement, they, moreover, constructed two large freight-boats, in which even white ship-builders found nothing to criticize."³⁷⁴ The Catholic mission, however, played its most signal role in helping the Ottawa to secure their land base in Michigan.

A clear example of how well the *Anishnabeg* understood the 1836 treaty is the political campaign they mounted to win federal approval for their continued residence in Michigan. They very adeptly forged a coalition of *Metis* kinsmen, Mackinac merchants, and missionaries to discredit advocates of removal and bolster public support for their civilization program. The

³⁷⁰ Pierz to Lefevere, 28 January 1850, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁷¹ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa People*, 64-65.

³⁷² Pierz to Lefevere, 5 January 1847, 17 May 1849, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁷³ Pierz to Lefevere, 9 July 1845, 12 September 1846, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁷⁴ Frances Pierz, "The Indians of North America," *Social Justice Review* XL, 1, (April, 1947), 27. This is a translation from the German by Eugene Hagedorn, O.F.M. of Pierz's 1855 pamphlet *Die Indianer in Nord Amerika, Ihre Lebensweise, Sitten und Gebrauche* (St. Louis: Franz Saler, 1855).

trigger for this campaign was the expiration of the five-year reservations in 1841. This raised anxiety among the *Anishnabeg* of northern Michigan that the United States might act on its stated intention to remove them from the Upper Great Lakes region. Indian Agent Henry Schoolcraft did little to relieve this anxiety because he thought that removal was in accord with the government's long-term plans. Two *Metis*, William Johnston and Augustin Hamlin, worked with the L'Arbre Croche bands to try and circumvent Schoolcraft and appeal directly to Washington for a clarification of their long-term status. Since 1832 the Ottawa had tried to make clear to Schoolcraft their determination to remain in Michigan and learn the ways of the white man.³⁷⁵ But Schoolcraft did not prove to be an ally in this endeavor, so, in 1840, the chiefs joined with Johnston (Schoolcraft's brother-in-law) and Hamlin to protest the Indian agent's management of the educational fund.³⁷⁶ To prevent Schoolcraft from removing them, the Ottawa decided to try and remove the Indian Agent. In time their charges against Schoolcraft were broadened to include the debt fund. The later issue was important to the Ottawa because they wished to have access to those funds to make land purchases along the shore of Little Traverse Bay.³⁷⁷

A second front in this campaign was spearheaded by Mackinac Island merchants who were heavily committed to the continued residence of several thousand *Anishnabe* customers in their area. This group lobbied the Michigan Superintendency and endorsed another Indian petition to the President. "We have three villages," the L'Arbre Croche Ottawa told the President, "in one of them we have built thirty neat wooden houses." They proudly added that in the past thirteen years they built "three churches, three parsonages, and three school houses." In addition, "[s]ome of our people can read and write in English, French, and Indian." With this progress under way, they expressed the desire "to become citizens of the State of Michigan." They concluded with

³⁷⁵ Pabamitabi to Schoolcraft, 1 September 1832, National Archives, Letters Received by the Superintendents, RG 75, M-1, Roll 31, frame 126-127, p.267-269.

³⁷⁶ Petition of the Principle Chiefs of the Ottawa and Chippewa to the President, 12 August 1840, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 424, frame 0050-0053.

³⁷⁷ William Johnston to Senator A. J. Porter, 4 June 1841.

the pledge: “If the government will permit us to remain on our reservations, we hope soon to be fit to claim the character and assume the situation of citizens.”³⁷⁸

The Ottawa seemed to dread the extension of the township and range survey into their region. In their 1840 petition to President Martin Van Buren, they specifically requested that the President “not allow them [their lands] to be surveyed at present.”³⁷⁹ The petition demonstrated a clear understanding of many treaty provisions, from the education fund to the Indian dormitory on Mackinac Island to the blacksmith services. It is logical to conclude that their concern over the survey of their lands reflects their understanding that once lands were “surveyed and sold,” their treaty occupancy and hunting rights would cease. An 1841 petition to the President on behalf of the Ottawa by the Protestant missionary Abram Coe expressed similar anxiety about the extension of surveys into the reservation territory.³⁸⁰ Even the removal of Schoolcraft from his post, which was effected not by charges against him but by the election of the Whig Presidential candidate William Henry Harrison, failed to resolve the Ottawa’s anxiety. By January of 1843, Father Pierz reported that surveys had taken place around his mission and that the Ottawa were now “uncertain about their legal status.” In councils with the Ottawa, Pierz advocated that they petition for the right “to become American citizens and be able to buy lands.” Augustin Hamlin, who was trying to be named the head chief of the Ottawa, also circulated a petition to that effect, but it was viewed with some suspicion by full-blooded Ottawa who distrusted Hamlin’s ambitions. Pierz himself felt that the future of the Catholic mission in northwest Michigan hung by a thread and that if the Ottawa could not be confirmed in their title to their lands, the majority would cross over the border and join the British Indian colony at Manitoulin Island.³⁸¹

To prevent a complete collapse of their civilization program the Ottawa needed to purchase their newly surveyed lands. This they did in October 1844. Father Pierz accompanied several

³⁷⁸ Rueben Turner to President John Tyler, 25 June 1841, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-234, Roll 424, frame 0763-0764; Rueben Turner to Robert Stuart, 23 June 1841, National Archives, Letters Received by the Agent at Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 50.

³⁷⁹ Petition of the Ottawa and Chippewa to the President, 12 August 1840, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-234, Roll 424, frame 0050-0053.

³⁸⁰ Abram Coe to President of the United States, 27 October 1841, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 424, frame 0694-0696.

³⁸¹ Pierz to Lefevere, 2 January 1843, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

chiefs to the General Land Office at Ionia, Michigan and there purchased more than 1,000 acres. (See Figure 4.) The lands were entered in the names of three of the chiefs and included the village sites of La Croix, Middletown, and L'Arbre Croche.³⁸² Pierz reported to his bishop that the Ottawa were “very much satisfied” with the purchases and that they were more “attached” to him and the mission because of it. By 1855 the Ottawa of the Little Traverse region completed the purchase of 16,000 acres of land.³⁸³ The missionary, however, was concerned about the ability of the Ottawa to hold onto the newly acquired land titles.³⁸⁴ Pierz advocated both citizenship, or as he put it “emancipation,” for the Ottawa, as well as the passage of special laws to prevent European-Americans from entangling the Ottawa in debt and then seizing the lands for non-payment. In these requests Pierz was supported by Robert Stuart, the former fur trader who had replaced Schoolcraft as Indian Agent. Stuart opposed removal and advocated expanding the Ottawa’s autonomy, but he was not optimistic that either the United States or State of Michigan governments would move boldly on such novel propositions.³⁸⁵ Federal agents encouraged the Ottawa to end the old fur trade practice of taking trade goods on account and to begin to pay cash for the things they needed. The debt system encouraged Indians to live beyond their means and offered traders leverage to seize Indian lands.³⁸⁶ Both Pierz and the Ottawa leaders, as well as agent Stuart, shared the belief that absent legal protections, it was more necessary than ever for the people of the L'Arbre Croche coast to persist with attendance at schools and the “practice of temperance.”³⁸⁷

Participation in the civilization program, either through school attendance or changes in subsistence activities, was a purely voluntary matter among the Ottawa. It is much easier to enumerate the variety of economic activities pursued by the people of the Little Traverse region

³⁸² Pierz to Lefevere, 22 October 1844, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁸³ Henry C. Gilbert, “Michigan Indian Agency, October 10, 1855” *Annual Reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 352.

³⁸⁴ Pierz to Lefevere, 25 October 1844, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁸⁵ Robert Stuart to Pierz, 15 April 1844, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent at Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 39; Robert Stuart to Pierz, 30 November 1844, National Archives, Letters Sent by the Agent at Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 39.

³⁸⁶ Justin Rice to Robert Stuart, 12 November 1844, National Archives, Letters Received, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-1, Roll 57, p.168-70.

³⁸⁷ Pierz to Stuart, no month/no day, 1843, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives; Stuart to Pierz, 30 November 1844.

L'Arbre Croche Land Entries 1837-1855

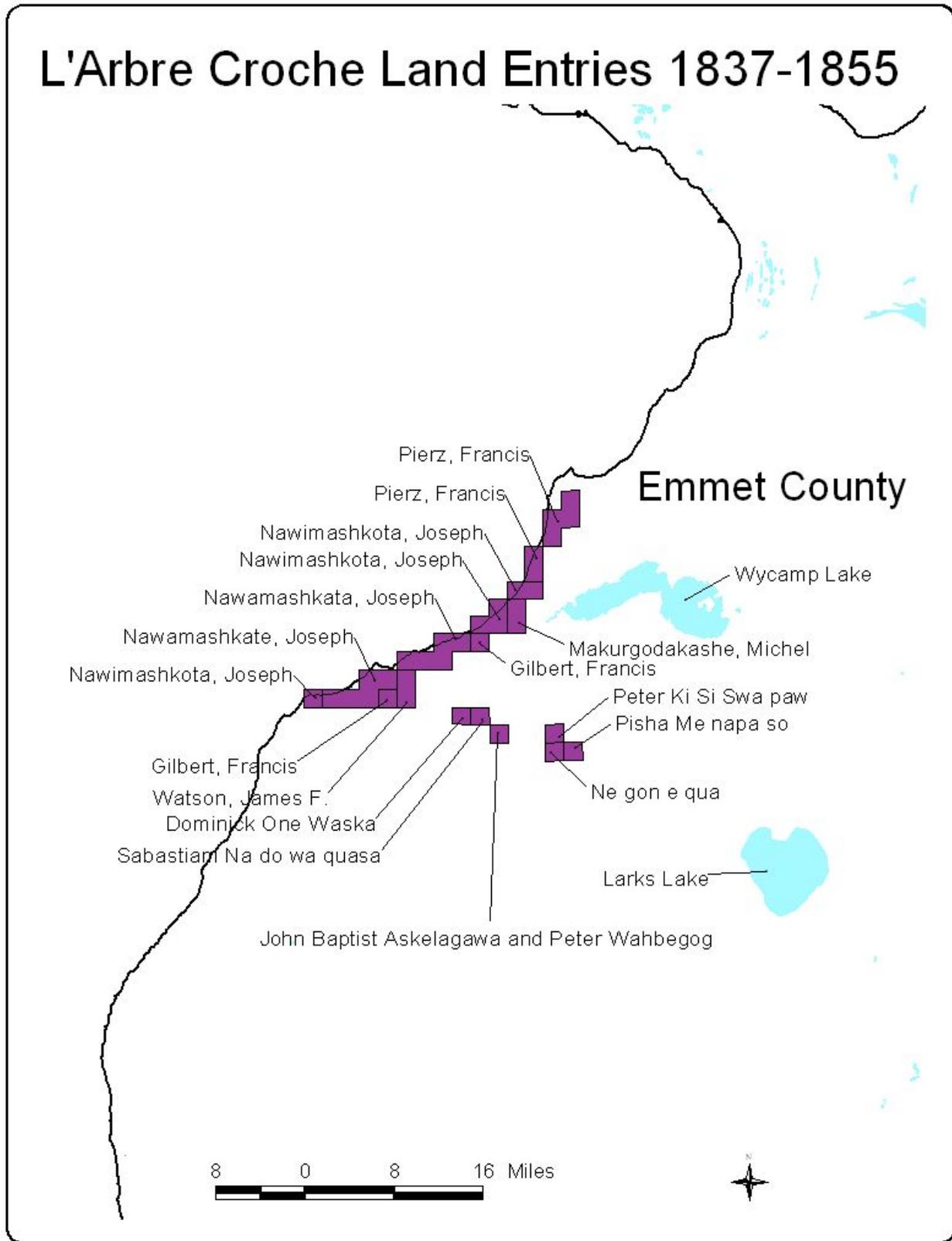


Figure 4. L'Arbre Croche land entries, 1837-1855.

than to assess accurately the degree to which these experiments represented a permanent change of lifestyle. In his 1843 report to Indian Agent Stuart, Pierz estimated that there were 1100 Catholic Ottawa and that they lived chiefly “by fishing.” A visiting Protestant missionary was surprised to see “by far the most appearance of civilization here of any place I have seen.” Even more impressive to the visitor was “a store kept by an Indian man,” where he purchased flour and “donuts.”³⁸⁸ For most inhabitants, farming seems to have been a supplemental activity. Families cultivated “from 1 to 4 acres raising corn, potatoes and vegetables.” Pierz also observed: “They build neat houses, make their own clothing—some in the manner of whites. Only the pagans and a few Christians engage in the chase in the winter.”³⁸⁹ In addition to corn, the Ottawa, under the direction of the missionaries, added wheat to their grain crops.³⁹⁰ Maple sugar harvesting continued and indeed was expanded during the post-treaty era. Sugar provided Ottawa who did not engage in winter hunts with a marketable surplus crop that could be used to secure European-American cloth and food stuffs.³⁹¹ Dependence upon the products of their fields and sugar camps, however, left the Ottawa vulnerable to bad harvests. “There is a lot of misery and starvation among them,” Pierz informed his bishop during the winter of 1846-47, “because the sugar crop and other crops this last spring were very meager.”³⁹²

Lake Michigan’s abundant fishery was the mainstay of the Ottawa. The question was how to supplement the harvest of whitefish and trout, by farming, wage labor, or by the old standby of fur trapping. The Catholic missionaries tried to dissuade the Ottawa from leaving their Lake Michigan villages for the winter and utilizing family trapping areas in the interior. Unreconstructed Ottawa traditionalists, usually referred to as “pagans,” continued the old seasonal rounds of the fur trade era. But it is not likely that there was a clear-cut line separating the behavior of converts and traditionalists. The letters and reports of the missionaries suggest that Ottawa families experimented with new variations in their subsistence cycle and modified their actions based upon perceived benefits. Winter hunts were strenuously opposed because the

³⁸⁸ Peter Dougherty, “The Diaries of Peter Dougherty,” edited by Charles A. Anderson, *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 30 (1952), 176.

³⁸⁹ Pierz to Stuart, no month/no day, 1843, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁹⁰ Pierz to Lefevre, 12 September 1846, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives.

³⁹¹ Pierz to the President of the United States, 15 December 1850, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives.

