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**Indian Agent and Wilderness Scholar:
The Life of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft**

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CHAPTER VI

Mackinac and the Treaty

On May 24, 1833, Schoolcraft and his family embarked on a schooner for Mackinac carrying with them their furniture and the Agent's collection of books, minerals, and Indian curios. Three days later they reached the Island and began settling into the two story Agency building that stood on the slope below the fort. The village itself consisted chiefly of small, bark-covered log cabins with the more pretentious houses of the larger traders strung out along the base of the hill behind the town. The great fur trading era was now drawing to a close and most residents depended upon the fisheries or the garrison for a livelihood. Here, as at the Sault, a heterogeneous population of predominantly French Canadian or mixed-blood ancestry lived next to a small cluster of Indian lodges. Anglo-American society revolved about the Presbyterian mission and church directed by the Reverend William Ferry with American Fur Company (AFC) Manager Robert Stuart its most prominent patron.¹

Even before his removal from the Sault Schoolcraft had found the existing Mackinac Agency structure inadequate to his tastes and obtained an allowance of several hundred dollars for repairs. The single building that served the combined purposes of office, storehouse, and blacksmith shop also proved too small for his liking and he drew up plans for a more spacious office. Early in 1834 he proposed to convert the existing building into an enlarged blacksmith shop and to erect

a thirty-foot square edifice with half-basement for use as an office and storehouse. These proposals failed to impress Governor Porter who refused to allow any funds for the purpose and instructed the Agent to use one of the rooms in the Agency house as an office instead.²

Early in 1833 the Department officially terminated the Mackinac Subagency and the Agent discharged George Johnston from that position although he remained employed as Agency interpreter. The following year Congress provided for the general reorganization of the Indian Department with major repercussions for the newly consolidated Agency. One provision standardized the salary of all Indian agents at \$1,500 while another eliminated the operation of all subagencies within the limits of established agencies. This led to the closing of the Sault Subagency that summer. Thereafter the commandant at Fort Brady acted as Subagent although Schoolcraft continued to licence and regulate traders in that area. The new law also limited each agency to a single interpreter for each native language used and halted those blacksmith operations not directly specified by treaty. The latter provision provoked great dissatisfaction among the Chippewas as the Mackinac shop provided them with useful free repairs for their guns, traps, kettles, and other hardware. At the same time the Department instituted a policy of severe fiscal retrenchment, reducing the Agent's 1836 budget to half that of 1834 and largely obviating the gains made during the previous four years.

Item	1834	1836
Agent's salary	\$1,400	\$1,500
Subagent's salary	500	---
Interpreters	995	300
Blacksmith & shop	1,820	970
Provisions	800	---
Presents	700	400
Contingencies	450	150
	<hr/> \$6,665	<hr/> \$3,320

Finally, in 1835 the Department created a new subagency on the Crow Wing River to serve the Chippewa bands of the upper Mississippi. This action, long advocated by the Indians, Taliaferro, and Schoolcraft, detached the area west of the St. Croix and St. Louis rivers (i.e. modern Minnesota) from the Sault Agency and attached it to William Clark's Superintendency. In the process it reduced the size of the combined Sault-Mackinac Agency by about one-third. Within the constraints imposed by this reorganization and his reduced allowances the Agent continued to carry out the routine duties of the office. This involved meeting with visiting Indians to hear their complaints and to explain government policy; the distribution of medals, flags, and gifts to friends of the United States; the issue of provisions to needy Indians; and the licencing and regulation of the Indian trade.³

Schoolcraft's expeditions into the interior of his Agency in 1831 and 1832 ultimately failed to accomplish their official objective of establishing peace between the Chippewa and the Sioux. In the spring of 1833 the Agent received reports of continuing large scale hostilities. The following year Congress appropriated funds to implement the boundary surveys provided for in the Treaty of Prairie du Chien nine years previously. The official survey effected in 1835 laid out a portion of the Sioux-Chippewa boundary beginning a short distance above Prairie du Chien and extending north for about two hundred miles. Upon reaching the latter point the officer in charge of the military escort decided to return to Fort Snelling, forcing the termination of the project some 120 miles short of its objective. In practice, even that limited boundary line failed to avert hostilities and the conflict continued with varying degrees of intensity until the pressure of white settlement forced the Sioux out of Minnesota.⁴

Efforts to halt the liquor trade in the Indian Country proved equally abortive. On July 9, 1832, Congress enacted a total ban on the introduction of liquor into the Indian Country. Unhappily, as Schoolcraft well knew, mere legislative enactment had little effect upon the continuing flow of ardent spirits into his Agency. With the development of white

settlement at Green Bay and St. Peter's liquor began to enter the Lake Superior country from those points as well as from the Sault. It flowed into the inland Chippewa country from the Mississippi and St. Croix, along the Chippewa River, and up the Menominee River from Green Bay. In 1833 Robert Stuart urged Governor Porter to re-establish the La Pointe Subagency or else create a subagency on the source of the Menominee River in an effort to stem the latter flow (from non-AFC traders). Schoolcraft himself later identified the major centers of the trade in Michigan Territory as the Menominee River, Saginaw, St. Ignace, and Grand River, into all of which points the AFC imported liquor on a large scale.⁵

The crux of the difficulty lay in the lack of means for enforcing the Indian intercourse laws. This remained the case throughout Schoolcraft's career in the Department. As he later wrote in his *Personal Memoirs*,

. . . Little does the spirit of commerce care how many Indians die inebriates, if it can be assured of beaver skins . . .

