

CHAPTER ONE
Traditional Chippewa Tribal Government



TRADITIONAL CHIPPEWA TRIBAL GOVERNMENT



For countless centuries Ojibwe people have governed themselves in a manner of which the so called "civilized" nations of today's world would be envious. Ojibwe people had a system, where there were no jails, poorhouses or insane asylums. People respected each other, and actions such as stealing from one another were unheard of. A person was judged not by how much he owned but by how a person treated his fellow man. The most humble man was often the most respected man. That was the way it was with the Ojibwe people. Often times the Ojibwe were noted for the large amount of their possessions they had given away.

Chiefdom was divided into two categories, civil and war. Civil chiefs held the highest authority of the tribe and received their leadership hereditarily. When a chief died, the oldest male normally assumed the chieftanship of the band. If that was not possible, the oldest male relative was given the position by the band. Consequently many chiefs could trace their chief-line back as many as ten generations.

Traditional Ojibwe chiefs originally came from the various "Dodaims" or clans of the tribe. Some of the clans claimed many of the most prominent chiefs as their members. Two of these, the crane and loon clans were the principle chief clans, although chiefs came from many of the other clans. Only males were chiefs in the Ojibwe tribe.

A chief was most noted for his personal characteristics; anyone wishing to join his band was at liberty to do so. A band might comprise as few as thirty or forty people, or as many as three hundred.

The duties of a civil chief included presiding over tribal councils of his band, the making of decisions that affected its general welfare, and the settlement of small disputes. He represented the band at the signing of treaties, the payment of annuities, and any large gathering of the tribe.

Associated with the chief were two "headmen" who acted with the chief for the band. They were selected from among the most prominent warriors. Many of these warriors or headmen also signed treaties; today they are considered by many to be chiefs. At large council the head men always sat next to their chief.

Chiefs were often called upon to settle disputes among their band. Typical disputes often came up during the harvesting of rice, and the gathering of maple sap. It was the chief's word which determined when the band would start to rice and where. Oftentimes the chiefs relied upon the powerful medicine men and "jisakiwug" (wigwam shakers) for advice. The chiefs themselves were oftentimes respected by their band as being powerful medicine men.

Family groups usually shared the same ricing, maple sap, and hunting grounds. The chief had to monitor these activities so that harmony was kept amongst the band. The chief, with strong advice from the elders of the band, settled any disputes between the members of the band, and between the white people and the Ojibwe. (The most difficult decision was how to deal with a murder, which did not happen very often.)

The chief had to decide whether the accused was guilty and whether punishment should be meted out, or retribution to the family of one who was killed. The family listened to the chief, but it was their final decision, whether to revenge the death or not.

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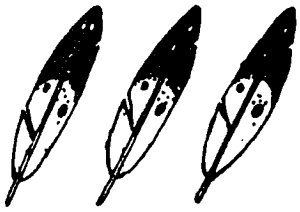


Photo courtesy Cass County Historical Society

Unidentified Ojibwe elders from the Cass Lake area around 1890.



Photo courtesy Cass County Historical Society



Civil chiefs also had to respect the wishes of the entire band in times of war. The signing of treaties was a difficult time for chiefs. There were many in the bands that disagreed on the treaty conditions. To be a chief for a lifetime and earn the continued respect of the tribe was indeed difficult.



TOTEMIC DIVISION OF THE OJIBWE¹



Each grand family is known by a badge or symbol, taken from nature; generally a quadruped, bird, fish, or reptile. The badge or Dodaim (Totem, as it was most commonly written) descends invariably in the male line; marriage is strictly forbidden between individuals of the same symbol. This is one of the greatest sins that can be committed in the Ojibwe code of moral laws, and tradition says that in former times it was punishable with death.

In present somewhat degenerated times, when persons of the same Totem intermarry (which even now very seldom occurs), they become objects of reproach. It is an offense equivalent to the sin among the whites of a man marrying his own sister.

In this manner the blood relationship is strictly preserved among the several clans in each tribe, and is made to extend amongst the different tribes who claim to derive their origin from the same general root or stock.

An individual of any one of the several Totems belonging to a distinct tribe, as for instance, the Ojibwe, is a close blood relation to all other Indians of the same Totem, both in his own and all other tribes, though he may be divided from them by a long vista of years, interminable miles, and not even know of their existence.

I am not possessed of sufficient general information respecting all the different groups of tribes in America, to enable me to state positively that the Algics are the only stock who have perpetuated and still recognize this division into families, nor have I even data sufficient to state that the Totemic System is as rigidly kept up among the Ojibwe, Ottaways, and Potta-wat-om-ies.

From personal knowledge and inquiry, I can confidently assert that among the Dakotas the system is not known. There are a few who claim the Water Spirit or Merman as a symbol, but they are the descendents of Ojibwe who have in former times of peace intermarried with them. The system among the Winnebagos, which somewhat resembles this, is one borrowed or derived from the Ojibwe during their long intercourse with them, while residing about Green Bay and other portions of the present State of Wisconsin.

From these and many other facts which shall be enumerated, the writer is disposed to consider, and, therefore, present the Totemic division as important and worthy of more consideration than has generally been accorded to it by standard authors who have studied and written about the Indians.

The Ojibwe acknowledge in their secret beliefs and teachings to each successive generation five original Totems. The tradition in which this belief is embodied is known only to their chief Mides, or priests. It is like all their ancient traditions, vague and unsatisfactory, but such as it is, I will here present it -- verbatim-- as I received it.

“When the Earth was new, the An-ish-in-aub-ag lived, congregated on the shores of a great salt water. From the bosom of the great deep there suddenly appeared six beings in human form, who entered their wigwams.

¹ Adopted from William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibwe Nation*, 42-52 reprint edition 1974.

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One of these six strangers kept a covering over his eyes, and he dared not look on the An-ish-in-aub-ag, though he showed the greatest anxiety to do so. At last he could no longer restrain his curiosity, and on one occasion he partially lifted his veil, and his eyes fell on the form of a human being, who instantly fell dead as if struck by one of the thunderers. Though the intentions of this dread being were friendly to the An-ish-in-aub-ag, yet the glance of his eye was too strong, and inflicted certain death. His fellows, therefore, caused him to return into the bosom of the great water from which they had apparently emerged.

The others, who now numbered five, remained with the An-ish-in-aub-ag, and became a blessing to them; from them originate the five great clans or Totems, which are known among the Ojibwe by the general terms of A-waus-e, Bus-in-aus-e, Ah-ah-wauk, Ma-kwa, and Monsone, or Waub-ish-ash-e. These are cognomens which are used only in connection with the Totemic system.

Though, according to this tradition, there were but five totems originally, yet, at the present day, the Ojibwe tribe consists of no less than fifteen or twenty families, each claiming a different badge, as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Uj-e-jauk, | Crane |
| 2. Man-un-aig, | Catfish |
| 3. Mong, | Loon |
| 4. Ma-kwa, | Bear |
| 5. Waub-ish-ash-e, | Marten |
| 6. Addick, | Reindeer |
| 7. Mah-een-gun, | Wolf |
| 8. Ne-baun-aub-ay, | Merman |
| 9. Ke-noushay, | Pike |
| 10. Be-sheu, | Lynx |
| 11. Me-gizzee, | Eagle |
| 12. Che-she-gwa, | Rattlesnake |
| 13. Mous, | Moose |
| 14. Muk-ud-a-shib, | Black Duck or Cormorant |
| 15. Ne-kah, | Goose |
| 16. Numba-bin, | Sucker |
| 17. Numa, | Sturgeon |
| 18. Ude-kumaig, | White Fish |
| 19. Amik, | Beaver |
| 20. Gy-aushk, | Gull |
| 21. Ka-kaik, | Hawk |

I have here given a list of every badge that is known as a family totem among the Ojibwe throughout their widespread villages and bands.

The crane, catfish, bear, marten, wolf, and loon are the principal families, not only in a civil point of view, but also in numbers since they comprise eight-tenths of the whole tribe. Many of these Totems are not known to the tribe in general, and the writer has learned them only through close inquiry. Among these are the goose, beaver, sucker, sturgeon, gull, hawk, cormorant, and white fish totems. They are only known on the remotest northern boundaries of the Ojibwe country among the Musk-keeg-oes and "Bois Forts."

The old men of the Ojibwe whom I have questioned particularly on this subject affirm that all these different badges are only sub-divisions of the five great original totems of the An-ish-in-aub-ag, who have assumed separate minor badges, without losing sight or remembrance of the main stock or family to which they belong. These divisions have been gradually taking place, caused in the same manner as the division into distinct tribes. They are easily classed under the five great heads, the names of which we have given.