³⁹² Pierz to Lefevre, 5 January 1847, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives.

practice kept Ottawa children away from school, and impeded the movement of Ottawa men and women into employment that would bring them into contact with the European-American mainstream. In November 1851, for example, Pierz recommended that the bishop reduce the mission at L'Arbre Croche village to simply an affiliated station, "[s]o long as they remain slaves of the woods they will not listen to the voice of the priests." On the other hand, the nearby village of La Croix was lauded for the steadfastness of its people.³⁹³

In addition to winter hunting, the missionaries along the L'Arbre Croche coast were frequently discouraged by outbreaks of drunkenness. The distribution of annuities at Mackinac was a recurring problem. The Ottawa and Chippewa would begin to assemble at the island in August but often had to wait for several weeks because either the payment roll was not ready or the funds had not yet arrived. In 1849 the Ottawa waited two weeks at Mackinac and the Straits area, the next year many were forced to wait a full two months. Such delays were excellent opportunities for whisky sellers to ply their wares and encumber the Ottawa with debts. Murders and drownings were one unhappy result of prolonged stays at Mackinac. In some years, the drunkenness continued following the return to the Little Traverse region.³⁹⁴ "In the last payment of the Indians at Mackinac, the Indians spent all their money in drink and this is very scandalous," Pierz informed the bishop. "The Indians of Mackinac and Arbre Croche do not believe anymore that drunkenness is a sin. The Indians of the affiliated mission of Cheboygan drink every cent of their payments."³⁹⁵ Four years later Pierz was near despair when a pair of French-Canadian whisky dealers from Mackinac joined the three existing merchants at Little Traverse. He wrote, "all the time that things get worse."³⁹⁶

Prolonged visits to Mackinac Island increased the Ottawa's exposure to European-American disease, most frequently cholera.³⁹⁷ Like the European-American communities of the Lake Michigan basin during the 1840s and 1850s, cholera was a frequent visitor to the Ottawa villages of the L'Arbre Croche coast. The missionaries imported drugs to help fight the disease, and they used epidemics to rally backsliding congregations. "It is remarkable that all the dead were great

³⁹³ Pierz to Lefevre, 21 November 1851, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁹⁴ Pierz to Lefevre, 12 October 1849, 10 October 1851, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁹⁵ Pierz to Lefevre, 25 November 1847, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁹⁶ Pierz to Lefevre, 10 October 1851, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

³⁹⁷ Pierz to Lefevre, 12 October 1849, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

drunkards,” Father Pierz wrote in 1849, “the ones who were temperate were never sick. This had a tremendous influence on the savages.”³⁹⁸ Smallpox epidemics also flared up, as did an ailment marked by “inflammation of the lungs, headache, and blood spitting.”³⁹⁹ The impact of these diseases on the population and morale of the Ottawa cannot be accurately estimated, although the incidence of outbreaks seems to have increased markedly during the years after 1836.

Northern Michigan in the Wake of the Treaty of 1836: the Grand Traverse Region

The mixed Ottawa and Chippewa population of the Grand Traverse region also suffered from increased exposure to European diseases. This region actually was in more frequent contact with the European-Americans than the people of the L’Arbre Croche coast. Ships leaving or heading to lower Lake Michigan ports such as Chicago, Milwaukee, and Michigan City invariably sailed through the Manitou Passage. This took them between the Manitou Islands and the sandy head of Sleeping Bear Point, the Leelaneau Peninsula, and the mouth of Grand Traverse Bay. Both the islands and the bay provided shelter from storms and a supply of wood for the steamers. The Ottawa and Chippewa of this region, similar to the *Anishnabeg* of the Upper Peninsula and L’Arbre Croche, utilized the years after the 1836 treaty to increase their participation in the European-American economy and their experiment with Christianity.

The establishment of a Presbyterian mission in May of 1839 was the first step in that direction. Located at the tip of a long narrow, northward-reaching finger of land that divided Grand Traverse Bay, the mission was established by Peter Dougherty. The New York State native was sponsored by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. The United States government lent considerable assistance to Dougherty. It was Henry Rowe Schoolcraft himself who recommend the Grand Traverse Bay region to him, and the Indian Agent provided the mission with what Dougherty described as “the patronage of the government” which he felt “will give recommendation to the Indians.” What this entailed was the support of a blacksmith, farmer, and interpreter, as well as funds for the operation of a school—all paid for out of the funds

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ Pierz to Lefevere, 9 July 1845, Papers of the Detroit Diocese, ND Archives.

dedicated to the *Anishnabeg* by the 1836 treaty. In time, the settlement that developed there was called Old Mission, and the Indians it ministered to were largely Chippewa.⁴⁰⁰

After 1843, Dougherty was faced with competition for souls from the Catholic missionary Francios Pierz. The latter's restless disposition inclined him to be much more interested in searching out new places to preach the faith, than to labor in the existing missions of Little Traverse. Pierz greatly resented the extensive support from the government and American Christians that sustained Dougherty. With little in the way of encouragement from even his own bishop, Pierz worked to establish rival Catholic Indian villages along Grand Traverse Bay. At a village described as "at the bay" Pierz made converts of thirty families including the Chief "Echwagonebi" [very likely the same Chief Ashquagonabe whom Dougherty counted as one of his converts]. A large wigwam was cleared for use as a temporary chapel, and a Catholic school was established. Pierz was bold enough to establish a second Catholic school just down the shore from Dougherty's mission, although he was prudent enough not to visit the site himself, and he staffed it with a lay teacher who was able to read and write Chippewa. This man, "Javanan," confined his instruction to reading from an Indian catechism Pierz had prepared.⁴⁰¹ In 1847, Pierz extended his evangelization to what may have been a Chippewa Indian village at the site of present day Omena, Michigan. Because the Catholic Church's resources were already over taxed by the attempt to manage the missions between Little Traverse and the Straits, Pierz tried to convince the Grand Traverse bands to relocate to the Catholic villages along the L'Arbre Croche coast.⁴⁰² The bands, however, would not consider this because the soil for farming was much superior where they were. Pierz was reluctant to move too strongly against the Presbyterian mission for fear of exciting the animosity of the government, "because the savages are not yet emancipated and that all the important offices for the welfare of the savages are in the hands of the worst Presbyterians."⁴⁰³ Eventually, Pierz's successor Father Ignatius Mrak established a mission at Peshawbestown, halfway up the west shore of Grand Traverse Bay.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁰ Dougherty, "Diaries," 95, 112, 190-191.

⁴⁰¹ Pierz to Lefevere, 25 October 1844, Diocese of Detroit Papers, ND Archives.

⁴⁰² Pierz to Lefevere, 2 January 1843, 9 September 1844, 19 August 1848, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives.

⁴⁰³ Pierz to Lefevere, 25 October 1844, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives.

⁴⁰⁴ S.E. Wait, *Old Settlers of the Grand Traverse Region* (Traverse City, Mich.: privately printed, 1918), 18.

A third Christian denomination moved into the Grand Traverse region in 1849. George Nelson Smith, a Congregational minister, led a group of forty to fifty Ottawa families to the current site of Northport, Michigan, where he established a mission settlement. They had been pushed northward by expanding European-American settlements, from Allegan County, then to Ottawa County, and finally to the tip of the Leelanau Peninsula. By 1857, Smith's Ottawa mission was joined by "Kervaquiscum Chief of the Manistee Band." While Pierz and Dougherty each nursed antagonistic feelings toward the one another and exaggerated the failings of the other's mission, Dougherty and Smith established a cooperative and friendly relationship. They enjoyed social occasions and preached to each other's congregations.⁴⁰⁵

Although the missionaries tended to emphasize the differences between their denominations, all three of the Christian missions at Grand Traverse were welcomed by the *Anishnabeg* because they offered the same services. The opportunity for literacy was appreciated by the Grand Traverse bands, although they lacked the sense of urgency shown by the Ottawa of the L'Arbre Croche coast. When Dougherty made his initial offer to establish a mission, a number of chiefs seemed equivocal regarding the evangelization, but indicated they "would like to have a school."⁴⁰⁶ After informing his bishop of the success of his Grand Traverse schools, among the youth and adults, Pierz noted "All want to learn how to read."⁴⁰⁷

The chiefs who played a lead role in creation of the 1836 treaty also were in the forefront of the civilization program at Grand Traverse. Ahgosa, who participated in the Washington negotiations and signed the treaty, joined Dougherty's congregation and by 1843 was a regular participant in the Presbyterian Sunday school. In time, he learned to read and write in *Anishnabe*.⁴⁰⁸ A second Grand Traverse chief, Ashquagonabe (Aishquagonabee), also a signatory of the 1836 treaty, joined the Presbyterian congregation. He was an older man and a much less enthusiastic convert to Christianity and civilization. Farm labor was not at all in keeping with his notion of manly conduct, and he seems to have held the government's treaty

⁴⁰⁵ Pierz to Lefevre, 2 January 1843, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives; George Nelson Smith, Diary, 6-8 October 1849, George Nelson Smith Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁴⁰⁶ Dougherty, "Diaries," 178.

⁴⁰⁷ Pierz to Lefevre, 25 October 1844, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives.

⁴⁰⁸ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1843* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 320.

farmer in contempt. The old chief's wives tended to his expanded fields.⁴⁰⁹ Both Ahgosa and Ashquagonabe moved into log cabins at Old Mission. Government agents praised Ahgosa's willingness to embrace European-American domestic arrangements. "The chief Ah-go-sa, in particular has made additions and improvements to his house and premises," the government carpenter reported in 1844, "and appears to set an example of industry, perseverance, and temperance, before his people, which is truly commendable." The same could not be said for Ashquagonabe, whom the carpenter described as, "not directly hostile to improvements, yet he does very little to encourage it, and indeed, is much behind some of his own band."⁴¹⁰ Another sign of Ashquagonabe's cool embrace of the new order were his visits to Manitoulin Island to receive gifts from the British authorities. Ahgosa discontinued this practice, but the old chief may have wanted to keep open the prospect of relocating to Canada if "civilization" in Michigan proved impractical or too oppressive.⁴¹¹

Like the Chippewa on Whitefish Bay and the Ottawa at L'Arbre Croche, the *Anishnabeg* of the Grand Traverse Bay region followed a similar pattern of post-treaty behavior: Christianization, expanded participation in market-related activities, and the private purchase of land. The first indication that the Ottawa and Chippewa of the region were interested in securing their future in the region via land purchases appears in the diary of Peter Dougherty. In July 1838, he noted that the *Metis* George Johnston "says the chiefs have money laid aside and design to purchase their lands as soon as they come on the market."⁴¹² Dougherty did not indicate with whom the Indians had "laid aside" their money, although the fur traders Biddle and Drew, who sometimes acted for the Grand Traverse bands, might have been trusted with the funds. The next mention of land purchases came in the fall of 1844. At the annuities payment in Mackinac, a rumor was spread that the General Land Office was opening the area to sale. This proved to be incorrect. Nonetheless, a group of Indians "at the head of the bay" journeyed to Ionia to secure their homes. When they found that the lands were not yet available, they left their funds on

⁴⁰⁹ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1842* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 412-3.

⁴¹⁰ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1844* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 488.

⁴¹¹ Dougherty, "Diaries," 248-52.

⁴¹² Dougherty, "Diaries," 107-108.

deposit with the agent in an attempt to secure as early a purchase of their homes as possible.⁴¹³ It would, however, be years before those lands were available for purchase. (See Figure 5 for all land entries in the Grand Traverse region, 1837-1855.)

Complicating the *Anishnabeg*'s search for secure land tenure was the uncertain status of the reservation they had been awarded in the 1836 treaty. That 20,000-acre reservation appears to have been surveyed in 1840 and included the northern portion of the Old Mission Peninsula and a small tract of land on the eastern shore of the mainland.⁴¹⁴ But according to the Senate's revisions of the draft treaty, the reservation was due to expire in 1841. Although the Ottawa and Chippewa had petitioned the United States Government to have the reservation continued indefinitely, they never received a definitive response in reply. Chief Ahgosa, in a letter to the Indian Agent, explained that some mission Indians who had been interested in building houses at Mission Point, "lay down their axes saying it is of no use if they must remove." He appealed for the sympathy of the agent by describing his people as holding onto the Old Mission lands "as a bird clings to a branch of a tree waving ready to fall."⁴¹⁵ Robert Stuart, formerly of the American Fur Company, had replaced Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. Unlike his predecessor, Stuart was firmly opposed to the removal of the *Anishnabeg*. Nonetheless, he was unable to provide Ahgosa with a firm guarantee with respect to the reservation lands.

Eventually, the Ottawa and Chippewa of the Grand Traverse region began to make independent land purchases to forestall the prospect of removal. These purchases were well under way by 1847, when Dougherty reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the Indians "are beginning to make purchases, here and there, at distant points." Dougherty was concerned that if the process of land acquisition was not controlled by the missionaries or government, the *Anishnabeg* would be scattered "into such small bands that it will be almost impossible to collect them into schools and meetings for improvement."⁴¹⁶ A year later Father

⁴¹³ Peter Dougherty to David Wells, 4 November 1844, Dougherty Papers, Reel 1, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁴¹⁴ Charles C. Royce, *Indian Land Cessions of the United States*, Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1899), Plate CXXXVI.

⁴¹⁵ Ahgosa to Robert Stuart, 15 February 1841, National Archives, Letters Received by the Agent at Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 50.

⁴¹⁶ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1847* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 908.