This subject of ardent spirits is a constantly recurring one in every possible form; and no little time of an agent of Indian affairs, and no small part of his troubles and vexations, are due to it. The traders and citizens generally, on the frontiers, are leagued in their *supposed interests* to break down, or evade the laws, Congressional and territorial, which exclude it, or make it an offence to sell or give it. If an agent aims honestly to put the law in force, he must expect to encounter obloquy. If he appeals to the local courts it is ten to one that nine-tenths of his jury are offenders in this very thing. So far as the American Fur Company is concerned . . . the argument is, that "on the lines"—that the Hudson's Bay Company use it, and that their trade would suffer if they had not "some". And they thus override the agents, by appealing to higher powers, and so get permits annually, for a limited quantity, of which *they* and not the *agents* are the judges. In this way the independence of the agents is constantly kept down, and made to bend to a species of mock popular will.

In practice Taliaferro, Boyd, and other agents in the region experienced the same difficulty and felt a sense of frustration

which made them perhaps the quicker to point out each other's lapses on the subject.⁶

Following the consolidation of the Sault and Mackinac agencies Schoolcraft prepared annual reports respecting the mission schools operating within his jurisdiction. He had first acquired official responsibility of this character under the Treaty of Fond du Lac which provided an annuity for the support of an Indian school on the St. Mary's River. In August, 1828, he discussed the subject with Jedediah Stevens of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM). That Board had recently decided to apply for the Fond du Lac Treaty education funds in order to establish a mission school some thirty miles below the Sault at a location suitable for agriculture. In accordance with the Agent's suggestions the Board proposed to employ a practical farmer and mechanics at the school, leaving the adult Indians unhindered and teaching their children without forcing any sudden change in their basic way of life. Schoolcraft then wrote McKenney endorsing the plan. As he explained,

. . . It is, in fact, sending the school to the children, instead of sending them from their parents for the purpose of being embodied for instruction, at remote points. It has been calculated to obviate objections which have long been urged by the Indians, on various grounds, and to afford them the benefits of instruction with as little *formality & parade* and as slight changes in their domestic arrangements, as may be deemed essential to success. By keeping out of sight the display of extensive buildings . . . no suspicious feelings will be excited, & it will have a tendency to quiet the suggestions of superstition and incredulity. It will in fine, be sending the teacher to the cottages of the Indians where if any where, in my humble opinion, we are to look for any real, practical, or permanent benefits, to be rendered them as a people, by moral discipline & eleemosynary aid.

By this time, however, McKenney had already awarded the treaty education funds to the Baptist Board.⁷

The Reverend Abel Bingham, the Baptist missionary who arrived at the Sault in October, 1828, personified many of the

traits that contributed to the general lack of success among Protestant missionaries working among the Indians. He possessed only an average intelligence and his outlook on the world was decidedly narrow. Dogmatic in his theological views, he preached lengthy sermons of a tedious character that can not have awakened many Indian hearts. In his twenty-five years at the Sault he never mastered the Chippewa tongue, either from incapacity or lack of motivation. At the same time he displayed an open honesty and willingness to forgive and forget unusual in this corner of the world. Shortly after his arrival he became associated with several individuals with whom the Agent was on bad terms at the time, notably Dr. James, John Hulbert, and trader Isaac Butterfield. During the next two years Schoolcraft carried on something of a sporadic personal vendetta against the minister/missionary, but the dispute subsequently cooled and the Agent ultimately conceded that Bingham possessed a number of good qualities. More seriously from the point of view of policy, however, Bingham and the Baptists followed precisely the approach to Indian education that Schoolcraft believed the most costly and least effective. That is, they constructed an expensive full-scale boarding school at the Sault where a limited number of Indian children lived and studied in isolation from their own families and their native culture, in direct opposition to the Schoolcraft-ABCFM model of day schools operating in the field.⁸

It therefore came as no surprise that in his first official report on mission schools written at Mackinac Schoolcraft strongly criticized Bingham's mission school for its inefficiency. During its first four years of operation that institution had received only twenty-four boarding scholars, four of whom had died. The Mackinac mission, on the other hand, had received 191 boarding pupils in its ten years of operation. None of the male pupils at the latter school had reverted to the hunter state, the Agent wrote, although only about one-sixth of them had professed religion. The return of these scholars to their homes, he believed, had proved decidedly beneficial to the Indians at large. At this time the small ABCFM mission station at La Pointe attracted from twenty to twenty-five day pupils and the Methodists had begun establishing a mission school

and agricultural colony on the St. Mary's River. In succeeding years Schoolcraft obtained oxen, plow, harrow, and log chains for the latter institution from the Indian civilization fund. At one point a discouraged Reverend Bingham offered to sell the Baptist mission to the Methodists, but the proposal came to nothing and he continued his largely fruitless labors at the Sault for another twenty years.⁹

Despite the Agent's optimistic report the Mackinac mission had clearly entered upon a period of decline after reaching its operating peak in the late twenties. In 1829 it enrolled 104 boarding scholars, owned property valued at \$10,000 and operated on a budget of \$4,800, only \$300 of which came from government sources. Boys at the school worked on the mission farm or in the shoemaking or blacksmith shop while girls helped with the housework. In the fall of that year the new Presbyterian church opened to an average Sunday congregation of two hundred or more. The high cost of operations due to the large proportion of boarding students alarmed the ABCFM, however, particularly since most of the students were the children of traders or mixed-bloods (According to McKenney only 11 of the 153 pupils at the school in 1826 were full-blooded Indians). The decline of the village with the stagnation of the fur trade discouraged Reverend Ferry who had directed the mission from its inception. In 1834 he left Mackinac for other fields and the ministry fell vacant although the mission school continued to operate briefly under the direction of Lucius Garey, who was not an ordained minister.