Aish-ke-bug-e-coshe, the old and reliable head chief of the Pillager and Northern Ojibwe, has rendered me much information on this subject. He is the present living recognized head of the great A-waus-e family. He says that this clan claim the Me-she-num-aig-way (immense fish) which, according to their description, is equivalent or analogical to the Leviathan mentioned in the Bible. This being is also one of the Spirits recognized in their grand Me-da-we rite. This clan comprises the several branches who claim the Catfish, Merman, Sturgeon, Pike, Whitefish, and Sucker Totems, and, in fact, all the totems of the fish species may be classed under this general head. This family is physically noted for being long lived and for the scantiness and fineness of their hair, especially in old age; if you see an old Indian of this tribe with a bald head, you may be certain that he is an A-waus-e.

Tradition says that many generations ago, all the different clans of the tribe, with the exception of the Ah-ah-wak, formed a league and made war on the A-waus-e with the intent to exterminate them. But the A-waus-e family proved too strong for their united brethren and prevailed against their efforts, and ever since this event, they have claimed a certain pre-eminence over them in the councils of the tribe. They also claim, that of the six beings who emerged from the great water and originated the Totems, their progenitor was the first who appeared and was leader of the others.

Of nine thousand of the Ojibwe who reside within the limits of the United States, about the shores of Lake Superior and the headwaters of the Mississippi, a full one thousand belong to the A-waus-e family.

The Bus-in-as-see, or Crane family, are also numerous and form an important element of the Ojibwe tribe. They reside mostly on the south shores of Lake Superior and toward the east in Canada, though they have representatives scattered in every spot where the Ojibwe have set foot and lighted their fires. The literal meaning of their totemic name is "Echo-maker" derived from the word Bus-wa-wag, "Echo" and pertaining to the loud, clear, and far reaching cry of the Crane. This clan is noted as possessing naturally a loud, ringing voice and are the acknowledged orators of the tribe; in former times, when different tribes met in councils, they acted as interpreters of the wishes of their tribe. They claim, with some apparent justice, the chieftanship over the other clans of the Ojibwe. The late lamented chief Shin-ga-ba-wos-sin, who resided at Sault Ste. Marie, belonged to this family. In Governor Lewis Cass's treaty at Prairie du Chien in 1825, he was the acknowledged head chief of his tribe and signed his name to that treaty as such. Ah-mous (the Little Bee), the son of the late worthy chief of Lac du Flambeau, Waub-ish-gaug-aug-e (or white crow) may now be considered as head or principal chief of this family.

The old war chief Ba-be-sig-aun-dib-ay (curly head) whose name is linked with the history of his tribe and who died on his way returning home from the above mentioned Treaty of Prairie du Chien, was also a Bus-in-aus-e and the only representative of his clan amongst that section of his tribe, who so long bravely struggled with the fierce Dakotas for the mastery of western banks of the Mississippi, which now form the home of the Winnebagoes. He was the civil and war chief of the Mississippi Ojibwe.

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Hole-in-the-day I, of later notoriety, and his brother Song-uk-um-ig (Strong Ground), inherited Curly Head's chieftanship by his dying request, since he died childless. Weesh-e-da-mo, son of Aissance (Little Clan), late British Ojibwe chief of Red River, is also a member of this family. He is a young man, but has already received two American medals, one from the hands of a colonel of our army, and the other from the hands of the Governor of Minnesota Territory. He is recognized by our government as chief of the Pembina section of the Ojibwe tribe.

These facts are stated to show the importance of this family, and its wide extended influence over the tribe. It can be said of them that whenever they have planted their wigwam on the widespread territory of their people, they have been recognized as chieftans.

They also boast the names of Keesh-ke-mun, chief of the Lac du Flambeau section; Che-suh-yauh and Waub-ij-e-jauk (White Crane), of La Pointe, Shaug-a-waum-ik-ong, all noted chiefs during their first intercourse with the white race. The small clans who use the eagle as their totem or badge are a branch of the Bus-i-aus-e.

The Ah-ah-wauk, or loon totem (mang), also form an important body in the Ojibwe tribe; in fact, they also claim to be the chief or royal family, and one of their arguments to prove this position is that nature has placed a collar around the neck of the loon, which resembles the royal megis, or wampum, about the neck of a chief which forms the badge of honor. This dignity, however, is denied by the Cranes and other totems, whoever that the principal chiefs of the Ah-ah-wauk are descended from, individuals who were on a certain occasion made chiefs by the French at Quebec, will be related to in the course of the following history. This family does not lack in chiefs who have acted prominently in the affairs of the tribe and are linked with its history.

Ke-che-waish-keenh (Great Buffalo), the respected and venerable chief of the La Pointe band, and principal chief of all the Lake Superior and Wisconsin bands, is the acknowledged head of this clan; his importance as an individual in the tribe strengthens the position of the Ah-ah-wauk.

The chief of Sandy Lake on the upper Mississippi is also of this family. The Goose and Cormorant Totems are its sub-divisions. The Ma-kwa or Bear family is the most numerous of the other clans of the Ojibwe forming fully one-sixth of the entire tribe.

In former times this numerous body was sub-divided into many lesser clans, making only portions of the bear's body their Totems, as the head, the foot, the ribs, etc. They have all since united under one head, and the only shade of difference still recognized by them is the common and grizzley bear. They are the acknowledged war chiefs and warriors of the tribe keepers of the war-pipe and war-club, and often denominated as the bulwarks of the tribe against its enemies.

It is a general saying and an observable fact amongst their fellows that the Bear clan resemble in disposition the animal that forms their Totem. They are ill-tempered and fond of fighting, and consequently they are noted as having kept the tribe in difficulty and war with other tribes, in which, however, they have generally been the principal and foremost actors. They are physically noted, and the writer has observed the fact, that they are possessed of a long, thick, coarse head of the blackest hair which seldom becomes thin or white in old age. Young Hole-in-the-day (son of the great war chief of that name), the recognized chief of the Ojibwe of the Mississippi, numbering about twelve hundred, is not (A.D. 1852) the most noted man of the Ma-kwa family. Ka-kaik (the Hawk), of Chippeway River, and Be-she-ke (Buffalo), of the Leech Lake, have recognizable influence as war chiefs.

The Mah-een-gun, or Wolf Totem family are few in number and reside mostly on the St. Croix River at Mille Lacs. They are looked upon by the tribe in general with much respect. The Ojibwe of this totem derive their origin on the paternal side from the Dakotas. Na-guon-abe, the civil chief of Mille Lac, may be considered the principal man of this family. Mun-o-min-ik-a-she (Rice maker), who has lately removed from the St. Croix to Mille Lac with his band, is a man of considerable importance amongst his fellows.

The Waub-ish-a-she, or Marten family, form a numerous body in the tribe, and is one of the leading clans. Tradition says that they are sprung from the remnant captives of the fierce and warlike tribe whom the coalesced Algie Tribes have exterminated, and whom they denominate the Mun-dua. The chiefs Waub-ish-ash (the Marten) of Chippewa River, Shin-goob, (Balsam), and Nug-aun-ub (Sitting Ahead) of Fond du Lac are now the principal men of the clan. The celebrated Ke-che-waub-ish-ash of Sandy Lake, Sha-wa-ke-shig of Leech Lake, and Mud-ud-a-shib (or Black Duck) of Red River were members of this family. In their days they conducted greatly towards wresting country from the Dakotas and driving them westward. All three died on battle fields, the first at Elk River fight, the second at Rum River massacre, and the third fell fighting on the western prairies against immense odds, but one out of forty who fought with him escaped a warriors death. Under the generic term of Mous-o-neeg, the families of the Marten, Moose, and Reindeer Totems are included. Aish-ke-bug-e-coshe, the old Pillager chief, related to me the following tradition, accounting for the coalition or close affinity between the Moose and Marten Totems.

“Many centuries ago the family of the Moose Totem, denominated Mous-o-neeg when the Ojibwe lived towards the rising sun, were numerous and powerful. They lived congregated by themselves in one great village and were noted for their warlike and quarrelsome disposition. They were ill-tempered and proud of their strength and bravery. For some slight cause they commenced to make war on their brethren of the Marten Totem. Severely suffering from the incursions, and unable to cope singly with the Mous-o-neeg, the Martens called together the different clans of the tribe to council and asked them for help and protection. A general league was made between the different Totems, and it was determined that the men of the obnoxious and quarrelsome family of the Moose badge should be exterminated.”

“The plan for their sudden and total destruction was agreed upon, and a council lodge was ordered to be built which was made narrow and just long enough to admit all the warriors of the Mous-o-neeg. The poles of this lodge were planted firmly and deeply into the ground close together, and lapping over the top they were strongly twisted and fastened together. Over this frame were tied lengthways, and worked in like wicker-work, other green poles, and so close together that a mans hand could scarcely pass through any part of the frame, it was constructed closely and strongly. Over this frame, and from the inside, leaving but a long narrow aperture in the top, was fastened a thick covering and lining of dried grass.”