Grand Traverse Land Entries, 1837-1855

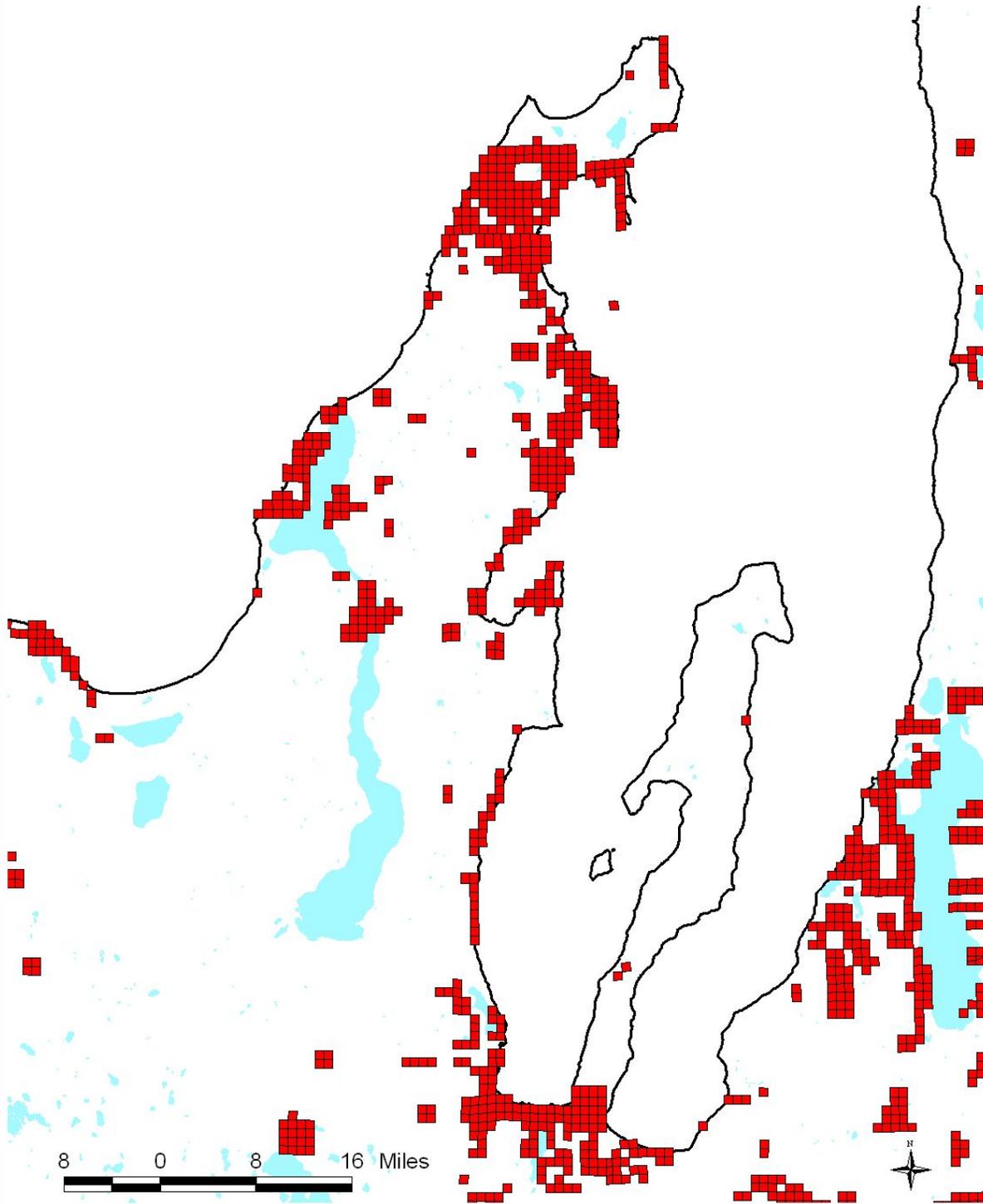


Figure 5. Grand Traverse land entries, 1837-1855.

Pierz reported that a group of the Catholic *Anishnabeg* who were resident at Mission Point had purchased land twenty miles away. Their exodus, Pierz was pleased to inform his bishop, left the Presbyterian mission with only 31 churchgoers.⁴¹⁷ In October 1849, independent land purchases were so common among the Grand Traverse band that the Indian agent actually proposed “to have a surveyor appointed” in place of one of the treaty funded farmers. Ahgosa and Ashquagonabe, however, rejected the offer. They wanted to keep the treaty farmer and proposed to “pay the surveyor for his services in surveying for us.”⁴¹⁸ Presumably, the surveyor’s utility was in locating land for private purchase.

The bulk of these land purchases appear to have been on the west shore of Grand Traverse Bay on the Leelaneau Peninsula. By the late 1840s, this was the focus of Indian settlement along the bay. Far from being the ones behind the land purchases, Christian missionaries seem to have been kept in the dark regarding *Anishnabe* land acquisition. Father Pierz despaired the success of his mission when Ashquagonabe’s people stopped work on the construction of a church. Yet only a year later, the missionary was enthusiastic when the Indians who had purchased land on west bay, shook hands with him and promised to be good Catholics.⁴¹⁹ Most likely, the priest’s earlier anxiety had been caused by the *Anishnabeg*’s unwillingness to waste time and energy constructing a new building at a site which they intended to abandon. The missionary, however, was clearly not privy to the plan. Even Peter Dougherty, who lived among the Ottawa and Chippewa of the bay, played no role in land acquisition⁴²⁰. In fact, the whole land acquisition program was a major inconvenience to his ministry. As more and more *Anishnabeg* settled on their lands along the west shore of the bay, he was forced in 1851 to abandon the Old Mission Peninsula, leaving behind his whitewashed home and the mission church. Dougherty, in the name of the church, then purchased more than 300 acres of land at Omena, Michigan, along the west shore, where he operated his mission settlement for another decade. The Presbyterian

⁴¹⁷ Pierz to Lefevere, 6 May 1848, Diocese of Detroit Papers, N.D. Archives.

⁴¹⁸ Ashquagonabe and Ahgosa to Charles P. Babcock, 15 October 1849, National Archives, Letters Received by the Agent at Mackinac, RG 75, M-1, Roll 63.

⁴¹⁹ Pierz to Lefevere, 25 November 1847; Pierz to Lefevere, 19 August 1848, Diocese of Detroit Papers, N.D. Archives.

⁴²⁰ A secondary source indicates that Old Mission Chippewa gave their annual payments to Dougherty for same keeping, but there is no indication he actually made real estate purchases with Chippewa money for the Chippewa. See, Ruth Cracker, *First Protestant Mission in the Grand Traverse Region* (n.p.: no publisher, 1932), 21.

mission at Omena, however, was forced to close following the Civil War, and in 1868 Peter Dougherty was ordered to sell all of the mission's land. By 1883 the site was transformed into a resort for tourists.⁴²¹

The purchase of land was merely one aspect of the Grand Traverse Ottawa and Chippewa's growing participation in the economic life of ante-bellum Michigan. Christian missionaries and government farmers encouraged men to enter the ranks of agriculturists. Throughout the 1840s, there is evidence that the *Anishnabeg* of the region gradually increased the size of their gardens. Indeed, one of the factors encouraging them to relocate to the west shore of the bay was the prospect of having more room to expand their individual fields and to graze domestic animals.⁴²² They also became skilled at carpentry and to a lesser extent at blacksmith work. Andrew Blackbird learned the latter trade by serving for five years as an apprentice at Old Mission.⁴²³ In 1844 chief Ahgosa and a number of Indians at the Old Mission used their wood working skills to cooperate with the government carpenter there in the construction of what was described as a "large boat."⁴²⁴ Boat building would eventually lead to the replacement of the traditional birchbark canoe as the principal transportation tool among the *Anishnabeg*. Most of the boats built during the 1840s and 1850s were likely similar to the mackinac boats favored by European-American fishermen. Some of the vessels, however, were fully rigged craft such as the one missionary Peter Dougherty referred to as "our little schooner."⁴²⁵ These two or three masted ships were typical of the craft being built all along the Lake Michigan shore by emerging European-American communities. They were a testament to the wood working skills of the *Anishnabeg* and their growing commercial engagement with the wider world.⁴²⁶

The image of *Anishnabeg* working before the mast as sailors and expanding their commercial involvement in agriculture must be balanced with the recognition that the Ottawa and Chippewa

⁴²¹ S.E. Wait, *Old Settlers of the Grand Traverse Region*, 18-19.

⁴²² U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1847* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 908.

⁴²³ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 56.

⁴²⁴ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1844* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 409.

⁴²⁵ Peter Dougherty to David Wells, 14 September 1847, Reel 1, Dougherty Papers.

⁴²⁶ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1846* (New York: AMS, 1976), 262.

in the Grand Traverse region did not abandon their seasonal subsistence round. Like so many aspects of their lives, however, the pursuit of game and other resources from the forests of Michigan was modified during the post-1836 era. Among the Indians at Dougherty's mission, winter hunting was standard practice. A significant distinction was noted by the missionary between those who followed the traditional practice of removing to a winter hunting area where they set up a seasonal camp and those who remained in residence near the mission and hunted locally.⁴²⁷ In the early spring, maple sugaring also remained a key activity. In fact, as in the Little Traverse area, the scale of maple sugaring was drastically expanded in the Grand Traverse region. In 1844 the treaty-funded carpenter played a significant role in the sugar harvest. The craftsman made wooden troughs, probably from huge basswood trees, for holding the sap. He also transported those heavy logs to the sugar bush camps and used agency teams to keep the Indian women supplied with firewood.⁴²⁸ In time tools such as saws, axes, and draft animals played a role in expanding the number of trees an Indian family could tap. According to Susan Pequongay, who was born at the family sugar camp in 1853, her father annually tapped 1100 trees.⁴²⁹ Of course, this was well beyond the requirements of domestic consumption, and it represented a commercialization of sugar production.

The passenger pigeon represented a wonderful source of game that was available to the Grand Traverse bands on an annual basis. In May 1844, missionary Peter Dougherty reported that most of the Chippewa were "absent on the other side of the bay" exploiting a pigeon roost that extended "for miles." The hunt was planned to occur "before the young ones can fly." The method of hunting was to cut down a tree that was used for a roost and then gather up the helpless chicks. "they get sometimes a hundred in felling one tree." The missionary reported that the Indians succeeded in "killing immense quantities of young pigeons," but did not indicate that this was done for any market gain. The pigeon hunts appear to have been a traditional

⁴²⁷ U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1843* (New York: AMS, 1976), 321.

⁴²⁸ U.S., *Annual Report, 1844*, 487.

⁴²⁹ Cracker, *The First Protestant Mission*, 31.

subsistence activity.⁴³⁰ Pigeon hunts would last between ten days and two weeks, which suggests the large number of birds that were consumed during the annual hunts.⁴³¹

The Grand Traverse Chippewa did exploit other forest resources for commercial gain. In 1849, missionary Dougherty reported “The Indians are busy peeling hemlock bark contracts have been made by men from Chicago for several hundred cords.” The bark was used to produce tannic acid, a key ingredient in the processing of hides into leather goods. The Chicago contract paid the Indians for both the peeling of the hemlock logs and for the transport of the bark to lakeshore, from whence it could be carried by ship to the city.⁴³² This contract was one of the first references to the *Anishnabeg*’s participation in the forest products industry that would, by the mid-nineteenth century dominate the economy of northern Michigan and provide regular employment opportunities for the Ottawa and Chippewa.

A negative side effect of greater *Anishnabe* integration into European-American culture and markets was greater exposure to alcohol and disease. Missionaries took pride in helping Christian Indians avoid the impoverishment, violence, and ill health that accompanied binge drinking. Conversely, they despaired when members of their community yielded to the lure of a “frolic.”⁴³³ A greater threat to the Ottawa and Chippewa, however, was the continuing threat of smallpox. As the number of steamers and schooners on the lakes increased, and as the number of European-American settlers increased so to did the likelihood of exposure to a deadly pathogen. Ships stopping to trade or refuel at Traverse Bay brought people, products, news and microbes. In 1849 Chicago was ravaged by a major outbreak of cholera. From that transportation hub, the disease spread down the Lake Michigan basin. By May of that year, the Indians at Traverse Bay were in watchful dread of the epidemic reaching their shores. The epidemic later hit Mackinac, killing a number of Chippewa who attended the annuity payment.⁴³⁴ At the same time, word was received that smallpox had broken out at the Manitou Islands prompting the *Anishnabeg* to

⁴³⁰ Peter Dougherty to David Wells, 10 May 1844, Reel 1, Dougherty Papers.

⁴³¹ Dougherty to Wells, 1 May 1849, Reel 1, Dougherty Papers.

⁴³² Peter Dougherty to Walter Lowrie, 20 July 1849, Reel 1, Dougherty Papers.

⁴³³ U.S., *Annual Report, 1844*, 409.

⁴³⁴ L.L. Hamling to Secretary of War, 12 October 1849, M-234, roll 771, p. 306.

request Father Pierz's assistance in an inoculation campaign.⁴³⁵ Exposure to such dangers was a grim surcharge on the price they had already paid to accommodate the swelling numbers of European-Americans in Michigan.

The Pace of Change Quickens: The Michigan Frontier, 1850-1855

By and large the *Anishnabeg* had used the time and benefits derived from the 1836 treaty to undertake adjustments in their economy, spiritual life, and education that greatly facilitated their ability to avoid removal and to remain in Michigan. Isolated bands along the Manistee and Muskegon Rivers in the Lower Peninsula and along the north shore of Lake Michigan in the Upper Peninsula seem to have been little affected by the "civilization" programs embraced by the Ottawa and Chippewa of Grand Traverse, L'Arbre Croche, the Straits region, and Sault Ste. Marie. Prior to 1850, it was still possible for Indian people, with the aid of annuities, to avoid the consequences of Michigan's expanding frontier. After 1850, the pace of regional development noticeably quickened, and it became imperative to both European and Native Americans that the final legal status of the Ottawa and Chippewa be determined. (See Figure 6.)

Logging, mining, and transportation improvements all played a major role in expanding Michigan's population and quickening the pace of its economic development. In many areas of northwestern Michigan, logging represented the first wedge of European-American settlement. Commercial logging began in the Grand River Valley immediately after the 1836 treaty, and by the time of statehood, there were eight mills operating in the Grand Rapids vicinity.⁴³⁶ By 1853 Rix Robinson, the fur trader who had witnessed the 1836 Treaty, was head of the Grand Haven Company, a firm that boasted a \$100,000 investment in timberlands. In 1837, two sawmills were established on Lake Muskegon. Martin Ryerson, another trader with the American Fur Company, abandoned the Indian trade and invested in a sawmill on Lake Muskegon. Through the 1840s, however, the logging industry was a small-scale enterprise that had little impact on

⁴³⁵ James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998), 185; Pierz to Lefevre, 17 May 1849, 12 June 1849, Papers of the Diocese of Detroit, ND Archives.

⁴³⁶ Barbara Ellen Benson, "Logs and Lumber: The Development of the Lumber Industry in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, 1837-1870," Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1976, p. 66, 105.