That September David Greene wrote Schoolcraft of the difficulties involved in securing a replacement for Ferry. Like most missionary societies the ABCFM found that foreign fields in the midst of dense, settled populations speaking a single language offered far greater attractions to potential missionaries than did the prospect of laboring among the scattered, migratory bands of Native Americans. The Agent read this letter with some trepidation and lamented that,

. . . the deep debt of duty and love, which we owe the natives, can be so lightly esteemed. All the duty we owe to foreign heathens, is not in my opinion, deemed by God, so

great, as to excuse us of any portion of our duty to the Indians of our continent . . . A Soul is as valuable in the American woods, as in the forests of India . . . has any single church in Bombay, ever returned as many converts, white & red, as Mackinac? Has not Mackinac been the nucleus of Christianity in the north west? Is it not so still? And shall the mission & Church now be suffered to languish? Is the mere transference of the pastor, so blighting a calamity? Can not God operate by another hand? . . .

He then proposed to convert the mission into a seminary for Indian children of unusual promise. A talented person, placed at its head, might also preach to the members of the church. In this way it could raise a class of evangelists from among the Indians to bring the gospels to their people. At the same time it might continue to operate the mission day school for local children at Mackinac.¹⁰

Schoolcraft's anxiety to keep the mission school open arose in large part from personal considerations. His decision to remove to Mackinac from the Sault had resulted largely from the advantages offered by the mission and the church. He believed that the school could educate his children more satisfactorily than Bingham's mission school, and in the spring of 1834 he sent both of them to the Mackinac establishment. Consequently he made strenuous exertions to find a successor to Ferry in order to keep the mission a going concern. During a visit to Detroit that summer he emphasized to his wife the undesirability of their children attending the Mackinac garrison school where they would come into contact with children of bad language and low manners. Under such circumstances, should the mission school close he would find it preferable to educate the children at home rather than sacrifice their moral piety for the sake of advancing them a few months in their studies. In the event this was the course he ultimately followed.¹¹

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Save for a few brief visits to Detroit the Agent devoted most of the two and a half years following the summer of 1833

(when he briefly visited the East) to routine Agency business, investigations into Chippewa language and mythology and the history of Mackinac, and to domestic and religious matters. He became an elder in the Presbyterian Church in January, 1834, and served as its clerk as well. During the winter of 1834-1835 he participated in the first major revival on the Island since Ferry's efforts in 1828-1829. He continued to practice daily worship services with scripture readings and prayers within his family circle. In January, 1834, he presented his young children with their own bibles, for he believed that they could not too early begin their study of the scriptures. He worked to promote the cause of temperance as well, and early in 1835 the members of his household including servants and guests signed a pledge to make water their common beverage. The Agent likewise made strenuous, if unsuccessful, efforts to secure a regular minister for the mission church.¹²

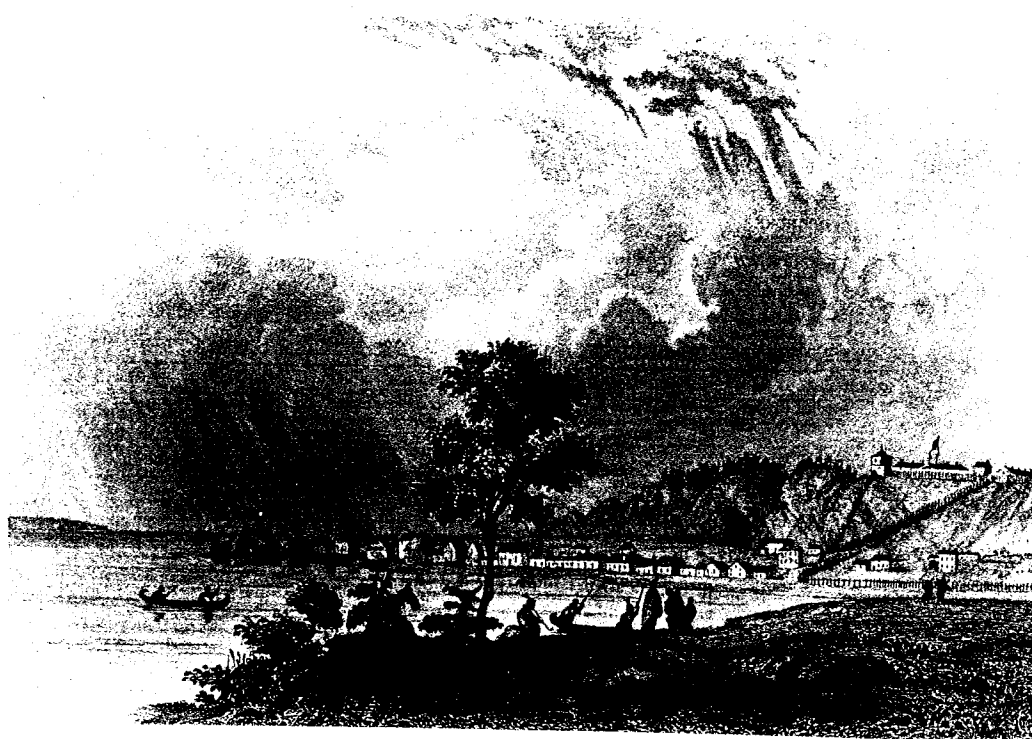
Jane Schoolcraft's health remained delicate during these years, but the children suffered no more than the usual ailments and family life continued much as before. The Agent kept a carriage in which they occasionally rode about the Island to view the sights. Schoolcraft himself took walks with his children to gather wildflowers and, in the springtime, busied himself with horticultural tasks, pruning, planting, and transplanting in the Agency gardens which he turned into a local showplace. On a visit to Green Bay in the summer of 1835 he purchased a tame deer which provided the family with much amusement. In addition, the Schoolcrafts entertained a stream of distinguished visitors such as English geologist George Featherstonhaugh, Dr. Chandler Robbins Gilman of New York, and General Robert Patterson of Philadelphia. To one of the Agent's turn of mind such a life did not lack attractions although its remoteness did little to gratify his taste for genteel literary evenings.¹³