“When this lodge had been completed, runners were sent to the village of the Moose Totem family, and all their chiefs and warriors solemnly invited to a national council and feast. This summons was made in such a manner that they could not refuse, even if they felt so disposed; and on the day fixed, the chiefs and all the men of war of the refractory clan arrived in a body at the village of their mortal foes (the Martens) where the council-lodge had been built and made ready.”

“They were led into the lodge, where the old men and chiefs of the tribe had collected to receive them. The Mous-o-neeg entered unarmed and as their great numbers gradually filled the lodge, the former inmates, as if through courtesy, arose and went out to give them room. Kettles full of cooked meat were brought in and placed before them, and they were requested to eat after the fatigues of their journey. They filled the long lodge entirely, and when everyone had left it but themselves, and while they were busy feasting on the good things that had been placed before them, the doors at each end were suddenly closed and fastened on them. A chief of

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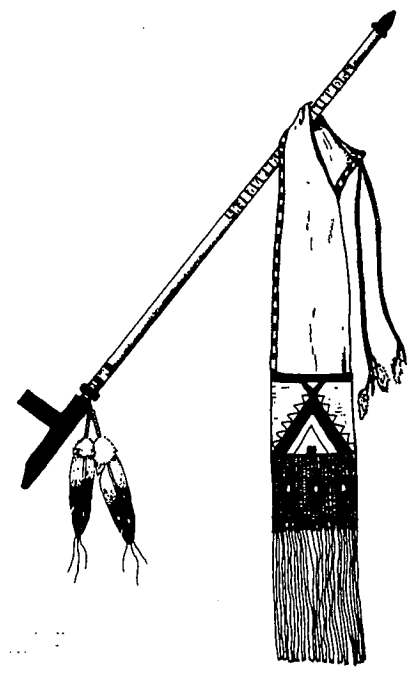
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the Marten Totem addressed them in a loud voice, repeating over all the acts of blood and wickedness which they had enacted, and informing them that for these things the national council had decreed to sweep them from the face of the earth which they polluted. The lodge was surrounded by the warriors of the Marten who acted as executioners; torches were applied to the thick and dry covering of grass, and, struggling in the flames unable to escape, the men of the Moose Totem were dispatched with barbed arrows shot through the narrow openings between the lodge-poles that confined them. In this fearful manner were the men of this wicked clan destroyed.

Their women and children were captured by the Marten family, and adopted into their clan. In this manner the close consanguinity of those two totems commenced, and at this day they are considered one family."

The Reindeer family, which is a branch of the Mous-o-neeg, are few in number, and they reside mostly on the north coast of Lake Superior. The celebrated Ojibwe war leader Waub-O-jeeg (White Fisher), whom Mr. Schoolcraft wrote about at some length, was a member of this family, descended from a branch who imigrated from the Grand Portage near the mouth of Pigeon River to La Pointe, Shag-a-waum-ik-ong, where he and his father, Ma-man-giz-id (Big Foot), lived nearly a century ago as war-leaders and chiefs of their people.

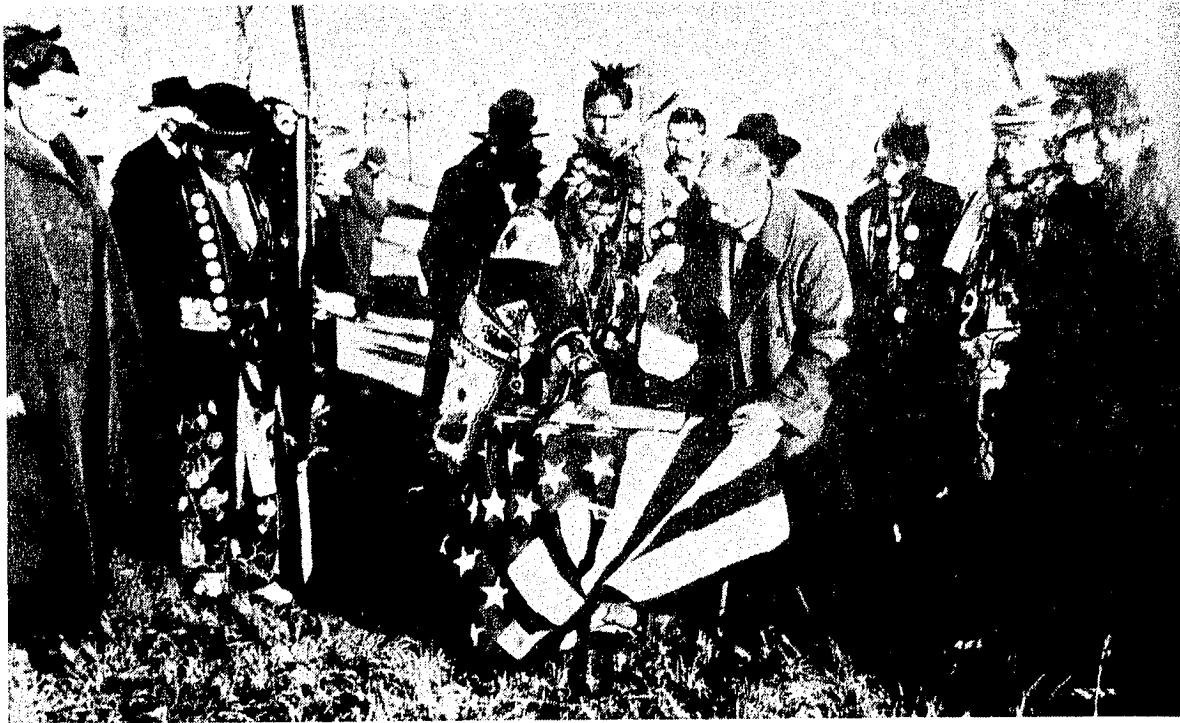


SIGNERS OF THE TREATIES

During the 1800's Ojibwe people met many times over the summer in treaty session. It was at these treaty meetings that the chiefs had to represent their bands in the government negotiations. Some of the chiefs had to come from far into the interior for the meetings. It would take weeks for the journey.

The traditional chiefs from each band were usually accompanied by lesser chiefs and the two top warriors from their band. These warriors were often called headmen.

Consequently, those who are recorded as having signed Ojibwe treaties are traditional chiefs, headmen and warriors. They represented the many bands in the treaty makings. They also had to report back to their bands and discuss the details and ramifications of the treaty issues.



photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

1913 - Leech Lake

Signing of the Declaration of Allegiance to the U.S. Government

As these Ojibwe leaders signed treaties, their Indian names were written down, and their band. Their particular bands that signed the treaties were evidence that significant villages were present.

Many of those villages do not yet remain Indian land. A classic example is the village of Gull Lake. Bug-o-nay-ge-shig, or Hole-in-the-day, as he was known, led his people for many years residing on the shores of Gull Lake. The surrounding area also was the home of many Ojibwe people.

Madeline Island, which is mentioned many times in the Midewiwin speeches of our tribe, was once the site of the longest Ojibwe villages of all time. It, along with Sandy Lake, was the center point of Ojibwe people.

These, then, are the chiefs, headmen and warriors who have been recorded as signing the Ojibwe treaties. When they were recorded, the government stenographers made countless mistakes in the spelling of their names. We have corrected them where possible.

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Ke-ni

Mee-

Kay-k

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Kwi-v

Nee-g

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Kway

Wa-b

Wa-b

Oh-ge

Bah-s

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LAKE SUPERIOR

BANDS

Grand Portage

Shaw-ga-nah-sheence
Kitchi-inini
Maw-da-gaw-me
Way-mi-tee-go-she
Bay-me-ge-wung
Ah-deek-once
May-mahsh-ko-wash
We-wigi-wam