Land Entries, 1830-1930

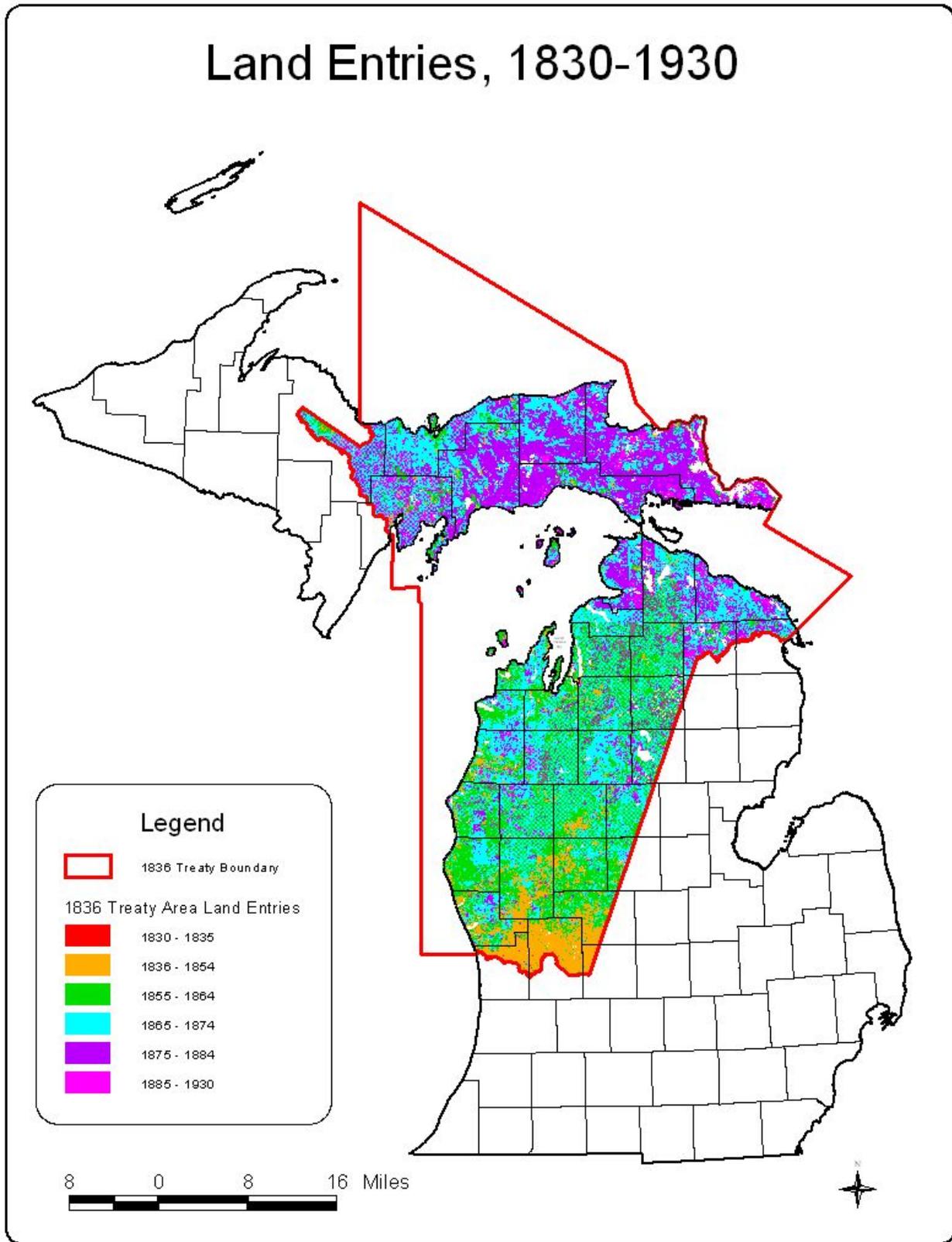


Figure 6. Land entries, 1830-1930.

the greater Muskegon River Valley and the densely timbered interior.⁴³⁷ This changed in the 1850s. The opening of the Illinois and Michigan Canal at Chicago in 1848 provided a key transportation artery between the pine forests of Michigan and the treeless prairies of Illinois. Lake Michigan schooners linked the lumber market in Chicago, soon to be the world's largest, with Michigan's pioneer mills.⁴³⁸ Between 1840 and 1854, the number of mills at Muskegon increased from four to ten. The population, which in 1853 was a mere 400 souls, increased to more than 2,000 four years later. Hundreds of lumberjacks were also at work in camps spread out along the Muskegon River.⁴³⁹ By 1852 there were so many different logging companies putting pine into the Muskegon River that a cooperative association had to be formed to manage the river.⁴⁴⁰ Logging was also expanding on the other major rivers entering Lake Michigan. Between 1837 and 1850 lumberman Charles Mears pioneered the establishment of sawmills on the White, Big Sauble, and Pere Marquette Rivers. Manistee had five sawmills by 1850. North of the Manistee, however, the lumber industry advanced more slowly. There was only one sawmill at Grand Traverse Bay before 1850. That modest operation was the germ of modern Traverse City, although it was not until the mill was purchased by Chicago capitalists in 1851 that its production became substantial. By 1854, the number of mills had increased to three at Traverse City, and the total lumber production had jumped to 5.5 million board feet.⁴⁴¹

Logging was not significant in the Sault Ste. Marie area during the period between 1850 and 1855. By 1849 the fur trader Pierre Barbeau joined with his son-in-law James Pendill to establish a small mill on Whitefish Bay, but its production was never great. The most important logging area in the Upper Peninsula during the 1850s was the northern reaches of Green Bay, particularly the rivers flowing into Bay De Noc. Several mills were established here well in advance of the first government land sales. The mill operators simply squatted on federal lands and plundered their logs from the public domain. When land sales were finally opened in 1848,

⁴³⁷ Jeremy W. Kilar, *Michigan's Lumbertowns: Lumbermen and Laborers in Saginaw, Bay City and Muskegon, 1870-1905* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 43-44.

⁴³⁸ Theodore J. Karamanski, *Schooner Passage: Sailing Ships and the Lake Michigan Frontier* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 56-58.

⁴³⁹ Kilar, *Michigan's Lumbertowns*, 44-46.

⁴⁴⁰ William Gerald Rector, *Log Transportation in the Lake States Lumber Industry, 1840-1918* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur Clarke Company, 1953), 126-7.

⁴⁴¹ Benson, *Logs and Lumber*, 110-112.

men wealthy from the forests of Maine and New York bought large tracts of wilderness real estate. Mills were located at the mouths of the Escanaba, Whitefish, Ford, and Rapid Rivers.⁴⁴² These mills were located very close to sites reserved for the Chippewa under the Treaty of 1836. On his 1837 “Map of the Acting Superintendency of Michigan,” Schoolcraft indicated two small reservations in the vicinity of the modern towns of Gladstone, Michigan and Rapid River, Michigan. These seem to be associated with the “Esconawba River” band (population 111 people) and the “Little Bay de Nocquet” band (population 109 people).⁴⁴³ The presence of the lumbermen, however, appears to have caused the Chippewa to stay clear of these areas. Isaac Stephenson, who directed logging operations on both the Escanaba and Whitefish Rivers during this period, later recalled in his memoir that “[t]here were few Indians when I first went to Escanaba.....and they gave us no trouble.” He remembered *Metis* fur trappers in the area, “but evidences of human activity were very scant and the brooding silences of the wilderness were rarely disturbed except for the cry of the water fowl or the call of the beasts.”⁴⁴⁴

Saw mills and log drives on rivers were not the only things bringing change to northern Michigan during the 1850s. The Michigan copper rush had begun in 1843, and iron mining was inaugurated three years latter. Although both enterprises were largely located west of the 1836 treaty area, mining acted as a magnet attracting people and resources to the Lake Superior region. While the logging industry linked Michigan to the rapidly developing prairie west, the mining industry linked the Lake Superior frontier with developing cities of the east. The lure of Michigan ore drew skilled engineers, immigrants, and investment capital to the bleak north and with them came a demand for improved transportation facilities.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² Karamanski, *Deep Woods Frontier: A History of Logging in Northern Michigan* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 34-37. The early lumber men hired land lookers to venture into the interior of Michigan and identify the best pine lands, particularly those located near navigable waterways. These tracts were then purchased at the land office, which in the case of the Upper Peninsula, was located at Sault Ste. Marie. In later years the lumber men purchased those pine lands that were away from navigable waterways. By the 1890s when most pine lands had been purchased lumber men began to slowly invest in quality hardwood forest lands. The logging settlement pattern was marked by successive waves of exploitation with shingles and pulpwood following the exhaustion of pine and hardwood lumber lands. The ownership of forest lands often changed hands many times in the course of these waves of the logging frontier.

⁴⁴³ Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, A Map of the Acting Superintendency of Michigan, 16 September 1837, photocopy of original, Special Collections Department, Newberry Library, Chicago, Ill.

⁴⁴⁴ Isaac Stephenson, *Recollections of a Long Life* (Chicago: privately printed, 1915), 77.

⁴⁴⁵ Willis F. Dunbar and George S. May, *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1995), 257-9.

The most important transportation advance of this era was the completion of the Sault Ste. Marie Canal in 1855. In the 1840s several ships were pulled on rollers around the St. Mary's Rapids. These vessels facilitated the movement of people and supplies to western Lake Superior, but they did not obviate the need for a direct link between Lake Huron and Lake Superior. A canal had been proposed by the State of Michigan since 1837, But a federal land grant to support such a project was not passed until 1852. Three years later workers completed the great excavation. Well before then, a land rush was underway in the Upper Peninsula. In just half of the 1853 fiscal year, the Sault Ste. Marie district land office recorded entries for 89,073 acres. John Wilson, the Commissioner for Public Lands credited "this great and extraordinary increase in the amount of land disposed of" to the prospect of the canal.⁴⁴⁶ As its reward for completing the project, the St. Mary's Falls Ship Canal Company claimed 750,000 acres of public land.⁴⁴⁷ This was land scattered throughout northern Michigan that had previously been available for Ottawa and Chippewa use under Article 13 of the 1836 treaty. An even larger amount of federal public lands were technically closed to the *Anishnabeg* when the Congress passed the Swamp Land Act. This 1850 law took from federal control 5.6 million acres of "swamp" lands. While much of the land was at least seasonally inundated with water, the grant included thousands of acres of quality agricultural lands, and almost all of these land had functioned as potential Indian hunting grounds.⁴⁴⁸ These two massive public land transactions were part of the rapid escalation in the settlement of Michigan.

In the course of building the Sault Ste. Marie canal, the construction company violated the 1820 treaty with the Chippewa which secured for the Indians a "perpetual" right to fish and camp upon the lands where the canal was constructed.⁴⁴⁹ The Chippewa were quick to protest this violation, which, in the Indian agent's words, rendered the camping ground "entirely useless to

⁴⁴⁶ "Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office," *Message from the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Thirty-third Congress*, House Executive Document No.1, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), 87.

⁴⁴⁷ Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 260-1.

⁴⁴⁸ Dallas Lee Jones, *The Survey and Sale of the Public Land in Michigan, 1815-1862*, M.A. Thesis, Cornell University, 1952, p.93.

⁴⁴⁹ Kappler, "Treaty With the Chippewa, 1820," *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 187-8.

them.” They immediately requested that the federal government provide them with compensation for this unauthorized taking by contractors working for the State of Michigan.⁴⁵⁰

The construction of the canal impeded the Chippewa’s access to one of the most productive fisheries in the Great Lakes region. This was a double blow because it occurred at a time when all of the *Anishnabeg* were facing increasing competition from European-American fishermen. Indians still were the majority of the fishermen during the years of 1850 to 1855, but the number of whites engaged in either fishing or the marketing of fish increased. By 1860, for example, there were thirty-two fishing companies, busying 130 fishermen, located in Mackinac County.⁴⁵¹ During the decade of the 1850s, European-American fishermen, with greater capital for boats, nets, and hands, hauled in a disproportionate amount of the fish. What Indian fishermen lacked in the way of equipment or capital, however, they made up with persistence, and by dint of effort, they sold their catches or their time to support their families. The newcomers demonstrated that to move from subsistence fishing to commercial fishing required more than a will to work.⁴⁵²

Among the new fishermen were immigrants from Ireland and other northern European nations. They were part of a swelling number of new settlers coming to Michigan as the region finally shook off the cobwebs brought on by the Panic of 1837. Michigan’s population grew at a phenomenal rate in the decade of the 1850s, increasing from 397,654 at the start of the decade to 751,956 at its conclusion.⁴⁵³ Most came as agriculturists and settled on lands south of the Grand River. In 1853 the Surveyor General of the United States noted: “At no period within the history of this State, since the great land speculations of 1836, has there been such a demand for the public lands as at the present time.”⁴⁵⁴ Such a rush for land ensured that as the population of the state grew, so to did the numbers of pioneers willing to explore the prospects of northwestern

⁴⁵⁰ Henry C. Gilbert to George W. Manypenny, 4 July 1853, National Archives, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Mackinac Agency.

⁴⁵¹ Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 263.

⁴⁵² Robert Doherty, *Disputed Waters: Native Americans and the Great Lakes Fishery* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 28-30.

⁴⁵³ “Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office,” *Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Fortieth Congress*, Senate Executive Document No.1, 40th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1867), p. 46

⁴⁵⁴ “Annual Reports of the Surveyor General,” *Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress, at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-Second Congress*, Senate Executive Document, No.1, 32nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D.C.: Robert Armstrong, 1853), p. 118.

Michigan. Indians, who were already outnumbered by minority groups like the African-Americans in the overall population of the state, were fast on their way to being outnumbered even in the thinly inhabited north.⁴⁵⁵ During the 1850s, there sprung up all along the shore of Lake Michigan scores of isolated European-American enterprises. At Elk Rapids on Grand Traverse Bay, A.S. Wadsworth established a sawmill. Within a year a commercial fisherman and several families were based at the site, and within two years a school was established. By 1852, seven European-Americans established themselves as merchants or commercial fishermen at the Ottawa town of Little Traverse (now known as Harbor Springs). When John S. Dixon landed with his family and business associates at the future site of Charlevoix in 1855, he found not a wilderness but a collection of abandoned fish shanties. He was greeted not by Ottawa but by Mormons, who did their best to intimidate him from staying. Scores of towns, from Leland to Glen Arbor to Northport, were born at this time.⁴⁵⁶ Each new fishing station or sawmill made more emphatic the point that had long been clear: if the Ottawa and Chippewa were going to persist in Michigan they would have to do so by living and working in conjunction with the white majority.