The problem of raising and preparing his children for adult life gave Schoolcraft a great deal of anxiety during these years. The nature of his ambitions for them clearly emerges from the terms of the will he drew up shortly before leaving for the East in the autumn of 1835. There he expressed his wish that Johnny should receive a college education and, if con-

verted, study divinity. Janee, in turn, should enjoy all the advantages of education in a female seminary. As often happens, he thereby projected his own retrospectively frustrated educational aspirations upon his children. He also felt deeply concerned that they should undergo conversion upon reaching the age of discretion and worried about their childish behavior. On at least one occasion he wrote his wife of his concern lest they run wild. He particularly worried about Johnny who evidently enjoyed associating with the rougher servants. In order to reduce this moral hazard he secured a pair of Presbyterian churchgoers as servants during his summer visit to Detroit in 1835.¹⁴

These years at Mackinac also brought the Agent increasing demands for assistance from his less successful relatives. His younger brother Abraham, formerly a glasscutter and then unsuccessful grocer at Albany, moved to Detroit in 1832. That year the Agent purchased some provisions from him for official use at well above current prices, thereby incurring an outburst of wrath from Governor Porter. At about the same time he unsuccessfully urged Cass to appoint Abraham Subagent at the Sault. He subsequently loaned his brother funds with which to pay off his old creditors, but Abraham's new business ventures proved equally unprofitable and he took up residence on a farm near Detroit. Meanwhile, family affairs at Vernon went from bad to worse. Schoolcraft's mother had died in 1832 and rumors reached Michigan that the Colonel, now living alone, had become a drunkard. Despite entreaties from his children, Lawrence Schoolcraft refused to move to Michigan and remained home alone on his farm, boarding out for his meals and subsisting on his pension with occasional assistance from the Agent.¹⁵

James Schoolcraft returned from the East in 1832 and spent some time in Detroit before returning to the Sault whence he bombarded the Agent and Cass with demands for assistance in securing the sutlership at Fort Brady. Frustrated in this attempt, he further cemented the Schoolcraft-Johnston alliance following a colorful courtship. In February, 1834, he complained that someone at the Sault had started rumors that Anne Maria Johnston had become his kept mistress. Further



Michilimackinack, from H. R. Schoolcraft, History of the Indian Tribes of the United States: Their Present Condition and Prospects, and a Sketch of their Ancient Status (Philadelphia, 1854) (Clarke Historical Library)



Old Indian Agency Building on Mackinac Island (Mackinac Island State Park Commission)

investigation convinced him that the tale had originated with Charlotte Johnston MacMurray who, with her husband, the Anglican missionary at the Canadian Sault, her sister Eliza, and her mother, opposed Anne Maria's infatuation with James. In the course of a family dispute over the matter Charlotte seized Anne Maria and held her while Mrs. Johnston beat the recalcitrant daughter with the fire tongs. The widow also forbade James the house, an order which he casually disregarded. The frustrated mother then referred the matter to the Agent and his wife, both of whom opposed the match. This united front proved of no avail, however, for the couple married at the end of November, 1834, then moved into the Johnston house while waiting for something to turn up.¹⁶

The Johnston clan likewise posed a growing burden for the Agent at this time. John Johnston's personal estate had inventoried at some \$1,299 besides the house and land claim at the Sault. Mrs. Johnston sold the family's small trading business to the AFC in 1831 and thereafter the family sank deeper into poverty. It now depended on its garden and Mrs. Johnston's annual fishing and sugar making operations for survival. William Johnston began working as the Mackinac Agency interpreter in 1834 after his brother George left in a huff to resume his unprofitable trading operations. Within this precarious financial situation the Johnstons came increasingly to live in a world of paper claims. These included claims against both the United States and Great Britain arising from the trader's losses in 1814, together with claims involving the family's Irish estate. Susan Johnston urged the Agent to give up his official position in order to handle the Irish claims and he actually requested an official leave of absence to visit England and Ireland in the autumn of 1835. In reality, these claims involved seriously inflated, if not wholly imaginary, sums with little hope for favorable settlement.¹⁷

If his relatives found themselves increasingly hard up during these years, the Agent's own financial position showed continued improvement. His will drawn up in October, 1835, listed stock in the Bank of Michigan valued at \$5,500 together with shares in the Michigan Steamboat Company with a face value of \$1,000. He had invested \$2,000 in real estate in the Green

Bay district and \$1,000 in a similar Michigan venture. In addition, he held \$1,370 in claims against the United States and personal notes. From this total one must deduct the \$2,000 that he borrowed to finance the Green Bay ventures, leaving a net worth of \$8,870, still on the high side given a serious overvaluation of his stock. Altogether his assets probably amounted to some \$6,000, about double his estimated net worth of five years before (this figure excludes the value of his personal property, which he valued at \$1,500 in 1830). This marked a comfortable level of affluence although, like his friends, the Agent hoped to accumulate a fortune a little more rapidly. In any event, given his free house, extensive gardens, and other perquisites of office, he could maintain his middle-class lifestyle in the wilderness without financial strain.¹⁸

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In the summer of 1835 a delegation of Ottawa chiefs visited the Mackinac Agency and offered to sell Drummond Island to the United States. Schoolcraft notified his superiors of the proposal and received instructions to investigate possible terms of sale. At the same time, he should also inquire whether the Indians living north of the Grand River on the Lower Peninsula would be willing to part with their lands and, if so, on what terms. During his subsequent council with Chippewa and Ottawa chiefs from that vicinity several of the latter asked to visit Washington in order to express their views directly to the President. The Agent then requested permission to visit the capital himself in order to discuss the preliminary points of a possible treaty with his superiors. He added that most of the bands now favored selling on favorable terms with provisions for reservations, the right to hunt on the ceded lands, and the designation of a future place of residence. Although the largely Catholic Ottawas of L'Arbre Croche dissented from this view, he believed that their objections could be overcome.¹⁹