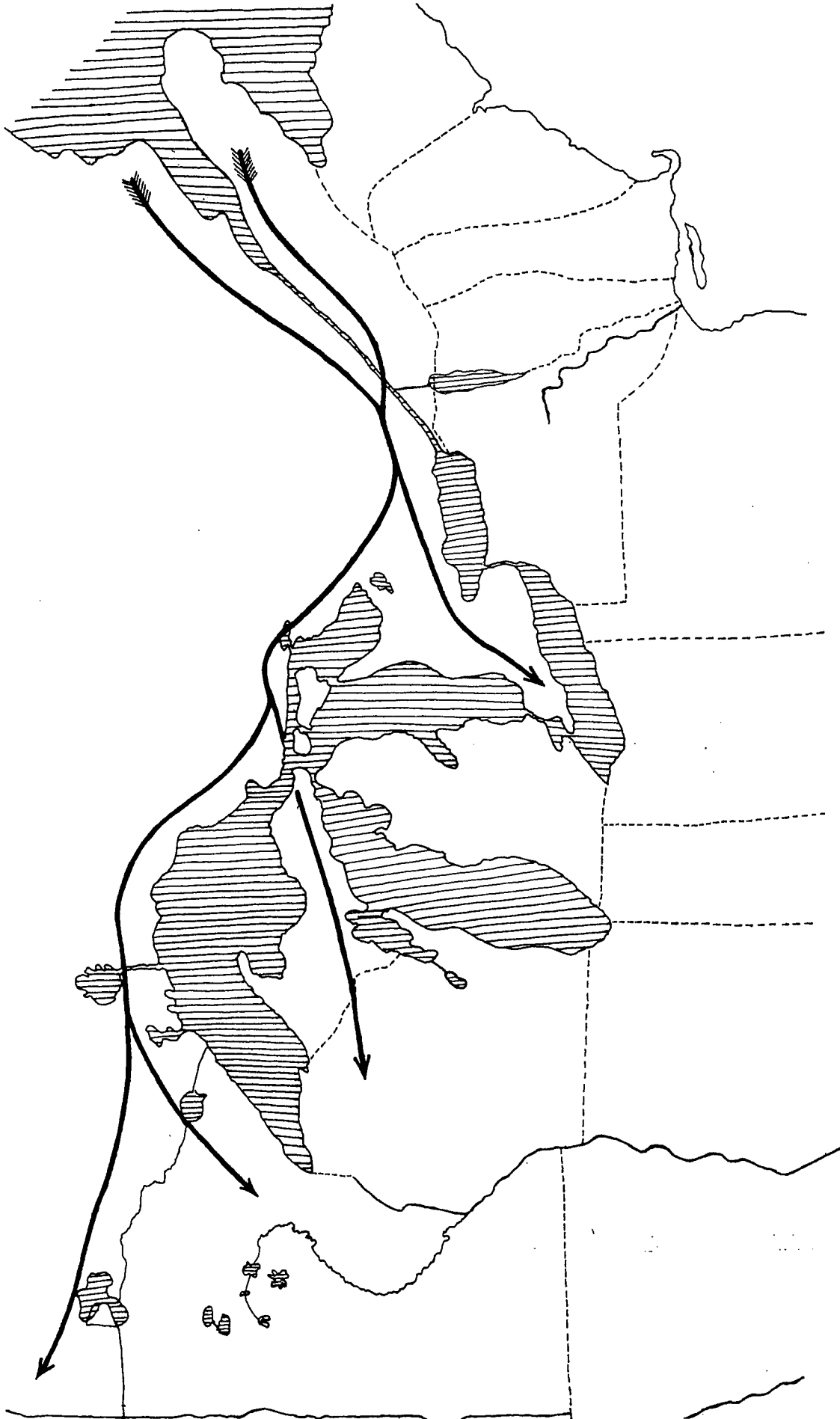
* Wisconsin and some Michigan bands are included here because they were a part of the 1854 Lake Superior treaty. It is important to note that in those times Ojibwe people were not divided by state boundaries. Also, a great kinship was felt by all Ojibwe Indians as they migrated eastward. Many Ojibwe in Minnesota and Ontario can trace their people's ancestry to Madeline Island.

Lac Du Flambeau

Me-zha-kwad
Ah-mous
Ke-nish-ti-no-ah
Mee-giz-ee
Kay-kay-go-nay-ah-shee
Oh-chi-chag
Nay-she-kay-gwaw-nay-be
O-shkaw-bay-wis
Kwi-wi-zaince
Nee-gig
Nay-wadj-ee-gee-zhick
Kway-kway-kee-gah
Wa-ba-nim-ikee
Wa-bish-kah-kah-gay
Oh-ge-ma-gah
Bah-se-quam-jis

Editors note on Wisconsin Band





Ojibwe historians tell of "the time when we lived by the great salt water...." This map shows the path of the Ojibwe from the original homeland to the lands occupied today - primarily in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and bordering provinces of Canada.

LAKE SU
 She-gaw;
 O-cun-de
 Wa-say-g
 Keesh-ke
 Oh-gaw-l
 Wa-bish-
 Bay-bahr
 Keesh-ke

David Ki
 John Sou
 Pete Mar
 Naw-taw-
 Aw-se-ne
 May-dwa;
 Bash-kwa

Ah-kee-w
 Key-no-zh
 Kitchi-bi-
 Kitchi-wa
 Wah-bi-sh
 Kway-kwa
 Shaw-waw
 Nay-naw-c
 O-saw-wel
 Ay-yaw-ba

LAKE SUI

Shin-goob
 Mang-oh-z
 An-ni-mah
 Na-ga-nab
 Naw-bun-v
 Manito-gee
 Oh-saw-ge
 May-kwaw
 Kay-tah-wa
 Kitchi-aki-v
 Keesh-kwal
 Wenji-ma-d

LAKE SUPERIOR

She-gawg
O-cun-de-cun
Wa-say-geeshick
Keesh-ke-taw-wug
Oh-gaw-bay-ah-naw-kwad
Wa-bish-kee-bee-nays
Bay-bahm-ah-sing
Keesh-kee-mun

BANDS
Ontonagon

LeVieux Desert, L'anse, Bad River

David King
John Southwind
Pete Marksman
Naw-taw-me-geeshick
Aw-se-neence
May-dway-aush
Bash-kway-geen

Lac Courte Oreilles

Ah-kee-wain-zee
Key-no-zhaince
Kitchi-bi-nay-see
Kitchi-wah-bi-shay-she
Wah-bi-shay-sheence
Kway-kway-cub
Shaw-waw-go-me-tay
Nay-naw-ong-gay-be
O-saw-wehsh-ko-geeshick
Ay-yaw-baynce

LAKE SUPERIOR

BANDS

Fond du Lac

Shin-goob
Mang-oh-zid
An-ni-mah-sung
Na-ga-nab
Naw-bun-way-geeshick
Manito-geeshick
Oh-saw-gee
May-kwaw-me-we-geeshick
Kay-tah-waw-be-day
Kitchi-aki-wainze
Keesh-kwak
Wenji-ma-dub



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Chief Buffalo

Age 96 - Died 1856

Head Chief of the large Lake Superior Band. Every chief was given a large land allotment by the U.S. Government. In 1854, Chief Buffalo chose his allotment on the present day site of Duluth.

- Bee-zhi-kee
- Ta-kwaw-gah-nah
- Cha-ching-gway-oh
- Shee-we-tah-gin
- Ki-mi-wun
- Ma-ka-dey-bi-nay-see
- O-shkin-ah-wey
- Ah-da-we-geeshick
- Bay-bah-me-say
- Na-wa-ge-wah-nos

La Pointe

- Me-g
- Nay-k
- Bah-k
- Wah-
- Wenji
- Adaw
- Ka-ka

MISSI

- Be-zhe
- Ka-be-
- Ba-gah
- Ay-ya-
- Kish-k
- Na-tar
- Sah-ga
- No-din
- Sha-go
- Sho-ne
- Wee-m

- Ah-aw-
- Miskwa
- Mah-nc
- Bee-du
- Ma-ya-j
- Naw-ga
- Mah-ya
- Kitchi-v

- Aish-ke
- Bi-shee-
- Nah-bi-i
- O-gee-n
- Ki-mi-w
- Mis-ko-l
- Manido-
- O-gee-tt
- Kaw-be-
- Kitchi-s
- Mah-ji-g

14 CHAPTER ONE - TRADITIONAL CHIPPEWA TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

MISSISSIPPI, PILLAGER, WINNIBIGOSHISH

BANDS

Mille Lacs

Me-gee-see
 Nay-kwan-ay-bee
 Bah-kay-naw-gay
 Wah-jushk-ko-kone
 Wenji-gec-shee-guck
 Adawe-gee-shick
 Ka-ka-gwap