The intermingling of Europeans and Native Americans in northern Michigan together with the success of many Ottawa and Chippewa in their “civilization” project eventually wrought a transformation of the Native Americans’ political status within the state. In 1850 Michigan voters approved a new constitution for the state. The basic thrust of the new document was to expand the direct political power of the electorate. The democratic spirit of the new document was reflected in its extension of the right to vote to aliens who merely expressed a desire to become United States citizens. Similarly, every “male inhabitant of Indian descent, a native of the United States and not a member of a tribe” was entitled to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.⁴⁵⁷

The promise of a change in status for Michigan’s native people had long been in the works. Throughout the 1840s Protestant and Catholic missionaries had advocated “emancipation” of the Indian as a necessary step on the road to “civilization.” What was meant by “emancipation” was

⁴⁵⁵ Dunbar and May, *Michigan*, 243, 249-250.

⁴⁵⁶ Morgan L. Leach, *A History of the Grand Traverse Region* (Traverse City, Mich.: Grand Traverse Herald, 1903), 25-31.

⁴⁵⁷ *Michigan Statutes Annotated*, I, p.220.

an end to the federal government's control over the affairs of native people and the development of individual Indian autonomy. The laws of the State of Michigan were seen as a potential source of protection. As early as the spring of 1841 fur trader Edward Biddle, whose advice had been solicited by Chief Ahgosa, recommended to the latter that the best way to frustrate removal was to "buy land and come under the laws of the white man or of the State."⁴⁵⁸ Later that same year Indian Agent Robert Stuart urged a petition to the State legislature "for the privilege of citizenship and the protection of the State laws."⁴⁵⁹ *Anishnabe* leaders played an active role in this change. Andrew Blackbird, who was the son of a Little Traverse chief and the product of the L'Arbre Croche mission school and four years of secondary school in Twinsburg, Ohio, lobbied the governor and legislature of Michigan for such a change during the early spring of 1850. With "one of our young chieftains from Cross Village," Blackbird marched by snowshoe all the way from Little Traverse to Detroit. He consulted with Judge Austin Wing, a veteran of Michigan law and politics, concerning the legal implications of citizenship for the Ottawa and Chippewa. They then met with the governor and a number of legislators. Blackbird later described his meeting with the governor:

The Governor received us very kindly and gave us much good counsel on the subject of citizenship, giving us some instructions as to how we should live under the rule of the State if we should become children of the same. He talked to us as though he was talking to his own son who had just come from a far country and asked his father's permission to stay in the household.⁴⁶⁰

Blackbird's lobbying helped to bring about an opportunity to change the legal status of the *Anishnabeg*, one that would eventually quiet fears that they would be removed from the state.

In the fall of 1850, the new constitution, with its provision for Indian citizenship, was approved by the voters. The constitution offered no clear statement of what constituted a "civilized" Indian, nor did it specify how his tribal status was to be determined. The Michigan Legislature, however, expressed its understanding of the State's new policy toward the Ottawa and Chippewa in April 1851, when it sent a joint resolution to the United States Congress. The resolution called for the "permanent location" of the Ottawa and Chippewa "in the northern part

⁴⁵⁸ Peter Dougherty to David Wells, 19 March 1841, Reel 1, Dougherty Papers.

⁴⁵⁹ Dougherty to Wells, 10 September 1841, Reel 1, Dougherty Papers.

⁴⁶⁰ Blackbird, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa*, 58-61.

of this state.” This rejection of removal by the state government was a repudiation of the Jacksonian approach to Indian policy. The resolution indicated that “all civilized persons of Indian descent” would have “equal rights and privileges with the white inhabitants of the state.”⁴⁶¹ The Chippewa indicated their interpretation of the opportunity for citizenship in an 1853 petition to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The thrust of that document was to convince the United States government to take its cue from Michigan and abandon, once and for all, the policy of removal. Citizenship, the Chippewa told the Commissioner, would give the Indians “a protection which no power can violate.” In order to become citizens, however, the Chippewa expected that they must “abandon our organization as a tribe & our connection with the federal government.” Yet, if they did this, the Chippewa feared that they would lose their remaining benefits under the 1836 treaty. Thus, they sought a new agreement with the federal government that would recognize their persistence in Michigan in perpetuity. “Let us,” the chiefs concluded, “have lands here to enable us to collect our people into municipal communities so that we may accept the gift which the state is extending to us.”⁴⁶²

Road to Detroit: The Origins of the 1855 Ottawa and Chippewa Treaty

The Michigan resolution requesting the government to “make arrangements” to keep the Ottawa and Chippewa within the state underscored the transformation in Indian-White relations that had been made since the time of the 1836 Treaty of Washington. That treaty had clear provisions for removal and indicated that such an event might occur within five years. However, the actions of the Ottawa and Chippewa, in many cases under the leadership of the chiefs and headmen who signed that treaty, altered the way European-Americans perceived the Indian people of northwestern Michigan. With citizenship within their grasp and exile no longer a threat, it became obvious to state and federal officials and to *Anishnabe* leaders that the new conditions required a new agreement.

Unlike 1836, the specific issues that necessitated a new round of treaty making, while not unimportant, were largely prosaic. Perhaps the most urgent was the fate of the reservations

⁴⁶¹ Joint Resolution of the State Legislature of Michigan, 7 April 1851.

⁴⁶² Petition of the Chippewa Chiefs to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1 November 1853, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 191.

created by the 1836 treaty. The pace of economic and population growth in 1850s Michigan meant that public lands were quickly passing into private ownership even in the northern Lower Peninsula and the Upper Peninsula. There was a growing demand by European-Americans for lands within the five-year reservations. At the same time, holding those lands in reserve from sale did not benefit the Ottawa and Chippewa because the future status of the land was in doubt. A considerable number of the *Anishnabeg* had been forced to abandon homes and farms within the reservations in order to secure clear title to farms elsewhere. Rather than serving as a refuge, the reservations had become a hindrance to the Ottawa and Chippewa who sought security in fee simple land ownership .

According to Senate's revision of the original 1836 treaty agreement, the Ottawa and Chippewa were to receive the sum of \$200,000 upon the surrender of their five-year reservations.⁴⁶³ By 1851 a considerable amount of interest income on the \$200,000 had accrued, and this was due to the Indians. In order to keep this rapidly growing debt from continuing to compound, Congress desired to secure the cession of the reservations and pay the mandated \$200,000 and interest. Ending the reservations, however, opened another question: if the Ottawa and Chippewa were going to remain in Michigan with the goal of becoming citizens where would they live? Many had, of course, already purchased land for themselves or for their extended families. Commissioner of Indian Affairs George Manypenny was convinced that this development needed to be extended to all of the Ottawa and Chippewa. He advocated replacing reservations shared in common with the ownership of "titles in fee to individuals for separate tracts."⁴⁶⁴ This desired change in Indian land ownership would necessitate a new round of treaty making.

In January of 1855, a group of more than forty Ottawa and Chippewa leaders assembled at Grand Traverse to discuss their relationship with the United States. The council resulted in a petition to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The document expressed the chiefs' dedication to "the spot where our forefathers bones are laid," yet stressed their united desire to follow the "advice and examples" of the white man. The petition requested a complete accounting of what

⁴⁶³ "Treaty With the Ottawa, Etc., 1836," Kappler (ed.), *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, p.452.

⁴⁶⁴ George W. Mannypenny to Secretary of the Interior, R. McClelland, 21 May 1855, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 844-851.

was owed to them from their many treaties with the United States government and sought compensation from the government for improvements they had made to their reservations. This petition's specific request for compensation for the reservations and its explicit statement that "[w]e have purchased lands to make us homes..." suggests that the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders who participated in the council shared with the United States government the desire to stake their future on individual land ownership. The document closed with the *Anishnabeg* announcing that a delegation was on its way to Washington. On February 7, 1855, a group of thirty Grand River Ottawa men also endorsed the petition.⁴⁶⁵

As had happened in 1836, the Ottawa and the Chippewa played an active role in initiating a new round of treaty making. Also reminiscent of 1836, when the Ottawa Catholics pressed the government for negotiations, it was the most progressive *Anishnabeg* who accelerated the drift toward a new treaty. However, just as the 1836 treaty served both the needs of traditionalists and progressives among the Ottawa and Chippewa, the circumstances leading up to the 1855 negotiation again favored the formation of a consensus among the *Anishnabe* factions that a new treaty was desirable. The annuity payments mandated by the 1836 Treaty of Washington were nearing expiration. For traditionalists, who had made little progress toward farming or commercial fishing, the annuities played an important role providing access to blankets, clothing, and food staples. Indian agent Henry Gilbert dismissed these Ottawa and Chippewa as presenting "the anomaly of savage, pagan communities, existing in the very midst of civilization," and he contrasted them with the "other bands" who were making "great improvement in civilization." Yet, for both the "civilized" Ottawa and Chippewa and those viewed by the government as "savage, pagan," a new agreement with the federal government was necessary to ensure their persistence in Michigan.⁴⁶⁶

A Flawed Vision of the Future: The 1855 Treaty of Detroit

On July 35, 1855, representative chiefs of the Ottawa and Chippewa met in council with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, George W. Mannypenny. Although a number of *Anishnabe*

⁴⁶⁵ Translation of a Petition from the Chippeway and Ottawa Indians, 16 January 1855, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 561.

⁴⁶⁶ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1853* (New York: AMS Press, 1976), 278-279.

leaders had requested that the treaty council be held in Washington, D.C., the government chose Detroit as way of holding down the cost of the proceedings.⁴⁶⁷ The treaty council lasted for four days and concluded with an agreement that provided formal federal approval for the persistence of the Ottawa and Chippewa within Michigan. The treaty is important as an early expression of the United States government's belief that the future welfare of the Indian was bound up in their acceptance of individual property ownership and the termination of tribal status. Both the latter ideas would be dominant features of United States Indian policy in the post-Civil War period and would result in the infamous Dawes Act of 1887.

The 1855 treaty record reveals a process that was much more of a genuine negotiation than the 1836 proceedings. While this may be partially due to the fact that the treaty record made of the Detroit proceedings was more detailed, it is also evident that Indian leaders played a more aggressive and vocal role in the negotiations. Certainly, the economic and political circumstances of the *Anishnabeg* were much less precarious in 1855 than in 1836. The threat of removal, which hung over the 1836 treaty, had largely been ended. Because the vast *Anishnabe* domain in western and northern Michigan had already been ceded, the council's purpose was to resolve the unsettled issues from 1836 and to plan for the future. As Commissioner Mannypenny said at the start of the treaty conference: "We are seeking no lands—nothing from you. We are here simply to settle your business already subsisting."⁴⁶⁸ The *Anishnabeg* came to Detroit well prepared to do just that. Time and time again during the negotiation, they demonstrated an understanding of previous treaties, such as the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, as well as a detailed knowledge of almost every aspect of the 1836 Treaty of Washington.

The 1855 treaty council and the correspondence that preceded and followed it offers telling insights into the aspirations and fears of the Ottawa and Chippewa people nineteen years after ceding their lands. For example, nothing is said in the lengthy treaty record concerning the exercise of hunting and fishing rights under Article 13 of the 1836 treaty. Article 13 is conspicuous as being one of the few provisions of 1836 treaty to which no direct or indirect

⁴⁶⁷ Ottawa and Chippewa to George W. Mannypenny, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 28 February 1855, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 553-556; Henry C. Gilbert to Mannypenny, 12 April 1855, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 625-627.

⁴⁶⁸ Proceedings of a Council with the Chippewas and Ottawas of Michigan held at the City of Detroit by the Hon. George W. Meanypenny [sic] & Henry C. Gilbert, Commissioners of the United States, July 25th 1855, typescript, p. 5.

reference is made during the 1855 negotiations. This silence suggests that the stipulated right to hunt on the public domain was not envisioned as crucial to the future welfare of the Ottawa and Chippewa people, either by their representatives or by the United States government. “I have abandoned the woods for a maintenace & am now a farmer,” said Wasson, a chief from Little Traverse. “I no longer go into the woods & look for wild animals when I want to eat; but I kill one of the cattle I raise for myself.”⁴⁶⁹ The *Anishnabeg* leaders gathered in council clearly identified their people’s future with the acquisition and settlement of specific tracts of land. As Andrew Blackbird said to Commissioner Mannypenny, the Ottawa leaders understood that the Commissioner “wants us to collect in communities, where we may educate our children, have churches & schools & become prosperous.”⁴⁷⁰ The silence in the 1855 treaty record regarding Article 13 supports the notion that this clause was viewed as a temporary right of residence, something that was no longer relevant in a negotiation focused on granting the Ottawa and Chippewa individual allotments of land. The focus of all discussion at Detroit was on what financial, educational, and land arrangements should be made to complete the assimilation of the *Anishnabeg* into the general population of Michigan.

The experience of the nineteen years since the signing of the 1836 treaty had given the Ottawa and Chippewa leaders a pride of accomplishment in the cultural evolution they had initiated, as well as a healthy concern for future challenges that they had before them and their children. They were well aware of the important role played by the annuities and blacksmith, carpenter, and educational services, all made possible by the treaty. “We have enjoyed the benefits of the sale of our lands for these twenty years,” said Assagon, spokesman for the Cheboygan *Anishnabeg*, “but our children will not have that benefit & now, as we have been so benefited we come to you with our children in our hands and present them to your generosity.”⁴⁷¹

Protecting the benefits secured by the 1836 cession for future generations was a major goal for the *Anishnabeg* but it was also one that ran counter to the vision of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of their future relations with the United States and the State of Michigan. The Ottawa and Chippewa stood to gain a very large sum of cash from the final settlement of the

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid* 31.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid* 38.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid* 6.