Less than a week after penning this report to Commissioner Herring the Agent himself set off for Washington. At Detroit he learned that the Department had instructed him to

remain at Mackinac if he had not already left for the East. In the latter case he might proceed to Washington, but only at his own expense. The Agent did not hesitate at this point, for the proposed treaty discussions represented only one of several distinct objects in making the trip. By the time he left Mackinac he had decided to seek the governorship of the proposed Wisconsin Territory, a position offering better pay and greater visibility than his current post. He also expected to forward the Johnston Estate's spoliation claim before Congress. In addition, he hoped to find a New York publisher willing to reissue his earlier travel accounts. Finally, he sought to publish a volume of Indian oral tales that he had collected over the years. Hopefully he would secure these literary objects during a visit to New York following his stay at the national capital.²⁰

After a brief pause in Detroit Schoolcraft proceeded to Albany where he spent several days collecting recommendations from various political figures. He reached New York on the eighth of December and there arranged with Ramsey Crooks, President of the reorganized AFC, to forward papers relating to the Johnston Estate claim to the appropriate congressional committee. He also tentatively arranged with Harper and Brothers to print his Indian tales. These matters disposed of, he continued on to Philadelphia where he secured another letter of recommendation from General Robert Patterson. Finally, he reached Washington on December twenty-second, only to discover that official matters had taken a totally unforeseen course.²¹

Schoolcraft's September councils with the Michigan Indians had aroused much anxiety among the Ottawas of L'Arbre Croche. There Augustin Hamelin, an educated Ottawa mixed-blood and sometime teacher at one of the mission schools, had secured a document signed by various Ottawas designating him head chief of the tribe, a largely honorific title allegedly once held by his grandfather. Hamelin had informed the chiefs that Schoolcraft had met with them, not on instructions from Washington, but in concert with farmers who wished to obtain their lands for nothing. He then urged them to accompany him to Washington to meet directly with the Great Father. Although the Ottawas divided on the question, eight of them

accompanied Hamelin to the capital where they arrived about the beginning of December. There they met with Cass and asked to be allowed to remain on their own lands. At the same time they offered to sell certain islands in Lake Michigan together with the land lying north of the Straits (which actually belonged to the Chippewas) to the United States. During their discussions they also asked the government to supply additional funds for Indian education to the Catholic mission schools in Michigan Territory.²²

Cass rejected this spurious offer but seized upon the opportunity it presented for negotiating a general cession of Chippewa and Ottawa lands in Michigan. He therefore decided to ask for a full scale treaty council with deputations from the appropriate bands of those tribes at Washington that winter. A single cession would obviate the administrative and fiscal complexities involved in negotiating a series of smaller cessions. As a proponent of western economic development Cass naturally favored a move that would promote the already surging flow of settlers into Michigan. Not surprisingly, he received strong support from Michigan Senator-elect Lucius Lyon, a land agent for eastern capitalists and major land speculator in his own right. When word of the proposed councils reached Detroit Acting Governor Stevens T. Mason inserted a call for the general extinguishment of Indian title to lands on the Lower Peninsula into his opening address to the Michigan Legislature. At the same time, because the region included large tracts of land unsuited to agricultural use, the Indians might remain there for some years, hunting on ceded but unoccupied land while receiving their annuities. Should they agree to cede the lands in question the United States might offer relatively liberal terms including the payment of their debts as well as future annuities. As a result of these considerations, the day after his arrival in Washington the Agent learned that the Department now expected him to assemble a full deputation of Chippewa and Ottawa chiefs at the capital as soon as possible in order to negotiate a final treaty.²³

He then dispatched the instructions necessary to set the treaty-making machinery in motion. First he wrote Trowbridge at the Bank of Michigan (where the latter was Cashier) and

arranged to provide the funds required to cover the expenses of Indian delegations passing through Detroit en route to Washington. He also directed Captain John Clitz at Mackinac and AFC trader Rix Robinson at Grand River to assemble deputations of chiefs from the bands in those districts. He wrote Ramsey Crooks to inform him of the proposed treaty negotiations and arranged for him to send down trader John Holliday, then visiting in New York, to assist the six Ottawa chiefs remaining in Washington (Hamelin and the two others had returned to Michigan) and to act as interpreter for the treaty councils. Owing to the difficulty in communications during the winter season, however, another two months passed before the delegations had assembled and negotiations could begin.²⁴

As the government had been expected to hold the treaty councils at Mackinac the following summer this development gave rise to suspicions among the traders. Ordinarily the United States treated with Indians in the field during the summer months. These councils attracted not only the tribesmen themselves, but also their mixed-blood relatives together with the traders (themselves often related by marriage) who held accounts for debts allegedly incurred by the Indians. By January the Michigan tribes had dispersed for the winter hunt which made it particularly difficult to assemble full delegations and transport them to Washington. Hence the traders assumed that some sinister motive lay behind the government's move. Crooks concluded that the real object in the business was to get the Indians' land without paying their debts as many claimants would not learn of the treaty negotiations in time to attend. Now, unless the traders took immediate action to safeguard their claims, the Indians might well forget to make a provision for them. In that case, he doubted whether the Indian Agent or the treaty commissioner would remind them of the large amount that they owed. This view may not have been far from the truth, for some years earlier Cass had complained that,

The greatest difficulties, which the negotiations of Indian treaties have to encounter, result from the interested

views of those, who are or have been engaged in the Indian trade, and who attend for the purpose of prevailing upon the Indians to urge a grant of money or of lands in payment of those debts. As this mode of payment is equally agreeable to both parties, there is little difficulty in persuading the Indians to urge it.