MISSISSIPPI, PILLAGER, WINNIBIGOSHISH

BANDS

St. Croix, Snake, & Chippewa River

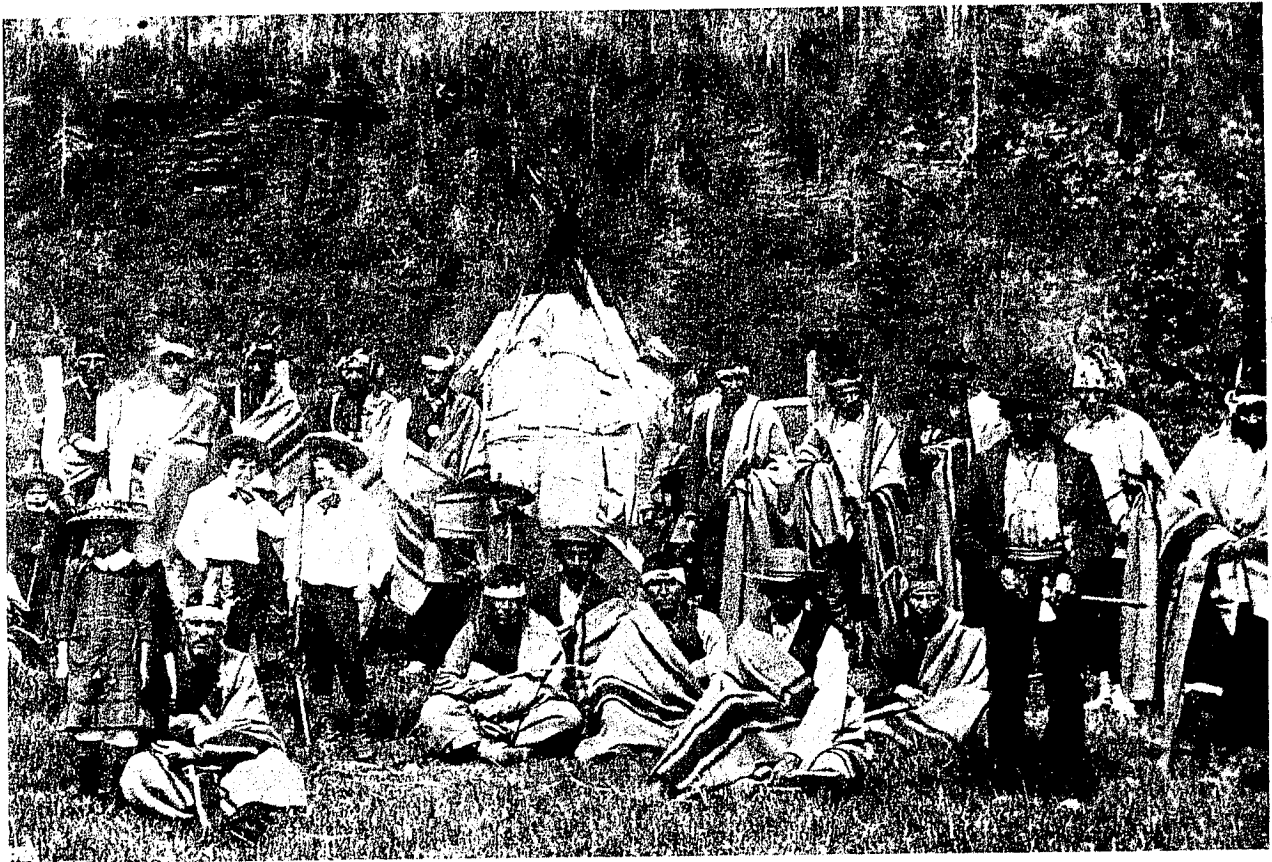
Be-zhe-ke
 Ka-be-ma-be
 Ba-gah-wey-we-wedung
 Ay-ya-banse
 Kish-kee-ta-wag
 Na-tam-ee-ga-bow
 Sah-ga-tah-gun
 No-din
 Sha-go-bay
 Sho-nee-yah
 Wee-mi-ti-go-sheens

Sandy Lake, Rice Lake (Pokegama)

Ah-aw-be-dway-we-dung
 Miskwa-dace
 Mah-no-min-i-kay-shee
 Bee-dud-ence
 Ma-ya-je-way-we-dung
 Naw-gawn-nee-gah-bow
 Mah-ya-ge-way-dung
 Kitchi-wee-mi-ti-goshe

Leech Lake & Winnibigoshish

Aish-ke-bug-e-koshe
 Bi-shee-kee
 Nah-bi-nay-aush
 O-gee-mah-wah-che-waib
 Ki-mi-wan-aush
 Mis-ko-bee-nay-say
 Manido-gee-shig
 O-gee-tub
 Kaw-be-mah-bee
 Kitchi-sai-yay
 Mah-ji-gah-bow



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Indians at Grand Portage at foot of Rose Hill about 1885. Chiefs and men stopped game of la crosse to meet with government officials. Chief May-maush-ko-waush stands in from holding tomahawk and wearing a chiefs medal, 6th from left in back row is Mike Flatt.

MISSISSIPPI, PILLAGER, WINNIBIGOSHISH

BANDS

Mississippi Band

- Ga-nawn-da-maw-win-so
- Ay-yah-baince
- O-taw-waw
- By-ah-jig
- Ih-yah-shaw-wey-ge-zhick
- Mah-ko-dey
- Ke-wey-cah-me-gee-shkung
- Gah-besh-ko-da-way
- Wah-dee-na

- Bug-oh-nay.
- Wah-bo-jee
- Wah-ba-na-i
- Manido-wah
- Sho-baush-k
- Kwi-wi-zain
- Wa-de-kaw
- Way-nah-me
- Song-ah-cun



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Chief Wabanaquot or White Cloud of White Earth.

Gull Lake and Crow Wing

- Bug-oh-nay-gee-shig
- Wah-bo-jeeg
- Wah-ba-na-kwad
- Manido-wab
- Sho-baush-kung
- Kwi-wi-zaince
- Wa-de-kaw
- Way-nah-me
- Song-ah-cumig



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

**Delegation of Leech Lake Ojibwe Leaders
in Washington D.C. 1863**

Me-jaw-ke-ki-zhick
 Ah-ah-jaw-way-ge-shick
 Day-dah-com-mo-say
 Moz-oh-mah-nay
 Way-saw-wah-no-nayb
 Mino-gee-shick

Rabbit Lake

MISSISSIPPI, PILLAGER, WINNIBIGOSHISH

Ga-besh-co-daway
 Ba-baw-madjew-esh-cang
 Way-zaw-we-je-zhick-way-sking
 O-saw-way-bi-nay-see
 Shay-way-be-nay-see
 Bah-pee-oh
 Ah-da-wawnequa-bee-nays
 Sa-gwa-da-came-gish-cang
 Ne-oning
 Wa-ba-gam-agwa
 Gan-ah-wah-bam-ina
 Gaw-nanda-ma-winzo
 Ah-be-tang

BANDS

Nett Lake, Vermillion, Pelican,
 Basswood Lake

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The names Waub-Ojeeg, or White Fisher, is to be found in few history books nor is there a monument to this greatest of Ojibwe Chiefs. His story, like that of his Indian contemporaries, can only be pieced together from fragments gathered from various pioneer histories and from the oral legends of the Ojibwe themselves. When these fragments have been carefully sorted and tabulated, the shadowy profile of Waub-Ojeeg emerges as an inspired leader of his people and a fearless warrior.

As the son of Ma-mong-e-se-da, Chief of the Pigeon River or Reindeer Clan of Ojibwe, the young Waub-Ojeeg was faced with the necessity of filling the moccasins of an illustrious father whose feats on the hunt, in the council lodge, and on the war path lived in legend among the Indians for generations. A staunch friend of the French, Ma-mong-e-se-da led a large force of Lake Superior's Northern Ojibwe to Quebec to aid in the defense of that fort against the British. It is said that the defeated and mortally wounded Montcalm died in the arms of the Chief on the Plains of Abraham.

Waub-Ojeeg was six foot six inches tall and a remarkable man. He was only twenty-two years old when he became recognized as the head chief of his people.

The fact that Waub-Ojeeg was a peerless hunter and trapper is significant only because it helps to explain the great esteem and respect which he enjoyed as chief of his people. Also, the immense areas which he covered in these pursuits made him intimately familiar with much of the terrain over which he would later lead his warriors against the enemy.

A typical incident illustrating his resourcefulness as a hunter and woodsman involved a chance meeting with a belligerent bull moose.

It seems that Waub-Ojeeg was proceeding, unarmed except for a hunting knife, through a stand of large pine timber when the moose, proceeding in an opposite direction, disputed with loud grunts and lowered head, the right of Waub-Ojeeg to pass. Not wishing to argue the point, the Indian stepped behind the nearest tree expecting the moose to proceed on its way.

For some obscure reason known only to the bull, he chose instead to chase Waub-Ojeeg from the protection of one tree to the next with a red-eyed ferocity and determination which left no doubt of his homicidal intent. When the moose showed no sign of tiring this grim game of hide and seek, Waub-Ojeeg snatched up a stout stick and, in the brief intervals between the charges of the moose, removed the leather lacing from one of his high winter moccasins and bound his hunting knife to the end of the stick. With this improvised lance and a great deal of care and agility in avoiding the horns and hoofs of the enraged animal, the young hunter was able to inflict wounds which finally became numerous and deep enough to drain the life blood from the moose and bring to a conclusion what must surely have been the first and only bull fight ever staged on the shores of Lake Superior.