1836 treaty and the consolidation of all other treaty payments due them from other, earlier agreements. This sum was eventually agreed to be \$528,400, the largest portion of which was the \$200,000 due to them for the cession of their five-year reservations. Some of the Indian leaders wanted the balance of this sum to be managed by the federal government and for only the interest to be paid to the Ottawa and Chippewa. The Ottawa chief Wasson expressed this position through an analogy, an Ottawa version of the “goose that laid the golden egg.” There once was a man who owned a little swan. “The swan when he went out used to pick up shillings in his bill & bring them to his master. At last his master got to think that the swan was all money & cut him open & found no money. So he lost his little swan. Now, we don’t want to cut our little swan open. We wish to let him live, that our father may feed him & he may grow & continue to bring us shillings in his bill.”⁴⁷² For his part Manypenny opposed the extension of annuity payments into the next generation. Not only was the administration of such annuities a burden on the Office of Indian Affairs, but the payments perpetuated the tribal status of the Ottawa and Chippewa people. Michigan’s 1850 constitution extended citizenship to males who were “not a member of a tribe.” Manypenny and Gilbert implied that so long as the Ottawa and Chippewa were on federal treaty rolls and receiving annuities that they would be considered members of a tribe and not as citizens. “The time must come,” Gilbert told the treaty delegates, “when you will be citizens, & then, without anything being done, you will lose this annuity.”⁴⁷³

In the end a compromise was reached between the *Anishnabe* leaders and the government. Under Article 2 of the 1855 treaty, the bulk of the financial settlement was to be paid, both the principle and the interest, in annual installments for ten years. After that time the remaining \$206,000 would be paid out, if the Indians so chose, in four equal installments. Presumably the Ottawa and Chippewa could have at that time chosen to keep the entire \$206,000 intact and only draw on the interest. Manypenny and Gilbert likely believed that after ten years, the Indian civilization program would have been far enough advanced that the Ottawa and Chippewa would not have wanted to continue the treaty fund.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷² *Ibid* 7.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid* 59.

⁴⁷⁴ Treaty with the Ottawa and Chippewa, 1855, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, edited by Charles J. Kappler, (New York: Interland Publishing, 1972), 728-729.

The relationship between tribal status and citizenship was further confused by Article 5 of the 1855 treaty. This clause has been read by some historians as dissolving “all tribal organizations in the state.”⁴⁷⁵ The wording of the article in question, at first glance, seems to support such a contention. “The tribal organization of said Ottawa and Chippewa Indians,” the treaty specifies, “except so far as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this agreement, is hereby dissolved; and if at any time hereafter, further negotiations with the United States, in reference to any matters contained herein, should become necessary, no general convention of the Indians shall be called; but such as reside in the vicinity of any usual place of payment, or those only who are immediately interested in the questions involved, may arrange all matters between themselves and the United States.”⁴⁷⁶ A reading of the entire treaty record, however, makes clear that those who negotiated the clause had a more limited intention.

On two occasions during the treaty council, Wawbojieg [Keewyzi], a Chippewa chief from Sault Ste. Marie and a veteran of the 1836 Treaty of Washington, protested the inclusion of the Ottawa and Chippewa in the same negotiation. “At the Treaty of ’36, our fathers were in partnership with the Ottawas,” he explained, “but now the partnership is finished & we who come from the foot of Lake Superior wish to do business for ourselves.”⁴⁷⁷ Article 5 is an attempt to meet Wawbojieg’s complaint and to dissolve the cords that bound the Ottawa to the Chippewa in their dealings with the federal government. While such a policy suited the interests of the Lake Superior Chippewa who constituted a relatively homogeneous population, it did not reflect the reality of *Anishnabe* life in the Straits of Mackinac or Grand Traverse areas, where Ottawa and Chippewa lived in much closer association with one another. Therefore, Article 5 concluded with the clause in which the United States pledged in future to direct all dealings to those local bands “who are immediately interested in the questions involved.” It is therefore reasonable to interpret that Article 5’s purpose was not to dissolve the existence of the Ottawa and Chippewa as discrete tribes, but rather to devolve future relations to the band level.

This intention to deal directly with local populations of Ottawa and Chippewa was conditioned by three understandings of the future that were clearly shared by both the Indian

⁴⁷⁵ Bruce Alan Rubenstein, *Justice Denied: An Analysis of American Indian-White Relations in Michigan, 1855-1889*, Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1974, 159.

⁴⁷⁶ Treaty with the Ottawa and Chippewa, 1855, *Indian Treaties*, 729.

⁴⁷⁷ Proceedings of a Council with the Chippewas and Ottawas, 26.

delegates and the federal commissioners at the Treaty of Detroit. These understandings were: 1) that the Ottawa and Chippewa would in the future live in fixed agricultural communities based on individual land ownership; 2) that they would take up the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and 3) that the *Anishnabeg* would assume greater autonomy in managing their affairs. The Ottawa chief Wasson expressed this sentiment when he reminded Commissioner Manypenny that “we had abandoned the wild habits of our fathers & have adopted those of the whites & that we would no more look to Indians as chiefs, but only to yourself.”⁴⁷⁸ Andrew Blackbird lectured Commissioner Manypenny that when the Ottawa had begun to purchase their own lands, they had entered upon “the same footing as yourself, we are citizens, your laws govern us.”⁴⁷⁹

One of the most telling passages of the treaty proceedings was the discussion of the issue of individual allotments. In accepting this policy, one after another *Anishnabe* leaders expressed their experience with the challenges of private property ownership. A common refrain was, as Wasson said, “we desire one thing of our father and that is that patents be issued to us with our lands.”⁴⁸⁰ The Ottawa Kenoshance further stressed the importance of patents in protecting Indian land tenure in the future by stating: “It is the desire of my chiefs that we have a patent to hand down to our children from generation to generation.”⁴⁸¹ Andrew Blackbird demonstrated an even sharper understanding of the federal government’s land policy, when he suggested that the Ottawa and Chippewa be given land warrants, similar to those given to military veterans. This would have allowed the *Anishnabeg* to locate lands where they wanted and would have freed them from the Indian Affairs bureaucracy.⁴⁸² This, however, was more autonomy than the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was willing to grant.

Assagon, the *Anishnabe* leader from the Straits of Mackinac region, challenged Commissioner Manypenny on the size of the individual allotments. Rather than accept the proposed 40 to 80-acre allotments, he suggested that the United States government grant “to each of us men, women, & children 160 acres.” Assagon’s 160-acre proposal was in line with

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 38.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 29.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid*, 30.

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, 38.

pre-emption laws that encouraged white settlers to stakeout a quarter section of the public domain. If 160 acres was a desirable farm for whites, why not for Indians? When Manypenny brushed aside Assagon's counter-proposal, the Indian leader eloquently expressed his frustration: "Father you said to me the other day I was rather extravagant in my demands. You seem to think me a glutton, never satisfied. Now I live only on corn soup at home & you have every luxury of life. It is strange that I should try to get as good as you!"⁴⁸³

The Indian leaders also well understood that the promise of land allotments was empty of meaning unless those lands were of the right quality. "We want to select our own lands as we are to cultivate them," argued Kenoshance. Assagon was concerned that many of the lands in the Straits area, where he lived, were "swampy." He argued "we must select only such as are good for agriculture. And this is a decision we have to come to, that we cannot select any lands until we see them, & know whether they are good."⁴⁸⁴ The Lake Superior Chippewa arrived at the council after already inspecting the lands they wanted and presented Commissioner Manypenny with maps of those tracts they preferred.⁴⁸⁵ It is perhaps unfortunate that the federal commissioners did not grant the Ottawa and Chippewa greater autonomy in the execution of the allotments. As Wawbojieg argued "we think we are old enough to take care of our papers. We have bought lands already & we take care of our papers, that our great father gives us. We think we can take as good care of your papers as we do of his."⁴⁸⁶

This same willingness to accept the responsibilities of citizenship was seen in the discussion of taxation. Several leaders requested that the allotments be granted to them free from taxation. Such a request revealed the lessons learned by the Ottawa and the Chippewa regarding the challenges of private property ownership. Failure to pay taxes had already cost some Indians their land. But Wawbojieg and others rejected the notion that the Chippewa would hold their allotments in a manner different than the white man. "I now speak in behalf of all the Chippeways, from our part of the country," he told the commissioners. "I have already taken your path & become a citizen, only I shall never be able to change the color of my skin. My

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 42, 46-7.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

father, we have accepted the land & wish to live on it. We are able to live—not perhaps in as good a style as you do, but we are still able. We are willing to pay our way up on this land—to pay our taxes as you do. You have opened your heart to give us land; we do not think you ought to feed us & our children forever, besides. We will pay our own taxes.”⁴⁸⁷

The Chippewa chief’s pride in his status as a citizen as well as in “the color of my skin” illustrates the greater assertiveness of the Indian leaders at the 1855 Detroit treaty council. This was expressed in their desire to make their own land selections and to control the actual land patents, together with their determination to receive a full accounting of the funds due them from past agreements with the federal government. Assagon made a further appeal for greater autonomy when he critiqued the performance of the mission schools. “Here are boys who have not learned enough from those school masters to say in English ‘give me a drink of water.’ It is our desire that when you come around to pay our annuities you will bring the school money with you so that we can pay it ourselves.” For the *Anishnabeg*, the key to improving the schools was to gain control of the distribution of education fund. “We want to hire our own school masters & then if they do not suit us, we can send them away.”⁴⁸⁸

In exchange for the substantial financial settlement offered in the 1855 treaty, the federal government inserted a release clause to bar further Indian claims. Article 3 stated: “The Ottawa and Chippewa Indians hereby release and discharge the United States from all liability on account of former treaty stipulations”. The article specifies that the waiver included “all claims, legal and equitable on the part of said Indians jointly and severally against the United States, for land, money or other thing guaranteed to said tribes”. Specifically excluded from this article were the fishing and camping rights “secured to the Chippewas of Sault Ste. Marie by the treaty of June 16, 1820.”⁴⁸⁹

At first glance this article would seem to void all pre-existing treaty rights of the Ottawa and Chippewa. The language used is both specific and sweeping: “all claims, legal and equitable.....for land, money or other thing guaranteed to said tribes [emphasis added]”. The reserved right to hunt and fish on ceded lands in Article 13 of the 1836 treaty, to the extent

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 31.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 54.

⁴⁸⁹ Treaty with the Ottawa and Chippewa, 1855, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 729.

that that right still existed, would seem to fall under the category of “other thing[s] guaranteed”. The fact that the article makes specific exception to the Chippewa’s rights at Sault Ste. Marie strengthens the impression that Article 3 of the 1855 treaty was intended to clear the slate on all other Ottawa and Chippewa treaty rights in Michigan. The treaty record, however, is not conclusive on this point. The main emphasis of the commissioners seems to have been to consolidate the government’s obligations to the Ottawa and Chippewa, or as Gilbert suggested to “relieve the General Government of all the contingent expense attending its transactions with the Indians of Michigan.” In a March 1854 letter to Commissioner Manypenny, Indian Agent Gilbert did suggest that another reason for undertaking a new treaty was to do “Justice to the State of Michigan” at the point in which the Indians were going to be moved from a federal responsibility to state citizens. Gilbert’s fear was that with no new treaty, the Indians would be “turned over to the state in the condition of paupers & will be from year to year a continual source of annoyance to her citizens & expense to the Treasury.”⁴⁹⁰ Gilbert may have been making reference to the need to settle Indians on specific tracts of land so as to reduce the “annoyance” of roving, landless Indians on white settlers. In the treaty proceedings, Manypenny described the allotment process as giving to the *Anishnabeg* “a suitable home.”⁴⁹¹ The Ottawa and Chippewa in Detroit accepted this notion that lands would be granted them for their residence. Wasson, an Ottawa spokesman, referred to the allotment lands as “a homestead.”⁴⁹² The *Anishnabeg* also explicitly understood that the Detroit treaty negotiation was intended to bring an end to the Treaty of 1836. “Our great father,” said Assagon, “sent you here to make a final settlement [emphasis added] of the affairs under that treaty of 36.”⁴⁹³ That final settlement included Article 3, and there is evidence to suggest that the Ottawa and Chippewa understood the 1855 treaty in that light.

At the conclusion of the 1855 treaty, several Ottawa and Chippewa leaders expressed relief that the negotiation had gone as well as it did. “When we started here, we were like travelers on a log,” said the Ottawa chief Paybahmesay. “We knew not when we might fall off, or where the

⁴⁹⁰ Henry C. Gilbert to George Manypenny, 6 March 1854, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 368-380.

⁴⁹¹ Proceedings of a Council With the Chippeways and Ottawas, 42.

⁴⁹² *Ibid*, 31.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, 44.

end of it was.” Coming to the end of the journey, Paybahmesay affirmed that “we should be christians, civilized & educated & honest is good.”⁴⁹⁴ Commissioner Manypenny was also pleased with the resulting Treaty of Detroit. He reported to Washington that the agreement would “stimulate and encourage” the Ottawa and Chippewa to continue “their very rapid advancement in civilization.” He further noted that a very large percentage of them were “qualified to enter upon and discharge the duties and assume the obligations imposed upon the citizens of the State of Michigan.”⁴⁹⁵

The Treaty of Detroit was based upon the vision of the Ottawa and Chippewa enduring in Michigan as citizens. The United States government, the State of Michigan, and the Anishnabeg shared this vision themselves. It was for its times a progressive, even a noble vision. In the wake of the treaty, Michigan Indians became regular voters in local and federal elections. In some areas *Anishnabeg* were elected to local political office. In time they became individual property owners and continued their participation in commercial agriculture and fishing, as well as wage labor in the lumber and shipping industries. Yet, in spite of these outward signs of continued progress and social acceptance, there was in the wake of 1855 a gulf between the expectations raised by the treaty and its execution. This gulf, as so often has happened in United States Indian policy, was the result of administrative incompetence and individual avarice.⁴⁹⁶

An unsavory tone was set from the start of the post-treaty era by Henry C. Gilbert, the Indian Agent for Michigan and a co-Commissioner at the 1855 treaty. He personally profited from his position as the dispenser of annuities and land. Subsequent agents were not as corrupt, but many were indolent in the exercise of their duties, not that the federal government encouraged a high standard of performance. The agency budget and staff was cut to the bare bone during the Civil War, making the conscientious exercise of trust responsibilities problematic at best. In addition to incompetence, political and sectarian partisanship further held hostage the best interests of the Ottawa and Chippewa. Indian agents who were adherents to the Methodist Church gradually all but squeezed out of the mission field the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Catholics, in spite of the

⁴⁹⁴ Proceedings of a Council With the Chippeways and Ottawas, 70.

⁴⁹⁵ Manypenny to Charles E. Mix, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 7 August 1855.

⁴⁹⁶ The best study of Michigan Indians in the post 1855 era is Bruce Rubenstein’s *Justice Denied: An Analysis of Indian-White Relations in Michigan, 1855-1889*. For Ottawa and Chippewa participation in electoral politics see, 159-161.

fact that these groups had enjoyed the greatest success developing communities of native Christians. The greatest threat to the *Anishnabeg* was land fraud, and here too they received little help from the Office of Indian Affairs and the State of Michigan.⁴⁹⁷

All of this added up to a sordid failure to live up to the high expectations of the 1855 council. Shawanah, a spokesman for the *Anishnabeg* at Detroit feared such a result. In the concluding moments of the council, he appealed to Commissioner Manypenny: “This treaty is of great importance to us & our children, & we trust you to carry it out faithfully.”⁴⁹⁸ Nor did the Ottawa and the Chippewa meekly submit to the incompetent and corrupt supervision of their affairs.