John Drew of the Mackinac trading firm of Biddle & Drew decided to attend the treaty councils in person, carrying along Robert Stuart's accounts from the old AFC, the personal accounts of Mackinac trader Samuel Abbott, and some mixed-blood claims as well. Robinson concluded that it would not be prudent to oppose the government and also attended in person. The AFC manager at Detroit later persuaded him that a treaty council in Washington would be preferable to a meeting in the field as it would operate to discourage inflated claims. At the same time he advised Robinson to persuade the Indians to sell, and to have them well trained in what to ask for before they reached Washington.²⁵

During the three month interval before the opening of treaty negotiations Schoolcraft assiduously pursued his other objectives at the national capital. His efforts to obtain approval of the Johnston Estate spoliation claim proved fruitless as the House Committee on Claims reiterated its earlier rejection of that claim. His quest for higher office initially appeared to hold out prospects of more positive results. Shortly after his arrival he visited Cass, whose influence with Old Hickory he considerably overrated. The Secretary of War then arranged for him to attend a Christmas eve party at which he met the President. Schoolcraft had already sent an appropriate selection of Christmas gifts to the White House — an Indian card rack for General Jackson together with moccasins, sugar cakes, and a quilted basket for Mrs. Donelson, wife of his nephew and private secretary. The next day he again called on the President to whom he presented his letters of recommendation. He also met with Calhoun and Benton and was introduced to Postmaster General Amos Kendall. Following this initial burst of activity he paused to await developments and

gan Superintendent and Mackinac Agent together with sub-agencies at Detroit (Saginaw), Green Bay, and either Mackinac or the Sault as well as an office clerk at Detroit. Such a reorganization would enable Schoolcraft, as Superintendent, to retain the Mackinac Agency while spending his winters at Detroit. Since any changes of this sort must await the approval of the Secretary of War and the workings of the federal bureaucracy, Schoolcraft did not advise his wife of this project until mid-March, 1836.²⁸

Meanwhile he continued with preparations for the treaty negotiations. As the Catholic Ottawas of L'Arbre Croche opposed selling their lands he instructed his wife to tell Captain Clitz not to include Catholic chiefs in the local delegation. He then made an unsuccessful effort to obtain the signatures of non-Catholic principal men at those villages to a petition authorizing the sale of lands. His brother-in-law William Johnston, however, predicted that the rest of the chiefs coming to Washington would agree to sell if separately approached. Although fearful of assenting to the sale in each other's presence, he wrote, they would sign individually if assured of receiving land for their children. Johnston then added,

. . . Your letters have acted like an electrick shock, on all the inhabitants of the place. And all are busy in talking of their claims, by losses, and through ties of blood. And I would ask of you if our claims are good, prior to those transferred to the A. F. Co. commencing from the time I commenced the Indian trade in 1828 (with Mrs. Johnston) til 1831 and also those that are previous to that date. I wish you would give me advice in relation to them.

Upon further consideration Johnston found these prospects so alluring that he persuaded his uncle Waiskey, a chief at the Sault, to sign a document acknowledging a debt of \$20,000 to Mrs. Johnston. He then wrote his brother-in-law of his happiness to think that the Agent would let no opportunity pass unnoticed which could advance the family's interest.²⁹

At the same time the AFC traders developed their strategy for handling the treaty councils. Both Lyon and Schoolcraft assured Robinson and Crooks that all just claims held by the

traders would be paid. Crooks, however, anticipated serious difficulties arising from the problem of who would judge the equity of the debt claims and the procedure to be followed in doing so. The government, he speculated, would try to postpone the debt question until the Indians had sold their land. Then it would offer, not the actual amount due, but whatever it deemed just and equitable. In a letter to Robinson he disclaimed any intention of obstructing the negotiations, but warned that the only way to secure the payment of the claims was to have them admitted, allowed, and inserted in the treaty.³⁰

On the second of March three of the Ottawa chiefs from Grand River arrived in Washington and other delegates soon followed. Robert Stuart also journeyed to the capital to look after the claims of the old AFC. On the fourteenth of that month Cass appointed Schoolcraft the sole treaty commissioner. Some years before the then Governor had outlined to Calhoun the burden resting upon those chosen to negotiate with the Indians,

An Indian negotiator is placed by the execution of his duty in a peculiar situation. He is required by his instructions to procure a cession upon the best terms for the United States. On the other hand, neither the feelings of the age, the opinions of the Country, nor the principles of the government permit, that he should extort from the wanderers of the forest the inheritance of their forefathers for the merest pittance, which they may be induced to take. There are more considerations, connected with this subject, which no honourable man will disregard. The execution of the duty is at best irksome and unpleasant. A part of the community see in every Indian negotiation a tissue of fraud and deceit, by which the land of the Indians is acquired with the merest shadow of a compensation. Another can discern nothing but an useless and lavish expenditure of the public money. Between these discordant opinions, it is difficult to pursue any course, which shall render general satisfaction.

As Schoolcraft soon discovered, Cass had not understated the difficulties he must face.³¹

this point Augustin Hamelin rose to denounce the proceedings, stating that white men who wanted reserves had told the chiefs what to say. They had disturbed the Indian councils almost continuously, he complained, calling the chiefs out and instructing them to refuse the government's terms in order to secure better terms at a future treaty council. Left unmolested, he declared, the Indians would agree to the sale of their land if allowed to select reservations for themselves. The Agent then ordered that the Indian delegates be assured of complete privacy in their deliberations. Up to this point Hamelin had been regarded as a tool of Mackinac trader Samuel Abbott. His abrupt shift at this time may have sprung from personal conviction, or may have resulted from Schoolcraft's offer of future government employment and a cash grant under the mixed-blood provisions of the treaty.³⁴

That evening the Agent wrote his wife of his hopes for obtaining a cession on terms equally advantageous to the future condition of the Indians and to the United States. He added that,

. . . My greatest opposition arises from the narrow minded & selfish views of the traders, who are low & groveling in their views, and ever ready to sacrifice general, for private interest. Among these are some, of whom I hoped better things. But my trust is that God will overrule the threatened evils of their counsel, & enable me to succeed.