Waub-Ojeeg sent out messengers with war sticks and tobacco to the major Ojibwe villages in one of his first large war parties. Although quite young, his name was already a legend with all the Ojibwe. Within a short time canoes from villages such as Grand Portage, Sault St. Marie, Bad River, and the renowned warriors from Leech Lake arrived to answer Waub-Ojeegs call at Madeline Island.



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Waub-ojeeg - White Fisher: Early 19th Century Ojibwe leaders from Madeline Island, who led his Lake Superior warriors in a decisive battle against the Sioux and Fox nations at the battle of St. Croix Falls. This victory assured the Ojibwe the area of northern Wisconsin unchallenged.

After leaving Lake Superior, Waub-Ojeegs little army ascended the left branch of the Mush-kee-se-bee or Bad River to its head where a ten mile portage was made into Long Lake on the height of land between Lake Superior and the Mississippi. Three more shorter portages from Lake to Lake brought them to the Num-akaug-un branch of the St. Croix River. Since this was enemy country, Waub-Ojeeg proceeded with great caution and kept scouts constantly ahead to prevent a surprise encounter with the enemy. Arriving at the mouth of the Snake River, where a rendezvous with the promised reinforcements from Mille Lacs and Sandy Lake had been pre-arranged, Waub-Ojeeg was disappointed to find no one in sight.

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Still confident in the numbers and fighting ability of his Lake Superior warriors, he proceeded down the St. Croix toward what he firmly believed would be a devastating surprise attack on the Sioux and Fox.

At about that time the three hundred Ojibwe were crossing the height of land between the Lake Superior and Mississippi waterheads, a like number of Fox Indians were proceeding up the Mississippi River to join a Sioux party of one hundred fifty warriors who had agreed to assist them in a last desperate attempt to annihilate the Ojibwe. It was routine that the Sioux and Fox should choose the St. Croix River as a war path to the north. It was incredible coincidence that they should do so at almost exactly the same moment that Waub-Ojeeg's forces moved southward on the same river.

As the Ojibwe prepared to cross the narrow and boulder strewn neck of rock which washed the black paint from their faces, which they were required to wear before engaging the enemy on their first war path, treasured amulets or *be-ne-si-wi-am*, made and guaranteed by the medicine man to keep the wearer safe, were hung about necks or attached to arm bands. Older warriors donned hard earned eagle feathers, each of which denoted an enemy slain. Muskets were loaded, knives and tomahawks were checked for readiness. At a word from Waub-Ojeeg, twenty-five warriors moved silently into the fringe of small trees on the landward side of the portage closing the only avenue of escape save the boiling rapids above and below the falls.

Having landed their dugouts, the Fox and Sioux quickly became aware of the presence of the Ojibwe on the portage. Confident of victory, and wishing to show contempt for the enemy, it was decided that the Fox would engage the Ojibwe alone, while the Sioux would be spectators and smoke their pipes in sneering unconcern on a pinnacle near the Falls. This, they felt, would be a magnificent gesture which would become a legend and a subject for boasting throughout the Fox and Sioux nations forever.

With these preliminary acts of symbolism and pageantry performed and a deafening, opening volley of musketry, and the battle was intensified in the hopelessly crowded confines of the portage. Muskets became clubs for lack of sufficient time and space to reload. Knives and tomahawks rose above the milling, sweating mass of warriors and descended swiftly and surely with the sickening, crunching thud of cleaving flesh and bone. Yells of triumph and screams of pain punctuated the steady, pervasive roar of the falls. Warriors, like grotesque dancers, locked in single combat at the river's edge, toppled into the rapids to be swept relentlessly to their deaths among the jagged rocks below. The dead and dying littered the rugged portage with scalps intact for want of an adversary with the time and courage to claim his trophy. This was a elemental, primitive conflict. This was "kill or be killed" at its grisly worst.

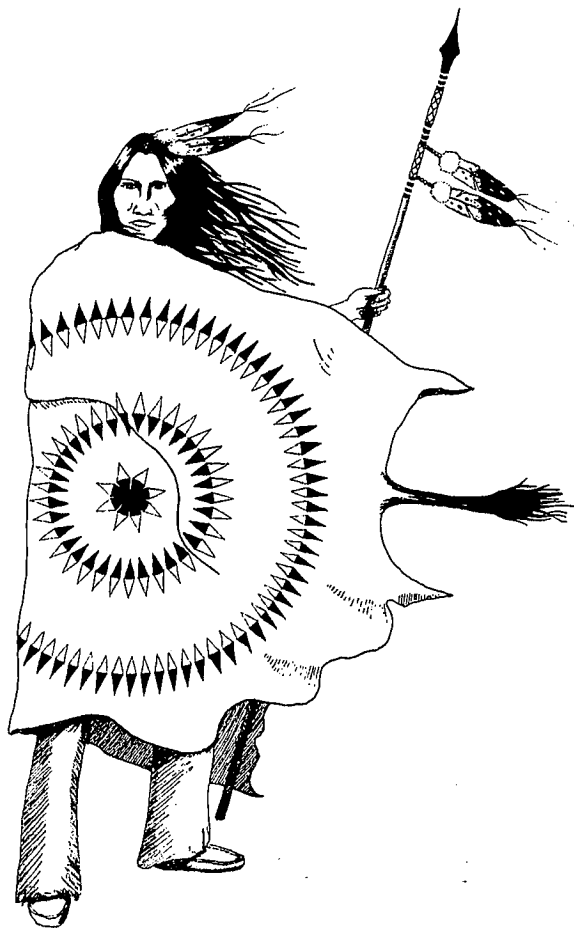
At this exhausting pace, and in what must have been only a few minutes, the tide of battle moved downward toward the foot of the falls, until the Fox, with their backs to the river, appeared to be in immediate danger of annihilation. Seeing this, the Sioux no longer indifferent joined the fray with fresh, screaming enthusiasm. Thus reinforced and encouraged, the Fox warriors threw themselves at the tiring, outnumbered Ojibwe and forced them to retreat to the bloody arena at the head of the Falls.



At this point, two things happened which changed the course of history for the Ojibwe, the Fox, the Sioux and the pioneer states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Waub-Ojeeg, although grievously wounded and exhausted from the tremendous exertion of battle, regrouped the remnants of his demoralized, bleeding warriors, and with loud cries of encouragement and defiance, led a renewed attack on the advancing Fox and Sioux. It will never be known how long this second phase of the battle lasted or how many more died among the blood stained rocks. It is only known that the promised but delayed flotilla of fifteen canoes, bearing sixty warriors from Sandy Lake, arrived in time to reinforce Waub-Ojeeg and drive the Fox and Sioux once more to the foot of the portage where most of them died under the knives and tomahawks of the Ojibwe or in the swirling currents and whirlpools of the river.

Costly as it was to the Ojibwe, this victory permanently removed the Fox Tribe from the Wisconsin-Minnesota wilderness and caused the Sioux to withdraw to the open country to the west and north.

Waub-Ojeeg later moved farther inland into present day Minnesota, where his fame grew. He lived out his days, leaving behind many descendents. At his death he was the principal Ojibwe chief of North America.



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HOLE-IN-THE-DAY I
AND SON HOLE-IN-THE-DAY II [KWI-WI-SENCE]



Bug-o-nay-ge-shig, or Hole-in-the-day, as it was interpreted, was born sometime around 1801. His well known older brother "Song-ah-comig", or Firm Ground, was born a few years before.

Hole-in-the-day had moved into Minnesota lands from LaPointe at the time of the Cass expedition in 1820. For the next five years he and his brother served as "Pipe Bearers" or aides-de-camp to Ba-be-sigundi-bay or Curly Head, principal War Chief for this avant-corps action on the downstream Mississippi. When Curley Head died of a disease controlled at the Prarie du Chien Treaty in 1825, Hole-in-the-day was the more dynamic of the two brothers, becoming the "Front man" while Song-ah-comig worked "behind the scenes". Before passing on, Curly Head had taken no less than 38 Dakotas with him.

In the late 1820's Hole-in-the-day had the rating of Second Chief at Sandy Lake under Ka-ta-wa-be-da; and, in 1828, his son Kwi-wi-sence was born of Ka-ta-wa-be-da's daughter. Shortly, the family moved to Gull Lake for a few years, probably at that time developing the famous "Sugar Bush" on North Long Crow Wing, thence to the mouth of the Little Elk near Little Falls. From that advanced position he variously retreated back to Rabbit Lake or Whitefish under Sioux attacks, though apparently never again going back to Gull Lake.

Bug-o-nay-ge-shig was the most well known chief of his era. Another prominent chief of that time, Buffalo of LaPointe, was equally as important to the bands of the Lake Superior group. Sam Yankee, a noted chief and elder of the Mille Lac Reservation, who lived at East Lake, near Rice Lake recollected many stories from his grandfather, "Manomin-ikesheence," about the bitter feuds between Buffalo, and Bug-o-nay-ge-shig. Mr. Yankee recollected his grandfather as saying that these two great chiefs split, and, as a result, the Lake Superior Bands treaty became completely separate from the Mississippi Band.