That the *Anishnabeg* understood the treaty is demonstrated by the way they fought against three problems in the allotment process: the government’s slow withdrawal of land from white settlement, the government’s choice of areas for Indian allotments, and its tardy issuance of patents on the land. As early as September of 1855, the Grand River Ottawa pressed the government to withdraw the block of lands selected for their allotments from public sale. “Some of the Ottawa chiefs have visited me under great anxiety in regard to the delay in withdrawing their lands from entry by whites,” wrote William Richmond, a former Indian agent who was trusted by the Ottawa. Nor did the Ottawa believe that the townships selected for their allotments were suited to their needs. They advocated being located adjacent to Lake Michigan, presumably in order to pursue commercial fishing. Richmond advised Washington that “they think the advantages of being near the Lake will afford them means of support which they will not enjoy on an interior locality.” Richmond added that this band of Ottawa, from the Grand River, still pursued their old seasonal subsistence round. For this reason, he felt that it was urgent that that lands they requested be reserved for them. “They have never learned the importance of a permanent location having had full range of the country, going to hunting grounds during the proper season and then resorting to the planting, fishing, and sugar locations as season and circumstances required—never expecting to find them all combined in one locality. They will find these advantages (those which are to be permanent) planting, fishing, & sugar nearest [to the] Lake”.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ Rubenstein, *Justice Denied*, 7-10, 17, 51-52, 105-11, 141-143.

⁴⁹⁸ *Proceedings of a Council with the Chippeways and Ottawas*, 1855, 70.

⁴⁹⁹ William Richmond to George Manypenny, 3 September 1855, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 950-952.

The Richmond letter is particularly interesting because it sheds light upon a group of people who still pursued a traditional lifestyle. The only chief Richmond mentions by name is “Na bun a qu zick,” who is probably the same person as the Grand River chief who signed the 1855 treaty under the name “Ne-baw-nay-ge-zhick.” This chief and others who accompanied him to Richmond’s house evidently lacked the education to write to Washington on their own. Yet they clearly understood that they were expected to take up allotments and that the federal government was being tardy in beginning the process, which was detrimental to their interests. Their understanding of the situation was sophisticated enough to move beyond simply monitoring the agreement, and they proposed changes in the area to be reserved for their use. The letter further implies that while they had up to this time ranged over a wide range of countryside in pursuit of traditional food sources, they recognized that in future they would be limiting their activities to lands specifically awarded them by the federal government. Therefore, they were very concerned about the location of those specific tracts and were anxious that the most desirable lands not be secured in advance by white settlers and speculators.

A month later, Richmond again addressed the Commissioner of Indian Affairs regarding the Grand River Ottawa. A party of Indians had ventured north to the White River area and inspected lands there. They demonstrated a familiarity with the American land system and a determination to locate lands with high agricultural potential. Prior to the exploration, they secured plats from the land office so as to be able to locate accurately the lands they wanted. In the course of their journey, they came across “a fine district of good farming lands which they would like to have reserved for their Entries, and they request me to make their wishes known to you that you can procure them the withdrawal under the stipulations made at Detroit.”⁵⁰⁰ Between 1857 and 1860, the majority of the Grand River Ottawa relocated northward to the Oceana County lands set aside for them under the 1855 treaty.

The actual movement of Indians northward was handled smoothly via steamship, but it was the only thing that went right about the relocation. Like any settlers in a new area the Ottawa had trouble adjusting to their new homes. In February 1859, Louis Campeau and several other former fur traders complained to the Indian Agent in Detroit that the Ottawa in Oceana County

⁵⁰⁰ Richmond to Manypenny, 12 October 1855, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, Rg 75, M-234, Roll 404, frame 954-955.

“are entirely destitute of anything to eat.”⁵⁰¹ Starvation was a real threat. Hunting was poor in the area and the Ottawa were committed to establishing working farms. Under Article 2 of the 1855 treaty the Ottawa were promised “agricultural implements and carpenters tools, household furniture and building materials, cattle, labor, and all such articles as may be necessary and useful for them in removing to the homes provided and getting permanently settled thereon.”⁵⁰² Yet as their second winter in Oceana County approached they had seen none of the pledged assistance. Bitterly the Ottawa leaders wrote Washington “if we should have known how we are going to be situated we should rather stay at our comfortable homes at Grand River instead of coming into this promised land.” Although the Oceana County Ottawa did not receive what they were promised by the United States, their ability to specify exactly what articles they were promised in the treaty reveals their understanding of the document.⁵⁰³

Ottawa and the Chippewa’s most vocal complaint was the federal government’s tardy execution of the allotment process. In some areas the *Anishnabeg* were required to make their land selections several times because of the incompetence of the Indian Agent. Selections were made under Agent Henry Gilbert only to be ordered redone by Agent A. W. Fitch. His successor D.C. Leach found so many errors in Fitch’s list that he ordered new selections made.⁵⁰⁴ As it was, most Ottawa and Chippewa did not receive patents on their land—something they urgently requested in Detroit in 1855—until 1870, and in some cases not until 1875.⁵⁰⁵ “We almost despaired of getting a title to our land as patents have been promised us from time to time for the past Fifteen Years,” complained the Sault Ste. Marie bands in 1871.⁵⁰⁶ Five years later some of their patents still had not been delivered and as happened to virtually all of the Ottawa and Chippewa their ability to hold the lands they had selected such a long time ago was called into question by the arrival of European-Americans. “White Settlers are encroaching upon us

⁵⁰¹ L. Campeau, A. Campeau, A. Robertson, A.W. Rike to A.W. Fitch, 24 February 1859, MG 234, RG 75, Roll 406, f. 0327-8.

⁵⁰² Treaty With the Ottawa and Chippewa, 1855, *Indian Treaties, 1778-1883*, 728-29.

⁵⁰³ Chiefs and Headmen of the Ottawa to A.B. Greenwood, 12 December 1860, M- 234, RG 75, Roll 406, f 0855-0861.

⁵⁰⁴ E.J. Parker, Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Indian Agent James W. Long, 30 July 1869.

⁵⁰⁵ Rubenstein, *Justice Denied*, 109-111.

⁵⁰⁶ Chief O Shawaw no to H. R. Clum, Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 12 October 1871, National Archives, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG 75, M-234, Roll 409.

everyday,” complained the chiefs, “we are in great fear that the detention of those Patents will cause us a great deal of trouble.”⁵⁰⁷

It would be wrong to give the impression that the 1855 treaty yielded nothing but frustration and failure. Article 2 of the treaty laid the foundation for a series of public day schools dedicated to the teaching of *Anishnabe* boys and girls. The schools enjoyed solid success in teaching basic skills. By 1885, nearly all Michigan Indians were able to speak and use English on a regular basis.⁵⁰⁸ This skill allowed most of the Ottawa and Chippewa to participate in virtually every aspect of the economy in western and northern Michigan. They worked as lumberjacks, river drivers, fishermen, sailors, and farmers, the same wage labor occupations that sustained most European-American residents of the region. Also, as European-Americans living in rural Michigan, they supplemented wage labor and farming by harvesting the wild resources of the Michigan forest through trapping furs, hunting game, and processing maple sugar.⁵⁰⁹

From the perspective of the *Anishnabe* negotiators, the most important accomplishment of the 1855 treaty was its formal recognition of their right to remain in Michigan. This achievement ended an effort native leaders had begun in the early 1830s to defeat the menace of United States Indian policy. They were now recognized as citizens or, at least, as on the road to citizenship. Ottawa and Chippewa leaders understood that citizenship, with its rights and responsibilities, together with land ownership, was their protection from the coercive power of the United States government. Between 1835 and 1855 the focus had been on achieving that protection. In the wake of the treaty the people of Michigan—red and white--were left with the challenge of determining what was the appropriate relationship between citizenship and cultural identity. In this regard 1855 was both an end and a beginning.

The official record reveals only glimpses of what the *Anishnabeg* expected. On the most superficial level Michigan Indians in the post treaty era generally adopted the dress and clothing of the European-Americans. They lived in frame or log houses, sent their children to school, spoke English, and were practicing Christians. Of course, there remained a handful of isolated communities of traditionalists who eschewed altogether or accepted only reluctantly the ways of

⁵⁰⁷ Chief Oshawwano to Secretary of the Interior, 5 July 1875.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 67; U.P. Hedrick, *The Land of the Crooked Tree* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986), 190-193, 201, 220-221.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 155-159.

the white man. The 1890 federal census reported a Mason County band of about seventy-five “pagan Indians” that “prefer to live by themselves, as far from civilization as possible.”⁵¹⁰ For most *Anishnabeg* such an existence was neither desirable nor practical. Yet, in an era lacking modern concepts of cultural diversity, people only had the examples of what had come before as a model. It may be that many Ottawa and Chippewa expected that the old pattern of the Upper Great Lakes region, the race mixing between fur traders and Indians that resulted in the birth of the *Metis*, might continue. To a limited extent it did, but mid-nineteenth century Americans were much more race conscious than the European-Americans who entered the Great Lakes region a hundred years before and it was they who were now the majority society. Most white citizens in the state came to take their cue on race relations from the norms of the eastern states. A New England Yankee visiting Sault Ste. Marie in 1843 could not contain his displeasure at the mixed race crowd of mourners at a child’s funeral. “I was amused, even at a funeral, to observe the different shades of color in the persons that composed the assembly,” sniffed Charles H. Titus. “Every grade was there, from dark copper color to the delicate white. A single glance at the group before me, was enough to tell me that I was on the frontier”.⁵¹¹

Of course, after Michigan passed from the frontier stage race mixing continued, but it was no longer viewed as a norm or as proper. Andrew Blackbird married a blonde haired English woman. Even though he was an author and local official, the white women of 1880s Little Traverse spurned his spouse because, in the words of one memoirist, “she was the wife of an Indian.”⁵¹² By the early twentieth century Indians in some northern Michigan towns were as segregated from the rest of the community as African-Americans in the deep South. In the company town of Nahma, Michigan, for example, whites lived, by order of the Bay De Noc Lumber Company on one side of the railroad tracks, Indians on the other. Yet, even in the face of such prejudice intermarriage between whites and Indians occurred, likely in greater numbers than during the fur trade era. In 1937 a Bureau of Indian Affairs agent noted, that in Nahma “many Indians of the younger generation” were “less than half blood.” The agent noted “This,

⁵¹⁰ Census Office, Department of the Interior, *Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States At the Eleventh Census: 1890* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 330-334.

⁵¹¹ George P. Clark, ed., *Into the Old Northwest: Journeys with Charles H. Titus, 1841-1846* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 97.

⁵¹² Headrick, *Land of the Crooked Tree*, 28.

again, parallels the southern Negro situation, for the Indians are ignored in broad daylight and slept with in the dark.”⁵¹³ Even in the face of prejudice extensive intermarriage did occur.

During the 20th century Ottawa and Chippewa’s, both full-bloods and mixed, in many ways became more and more like other citizens of Michigan. They belonged to Christian Churches, they served in the armed forces during World Wars, they abandoned rural life for the opportunities of the city, and eventually left the cities for the suburbs. The same federal agent quoted above seemed almost disappointed to report in 1937 that even on remote Beaver Island there was “little to distinguish” the Indian from the white population save for “race, patterns of thought, and certain mannerisms in behavior.”⁵¹⁴ Yet, “patterns of thought” are the reservoir of social identity. The inner life of Ottawa and Chippewa people, both those on the reservation and those in the city, often remained true to tradition. A folklorist visiting the Upper Peninsula in 1946 was impressed with the persistence of Chippewa oral traditions, non-materialist values, and extended family households. In his opinion education and literacy did not curb tribal traditions but helped to sustain them.⁵¹⁵ The anomaly of *Anishnabe* persistence in Michigan is the degree to which Indian people have taken the things that were meant to destroy their culture: education, Christianity, participation in the market economy, and turned them into mechanisms to enhance and develop their culture.

During the last century and a half, the Ottawa and Chippewa people have maintained unique cultures within the State of Michigan. They have been able to do this because of survival strategies formulated by the Indian leaders of the treaty generation. The men who negotiated and assented to the Treaty of 1836 were faced with a powerful opponent in the United States government and they had few easy choices before them. In the words of an Ottawa petitioner, the thought of loosing their lands made “the soul shrink with horror.”⁵¹⁶ Yet the leaders of that generation embraced that “horror” and knowingly ceded those lands. The treaty and the drive for land purchases and citizenship that followed were the bold actions of founding fathers that

⁵¹³ E. Scudder Mokeel, Report on the Michigan Indians, 1937, National Archives, Bureau of Indian Affairs, RG 75, p. 7-8.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 11.

⁵¹⁵ Richard M. Dorson, *Bloodstoppers & Bearwalkers: Folk Traditions of the Upper Peninsula* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), 22.

⁵¹⁶ Memorial of the Ottawa delegation, 5 December 1835, N.A., Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Michigan Superintendency, RG75, M-234, Roll 421, frame 722-725.

adapted to painful circumstances and laid the foundation for the *Anishnabe* renaissance of the present.

We cannot understand the past if we fail to recognize its complexity. We do not honor the people of the past if our history belittles their capability to respond to the challenges of their day. The twenty-five band leaders who signed the treaty made a conscious decision to trade their lands for an opportunity to maintain their residence in Michigan. They eventually lost their treaty rights, as they knew they would, to most of the ceded lands, but they also won the right to become citizens of Michigan. Citizenship was not a vehicle for maintaining an ancient way of life; rather it was a means for the *Anishnabeg* to continue the dynamic evolution of their culture. The Indian people of the treaty generation were not the “vanishing Americans” that many Jacksonian officials dismissed, nor were they tragic victims, as the modern cliché would have them, rather they were people faced with tragedy who were determined to survive. They realized that goal not by clinging to a fur trade, hunting lifestyle, but rather by embracing a new way. “I no longer go into the woods & look for wild animals when I want to eat,” proclaimed Louis Wasson, an Ottawa chief in 1855; “but I kill one of the cattle I raise for myself.” By forsaking hunting rights the treaty generation knowingly embraced a new way to live as *Anishnabeg* in Michigan. Andrew Blackbird, the son of Mackadepenessy one of the men who made the 1836 treaty, understood the change that had been embraced when he lectured the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the Ottawa and Chippewa were “on the same footing as yourself, we are citizens, your laws govern us.”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁷ Proceedings of a Council with the Chippewas and Ottawas of Michigan held at the City of Detroit by the Hon. George W. Meany penny [sic] & Henry C. Gilbert, Commissioners of the United States, July 25th 1855, typescript, p. 31, 38.