Now the trader-organized opposition to the proposed treaty began to crumble. John Drew's Indians from the Sault deserted him and agreed to sell, while only four of the Grand River Ottawas continued to adhere to Robinson. The latter wrote Crooks that this would enable him to conclude peace favorably with the "great folks" although he could not obtain as much as he had intended. The claims would have to go before a commissioner contrary to their will, but he believed that the Johnston Family claims would place those of the other traders on very fair ground. He later wrote that, although not very agreeable, he believed the treaty terms the best that could be

obtained, and that the sum set aside for paying the Indian debts should suffice for the purpose.³⁵

At the conclusion of a series of closed councils the Ottawa was decided to sell their lands on the Lower Peninsula with the exception of certain reservations, a condition readily agreed to by the government. At the same time Schoolcraft agreed to stipulate the payment of a sum of money to the members of the Indian deputations. The Chippewas then consented to cede their lands and devoted several council sessions to settling the details regarding reservation locations. During these councils various chiefs asked that their mixed-blood relatives receive land grants and that certain traders be allowed to examine their accounts. Finally, on March 28, 1836, Schoolcraft's forty-third birthday, the U.S. treaty commissioner and the Indian delegates signed the final treaty document.³⁶

Under the terms of this treaty the Chippewa and Ottawa tribes ceded about sixteen million acres, or about three-eighths of the entire state of Michigan. They retained three major reservations totalling 140,000 acres on the Lower Peninsula together with some smaller tracts. The Chippewas north of the Straits also selected a number of small reserves, chiefly fishing grounds along the lakeshore together with the Beaver Islands of Lake Michigan, Round Island near Mackinac, and Sugar Island in the St. Mary's River. Both tribes reserved the right to hunt in the ceded territory until the land was required for actual settlement. In exchange for this cession they received a compensation package equal to about nine cents per acre, of which roughly one-third went to the mixed-bloods and traders. This included \$150,000 in goods and provisions to be distributed at Mackinac following the Senate's ratification of the treaty and \$30,000 in cash payments to the chiefs. The United States would also pay a cash annuity of \$30,000 for twenty years and would provide a future location when the tribes chose to emigrate, either among the Chippewas west of Lake Superior or else in some portion of the Indian Country southwest of the Missouri River. At the time of their removal the United States would organize and pay for their transportation, provide them with a year's subsistence in their new home, and furnish certain articles for the use of each emigrant.

Despite the indignant outcries from the traders and mixed-bloods, those groups did not emerge from the negotiations empty-handed. The fifth article of the treaty reserved \$300,000 to pay the just debts of the treaty Indians. A commissioner appointed by the President would examine those debts at Mackinac to prevent the allowance of unjust claims. A supplementary article added at the request of the President nullified debt claims dating from before 1812 and provided for investing any surplus left in the fund after the payment of claims on behalf of the Indians. The sixth article allowed \$150,000 for mixed-bloods to be enumerated by a census while the ninth article provided specific compensation to designated individuals with Indian connections. Nearly half of the \$48,141 allowed under this clause went to Rix Robinson, who had an Indian wife, while John Drew received nearly \$4,500 and Augustin Hamelin \$1,600.

Finally, the Indians received a package of specific annuities that together constituted a twenty year Christianization-civilization program. This included a lump sum of \$10,000 for the purchase of agricultural implements, cattle, tools, etc; blacksmith shops at Mackinac, and Sault, and on one of the larger reservations; a gunsmith at Mackinac and, for a period of ten years, a dormitory at Mackinac for the use of visiting Indians. It also provided for two government farmers with assistants and two mechanics to instruct the Indians in those vocations. For twenty years the tribesmen would receive fish barrels and salt to aid their fisheries, while another small annuity assured them of continuing smallpox vaccination services. The remaining specific annuities included \$5,000 annually for education and \$3,000 yearly for missions. Jubilant at the outcome of this, his first Indian treaty, the Agent wrote his wife,

. . . All that could be worked in by the way of schools, missions, agriculture, mechanics, &c. &c. is granted. Much money will be annually distributed, their debts paid, their half-breed relations provided for, every man, woman & child of them, & large presents given out. Rejoice with me. The day of their prosperity has been long delayed, but has finally reached them, in their lowest state of poverty, when their

game is almost gone, and the country is shorn of all its advantages for the hunter state.

For the moment it appeared as if the reclamation of the red man now stood within his grasp.³⁷

One need not doubt the Agent's sincerity on this point while noting that the treaty also provided very substantial financial benefits for himself and his in-laws. Two weeks after signing the treaty he wrote his wife that a commissioner would pay the just debts of the Indians and that he himself had declined that position from the delicacy of deciding on the claims of his relatives. However, justice would be done to Mrs. Johnston and something obtained for each of the children. A month later he wrote that William Johnston had not been forgotten and that if the treaty were ratified he would be offered a place that provided good living. This referred to the new position of keeper of the Mackinac Indian dormitory provided for in the treaty.³⁸