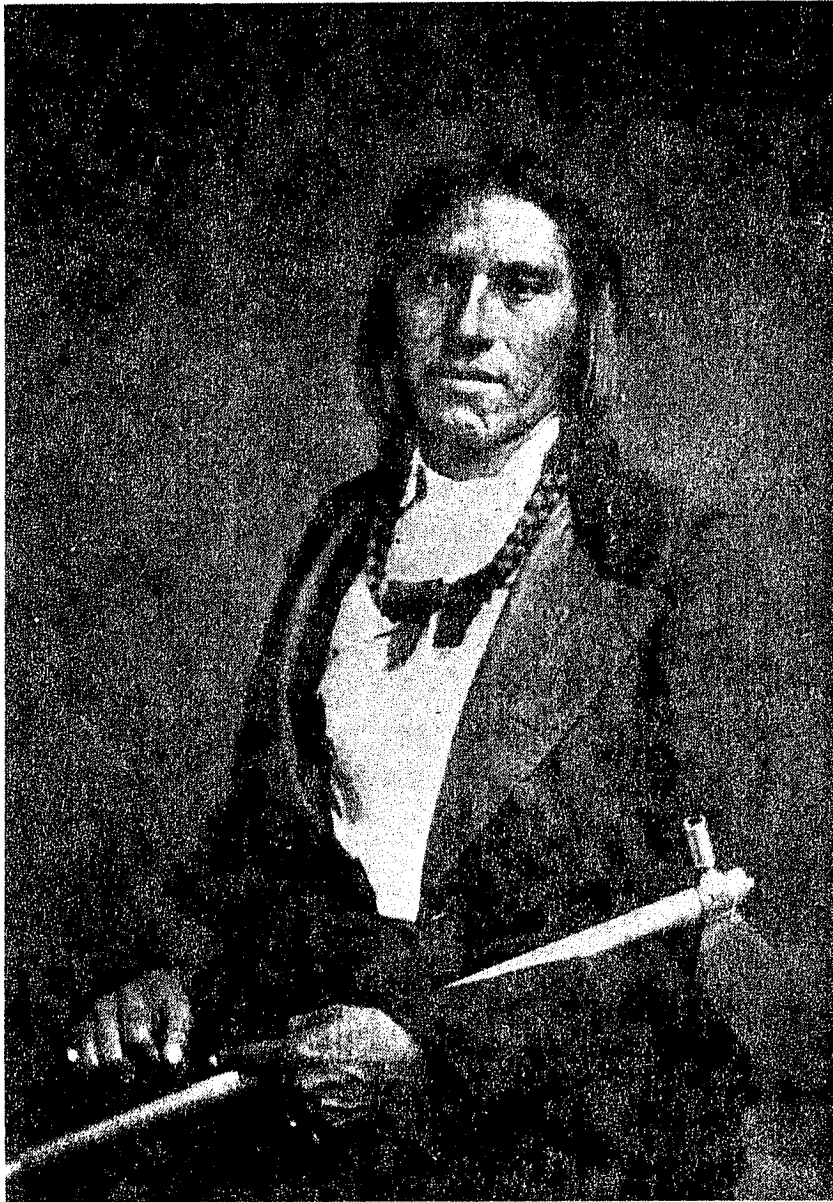
"Manomin-ikesheence" was a chief, and signer of the Mississippi Band treaty, and was a close friend and ally of "Bug-o-nay-ge-shig." These Mississippi Band Chiefs thought that Buffalo was too quick to agree to the government agents and was leading the Indians down a bleak trail. Consequently, these two great personalities clashed, making the split. (Sam Yankee, the resource on this subject passed away in May of 1975.)

"Bug-o-nay-ge-shig," in 1847, while traveling back from St. Paul, was killed by mixed bloods near the present site of Little Falls. Thus ended the life of one of the truly great Chippewa chiefs.

His son "Kwi-wi-sence" or Hole-in-the-day II carried on his chieftanship for many years and became famous during the Sioux uprising of the 1860's. Hole-in-the-day II had plans of joining the Sioux in driving the white man out of Minnesota. On August 18, 1862, Hole-in-the-day II's warriors burned the mission buildings at Gull Lake to the ground and also killed the Indian agent at nearby Crow Wing, at the Chippewa agency.

However, at Leech Lake, where Hole-in-the-day II never did enjoy his fathers popularity, the Ojibwe people rose up against his plan. While many young warriors were anxious for battle, the older chiefs prevailed. Bi-zhi-ki" of Leech Lake, along with Big Dog did not like Hole-in-the-day II's arrogant attitude nor his logic in fighting the white man. As stated previously, "Kwi-wi-sence" or Hole-in-the-day II, was not well liked by the other chiefs, ever since his father had died.

Many Ojibwe and a few respected whites and half breeds traveled to the Gull Lake camp where "Kwi-wi-sence" held many white captives from the mission at Gull Lake and the Chippewa Agency at Crow Wing. They were all able to stop the battle plan of the young chief from Gull Lake. Had they not done so, the Ojibwe might have joined the Sioux and the Ojibwe people all might have been talking in Ojibwe today instead of English.



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Hole-In-The-Day II

Hole-In-The-Day II or Kwi-wi-sence, played a major part in shaping the history of Minnesota.

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OLD BUG



It is **very** important to note, that "Old Bug" as he was called, is **not** the same person as Hole-in-the-day I or II. Although his name is the same, this sub-chief of Leech Lake was not related to the first great "Bug-o-nay-ge-shig" of Gull Lake, nor to his son.

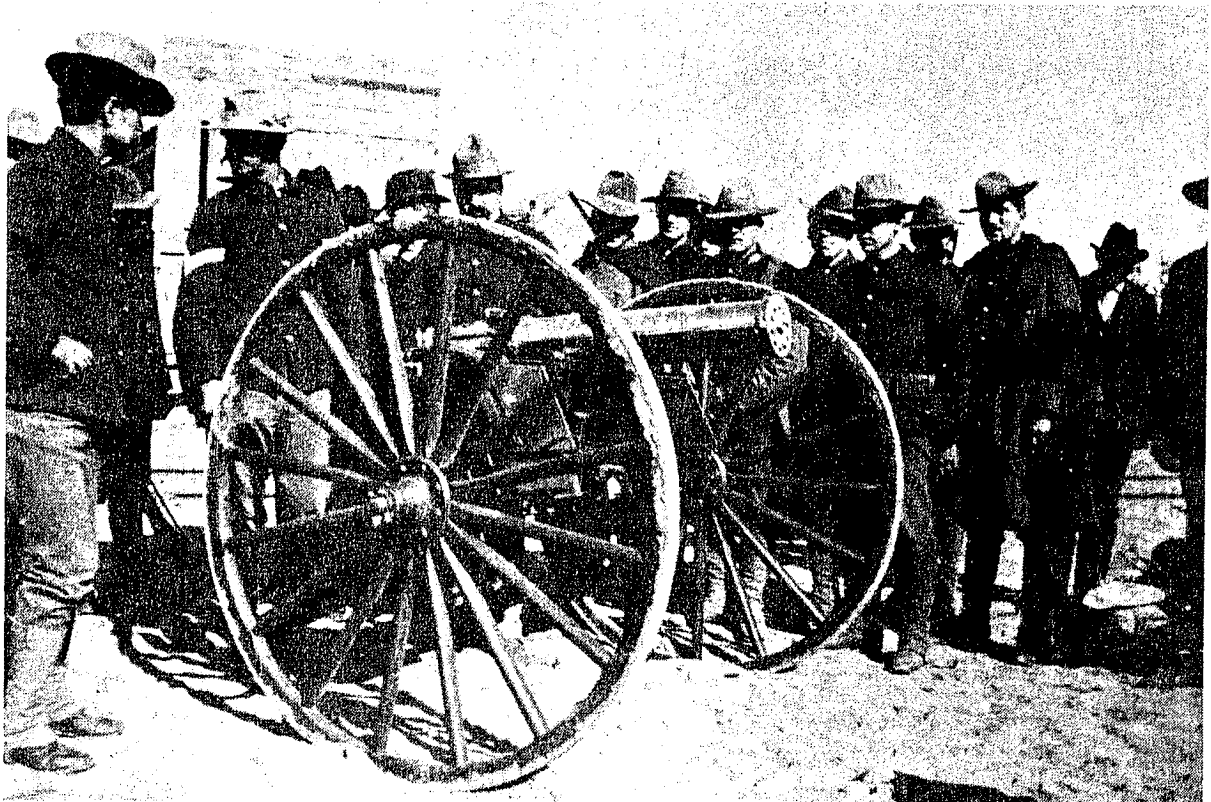
The 1890's was a time of deep resentment for Ojibwe people. Timber barons, and crooked government agents had cheated Ojibwe people so badly that it had prompted a federal investigation.