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Appendix A

CURRICULUM VITAE

Theodore J. Karamanski

CURRICULUM VITAE

THEODORE J. KARAMANSKI

PERSONAL

Date of Birth: August 1, 1953, Chicago, Illinois
Marital Status: Married
Home Address: 40 Palos Commons, Palos Park, IL 60464
Telephone Number: (708)923-1858

EDUCATION

Southwest College, 1971-72
Loyola University of Chicago, 1972-75
Awards: University Honors
Degree obtained: A.B. Honors
Loyola University of Chicago, 1975-79
Awards: History Department Teaching Assistantship, University Fellowship
Degrees obtained: A.M., Ph.D.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Loyola University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Visiting Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor of History.
Courses: United States History 1865, History of the Frontier in the United States, History of Canada, Public History Method and Theory; American Indian History; Family and Community History, Management of Historic Resources; 1979-present.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

National Register Historian, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service, July to September, 1990.
Mid-American Research Center, Loyola University of Chicago, Director. Responsibilities: initiate public history projects, develop research center capacities, 1979 to present.
Fischer-Stein Associates, Carbondale, Illinois; public historian, archaeological field technician, historic preservation planner, 1978-79.
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois. Chicago Portage Archaeological Project; Assistant and Advisor; 1977-79.
La Compagnie des Amis de Fort de Chartres; Fort Kaskaskia Archaeological Project; staff historical advisor; August, 1975.
Illinois Department of Conservation; Fort de Chartres Archaeological Project, volunteer, July, 1975.

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Fur Trade and Exploration: The Opening of the Far Northwest. Norman: University of Oklahoma Pr., 1983.
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With David J. Keene, Cultural Resource Survey of the Cook County Forest Preserve District: Calumet and Palos Division. 95 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center, Loyola University of Chicago, 1980.

With David J. Keene, Archaeological and Historical Resource Literature Search of the Chicago Area: Annotated Bibliography and Mapping of Known Sites. 16 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center, Loyola University of Chicago, 1980.

With David J. Keene, Historical Resource Reconnaissance for the Little Calumet River Flood Control Project. 24 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center for the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District, 1980.

With David J. Keene, Historical Use Study of White Deer Lake Camp, Marquette County, Michigan. 60 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center for the United States Forest Service, Eastern Region Office, 1980.

With John Vogel, Gerald Morin and David J. Keene, Historical Records Study of Logging Industry and Pioneer-Homesteading Cultural Resources on the Hiawatha National Forest. 189 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center for the United States Forest Service, Eastern Region Office (November, 1983).

With Gerald Morin and David J. Keene, History and Cultural Resources: Logging, Mining, and Pioneer Agriculture on the Ottawa National Forest. 204 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center for the United States Forest Service, Eastern Regional Office (July, 1984).

With Michael J. McNerney and Virgil Noble, Inventory and Assessment of Archaeological Resources Within the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. Report prepared by the American

Resource Group for the National Park Service, Midwest Archaeological Research Center (August, 1985).

With Richard Zeitlin, History of the Isle Royale National Park, 386 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center for the National Park Service, April, 1987.

With Timothy Cochrane, Narrative History of the Shoshone National Forest, 232 pp. report prepared by the Mid-American Research Center for the Rocky Mountain Region, United States Forest Service, November, 1988.

With Joanne Grossman, et al., Historic Lighthouses and Navigation Aids on the Illinois Shore of Lake Michigan, 89 pp. report by the Chicago Maritime Society, June, 1990.

Saving the Saint Croix: A History of the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, 244 pp. report to the National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, December, 1992.

The Pictured Rocks: An Administrative History of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, 151 pp. report to the National Park Service, Midwest Regional office, July, 1995.

Nationalized Lakeshore: A History of the Creation and the Administration of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Omaha: National Park Service, 1999).

Time and the River: A History of the St. Croix River Valley (Omaha: National Park Service, 2002).

Reviews:

American Historical Review, American Indian Quarterly, Western Historical Quarterly, Annals, Journal of the Early Republic, Terra Incognita, The Public Historian, Journal of American History, Gateway Heritage.

MEDIA PRODUCTIONS AND EXHIBITS

Executive Producer, "Shaping the Waterways," video-documentary, funded by the Illinois Humanities Council, 1988.

Co-Producer, "Chicago Maritime Folk Festival," exhibits, workshops, and concerts, 1985-86.

Executive Producer, "Work and the Waterways: An Aural History of Midwestern Workers," a radio documentary and secondary school curriculum unit, funded by Loyola University and the Illinois Humanities Council, 1988.

Historian, "Port to Port: 300 years of Shipping on the Great Lakes," Chicago Maritime Museum, December, 1988-1990.

Project Director, "Freshwater Flattops: Lake Michigan's World War II Aircraft Carriers," Chicago Maritime Museum - Navy Pier, May, 1991-1992.

PAPERS BEFORE PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

"Expansion and Economy: The Hudson's Bay Company and the Exploration of the Far Northwest, 1821-1852," Northern Great Plain History Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, October, 1979.

"Historical Archaeology and the Fur Trade: A Historian's Perspective," Society for Historical Archaeology, Albuquerque, January, 1980.

"History as an Empowering Force in Cultural Resource Management," Conference on Public History, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, April, 1980.

"The Historian and Cultural Resource Management," American Historical Association Conference, Washington, D.C., December, 1980.

- Co-chairman and commentator, "History and Archaeology" session, National Conference on Public History, Raleigh, N.C., April, 1981.
- "Cultural Resource Management and Current Historiography: Theoretical Implications of Interdisciplinary Research at the Millwood Plantation Site, South Carolina and the Sharpley's Bottom Site, Mississippi," Society for Historical Archaeology Conference, Philadelphia, January, 1982.
- "Graduate Programs in Public History: The Creation of a Professional Humanist," National Conference on Public History, Chicago, April, 1982.
- Co-chairman, Program Committee, Fourth Annual National Conference on Public History, Chicago, April, 1982.
- "Back to Nature: Elite Recreation Camps in Northern Michigan," Society for Historical Archaeology Conference, Denver, January, 1983.
- "Problems in Teaching Public History," National Conference on Public History, Waterloo, Ontario, May, 1983.
- "Lumberjacks, History and the National Forest," American Historical Association, San Francisco, December, 1983.
- "Problems with the Historical Approach to Historic Site Location," Society for Historical Archaeology, Williamsburg, January, 1984.
- Chairman, "Ethics and the Historian," Organization of American Historians, Los Angeles, April, 1984.
- Chairman, "Early Chicago Waterways," Chicago's Maritime Heritage Conference, March, 1984.
- Commentator, "Great Lakes Fur Trade," Western History Association, St. Paul, Minn., 1984.
- Panelist, "Ethics and the Historical Profession," National Conference on Public History, Phoenix, Arizona, April, 1985.
- "Past and Present: the Role of Oral History in Cultural Resource Management," Oral History Association, Long Beach, CA, October, 1986.
- Commentator, "Great Lakes Maritime History," Illinois State History Symposium, Springfield, IL, December, 1986.
- Workshop, "Integrating Public History into the Curriculum," Kutztown State University, January, 1988.
- "Teaching Students to Use the Past," Missouri Valley History Conference, Omaha, NE, March, 1986.
- "Historical Geography and Cultural Resource Management," Midwestern Historical Geography Conference, Springfield, IL, September, 1987.
- Chaired, "Teaching Public History," National Conference in Public History, Washington, D.C., April, 1987.
- Commentator, "The Northwest Territory: Maritime Interpretations," Illinois State History Symposium, Springfield, December, 1986.
- "Public History and Archival Education," Midwest Archives Conference, Chicago, May, 1989.
- Chairman-Commentator, "Preserving Our Industrial Heritage," American Historical Association, San Francisco, December, 1989.
- "The Future Role of Public History," National Conference on Public History, San Diego, March, 1990.
- "Sources for Chicago Maritime History," Midwest Archives Conference, Chicago, May, 1990.
- Commentator, "Public History and the West," Western History Association, October, 1990.
- Chairman and commentator, "Corporate Funding for the Public's History," National Conference on Public History, Toledo, March, 1991.
- Program Co-chairman, "North American Conference on Sports History," Chicago, May, 1991.
- "The Impact of Public History on Community Studies," National Conference on Public History, Columbia, South Carolina, April, 1992.

Commentator, "Past and Present, Shaping History of the Public" National Council on Public History, Annual meeting, Valley Forge, PA, May, 1993.

"Chicago and the Memory of the Civil War," North Central College, The Civil War as Local History Conference, October, 1994.

"Inventing the Northwoods: The National Park Service and Recreational Development in the Upper Great Lakes Region," National Council on Public History Annual Meeting, Seattle, April, 1996.

Program Co-Chair, "Old Sites, New Stories: The Reinterpretation of Fur Trade History Sites," Great Lakes Public History Workshop, Grand Portage National Landmark, September, 2000.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Choice, Fur Trade and Exploration named one of the "Best Academic Books of 1983."

Congress of Illinois Historical Societies, Special Achievement Award to "Work and the Waterways," 1988.

President, National Council on Public History, 1989-1990.

Illinois State Historical Society, Superior Achievement Award for Rally 'Round the Flag: Chicago and the Civil War, 1994.

Graduate Faculty Member of the Year, Loyola University, 1994.

Faculty Member of the Year, Loyola University, 2004.

GRANTS

Indiana Humanities Council, "Great Lakes Film Project," 1994.

Illinois Humanities Council, "Great Lakes Film Project," 1993

Loyola Mellon Fund, "Chicago and the American Catholic Experience, Conference for the Chicago Archdiocese, 1993.

Illinois Humanities Council, "Work and the Waterways: An Aural History of Midwestern Workers" radio documentary (with M. Campbell) 1987.

Loyola Summer Research Grant, 1985.

Illinois Humanities Council, "Shaping the Waterways" video documentary (with J. Mendes), 1984.

Loyola-Mellon Fund, "The Culture of American Catholicism Conference" (with L. McCaffrey and P. Messbarger), 1983.

Illinois Humanities Council, "Chicago's Maritime Heritage Conference" (with J. Mendes), 1983.

Loyola University Small Grant, 1981, 1983.

Loyola-Mellon Fund, 1982.

Illinois Humanities Council, "Business and History Conference," 1982.

Canadian Studies Faculty Development Grant, 1982.

Chicago Community Trust, 1979.

Total amount of external grants and contracts received: \$781,000.

PUBLIC LECTURES

"Historical and Archaeological Resources of the Cook County Forest Preserves," before various Chicago-area high school classes.

"The Forgotten History and Archaeology of Chicago," radio interviews broadcast on Chicago radio stations WAIT and WNEB.

- "Historical Resources of Summit, Illinois," May, 1981, and "The Prehistory and Early History of Romeoville, Illinois," June, 1981, as part of public programs sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council and the Open Lands Project.
- "The New Corporate History," Panel Discussion, Radio WNEB.
- "Corporate Historians," radio interview, Voice of America, April, 1982.
- "Fur Trade Explorers of the Yukon," Chicago Westerners Corral, April, 1982.
- "Chicago's Maritime Heritage," Panel Discussion, Radio WNEB, July, 1984.
- "Lumberjacks and the Northwoods Frontier," U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Watersmeet, Michigan, July, 1984.
- "History and the Landscape," a series of three lectures for the Newberry Library's "History on the Ground" program, February-May, 1985.
- "Principles of Landscape History," part of the Newberry Library's "Adding the State and Local Perspective to American History" program, July, 1985.
- "Bus Tour of Chicago's Historic Neighborhoods and Suburbs," Know Your Chicago, September, 1985.
- "Historical Perspectives on Canadian-American Free Trade," Chicago Round Table, University of Chicago, November, 1988.
- "Mysteries of the Great Lakes", WLS-ABC TV, October, 1989.
- "Boat Tour of Chicago's Great River Past," Friends of the Chicago River and the Chicago Historical Society, September, 1989, 1992.
- "Public Perceptions of History," Chicago Historical Society, October, 1989.
- "The Public and Professional Image of Public History," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, June, 1990.
- "Boat Tour of the Upper Illinois Waterway" (with H. Platt), Society for Industrial Archaeology, May, 1991.
- "History of the Chicago River," Friends of the Chicago River, June, 1991.
- "Navy Pier and Chicago Memories," WBEZ radio, May, 1991.
- "The New Military History of the Civil War" Chicago Historical Society Volunteer Training Workshop, April, 1991 and 1992.
- "The Chicago River," WLS-ABC TV, July, 1991.
- "Before Riverside: the Early History of the Des Plaines River Valley" Riverside Historical Commission, September, 1991.
- "Hunting Societies and the Settlement of the Illinois Prairie," Chicago Academy of Sciences - Chicago Historical Society Prairie Studies Program, November, 1991.
- "The Civil War as Local History," Elmhurst Historical Society, November, 1993.
- "Illinois and the Civil War," Lecture Series at the Chicago Historical Society, April, 1992.
- "Why They Fought: Understanding Civil War Soldiers," Chicago Historical Society, February, 1995, 1996, 1997.
- "Critical Events in Chicago Environmental History" Chicago Historical Society, October, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004.
- "Environmental Imagination and Making of Chicago," National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, Lewis University, June, July, August, 2004.

COMMITTEES (selected)

Chair, Editorial Board, Illinois History Journal, 1994-96.

Annual Meeting Program, Illinois State Historical Society, 1995-96.

National Park Service-Newberry Library, Advisory Board, Labor History National Landmark Study, 1994-97.

Chair, Conference Committee, Chicago Archdiocese Sesquicentennial, 1996-97.

Chair, Core Curriculum Task Force, College of Arts and Sciences, Loyola University, 1995-98.

Interpretation Committee, Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, 1988-1997.

National Council on Public History, Past President.

National Council on Public History, Chair, Awards Committee, 2004-present.

Director, New Frontiers Program, Loyola University, 2002-present.