Schoolcraft had originally intended to leave for New York immediately upon concluding the treaty negotiations. During the winter he had prepared his Indian tales for publication and he hoped to oversee that operation while in New York awaiting the opening of navigation on the lakes. Cass, however, instructed him to remain in Washington until the Senate had ratified the treaty and the Department had prepared estimates of the expenses involved in its implementation. At the same time he should also settle the expense accounts of the Indian delegations at the capital. Schoolcraft then received instructions to conclude several additional minor treaties and on May ninth signed a treaty with the tiny Swan Creek and Black River Chippewa bands. These Indians lived on small reserves not far from Detroit. In exchange for their 8,320 acres of land the United States agreed to provide them with an equivalent acreage either northwest of the Falls of St. Anthony or southwest of the Missouri River. It would also pay them the actual price received from the public sale of their lands less the cost of survey and sale. On the day before he signed that treaty the Agent informed his wife that arrangements had been made for his appointment as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Mich-

ferred with Crooks regarding the steps necessary to obtain the assent of the Chippewas and Ottawas to these treaty modifications. Crooks agreed to exert his influence on behalf of the treaty and advised Robinson to persuade the Grand River Indians to agree to the changes since they could not, in any case, retain their lands much longer in the face of the advancing white population. He also urged the AFC traders at Mackinac and the Sault to co-operate in the matter. Schoolcraft then left New York, arriving at Mackinac on the fifteenth of June. The following day he instructed Robinson and the commandant at Fort Brady to organize deputations to meet on the Island in July to ratify the revised treaty. On the twelfth of July some twenty-seven chiefs and principal men met at the Agency for that purpose. In the ensuing five-day councils some of them strenuously opposed the additional cessions and only yielded when Schoolcraft emphasized that the treaty allowed them the right to occupy and hunt on ceded lands until they were required for actual settlement. The Indian delegates then drew up a memorial asking that they be allowed to remove to the unceded Chippewa lands on the south shore of Lake Superior west of the Chocoday River, rather than being forced to migrate to the Southwest.⁴¹

The new Acting Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Michigan then began preparing for the general distribution of Indian goods and the examination of claims to be held at Mackinac in September. The new Indian Commissioner Carey A. Harris appointed John W. Edmonds of New York to act as commissioner to examine the mixed-blood claims and, together with Schoolcraft and Colonel Henry Whiting (Paymaster for the Northern Department) to jointly distribute the treaty goods. Whiting would also pay the cash annuities. The Indians themselves would examine the debt claims, but would only act with the aid and advice of the three commissioners who would explain each debt claim in open council, ascertaining whether it was just and whether the tribesmen wished it paid in full or in part. Should the total claims allowed exceed the \$300,000 provided under the treaty, a pro-rata distribution would be made.⁴²

In mid-July Schoolcraft began recording debt claims and arranged for taking censuses of the Indian bands in the ceded

area who were entitled to receive annuities. He also persuaded the Mackinac traders not to supply the Indians with liquor during their stay on the Island. As the Indians of Grand River lacked canoes suitable for crossing the Straits he arranged for a separate distribution of goods and annuities to be made there by Edmonds and Whiting. At the beginning of September the Indians poured into Mackinac accompanied by claimants of every description. They remained at the Island until the final closing of the distribution on the twenty-ninth of that month. During the interim more than four thousand Chippewas and Ottawas attended one of the largest and most colorful such gatherings in the long history of the Island. The Superintendent directed the payment of cash annuities made to the heads of families according to his census of the treaty bands. The goods distributed included a variety of items ranging from woolen blankets to kettles, cutlery, and steel traps. As not all of the Indians from the Sault could attend Schoolcraft later arranged for Major Cobbs at Fort Brady to distribute their goods and annuity funds at that point the following spring.⁴³

The adjudication of mixed-blood claims gave rise to many complaints, principally from those who arrived too late or had weak claims. In political terms the payment or nonpayment of the traders' debt claims proved far more significant. Altogether out of some \$438,383.58 in claims submitted some \$220,954.57 or barely half were allowed. Schoolcraft declined to act on those claims involving his relatives which were then decided by Whiting and Edmonds. On the whole they fared somewhat better than the average:

Claimant	Amount Claimed	Amount Allowed
John Hulbert	\$3,515.42	\$3,493.93
James Schoolcraft	2,739.34	2,286.42
William Johnston	18,079.10	10,521.54
Susan Johnston	7,820.00	7,820.00
John Johnston Estate	69,273.69	32,463.72
George Johnston	450.00	300.00
	<hr/> 101,877.55	<hr/> 56,885.61

Rix Robinson received \$22,989.38 on his claim of \$24,076.2 for himself and \$5,656.74 of \$6,858.51 claimed as agent for the new AFC. He also received \$23,040 under the ninth article of the treaty which provided cash grants to specified mixed-blood claimants. By contrast, Robert Stuart of the old AFC received only \$17,723.91 of \$32,592.16 claimed while Biddle and Dre received \$46,653.51 on a claim of \$87,465.29. These traders felt particularly outraged and henceforth it was war to the knife between them and the new Superintendent. This proved especially true in the case of Robert Stuart who would ultimately exact a heavy vengeance.⁴⁴

As the distribution drew to a close the Indians departed in their canoes, the commissioners headed south and Mackinac residents prepared for the annual five months of winter isolation. For Schoolcraft, however, this year spelled an end to these ordeals by tedium. On July 2, 1836, Cass had formally appointed him Superintendent of Indian Affairs within the State of Michigan. In his instructions he offered Schoolcraft a choice of residence during the winter months although he must maintain his summer residence at Mackinac. Under this arrangement he would supervise Subagent Henry Connor (Saginaw) and Major Cobbs at Fort Brady and receive an annual salary of \$1,500. On the twenty-second of October he informed the commandant at Fort Mackinac that he was leaving William Johnston as Acting Subagent and Keeper of the Indian dormitory during the winter season. Then, on the twenty-seventh of the month the Schoolcrafts boarded a steamer for Detroit where they arrived following a voyage of three days. There Henry Schoolcraft hired a clerk/messenger, rented an office for business use, and settled down to fully assume the role of Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Michigan.⁴⁵