About this time, a sub-chieftain of the Bear Island Ojibwe, with a cabin on Sugar Point across the way, obtained a substantial supply of whiskey from one of these new installations, and brought it back to his comrades. The result was that one of them was shot and killed. This sub-chief was Begona-geshig, a namesake of the first great chieftain by that name on the lower Mississippi, as we have discussed elsewhere. Since the "p" and the "b" in Ojibwe are indistinguishable, this Leech Laker was commonly known as "Old Bug." He was arrested and sent to Duluth for six months in the St. Louis County jail. When his term ended in February, the authorities merely dismissed him - turned him out into mid-winter weather with no money for food, no fare to get back home. Sugar Point was a long ways off and Bugona-geshig was no longer a young man. The census in 1898 showed his age as 60. Worse, he had come to Duluth mid-summer, in mid-summer clothes. He tried to board a train; the conductor put him off. After hiking awhile along the bleak snowswept tracks, he tried to board another at the next stop out of Duluth. The conductor again put him off.



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Ojibwe patriot, Bug-o-nay-ge-shig [left, in the beaver pelt hat, holding the pistol], poses with two of his band members from Leech Lake. Taken 1897 at Bear Island.



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Soldiers and weaponry used against Bug-o-nay-ge-shig at Sugar Point 1898. Part of Col. Harbach's command stationed at Walker, Minnesota.



Photos courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Mock battle staged at White Earth Reservation 1910.

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By the time "Old Bug" made Sugar Point, he was a very sick Indian. He nearly lost his life. Meantime, the authorities had moved against the White man who sold the liquor. They brought him to court. But when they came to get "Old Bug" to serve as a witness against him, he would have nothing to do with it - quite understandably. He simply hid out in the woods and refused to come in. Never again would he expose himself to the complex crudities of the white man and to find an Indian in the woods is not an easy matter. The situation was about to resolve itself when the annual payment became due at the Old Agency in Trader Bay. Though a mere pittance of some few dollars and a bit of merchandise, Bug-o-nay-ge-shig could not resist calling for that which was his own; whereupon he was promptly clamped in irons.

"Where are my young men?" he dramatically shouted toward a group of youthful Ojibwe as the two marshals were hustling him toward the boat. This touched a tender cord; for it was ever the honor and the glory of the young male Indian to serve as the battle arm for the helpless, the replacement for the old warrior, and the standard bearer for everything held dear in tribal tradition.

Within moments a score of them had Old Bug properly freed, and the two marshals effectively roughed up. But the aging Indian was not able to run quite fast enough particularly when manacled, and others aiding the marshals soon caught him. This infuriated a bunch of bystanding women who now got into the act and really put an end to it. Old Bug made it to the woods and all the way to Stony Point. There his friends filed off his handcuffs.

He was free and with nothing less than an official war with the United States Army on his hands. This was the famous Sugar Point Battle of 1898, begun on October 5 and finished on the 7th, with six Army men killed and no known dead Indians. For sometime all of Minnesota was under a renewed scare of an Indian uprising.

Old Bug escaped to live out his years in peace. He was rarely photographed and is today very well known for soundly leading his warriors in the victory of Sugar Point in one of the last Indian-White battles of this country.



Standing on the left is none other than the Leech Lake Bug-o-nay-ge-shig or "Old Bug", who instigated the Sugar Point Battle of 1898, then escaped into the deep woods to wear to this dying day the proud title of "Unconquered Indian." Very few photographs of him are known. To the left of "Old Bug" is the Leech Lake Chief, Jim Goose, second only to Chief Flat Mouth in rank. Seated is John Smith who lived to the ripe age of 138 years before passing on.



PRESENT DAY TRADITIONAL CHIEFS



Today, on all of our Ojibwe reservations, some of the descendents of our hereditary chiefs reside. Because of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, chiefs do not anymore have the type of leadership authority that they had traditionally. However, many of these descendents are still active with the business and affairs of their bands, and some are members of their elected tribal councils. Many of the older generation on our reservations still seek out out hereditary chiefs and go to them for advice in tribal matters.



Two tribal chiefs from the Mille Lacs Reservation: Melvin Eagle [left] and John Nayquonabe.

Melvin Eagle is the son of Joe Eagle, now deceased, a traditional chief of the Mississippi Band. Melvin's grandfather was "Migizi" which means eagle in the Ojibwe language. "Migizi" was one of the principal chiefs who signed the treaty with the Mississippi Band and the United States of America.

John Nayquonabe is the son of Pete Nayquonabe, also of Mille Lacs. John inherited the chieftanship when his father Pete died. John is the grandson of "Nayquonabe" which means the feathers end.

Both Melvin Eagle and John Nayquonabe are involved in the tribal affairs of their band. Both are also owners of ceremonial drums which have been handed down for years to which a great importance is held. John Nayquonabe has also begun officiating at tribal religious ceremonies. These two men are good examples of our present day traditional chiefs.

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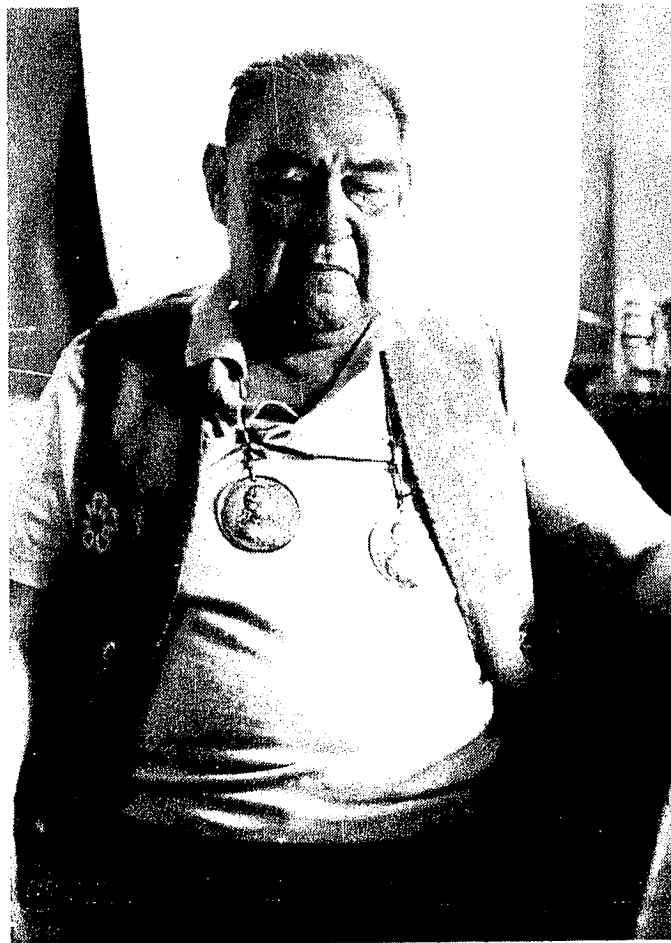
JOHN FLAT



John Flat of Grand Portage is also a traditional chief. John is the holder of two chief medals, which were given out by King George of England in 1783, and again in 1814. John can trace the medals back seven generations, when Sir William Johnston traveled out to meet Ojibwe chiefs on behalf of the English Government. Special silver medals were minted and given to major Ojibwe chiefs. A delegation from Grand Portage traveled the long journey south from Sault Ste. Marie or "Ba-wi-ti-gong" as the Ojibwe called it, to the meeting. These medals that John has, have been in the hands of Grand Portage chiefs since those times.

John inherited the medals and chieftanship from his father, Mike Flat, who died in 1953. Mike was the stepson of Joe Louis, whose father was "May-mosh-ko-waush," a signer of the 1854 Lake Superior Band treaty.

John has served on the Grand Portage tribal council for many years, and has been active in the affairs of the Grand Portage Band for a long time.



John Flat of Grand Portage, Chief medals inherited from father, Mike Flat.

STUDENT WORKSHEET QUESTIONS



UNIT NUMBER I PART I

1. What were the most important duties of the civil chiefs?
2. What qualities were civil chiefs expected to have had?
3. What function did **totems** have?
4. Name the totems you know that have existed for your particular Indian community.
5. Which clans or totems usually provided chiefs to the Ojibwe Tribe?
6. What does the Ojibwe word "do-daim" mean?

UNIT NUMBER I PART II

Write a brief biography, on your own words, of three of the chiefs you have read about. Give facts about residence, clan, qualities, when they lived, and a few exploits.

I.

II.

III.

